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Deleuze’s Neo-Leibnizianism, Events and The Logic of Sense’s ‘Static Ontological Genesis’

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Abstract
In The Logic of Sense, Deleuze effectively argues that two types of relation between events govern their ‘evental’ or ‘ideal play’, and ultimately underlie determined substances, that is, worldly individuals and persons. Leibniz calls these relations ‘compossibility’ and ‘incompossibility’. Deleuze calls them ‘convergence’ and ‘divergence’. This paper explores how Deleuze appropriates and extends a number of Leibnizian concepts in order to ground the idea that events have ontological priority over substances ‘all the way down’.

Keywords: Deleuze, Leibniz, events, ontology, possible worlds, intersubjectivity

Deleuze’s philosophical relation to Leibniz has in general been downplayed in the secondary literature.¹ Deleuze’s major, pre-Difference and Repetition influences are frequently cited as Nietzsche, Bergson and Spinoza, and that these figures are constant touchstones for Deleuze is undeniable.² Nevertheless, in his 1968 Spinoza book it is clear that, in certain respects, Deleuze reads Spinoza through Leibniz.³ It is also clear that Leibniz is a major reference in ‘The Method of Dramatization’ (Deleuze 2004), which is effectively a summary of the major themes of Difference and Repetition. In the text of The Logic of Sense, which was published one year after Difference and Repetition, Spinoza is not mentioned at all, and Bergson is cited only once. Leibniz, on the other hand, features prominently in the highly

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important ‘Sixteenth Series of the Static Ontological Genesis’, as well as in the ‘Twenty-Fourth Series of the Communication of Events’, where he is heralded as ‘the first important theoretician of the event’ (Deleuze 1990a: 171). Similarly, in the much later text, *The Fold: Leibniz and The Baroque*, Leibniz is affirmed as having implemented ‘the second great logic of the event’, after the Stoics and before Whitehead (Deleuze 1993: 53). It is thus not unlikely that Deleuze sees himself as a philosophical descendent of Leibniz when he maintains in a 1988 interview that ‘I’ve tried in all my books to discover the nature of events’ (Deleuze 1995: 141).

This is not to say, however, that Deleuze accepts all of the premises on which Leibniz bases his philosophy. On the contrary, Deleuze’s constant criticism is that Leibniz ultimately subordinates the ideal play of events to a principle of converging differences under the hypothesis of a God who calculates and chooses for existence the ‘best’ or maximally convergent series of possible events. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze suggests that Leibniz’s God perhaps responds to a ‘theological exigency’, or again to an ‘economic principle’ for the determination of causes and effects, or means and ends (Deleuze 1990a: 59). Nevertheless, according to Deleuze’s own testimony in *Difference and Repetition*, this subordination of events to a principle of convergence was Leibniz’s ‘only error’ (Deleuze 1994: 51). In this same work, Deleuze writes that ‘no one has gone further than Leibniz in the exploration of sufficient reason . . . [and] the element of difference’ (213). Similarly, in *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze writes that Leibniz went a long way (although not ‘all the way’) in establishing ‘a theory of singular points’ and their ‘ideal play’, that is to say, a theory of the relations of alogical compatibility and incompatibility between predicate-events which would be irreducible to the identical and the contradictory (Deleuze 1990a: 116 and 171).

We would like to show here how, in the *The Logic of Sense’s* ‘Sixteenth Series of the Static Ontological Genesis’, Deleuze turns to Leibniz in order to ground the idea that events have ontological priority over substances ‘all the way down’. Following Leibniz, but also criticising and extending several of his presuppositions and concepts, Deleuze effectively argues that two types of relation between events govern their ‘evental’ or ‘ideal play’, and ultimately underlie the determination of substances, that is, of substantial ‘things’ such as individuals and persons. Leibniz calls these relations ‘compossibility’ and ‘incompossibility’. Deleuze, for his part, calls them ‘convergence’ and ‘divergence’ (Deleuze 1990a: 111). Before examining the ways in which Deleuze takes up Leibniz’s philosophy, it will be important to briefly
recall a number of elements of Leibniz’s thought and to highlight the role of compossibility and incompossibility therein.

I. Leibniz’s System in Outline

For Leibniz, before the creation of the world, God has an understanding of all of the ‘possibles’, that is, of all possible individual concepts. What is possible, at this level, is anything whose concept does not violate the ‘principle of contradiction’ (Leibniz 1973a: §31 and §43; 1989b: 19). In other words, in so far as the concept of an individual does not in itself involve a contradiction, it is possible in the minimal sense that there is no inherent reason why it cannot be thought: it is, as Leibniz writes, ‘perfectly conceivable’ (Leibniz 1969a: 662; 1966: 54).

Not all of these possibles, however, can be thought together without contradiction, for what is possible in itself is not necessarily ‘compossible’ with other such possibles. In God’s understanding, then, possibles which are compossible with one another in various ways form ‘an infinite number of possible worlds’ (Leibniz 1973a: §53). Or again, the possible world of any given individual concept is the totality of all individual concepts compossible with it (Rescher 1967: 17). Possibles which are ‘incompossible’ with one another, correspondingly, belong to different possible worlds.

From among all of these possible worlds, God will bring only one into existence: the ‘best’ of all possible worlds, that is, the one which is maximally compossible, displaying the most perfection, which is to say, the most variety and order with respect to the series of individual concepts (Leibniz 1973a: §58; 1973b: §10). This act of creation follows from the very nature of God, whose concept includes the primary perfections: power, wisdom, goodness and, of course, existence (Leibniz 1989a: §1). In other words, given that he is a necessary and all perfect being, to not bring into existence the best of all possible worlds would contradict the very nature of God.5

The existing world, our actual world, is thus composed of utterly unique individual substances, or ‘monads’, which ‘realise’ the maximally compossible series of possible individual concepts. Being compossible with the entire series of existing monads, then, each individual monad is said to ‘express’ or ‘mirror’ the entire universe of monads (Leibniz 1973a: §56), one thing ‘expressing’ another ‘when there is a constant and regular relation between what can be said [that is, predicated] about one and about the other’ (Leibniz 1969c: 339). It is due to this relation of compossibility or expression that each monad carries ‘traces
of everything that happens in the universe’. In short, for Leibniz, each existing monad or ‘singular substance expresses the whole universe in its own way, and ... all its events, together with all their circumstances and the whole sequence of external things, are included in its notion’ (Leibniz 1989a: §§8–9).

Leibniz’s monads are simple, unified, extensionless and imperishable substances. They are the ‘true atoms of nature’, but there are no causal relations between them (Leibniz 1973a: §§1–7). They rather have, as has been seen, expressive relations of predication. In other words, what ‘we call causes are only concurrent requisites’ whose agreement or ‘harmony’ has been regulated by God from all eternity (Leibniz 1989d: 33). Nevertheless, in this non-causal relation of expression, a monad is said to be ‘active insofar as what is distinctly known in it [i.e., in its concept] explains what occurs in another, and passive insofar as the reason for what occurs in it is found in what is distinctly known in another’ (Leibniz 1973a: §52).

Being imperishable and extensionless ‘points of view’ on the universe, monads are, for Leibniz, necessarily souls or minds (a mind being a ‘reasonable’ soul) (Leibniz 1989h: 79; 1989d: 34). But it is also clear from what has been said above that there are souls and minds ‘in the least part of matter’ (Leibniz 1973a: §66). Even in the case of ‘rational souls’ such as ourselves—that is, souls endowed with memory, reason and capable of acts of reflection—our so-called ‘bodies’ are in fact teeming with ‘bare monads’ or ‘sensitive souls’ having between them particularly well coordinated and direct relations of expression (Leibniz 1973a: §§28–30 and §82).

Furthermore, as simple, extensionless and thinking substances, monads or souls are internally characterised by their perceptions and appetitions. Perception is defined as a ‘passing state, which involves and represents a plurality within the unity or simple substance’, and appetition as ‘the passage from one perception to another’ (Leibniz 1973a: §§14–15). It is important to note that this characterisation of monads is perfectly compatible with the idea that monads are distinguished by the way in which they realise, in their own particular way, the maximally compossible series of possible individual concepts conceived of by God, for God himself is a monad, having as his attributes the primary perfections. In other words, what God perfectly and all at once perceives, the created monads perceive only imperfectly, in related, though varying and changing, degrees of clarity, confusion and distinctness depending on their ‘point of view’ on the universe. Indeed, Leibniz argues that each monad perceives the entire universe,
but confusedly for the most part, in minute, unconscious perceptions (Leibniz 1973b: §13). What the monad perceives or represents distinctly, on the other hand, are those monads ‘nearest’ to them and which compose its ‘body’. The soul thus ‘represents the whole universe also in representing the body which belongs to it in a particular way’ (Leibniz 1973a: §62).

Every body, then, has a ‘dominant’ monad which is ‘active’ in the sense examined above: its concept expresses more distinctly what happens in and for the monads composing its body. The ‘dominated’ monads, for their part, express this dominant monad confusedly or passively, but they in turn are dominant or active in relation to other monads, clearly and distinctly expressing what happens in relation to them, and so on, to infinity (Leibniz 1973a: §70; 1973b: §4). ‘Body’, in this sense, is thus ‘not a substance, but a phenomenon resulting from simple substances’, the ‘reality of which is situated in the harmony of the perceivers with themselves (at different times) and with other perceivers’ (Leibniz 1989i: 181; 1989j: 181).

Monads, then, are simple, unified or ‘closed’, imperishable substances which have non-causal, expressive relations between one another, and which fall under complete individual concepts which express the entire universe from a particular point of view. If monads are simple or ‘closed’, however, what is the status of relations between them? It is clear that compossibility and incompossibility are relations, but these relations only govern the formation of worlds, the best of which is subsequently realised by simple, closed substances which alone exist. The relations between existing individuals must, therefore, be ‘out of the subjects; but being neither a substance nor an accident, it must be a mere ideal thing’ (Leibniz 1989f: 339). Nevertheless, relations are said to be well founded in so far as they ‘inhere in the nonrelational properties of the relata at issue’ which, as has been seen, are determined by relations of compossibility and incompossibility (Rescher 1979: 56).

Another important consequence of monadic ‘closure’ and the ‘completeness’ of its concept is that the infinite number of predicates which define each monad’s unique point of view on the universe are, as Leibniz says, analytically ‘contained’ or ‘included’ in its concept (Leibniz 1989a: §8 and §13). It does not follow from these notions of analyticity and inclusion, however, that the opposite of a true proposition denoting an existing monad implies a logical contradiction strictly speaking. For, as seen above, such a proposition about existing monads is always possible or perfectly conceivable in so far as it does not in itself involve a contradiction. The opposite of a true proposition denoting an existing
monad is not contradictory in itself, but rather incompossible with the compossible set of true propositions characterising the world of created monads.

Truths of ‘fact’ are thus of a different nature than truths of reason, even if both are ‘analytic’. Indeed, for Leibniz, if the principle of contradiction governs truths of reason or necessary truths (formal possibilities or essences), then the ‘principle of sufficient reason’ governs contingent truths or truths of fact (Leibniz 1973a: §§31–6). Leibniz formulates the principle of sufficient reason in the following way: ‘nothing happens without its being possible for one who has enough knowledge of things to give a reason sufficient to determine why it is thus and not otherwise’ (Leibniz 1973b: §7). What this means is that, following our exposition above, the sufficient reason why something is true of a given simple substance must be able to be seen in an analysis of the way in which something is true of another monad whose concept is apt to explain the worldly nature of the former. Furthermore, since a sufficient reason must also be found for this latter monad’s being such and such, this analysis must be continued into that of the ‘concurrent requisites’ of a third monad, and so on, right across the infinite series of created things, and finally into an analysis of the concept of a God who, in line with his perfections, grants existence to that series of monads which realises the maximally compossible series of possible individual concepts which he conceives in his understanding. God, in the final analysis, is thus the sufficient reason for the entire series of created things (see on this Leibniz 1973a: §§36–8).

For Leibniz, therefore, all ‘true predication has some basis in the nature of things’, up to and including the nature of that thing called God (Leibniz 1989a: §8). And the difference between these truths of fact and truths of reason is that the latter can be analysed in a finite number of steps while an analysis of the former requires an infinite number of steps. Of course, no created monad can carry out an infinite analysis. God, however, sees the entire series ‘at the same time’ or knows it ‘intuitively’ (Leibniz 1989k: 99; 1989l: 25). This is still not to say, however, that at the end of even an infinite analysis, true propositions of fact could be reduced to simple, primitive terms. For if they were so reducible, the world would have to have been created according to an absolute, logical or metaphysical necessity, thereby contradicting the concept of God who, in his perfect power, wisdom and goodness, must be free to choose and bring into existence the best of all possible worlds (Leibniz 1989a: §13; 1973c: 49). Since God must nevertheless be said to be the sufficient reason for the series of created things and their expressive relations,
rather than arguing that contingent truths can be reduced to identical propositions, we must say that the infinite analysis of contingent truths is ‘asymptotic’ to certain necessary truths: those concerning God’s essential attributes, the relation between which is established by the ontological proof of his existence (Leibniz 1966: 77).\(^{11}\)

Now, our argument here is that it is in accordance with the problem of finding a coherent means of speaking about the ontological primacy of events in relation to substances that Deleuze turns to Leibniz. Having explicated the major lines of Leibniz’s philosophical system, let us now examine what Deleuze takes from it.

II. Deleuze and Leibniz: The ‘Static Genesis’ of Individuals and Persons and the Pure ‘Play’ of Events

As noted in the introduction, central to Deleuze’s philosophy of the event in the ‘Sixteenth Series’ of The Logic of Sense is a certain appropriation of the Leibnizian relations of compossibility and incompossibility between predicate-events, in so far as these are understood to ontologically precede and govern the constitution of worldly individuals and persons.

It should be remarked, however, as a point of terminological clarification, that when Deleuze speaks of compossibility and incompossibility between events, he does so, more often than not, by speaking of them in terms of the convergence and divergence of ‘singularities’ (Deleuze 1990a: 172). It is thus not uncommon for Deleuze to write of ‘singularities-events’ (103, 112, 116). While we cannot here deal with the complex reasons why Deleuze speaks of events and their relations by means of these quasi-mathematical concepts,\(^ {12}\) what is important to understand is that singularities-events and their relations of convergence and divergence have several characteristics which map quite precisely onto those of their correlates in the Leibnizian system: predicate-events and their relations of compossibility and incompossibility.

The first of these characteristics is that singularities-events are ‘impersonal and pre-individual’. For Deleuze, in other words, just as for Leibniz, events and their relations precede the constitution of individuals and persons. As Deleuze argues, relations between events form ‘worlds’, and the ‘individual is inseparable from a world’ (Deleuze 1990a: 109).

Secondly, as Deleuze describes it, singularities-events may be either convergent or divergent, or as Leibniz would say, compossible or incompossible. Deleuze explicitly ties together the notions of compossibility and convergence when he writes that ‘compossibility is... defined as a
continuum of singularities, whereby continuity has the convergence of series as its ideational criterion’ (Deleuze 1990a: 111). It should here be noted that Deleuze speaks of the convergence of ‘series’ rather than of singularities-events per se, for, as he writes, the ‘nature’ of a singularity is determined in so far as it is ‘analytically prolonged over a series of ordinary points up to the vicinity of another singularity’ (109; emphasis added and translation modified). So what is the correlate in Leibniz’s system of Deleuze’s differentiation between the singular and the ordinary?

It was said above that, for Leibniz, within a possible world, a given individual substance is said to be active or dominant with respect to another in so far as what its concept distinctly expresses explains what occurs in relation to this other. And this latter substance is, correspondingly, passive or dominated in relation to the former: its concept expresses what happens only obscurely. But, distinctly or otherwise, what are known in individuals are precisely the predicate-events which define their relations to other individuals within a world, over time. For Leibniz, therefore, within a world of compossible individuals, there are both distinct events and obscure events. Now, Leibniz’s ‘distinct and obscure’ events map quite precisely onto Deleuze’s ‘singular and ordinary’ events. Indeed, when Deleuze says that singular events are ‘analytically prolonged’ over ordinary events, this must be understood in terms of the Leibnizian principle of sufficient reason which governs truths of fact in relation to worldly individuals. Thus: the sufficient reason why a first, obscure or ordinary event can be truly predicated of a given simple substance must be able to be seen in an analysis of the way in which a second, distinct or singular event can be truly predicated of another monad, and in such a way that the concept of this latter is apt to explain why the first event is included in the concept of the former. And of course, for Leibniz as well as Deleuze, the reason why this second event can be truly predicated of this second simple substance must be able to be seen in an analysis of the way in which a third event can be truly predicted of a third simple substance, and so on, ad infinitum.

The third point of correspondence between the Leibnizian and Deleuzian systems is thus that, in so far as singularities-events are analytically prolonged over series of ordinary events, and in so far as these series converge with series which depend on other singularities-events, a possible world is formed. Conversely, therefore, another world, incompossible with the first, would begin ‘in the neighbourhood’ of those singularities-events whose series diverge (Deleuze 1990a: 109, 111).
Now (and this is our fourth point), within such a compossible world, ‘individuals are constituted which select and envelop a finite number of the singularities of the system. They combine them with the singularities that their own body incarnates ... [and] spread them out over their own ordinary lines’ (Deleuze 1990a: 109). For Deleuze, therefore, just as for Leibniz, the individual ‘parts’ of an individual’s body are related in precisely the same way as individuals in general, that is, through the way in which the events which define them can be analytically prolonged over one another within a compossible world. As Deleuze writes, Leibniz ‘was right to say that the individual expresses a world according to the relation of other bodies with its own, as much as it expresses this relation according to the relation of the parts of its own body’ (110).

In accordance with the Leibnizian system, Deleuze now argues that, to the extent that existing individuals are said to envelop singularities-events which have been ‘analytically prolonged’ over ordinary events within a possible world, these convergent events must be said to have become, within this world, ‘the analytic predicates of constituted subjects’ (Deleuze 1990a: 112). This, then, is a fifth point of correspondence: singularities-events are effectively ‘realised’ or ‘actualised’ as the predicates or ‘concurrent requisites’ of existing individuals. The analyticity of the individual’s predicates follows from the idea that the individual simply is its realisation of a particular, determined slice of the continuum of singular and ordinary events which have been analytically prolonged over one another within a compossible world. Each ‘expressing’ the entire world-series in a unique way, each determined individual thus expresses every other, but in ‘variable and complementary degrees of clarity’ depending on the particular slice of the continuum of singularities-events they have been said to actualise (111). Viewed together severally, therefore, ‘their bodies form mixtures and aggregates, variable associations with zones of clarity and obscurity’. What is more, it follows from the analytic nature of the continuum of singularities-events that we can consider the ‘relations’ between bodies as the analytic predicates of the mixtures they form (112).

Deleuze concludes this section of his analysis and appropriation of various Leibnizian concepts by writing that he ‘identifies’, following Leibniz, ‘the domain of intuitions as immediate representations, the analytic predicates of existence, and the descriptions of mixtures or aggregates’ (Deleuze 1990a: 113). And we have seen what these ‘identifications’ amount to: the domain of intuitions refers to the ‘harmoniousness’ of the world-series of convergent singularities-events (which is to say, for Leibniz, God’s intuitive knowledge thereof); the analytic
Predicates of existence are the determinations in relation to which individuals ‘actualise’ particular ‘slices’ of this world-series; and the description of mixtures or aggregates refers to the way in which relations of coexistence and succession between individuals and their bodies can be understood as a function of the analytic predicates of existence. What will also be essential to retain from the above is that Deleuze follows Leibniz in arguing that the continuum of singularities-events must be distinguished from the individuals who envelop or express only a certain number of these singularities-events. In other words, while the expressed world ‘does not exist outside of the monads which express it’, the world cannot be identified with the way in which it exists in the monads, for the world is defined, prior to the constitution of worldly individuals, as the convergence of singularities as they extend themselves over series of ordinary points (110–11). As Deleuze writes, while the world exists in the individual as a predicate, it ‘subsists in an entirely different manner, as an event or a verb, in the singularities which preside over the constitution of individuals’ (111). We have spoken of the predicates which determine individual things as such (e.g., Adam is a sinner, Christ is a redeemer), but these predicates are themselves determined in relation to convergent series of pre-individual events (to sin, to redeem, etc.) which are only subsequently realised in determined, existing individuals (Adam, Christ, etc.).

The next question Deleuze addresses in the ‘Sixteenth Series’, still following Leibniz in certain respects, is how the individual can ‘transcend’ the world of compossible singularities-events in which it is determined in order to ‘confront’ this world and constitute itself as a ‘knowing subject’ in relation to objects of experience, as well as in relation to other such knowing subjects. Indeed, for Deleuze, the problem of understanding how events are ontologically primitive in relation to ‘things’ is prolonged in this problem of knowledge. In fact, there is in Deleuze’s reading of Leibniz, as there is throughout The Logic of Sense, a fertile relation between these ontological and epistemological problems. We might even say that Deleuze’s ontology of events in The Logic of Sense is a transcendental ontology, in the sense that the ‘world’ of events, which has ontological priority over worldly individuals, is not something external to the conditions of knowledge. As will be seen, for Deleuze the world is an event which results from another, prior event, which is a synthesis of divergent worlds or divergent points of view in an intersubjective and linguistic context.

Now, we do not say that one individual knows another simply because they ontologically ‘express’ one another within a compossible world. We
would not say, for example, that a rock knows the hammer which breaks it apart, simply because of a law-like or expressive relation between their 'concurrent requisites'. Rather, when we speak of knowledge, we speak of an individual's knowledge that \( x \), where \( x \) has propositional content which may be exhibited in language in an intersubjective context. In other words, knowledge necessarily implies a relation between 'persons', and a relation between these persons and the world, which transcends their relations within a compossible world. Indeed, this is precisely why Deleuze, in the first instance, emphasises relations between incompossible worlds for the determination of knowing subjects and the 'things' they know. As he writes:

the Ego as knowing subject appears when something is identified inside worlds which are nevertheless incompossible, and across series which are nevertheless divergent… It is only when something is identified between divergent series or between incompossible worlds that an object = \( x \) appears transcending individuated worlds, and the Ego which thinks it transcends worldly individuals, giving thereby to the world a new value in view of the new value of the subject which is being established. (Deleuze 1990a: 113; translation modified)

As examined above, a world is said to be incompossible with another when series of ordinary events, which depend upon a given singularity-event (analytic prolongation), diverge with series depending on another. Now, for Leibniz, since the created world is characterised by the universal convergence of series of events, such divergences must be only apparent: a by-product of the fact that no existing individual, save God, can carry out an infinite analysis of the convergent world-series of events. Indeed, Leibniz often tells us that various 'evils'—that is, events such as Christ’s dying, Judas' betraying Christ, or Sextus Tarquin's raping of Lucretia—can appear to us to diverge from a world created by an omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly benevolent God.\(^{15}\) This divergence, however, is only apparent, for it is based on our inability to appreciate that everything is of the highest perfection there can be, either because we lack God’s vision of the convergent world-series, or because we cannot perform the calculations necessary to see that a world devoid of a given evil would be a comparatively less perfect world.\(^{16}\) For Leibniz, in short, because divinely conceived worlds are defined by the convergence of series of events, the relation between incompossible worlds is ultimately one of exclusion: either this world or another world, but not both (Deleuze 1990a: 172).
For Deleuze, however, taking up some of Leibniz’s texts in a very non-Leibnizian way, we can establish a **positive** relation between incompossible worlds in terms of a problem which refers to certain ‘conditions’ which constitute it as a problem (Deleuze 1990a: 113). As Deleuze writes, a ‘problem . . . has conditions which necessarily include ‘ambiguous signs’, or aleatory points, that is, diverse distributions of singularities to which different cases of solution correspond’ (114; translation modified). In spelling out the nature of these ‘ambiguous signs’, Deleuze’s main references are Leibniz’s *Theodicy*, one of Leibniz’s letters to Arnauld, and a much earlier mathematical text, ‘On the Method of Universality’. In relation to this latter work, Deleuze examines the way in which, in relation to conic sections, Leibniz attempts to find the ‘formula, rule, equation or construction’ for which the equations of the various curves (circle, ellipse, hyperbola, parabola, straight line) are only particular cases (see Leibniz 1961: 115–17). What is crucial is that this ‘universal equation’ has ‘ambiguous signs’ or ‘characters’ which allow for the ‘inclusion’ of the different cases of conic sections. These ambiguous characters are here of two forms: a *sign*, which may be either an addition, subtraction, or a series of such operations; and a *letter*, which may be a finite, an infinitely large, or an infinitely small line or number. These characters, which are ambiguous or indeterminate in the general formula, may then be ‘filled in’ by unambiguous signs, thereby generating the finite number of cases corresponding to the cases of conic sections. In other words, the universal equation unifies and exhibits, within an objective ‘problem’, the relations among the series of apparently discontinuous cases of conic sections. As Emily Grosholz concludes, ‘this equation, by exhibiting the conic sections as limit cases of one general equation . . . displays their mutual relations as a coherent system’ (Grosholz 2007: 212). Or again, as Deleuze puts it:

the equation of conic sections expresses one and the same Event that its ambiguous sign subdivides into diverse events—circle, ellipse, hyperbola, parabola, straight line. These diverse events form so many cases corresponding to the problem and determining the genesis of the solutions. We must therefore understand that incompossible worlds, despite their incompossibility, have something in common—something objectively in common—which represents the ambiguous sign of the genetic element in relation to which several worlds appear as cases of solution for one and the same problem. (Deleuze 1990a: 114; translation modified)

Now, although Leibniz did not explicitly treat such ‘ambiguous signs’ with respect to the relation between possible existences belonging to
incompossible worlds, Deleuze finds several indications of such an operator in Leibniz’s works. In particular, Deleuze understands the figure of Adam in one of the letters to Arnauld, as well as the figure of Sextus in the *Theodicy*, to be examples of such ambiguous signs. In other words, these figures are considered to be ‘objectively indeterminate’ operators within an inter-worldly ‘problem’ which is ‘resolved’ by the way in which these operators take on particular, determinate values within the incompossible worlds forming the cases of solution to the problem. Thus, in his letter to Arnauld of July 14, 1686, Leibniz responds to Arnauld’s criticism that ‘it is no more possible to conceive of several possible Adams, if Adam be taken as a singular nature, than it is to conceive of several “myselfs”’, by writing that:

> when I speak of several [possible] Adams, I do not take Adam for a determined individual but for some person conceived in a relation of generality (*sub ratione generalitatis*), under circumstances which seem to us to determine Adam to be an individual but which do not truly do so sufficiently; as for instance, when we mean by Adam the first man, whom God puts in a pleasure garden, which he leaves through sin, and from whose side God makes a woman. But all this does not sufficiently determine him, and so there might be several other disjunctively possible Adams . . . But that concept which determines a certain Adam must include, absolutely, all his predicates, and it is this complete concept which determines the relation of generality in such a way as to reach an individual (*rationem generalitatis ad individuum*). (Leibniz 1969b: 335)

As Deleuze extrapolates:

> Within these [incompossible] worlds, there is, for example, an objectively indeterminate Adam, that is, an Adam positively defined *solely* through a few singularities which can be combined and can complement each other in a very different fashion in different worlds (to be the first man, to live in a garden, to give birth to a woman from himself, etc.). The incompossible worlds [thus] become the variants of the same story. (Deleuze 1990a: 114)

However, as Deleuze notes, in the letter to Arnauld such a ‘vague Adam has no existence; he exists only in connection with our finite understanding, and his predicates are only generalities’ (Deleuze 1990a: 346, n.4). In other words, Leibniz’s primary aim here is to make a distinction between how finite individuals can conceive of a ‘vague Adam’ (i.e., in relation to a few predicates of a general nature), and how God conceives of the complete individual concept of the existing
Adam, with his infinite number of determinate predicates. Deleuze, however, is more interested in defining the ‘ambiguous sign’ common to incompossible worlds without passing through the distinction between God and his finite creatures. He thus turns to the figure of Sextus in Leibniz’s *Theodicy* (see Leibniz 1951: §§413–17).

At the end of this text, Leibniz presents us with a story of the historical figure, Sextus Tarquin. Sextus goes one day to find the God, Jupiter, whom he beseeches to change his fate. Jupiter replies that were he to renounce the then kingdom of Rome, he would be given other destinies. Sextus, however, not being able to reconcile himself to the sacrifice of the crown, leaves Jupiter’s temple in a rage and abandons himself to his destiny such as we know it: to the rape of Lucretia which will bring about the collapse of the kingdom of Rome. Theodorus, the high priest, who has been watching this scene, asks Jupiter why he has not given Sextus another will. The God replies that Theodorus should go and see his daughter Pallas, who will show him what he, Jupiter, was obliged to do in order to create the world. Theodorus then finds himself transported with the goddess to the palace of destinies, where he sees representations not only of the real world but of all other possible worlds. What he sees in effect is a series of apartments organised in the form of a pyramid. In each apartment there is a possible world filled with all of the individuals of that world including, each time, a different Sextus: a Sextus happy but mediocre in Corinth, a Sextus king of Thrace, and so on. As Theodorus climbs the pyramid, these worlds with their various Sextuses become more and more beautiful, indeed, they become ‘better’, until finally at the summit he sees a representation of the real world, the most perfect of all, where Sextus leaves the temple, goes to Rome, rapes Lucretia, brings about the downfall of the kingdom, and so on.

For Leibniz, of course, these pages function as a kind of counterfactual proof of the goodness of God, designed to show why God could not have chosen for existence the Sextus whom we know, along with his evil deeds. For it is in comparing all of the possible worlds and their different Sextuses that we come to realise that the existence of the historical Sextus is an integral condition of the best of all possible worlds. Deleuze’s interpretation of these passages, however, is that Leibniz is inviting us to consider the pyramid with its incompossible worlds as a ‘problem’ which is susceptible to various orders or states. Within this problem, then, Sextus functions as an ‘ambiguous sign’, common to all the incompossible worlds making up the pyramid, in so far as these different worlds ‘appear’ depending on the different ways in which he is determined. As Deleuze writes, we
are no longer faced with an individuated world constituted by means of already fixed singularities, organized into convergent series, nor are we faced with determined individuals which express this world. We are now faced with the aleatory point of singular points, with the ambiguous sign of singularities, or rather with that which represents this sign, and which holds good for many of these worlds, or, in the last analysis, for all worlds, despite their divergences and the individuals which inhabit them. (Deleuze 1990a: 114)

There is thus, following Deleuze’s reading of Leibniz, a Sextus = x – or, more generally, an ‘object = x’ (Deleuze 1990a: 114–15) – which is common to a number of incompossible worlds, and which forms part of the objective conditions of the ‘problem’ defining the positive or non-exclusionary relation between these worlds. These objects = x are thus no longer thought of as individuals determined in relation to an analytic continuum of singularities-events within a single compossible world, but rather as ‘ambiguous signs’ which express a non-exclusionary relation between worlds perceived as incompossible.

Now, this shift from the determined individual to the object = x also signals the necessity to rethink the nature of the predicates which would define such objects. As Deleuze explains, in relation to objects = x, predicates are no longer the analytic predicates of individuals determined within a world and carrying out the description of these individuals. They are rather predicates which define objects = x synthetically, and open different worlds and individualities to them as so many variables or possibilities. In other words, instead of each world being the analytic predicate of individuals described in series, it is rather the incompossible worlds which are the synthetic predicates of objects = x, in so far as these latter must be defined in relation to what Deleuze calls a ‘disjunctive synthesis’ of these incompossible worlds (Deleuze 1990a: 115).

How then do these considerations respond to the problem of knowledge such as this was characterised above? First of all, in so far as it forms part of the conditions of the problematic relation between perceived incompossibilities, it is clear that the object = x transcends any particular individuated world. Furthermore, the individual which ‘thinks’, ‘identifies’, or synthetically defines this object = x in relation to these incompossible worlds, must itself transcend worldly individuals. Finally, at precisely the same instant that the individual gives to the world a ‘new value’ through the synthetic determination (‘identification’) of an object = x in relation to variables belonging to incompossible worlds, it must itself be given a new value within this newly synthesised world. For, if individuals are always relationally determined within a
world in the way examined above (analytic continuum), then a world which is being supplemented with new values must entail corresponding new definitions for all of its related individuals. In other words, the individual which has become a ‘knowing subject’ must also be said to be synthetically defined, within a ‘new’ world, by the kind of ‘incompossible predicates’ to which the object = x has exposed it.

This is not, however, the end of the story. Deleuze proceeds to argue that all objects = x are ‘persons’. As he writes: ‘There is thus a “vague Adam”, that is, a vagabond, a nomad, an Adam = x common to several worlds, just as there is a Sextus = x or a Fang = x. In the end, there is something = x common to all worlds. All objects = x are “persons” and are [synthetically] defined by predicates’ (Deleuze 1990a: 114–15).

The reason why objects = x are ‘persons’ must be approached from two points of view. First of all, Deleuze writes that we are not so much concerned with the ambiguous sign per se, as with what represents this sign (Deleuze 1990a: 114), and that which represents this sign could only be a person or an ‘I’. Indeed, following Deleuze’s analysis of the propositional dimension of ‘personal manifestation’ earlier in The Logic of Sense, in the order of speech ‘it is the I which begins, and begins absolutely . . . the I is primary, not only in relation to all possible denotations which are founded upon it, but also in relation to the significations which it envelops’ (15). In this sense, then, persons correspond with what Leibniz calls ‘minds’ or ‘spirits’, that is, rational and conscious monads capable of thinking, willing and conversing among themselves. They not only perceive or represent the world relatively clearly and have memory, they are also capable of inference and reflexive self-consciousness and may approach God’s intuitive understanding of the world of which they are a part, though only with respect to a limited portion of it. Limited in this way, of course, as argued above, a person’s particular perception of the world of which they are a part may diverge from the perceptions of other persons. But for Deleuze, it appears, it will be by positing an object = x open to different possible worlds that the person will be able to formulate the ‘problem’ corresponding to the positive, non-exclusionary relation between these worlds, and then resolve that problem by representing that object = x in a particular way.

On the other hand, however, Deleuze writes that objects = x simply are persons. So what could it mean to say that a person synthesises incompossible worlds by representing an object = x, if this object = x is itself a person? In short, and although Leibniz never puts it in quite this way, it appears that Deleuze wants to argue that there is at work
here what Donald Davidson calls a process of ‘triangulation’, whereby knowledge of the world cannot be separated from knowledge of oneself (that is, of the contents of one’s beliefs) as well as knowledge of other persons or minds.

Now, ‘triangulation’ in Davidson’s work is designed to respond to the problem of correlating a concept with some unknown object, but without presupposing the concept as already given. As he writes:

> It takes [at least] two points of view to give a location to the cause of a thought [i.e., a perception], and thus to define its content. We may think of it as a form of triangulation: each of two people is reacting differentially to sensory stimuli streaming in from a certain direction. Projecting the incoming lines outward, the common cause is at their intersection. If the two people now note each other’s reactions (in the case of language, verbal reactions), each can correlate these observed reactions with his or her stimuli from the world. A common cause has been determined. The triangle which gives content to thought and speech is complete. But it takes two to triangulate. (Davidson 2001: 212–13)

So how can this concept of triangulation be translated back into the Deleuzian-Leibnizian vocabulary we have here been employing? It is by arguing that the reason why objects = x are to be understood as persons is that the ‘unknowns’ which condition the positive relation between incompossible worlds refer to a problematic relation between persons or knowing subjects. In other words, the knowing subject does not directly represent some unknown thing (object = x) which defines a problematic but non-exclusionary relation between incompossible worlds. Rather, the knowing subject stands in a problematic relation to another such subject in an intersubjective and linguistic context: inter-worldly problems are inter-personal problems. It thus follows that both subjects’ mutual ‘identification’ of one another (that is, of their behaviour, the meaning of their verbal activity, the contents of their beliefs, their behaviour vis-à-vis further persons, and so on) is a necessary condition for resolving a problematic but positive or non-exclusionary relation between different ways in which the world can be perceived. The problem of the relation between incompossible worlds will thus be resolved to the extent that a three-fold and simultaneous determination takes place: that of the beliefs of a knowing subject, that of the beliefs of another knowing subject, and that of a common world of individuals corresponding to these beliefs. And this three-fold determination conforms quite precisely to Deleuze’s resolution of the problem of knowledge, such as this was cited above: when something is identified between divergent series or between incompossible worlds,
an object = x or person appears transcending individuated worlds, and
the person which thinks it itself transcends worldly individuals, thereby
giving to the world a new value in view of the new value of the
subject which is being established. And as was also examined above, for
Deleuze, these persons are defined by predicates: no longer the analytic
predicates of individuals determined within a world which carry out
the description of these individuals, but predicates which define persons
synthetically in relation to disjunctive syntheses of incompossible worlds,
opening these divergent worlds and their corresponding individuals to
them as so many variables or possibilities.

Of course, in Leibniz, there is a ‘person’ who is common to all possible
worlds: God. As Deleuze writes:

As far as the absolutely common object in general is concerned, with respect
to which all worlds are variables, its predicates are the first possibles [premiers
possibles] or the categories… The universal Ego is, precisely, the person
corresponding to something = x common to all worlds, just as the other egos
are the persons corresponding to a particular thing = x common to several
worlds. (Deleuze 1990a: 115; translation modified)

Now, it should first of all be noted that the ‘first possibles’, in this
citation, refer to the ‘irreducible concepts’ or ‘absolute attributes of
God’. As has been seen, for Leibniz, it is because God is ontologically
determined by his absolute attributes or perfections that he brings
into existence a unique, maximally compossible world of singularities-
events: the best of all possible worlds. Indeed, it is for this precise
reason that any incompossibilities perceived by the individual substances
belonging to the created world are merely apparent. Yet, if we also
take into account the Leibnizian idea that whatever the created monads
perceive has always-already been included by God in their concepts,
it can be said that God, as an ‘ontologically’ determined object = x,
is absolutely common to all perceptions of apparently incompossible
worlds. Conversely, if finite, created individuals were able to show
that perceived incompossibilities such as various ‘evil’ events are in fact
integral parts of the same, maximally compossible world—the best of all
possible worlds—then these individuals would have effectively proved
that God, in choosing this world for existence, evils and all, is all wise,
all powerful, all good, etc. Leibniz’s God, therefore, can be thought
of in this sense as a ‘person’, determined in a triangular structure along
with other persons and worldly individuals.

Nevertheless, it is also clear that Leibniz’s ‘ontological proof’ for the
nature and existence of God requires no recourse to such triangulation,
relying as it does only on the principle of contradiction. Crucially, then, Leibniz ultimately determines the 'ideal play' of singularities-events with reference to an underlying substance: God. In other words, individuals and persons, for Leibniz, are not determined by singularities-events 'all the way down'. Rather, the events which determine individuals and persons are themselves to be determined with reference to God.

How, then, must the Leibnizian system be modified such that it can be said that events, considered only from the point of view of their ideal play, govern the genesis of worldly things? In short, following Deleuze, two requirements must be met: divergences must be 'affirmed' as divergences, and the persons who are 'common' to these divergences must always be considered as 'produced forms', brought about only by the play of converging and diverging events (Deleuze 1990a: 113, 116, 172). Indeed, these two requirements are interrelated, for if persons are always derived from the play of events, there can be no original point of view from which it can be said that divergent worlds are reducible to the same world which is in principle identifiable. And conversely, if incompossible worlds are affirmed as incompossible, then persons, unable finally to resolve divergences, remain forever 'open' to further (re-)determinations within the above analysed structure of 'triangulation'.

With regard to the first requirement of affirming divergences, Deleuze writes that 'Leibniz did not attain the free character of this play [of singularities-events], since he neither wanted nor knew how to breathe enough chance into it, or to make of divergence an object of affirmation as such' (Deleuze 1990a: 113–14). What, then, does it mean to affirm divergences? Deleuze expands upon this idea in the 'Twenty-Fourth Series of the Communication of Events', immediately after his heralding of Leibniz as the 'first' (though obviously not the last) 'important theoretician of the event' (171). Here, Deleuze argues that to affirm divergences means that different 'things' must be affirmed through difference rather than through identity. In other words, instead of a 'form of identity' determining things in their differences, it must be difference itself which relates things together in so far as they are different (172–3). What this implies is that, instead of a certain number of predicates being excluded from a thing in so far as this would contradict the form of identity guaranteed by the existence of God (maximally compossible world), each 'thing' must be open to the infinity of predicates through which it passes (174). Or to put it another way, as Deleuze does somewhat poetically, we must speak of the communication of series of singularities-events, no longer with reference to a world (cosmos), but
within a ‘chaosmos’ (chaos-cosmos) (174). What then causes events to communicate within this ‘affirmative synthetic disjunction’ is ‘the erection of a paradoxical instance… which traverses the divergent series as divergent and causes them to resonate’ (174). But in fact, we have shown that this paradoxical instance is nothing other than an object = \(x\) or ‘person’ common to incompossible worlds. It now follows that if we are to affirm divergences as such, no person can be thought to be reducible to an already given instance, identical with itself. This is what Deleuze means when he writes that, in affirming divergences, ‘the ideational centre of convergence [i.e., the ‘person = \(x\)’] is by nature perpetually decentred, it serves only to affirm divergence’ (174–5).

This leads us to our second point: that of understanding this paradoxical instance—this person—as always produced and never as originary. Indeed, Deleuze writes that, in ‘truth, the person is Ulysses, no one [elle n’est personne] properly speaking, but a produced form, derived from this impersonal transcendental field’ (Deleuze 1990a: 116). Deleuze is here playing on the French homonym personne, which may be either a noun meaning ‘person’ or pronoun signifying ‘nobody’. But there is also a deeper, philosophical transformation at stake. Indeed, we have seen how the person is determined or identified as such (with respect to their beliefs, behaviours, etc.) within a triangular structure involving another person and an object of experience, and such that each ‘point’ of the triangle must be determined only in relation to the other two. Within such a structure, therefore, there is no unproduced ‘point of view’: every point of view could only be a ‘result’ of triangulation. If, however, there are no unproduced points of view, then there is no guarantee that perceived divergences could be reduced to a convergence, from which it also follows that persons remain ‘open’ to further determinations. In this sense, the person is never an underlying substance but is itself an event, produced entirely by syntheses of singularities-events within processes of triangulation. Deleuze confirms this productive relation of triangulation in the ‘Twenty-Fifth Series of Univocity’ when he writes that it is necessary for the individual to grasp himself as an event; and that he also grasp the event actualized within him as another individual grafted onto him. In this case, he would not understand, want, or represent this event without also understanding and wanting all other events as individuals, and without representing all other individuals as events… [T]he individual, born of what comes to pass, affirm[s] his distance [i.e., difference] with respect to every other event. As the individual affirms the distance, he follows and joins it, passing through all the other individuals implied by the other events, and
extracts from it a unique Event which is once again himself. (Deleuze 1990a: 178; translation modified)

Or again, more poetically, in the ‘Twenty-Fourth Series of the Communication of Events’:

Leibniz . . . subjected the points of view to exclusive rules such that each opened itself onto the others only insofar as they converged; the points of view on the same town . . . [O]n the contrary, the point of view is opened onto a divergence which it affirms: another town corresponds to each point of view, each point of view is another town, the towns are linked only by their distance and resonate only through the divergence of their series, their houses and their streets. There is always another town within the town . . . [D]ivergence is no longer a principle of exclusion, and disjunction no longer a means of separation. Incompossibility is now a means of communication. (Deleuze 1990a: 173–4)

But now a final question arises: if, for Deleuze, persons are always produced – if, in other words, there is no uncreated creator – what brings about the convergence of singularities-events which determine worldly individuals in the first place? Deleuze does not address this point directly, even though he continues to maintain that ‘[i]ndividuals are infinite analytic propositions’ even after affirming that the person is ‘nobody’ (Deleuze 1990a: 118). So how must the individual and its analytic predicates of existence now be understood, in the absence of God’s divine ordering of them? It appears that Deleuze wants to argue, relatively uncontroversially, that the individual concepts which make up a determined world must, quite simply, be consistent with one another. In other words, if something is an individual in a given world, its concept must be consistent with those of the other individuals in that world. Indeed, this is only another way of saying that the world in question, if it is to be a world, must be law-like. Therefore, in so far as it is necessary for the definition of worldly individuals as such, the notion of consistency – or rather, of convergence – will be an integral part of the Deleuzian system. Thus, even if worldly consistency is no longer grounded in a divine act as it is for Leibniz, this convergence will still be understood as the ‘analytic prolongation’ of singular events over series of ordinary events, up to the neighbourhood of another singularity-event; and this convergence of series of events will still be ontologically prior to the way in which determined worldly individuals will be said to ‘express’ this continuum or world-series in their variably distinct and obscure ‘concurrent requisites’.
Now, if consistency or convergence is a necessary requirement for the
determination of a world and the individuals which express it in law-
like ways, how must we understand the further idea, examined above,
that individuals are ultimately determined by relations between persons
who are common to divergent worlds? First of all, it has been said that
divergent worlds appear as a consequence of the fact that persons are,
like any worldly thing, ‘finite with respect to their clear expression’,
that is, with respect to the ‘corporeal zone of expression’ or perceptual
apparatus in terms of which they express their relations with the world
(Deleuze 1990a: 118). And again, that knowing subjects are ‘finite’ in
this way is a relatively uncontroversial claim. Nevertheless, as has also
been seen, persons transcend their immediate worldly determinations
in so far as they bring about syntheses of divergent worlds within
a triangular structure simultaneously implicating other persons and a
world of determined individuals corresponding to the beliefs of these
persons. As Deleuze puts it, persons are grounded on individuals and,
conversely, individuals are grounded by the person (118). With respect
to these syntheses, then, the person as a knowing subject will be said
to have been synthetically defined in relation to the divergent worlds.
On the other hand, in accordance with the requirement noted above,
the world of individuals synthesised out of the incompossible worlds
will still be said to have resulted from a continuum of converging
singularities-events; but now, this convergence must be considered to
have been generated by the same synthesis of incompossible worlds
which defined the knowing subject. In other words, even though
convergence is a necessary relation with respect to determined worlds
and worldly individuals, this must here be seen to be generated by
prior divergences and their ‘disjunctive syntheses’ in relation to persons.
So it is in this sense that, as was said earlier, the law-like ‘world’ of
events—which has priority over determined, worldly individuals—is not
something external to the conditions of knowledge. The world and,
by consequence, its individuals and persons, are rather constituted, as
events, by these conditions. In other words, Deleuze’s ontology of events,
whereby events are ontologically prior to substances ‘all the way down’,
is a transcendental ontology.

III. Conclusion
We have thus seen how Deleuze initially follows Leibniz in arguing
that the determination of individuals and persons—or ‘monads’ in
the Leibnizian vocabulary—presupposes relations of convergence and
divergence between singularities-events. But we have also seen how Leibniz was not able to reach the point of affirming the ontological priority of events over substances ‘all the way down’, since, for this latter, relations between events are ultimately determined with reference to an already given, divine substance. Leibniz, let us recall, only made a negative use of divergence, in so far as his God brings into existence a single, maximally compossible world, and excludes from existence anything incompossible with this world. Deleuze, however, extending certain Leibnizian concepts such as the ‘ambiguous sign’, argues that divergence must rather be affirmed as such. This affirmation of divergence effectively consists of the erection of a paradoxical instance – the object = x or person understood as ‘nobody’ – which causes divergent series of events to communicate through their differences. Within a virtual ‘triangular’ structure implicating an open series of such personnes, as well as a chaos-cosmos of incompossible worlds, disjunctive syntheses are carried out which will generate the determined individuals and determined persons populating the actual world. The world is thus an event, which is to say that disjunctive syntheses or processes of triangulation are the ‘evental-determinations’ of the events characterising worldly individuals and persons in general.

The aim of this present study, however, has not only been to clarify Deleuze’s understanding of the ontologically primitive event such as this is outlined in The Logic of Sense’s ‘Sixteenth Series of the Static Ontological Genesis’. It has also been to bring into focus the importance of Leibniz for Deleuze as a philosophical source. As noted above, the relation between these two philosophers has been addressed only sparingly in the secondary literature. It is thus hoped that we have been able to contribute in some small way to rectifying this neglect.24

Notes
1. There are only a few works devoted to Deleuze’s philosophical relation to Leibniz, and all of these concern Deleuze’s 1988 work, The Fold. See: Badiou 1989, Frémont 1991, Baker 1995, During 2003, Robinson 2003, and McDonnell and van Tuinen 2010. Rölli (2009) shows the way in which Deleuze draws on Leibniz in order to develop a ‘transcendental psychology of perception’. In relation to Deleuze’s work more generally, Smith (2007) indicates a number of points of intersection between Deleuze and Leibniz, Williams (2003 and 2008) has also highlighted Leibniz’s influence on Deleuze in his major early works, Difference and Repetition and The Logic of Sense.
2. See, for example, May 2005 and Hardt 1993.
3. See, for example, Deleuze 1990b: 11: ‘What interested me most in Spinoza wasn’t his Substance, but the composition of finite modes. I consider this one of the most original aspects of my book. That is: the hope of making substance
turn on finite modes, or at least of seeing in substance a *plane of immanence* in which finite modes operate, already appears in this book. What I needed was both (1) the expressive character of particular individuals, and (2) an immanence of being. Leibniz, in a way, goes still further than Spinoza on the first point. But on the second, Spinoza stands alone. One finds it only in him. This is why I consider myself a Spinozist, rather than a Leibnizian, although I owe a lot to Leibniz.’

4. Although Deleuze here seems to revise his argument from *The Logic of Sense* that Leibniz was the *first* important theoretician of the event, it should be noted that the above citation from *The Logic of Sense* occurs immediately after Deleuze’s critique of the Stoics in this text, which shows how they tried but ultimately *failed* to think the ‘ideal play of events’.


6. On the concepts of ‘compossibility’ and ‘incompossibility’, see Leibniz 1969a: 661–662; and 1996: III, vi, §12. This concept of compossibility is fundamental to all of Leibniz’s most important works, even if it is not always mentioned by name. See, for example, Leibniz 1973a: §56; 1973b: §10; 1989a: §9 and §14; and 1951: §201.

7. See Leibniz 1948: 325: ‘The compossible is that which, with another, does not imply a contradiction’ (cited in Mates 1986: 75, n.36).

8. Leibniz’s argument that the existence of God necessarily follows from his concept is a recasting of the ‘Ontological Argument’ in relation to the principle of contradiction. In short, Leibniz supplements the argument that if God is a being having all perfections, and if existence is a perfection, then God exists by definition, by showing that the idea of a being having all conceivable perfections is not contradictory. God is thus a necessary, existing being and this can be known *a priori* or by reason alone. See Leibniz 1973a: §41 and §43; and 1989c: 237–8.

9. On Leibniz’s ‘principle of the identity of indiscernibles’, which accounts for the uniqueness of the monads, see: Leibniz 1989a: §9; and 1989d: 32. See also Leibniz 1989e: 328: ‘To suppose two things indiscernible is to suppose the same thing under two names.’

10. Another way of putting this is to say that each monad has a ‘complete individual concept’ which is capable of distinguishing it from every other such monad, and in which God is able to read, from a particular ‘point of view’, not only everything that happens to it, but also everything that happens in the entire universe. See Leibniz 1989a: §8 and §14.

11. On the ‘ontological proof’ of God’s existence, see note 8, above.

12. See on this Duffy 2010: 89–111.

13. ‘Distinctly’ here means: more economically, more simply, with greater explanatory force relative to a differentiated system of concepts, and so on. Thus, to take one of Leibniz’s examples (see Leibniz 1973d: 63–4), we cannot explain the motion of the ship in terms of it being caused by its wake, for, given the connection between our concepts of these individuals (which are themselves bound up with our more general concepts of water, displacement, ships, wind propulsion, and so on), this would lead us to having a very confused or indeed obscure representation of what is going on. On these terms, see also Leibniz 1989l.

14. See Leibniz 1989g: 70: the ‘notion of an individual includes considered as possible what, in fact, is true, that is, considerations related to the existence of things and to time’.

15. See, for example, Leibniz 1989a: §3; 1951: §§414–16.

17. See also on this Bouquiaux 2006: 34–5, and Duffy 2010: 89–111.
20. Leibniz uses these terms as synonyms in ‘Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas’ (Leibniz 1989). The ‘categories’ mentioned in this citation, on the other hand, refer to the a priori concepts which define the ‘unity of apperception’ in Kant, in so far as these allow diverse appearances to be brought together in a law-like manner for the knowing subject. However, we shall not here deal with Deleuze’s critique of Kant, except to say that Kant treats the knowing subject as an origin rather than as a produced form in accordance with the ontological priority of events over substances (see Deleuze 1990a: 97–8, 105).
21. See, on this, Frémont’s work on Leibniz’s Theodicy (2003: 86). She argues that the story of Sextus Tarquin is designed to illustrate how we must understand—that is, by comparing, for example, the effects which ensue from differently determined Sextuses—how historical evils are not divergences from, but rather the conditions of, the best of all possible worlds. It follows from such a ‘juridical proof’ that God must be all good, all wise, all powerful, etc. See also on this Bowden 2006: 110–11.
22. See note 8, above.
23. It is clear from the context here that for ‘individual’, in this citation, we should read either ‘person’ or ‘individual or person’, but only in so far as, by ‘person’, we understand ‘nobody’: a ‘produced form’. The idea of grasping the event being actualised within me as another individual or person grafted onto me is no doubt a means of recalling this passage from the ‘Sixteenth Series’: ‘In truth, the person is Ulysses, no one [elle n’est personne] properly speaking, but a produced form … And the individual is always anyone [i.e., any individual, quelconque], born, like Eve from Adam’s rib, from a singularity prolonged [prolongée] over a line of ordinary points and starts from the pre-individual transcendental field’ (Deleuze 1990a: 116; emphasis added and translation modified).
24. I would like to thank Paul Patton, Simon Duffy and an anonymous reviewer for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this article.

References


