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PERSPECTIVES ON THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY WORLD  
OF VISCOUNTESS ANNE CONWAY

This issue of The Guilford Review is based on a Symposium, "The Seventeenth Century World of Anne Conway," which was held at Guilford College, November 7, 1984. That symposium was part of a larger series, CONCEPTION/RECONCEPTION: EXPLORING MEANINGS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY which was sponsored by Women's Studies and Faculty Development and was partially funded by a grant from the North Carolina Humanities Committee.

All of the papers in this issue were presented, in part, at the symposium. They have been edited so that repetitive information has been deleted. Thus, a reader interested in the biographical sketch of Anne Conway's life, needs to read the first two papers. The other papers suggest different influences either directly on Anne Conway or significant movements or pockets of intellectual and spiritual fervor which indirectly influenced Anne Conway as part of the turmoil of the 17th Century in England.

Permission to reprint "Anne Conway: Quaker and Philosopher" by Carolyn Merchant has been granted by the Journal of the History of Philosophy where most of it appeared as "The Vitalism of Anne Conway: Its Impact on Leibniz's Concept of the Monad" in the July 1979 issue and by The Society for the History of Alchemy and Chemistry which published this article in the November 1979 issue of Ambix.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY WORLD  
OF VISCOUNTESS ANNE CONWAY

Issue Editors: Carol Stoneburner, O. Theodor Benfey, Robert Kraus

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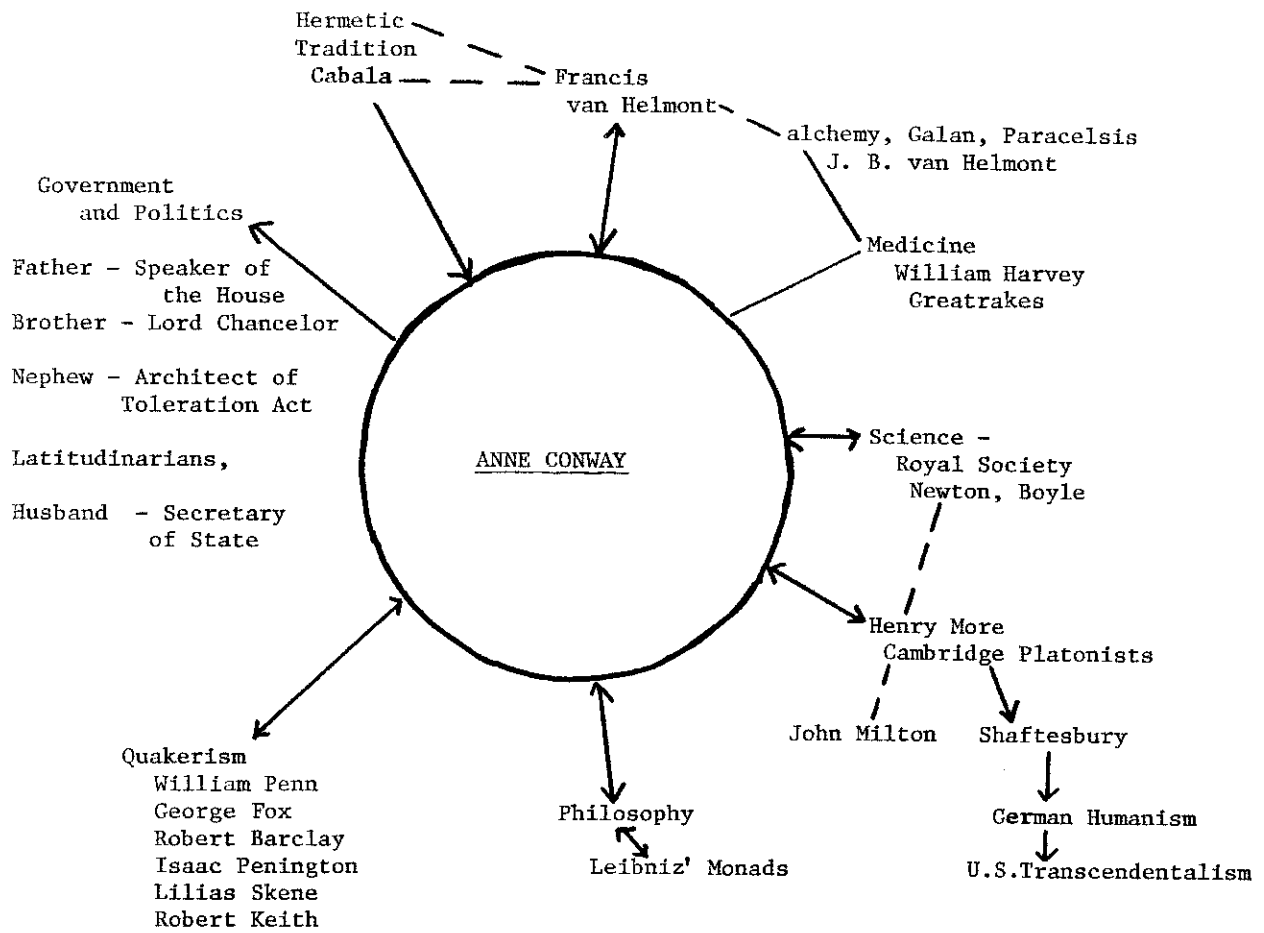


Chart drawn by O. Theodor Benfey

Anne Conway: Quaker and Philosopher  
by Carolyn Merchant

For those with no prior introduction to Anne Finch Conway, a few words concerning her background are in order before exploring her philosophy and its influence. Anne Conway was a seventeenth century philosopher whose ideas were praised and respected in her own day and who through scholarly error, has only recently begun to receive proper recognition for her important contributions to the philosophy of her period.

The youngest child of Heneage Finch, she was a member of the English nobility and upon her marriage to Edward Conway, she became a Viscountess. As a young girl, Anne was an avid reader of philosophy, literature, the classics, mathematics and astronomy. Her interest in philosophy was greatly inspired by her introduction to Henry More, who was the teacher of her brother, John Finch and a respected professor at Christ College in Cambridge. Through this continued contact, Anne Conway became one of More's most brilliant and devoted pupils. Anne was an intelligent, vital conversationalist and had a charming personality. Her home at Ragley Hall in Warwickshire became an intellectual center which entertained some of the most exciting minds of her century including Henry More, Ralph Cudworth, Joseph Glanvill, Benjamin Whichcote and Francis Mercury Van Helmont, son of the renowned Jean Baptiste Van Helmont.<sup>1</sup>

The younger Van Helmont made her acquaintance due to her being afflicted by a life long bane. This bane came in the form of severe headaches which began at age 14 and increased in frequency and severity throughout her life. Her headaches became a famous medical case. She was tormented by them and even journeyed to France at one point to have her skull opened up to relieve the pressure. Fortunately, circumstances prevented the operation from ever taking place. Anne Conway was treated by many of Europe's most noted physicians including William Harvey, the noted healer Vanlentine Greatrakes and Van Helmont. All failed.

It was quite fortuitous that Francis Mercury Van Helmont, the wandering "scholar gypsy," was introduced to Anne Conway in 1670. He had come to England in order to deliver to Henry More several letters from Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia and to discuss with him their mutual interest in the Cabala, an esoteric occult and mystical tradition stemming from the Middle Ages. He had only planned to remain in England one month, but through the joint efforts of More and Viscount Edward Conway he was finally persuaded to travel to Ragley to visit the learned Lady Anne Conway, in order to attempt a cure of her migraine headaches.<sup>2</sup>

Van Helmont's intended month in England turned into eight years during which he remained with Lady Conway, unsuccessful in treating her terrible headaches, but introducing stimulating new intellectual avenues for her mind. Henry More likewise spent much time there, experimenting with Van Helmont in the laboratory which the wandering alchemist had set up, and discussing Hebrew and cabalistic texts. Whenever Lady Conway was too ill to do so herself, Van

Helmont read to her from a variety of books and pamphlets and reported on the activities of a group of Quakers meeting near Ragley. Under his influence, she began studying the texts of Quakers, Behmenists, Seekers, and Familists--religious sects that had flourished during the period of the Civil War.

In spite of her illness, Anne Conway carried on an active intellectual life. Her only book, The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy, continued the Cambridge school's interest in spiritualism, Platonism, and cabalism. Truer to the Platonic tradition than the writings of either of her colleagues, More or Cudworth, it was far more sweeping in its rejection of Cartesianism and embracement of vitalism.

Anne Conway developed a vitalistic philosophy which in many ways anticipated the philosophy of Leibniz. Her treatise was thought by Marjorie Nicolson to have been written early in the 1670's, perhaps in 1672 or 1673. But, in a new edition recently published by Peter Loftson, its writing is placed somewhat later in her life, closer to her death, around 1677 and during her association with Van Helmont.<sup>3</sup> Both Nicolson and Loftson agree that her work bears the strong influence of Van Helmont and the Cabala. Her original edition, written in English, seems to have been lost very early on. The earliest edition we have is a Latin translation, edited and published in Holland in 1690 by Van Helmont in a volume containing several other works by him. It was republished and retranslated back to English in 1692. This edition, mentioned that it had been written by a certain English Countess, "a woman learned beyond her sex, being very well skilled in the Latin and Greek tongues and exceedingly well-versed in all kinds of philosophy."<sup>4</sup>

Because her name was withheld from the original Latin title page--the custom regarding female authors in that period--the book was attributed by modern scholars to its editor, Van Helmont. In 1853, the German historian of philosophy, Heinrich Ritter, erroneously based his analysis of the younger Van Helmont's philosophy almost entirely on Conway's book. His discussion became the basis for historian Ludwig Stein's theory (1890) that Van Helmont had transmitted to Leibniz the most fundamental term in his whole philosophy--the monad, Leibniz's infinitesimal vital active force.<sup>5</sup> Actually, Van Helmont did use the term, but the book containing his discussion of it was apparently unknown to Ritter. Thus the major textual evidence for attributing Leibniz's appropriation of the term monad to Van Helmont, rather than including Anne Conway, was due to inaccurate scholarship. The withholding of Conway's name, as a woman writer, from the Latin edition of her book excluded from recognition her important role in the development of Leibniz's thought. Later scholarship has rightfully honored Anne Conway as author.

More than any other contemporary philosopher, Loftson has taken Anne Conway seriously as a philosopher in the essentialist tradition. In his recent edition which contains both the first published Latin treatise and the English re-translation, Loftson has included an introduction to her life and work. He has also spent much time analyzing the philosophical content of her work chapter by chapter providing an explication and summary of each section.

For me, the importance of Conway's ideas and work lies in the fact that she was a vitalist in direct contrast to the mechanistic philosophies which treat matter as dead and asserts that change comes from external forces acting upon matter. She was a critic of Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza and others espousing mechanical philosophies. She saw herself as a vitalist and held that spirit and matter are one and the same substance. Body is essentially spiritual and change and motion come from within.

The vitalists affirmed the life of all things through a reduction of Cartesian dualism to the monistic unity of matter and spirit. Among the

proponents of a vitalist philosophy were Francis Glisson, Jean Baptiste Van Helmont and his son, Francis Mercury Van Helmont, Lady Anne Conway, and Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz.

As a philosophy of nature, vitalism in its monistic form was inherently antiexploitative. Its emphasis on the life of all things as gradations of soul, its lack of separate distinction between matter and spirit, its principle of an immanent activity permeating nature, and its reverence for the nurturing power of the earth endowed it with an ethic of the inherent worth of everything alive. Contained within the conceptual structure of vitalism was a normative constraint. Perhaps it is not an accident to find among its advocates a woman philosopher, Anne Conway, and a wandering scholar-healer, France Mercury Van Helmont both of whom turned to Quakerism as a moral and religious alternative.

More and Conway discussed the philosophy of Jacob Boehme and the Familists in their letters during the years 1667-1670. More was skeptical of the neglect of the power of reason by the Behmenists and Familists, and deplored their tendency toward enthusiasm, but Anne Conway was sympathetic. Because the Quakers were "quiet people," she employed them as servants and also lent her home for their meetings. She made the acquaintance of Quaker leaders--George Fox, George Keith, Isaac Pennington, and Charles Lloyd--and corresponded with William Penn. To the despair of More, who identified the Quakers with Ranters, Seekers, Familists, and other enthusiasts of the Civil War years, both she and Van Helmont became Quakers--Van Helmont in the spring of 1676 and Conway at least by 1677.

The Quakers, far more than the other Protestant sects, gave both women and men full equality. Quakerism, growing out of discontent with Puritanism, began to spread in southern and eastern England around 1655, carried not only by men but also women preachers, such as Anne Blaykling, Mary Fisher, Dorothy Waugh, Jane Waugh, and Mary Pennington. Women, some of whom left their families behind, became traveling preachers, bearing the Quaker message not only all over England but as far as the Ottoman Empire. Under the leadership of George Fox, separate meeting for business were established, and administered and attended solely by women throughout England.<sup>6</sup>

The Quakers emphasized the inward presence of God, the living Christ within each individual, and the vitality of the living word, as opposed to the deadness of tradition and inertness of the written word. They distinguished between the historical figure of Christ, who had died, and the voice of the living, vital Christ within.

Van Helmont, George Keith, and Anne Conway saw much in common between the Cabala and the Quaker doctrines of the "inner light," "Christ within," and the Christian trinity. The three collaborated over a four-year period on a treatise entitled the "Two Hundred Queries...Concerning the Doctrine of the Revolution of Humane Souls" (1684). In subsequent years, this book became the bone of contention between the Quakers and Keith and Van Helmont, because the latter two emphasized the transmigration of human souls and disputed the reality of the historical figure of Christ.<sup>7</sup>

Interest in cabalistic literature was keen among the members of the Cambridge school, and both More and Cudworth had at times viewed Descartes as the restorer of the true philosophy of Moses. One of More's works least appreciated by modern scholars, his Conjectura Cabbalistica (1653), written before he had read the Zohar and admitted to be the product of his own imagination, was nevertheless an important influence on John Milton. More subsequently repudiated the Cabala in a treatise in the Kabbalah Denudata, entitled "The Fundamentals of Philosophy." But the Cabala was an important source of validation to those philosophers who wished to restore life and spirit to the dead world



of the mechanists. Cudworth, More, and Conway all used it to argue that the ancient wisdom that perceived a total unity and vitality in the universe was the true knowledge, whereas the dead mechanical world of the moderns was a distortion emphasizing only the atomistic aspect of old gnosis.

Anne Conway dies in 1679 while her husband was away on business to the north. In order to preserve the body till her husband could return and see his wife one last time, Van Helmont used the rather bizarre method of keeping her body in a bath of wine. Her husband arrived back home some two months later. Her tombstone was simple and inscribed merely with "Quaker Lady." After her death, Van Helmont left for the continent where he continued to carry her writings and ideas with him for years to come.

In March 1696, Van Helmont arrived in Hanover, where he remained for several months, meeting with Leibniz each morning at nine for philosophical discussion. According to Leibniz, Van Helmont took the desk, while Leibniz became the pupil, interrupting frequently to ask for greater clarification. Van Helmont recounted to Leibniz the history of the "extraordinary woman," the Countess of "Kennaway," and his own relationship with Henry More and John Locke. From him, Leibniz learned of Anne Conway's metaphysics and her studies of the works of Plato, Plotinus, and the Cabala.<sup>9</sup> In a 1697 letter to English divine Thomas Burnet (1635-1715), Leibniz, having read her book, went so far as to state:

My philosophical views approach somewhat closely those of the late Countess of Conway, and hold a middle position between Plato and Democritus, because I hold that all things take place mechanically as Democritus and Descartes contend against the views of Henry More and his followers, and hold too, nevertheless, that everything takes place according to a living principle and according to final causes--all things are full of life and consciousness, contrary to the views of the Atomists.<sup>10</sup>

Leibniz spoke subsequently with praise and approval of both Lady Anne Conway and Van Helmont, although the latter he often found puzzling and quixotic. In the New Essays Concerning Human Understanding, begun in 1697 and published posthumously in 1765, Leibniz referred to both as explicating the doctrine of vitalism better than their Renaissance predecessors, writing that he saw:

. . . how it is necessary to explain rationally those who have lodged life and perception in all things, as Cardan, Campanella, and better than they, the late Countess of Connaway, a Platonist, and our friend, with late M. Francois Mercure Van Helmont (although elsewhere bristling with unintelligible paradoxes), with his friend the late Mr. Henry More.<sup>11</sup>

The elements of Conway's system were a significant influence in the important period of Leibniz's thought, leading up to the writing of his "Monadology" (1714).

A concern which dominated much of seventeenth century philosophy was the concept of substance. Different philosophers defined the term "substance" in

very different ways. For instance, Descartes held that there were two fundamentally distinct substances underlying all reality: mind and matter. To him, these two substances were separate and unrelated to each other in a most absolute way. Hobbes, on the other hand, took a more purely materialist position and declared there to be only one substance, namely matter. But for Conway and Leibniz substance was better understood as spiritual in nature, something living and capable of movement.

Anne Conway's vitalism was based on the idea of the unity of spirit and matter and was an influential reaction against the ideas of the mechanists. She was well versed in and sharply critical of the ideas of her adversaries, Descartes, Hobbes, and the Dutch philosopher Benedictus Spinoza (1632-1677), as well as her teachers and friends, More and Cudworth. Ritter, mistaking the work of Conway for that of Van Helmont, saw the author of the Principles as carrying out a wide-ranging battle against the Cartesian philosophy of dualism and against the basis of mechanical physics in general.<sup>12</sup> Whereas the Cartesians and the Cambridge Platonists, More and Cudworth, were dualists, Anne Conway was a monist. In her philosophy, there was no essential difference between spirit and body and, moreover, the two were interconvertible. She distinguished her views sharply from those of Descartes and also from More and Cudworth on these points. Body was condensed spirit and spirit was subtle, volatile body. Body and spirit were not contrary entities, the first impenetrable and divisible, the other penetrable and indivisible, as More had held. Matter was not dead, "stupid," and devoid of life, as Descartes and the Cambridge Platonists had thought. For Lady Conway, an intimate bond and organic unity existed between the two. Body and soul were of the same substance and nature, but soul was more excellent in such respects as swiftness, penetrability, and life.<sup>13</sup>

Matter and spirit were united as two different aspects of the same substance. Division into parts, ordinarily attributed to bodies, was equally an attribute of spirit. Just as bodies were composed of lesser bodies, the human spirit was composed of several spirits under one governing spirit. Conversely, motion and figure, which were supposed to be attributes of extended matter, applied equally to spirit, for spirit was even more movable and figurable than body.<sup>14</sup>

Her break from Descartes and the other Cambridge Platonists was sharpest on the issue of dualism. She insisted that her philosophy was not Cartesianism in a new form, as she perceived that of her friends to have been, but fundamentally anti-Cartesian:

For first, as touching the Cartesian Philosophy, this says that everybody is a mere dead mass, not only void of all kind of life and sense, but utterly incapable thereof to all eternity; this grand error also is to be imputed to all those who affirm body and spirit to be contrary things, and inconvertible one into another, so as to deny a body all life and sense.<sup>15</sup>

Body and spirit were interconvertible because they were of the same substance and differed only as to mode. The distinctions were made between the attributes of matter as impenetrable and extended, and spirit as penetrable and unextended, could not be assigned respectively to two separate substances. Body was simply the grosser part of a thing and spirit the subtler. The penetration of spirits within a body caused it to swell and puff up, an

alteration that might or might not be visible to the senses. Just as spirit and body could interpenetrate, so a less gross body or spirit could penetrate a more gross one. Penetrability like other properties of objects (heat, weight, and solidity), was relative. The dualists had "not yet proved that body and spirit are distinct substances."<sup>16</sup>

Like other organicists of the period, Conway based her system of creation not on the machine but on the great, hierarchical chain of being, modified to incorporate an evolution or transmutation to higher forms, based on the acquisition of goodness and perfection. Conway denied that any created essences could reach God's essence, which was infinitely perfect, but within the creation there was an ascension up the scale of being. Dust and sand were capable of successive transmutation to stones, earth, grass, sheep, horses, humans, and the noblest spirits, so that after a long period of time they could achieve the perfections common to the highest creatures; that is, "feeling, sense, and knowledge, love, joy, and fruition, and all kind of power and virtue."<sup>17</sup>

Creation was like a ladder whose steps were species placed in finite, rather than infinite, distances from one another. Hence,

. . . stones are changed into metals, and one metal into another, but lest some should say these are only naked bodies and have no spirit, we shall observe the same not only in vegetables, but also in animals, like as barley and wheat are convertible the one into the other, and are in very deed often so changed. . . . And in animals worms are changed into flies and beasts, and fishes that feed on beasts, and fishes of a different kind do change them into their own nature, and species.<sup>18</sup>

This, she believed, was consistent with the biblical account that the waters brought forth birds and fishes and the earth, beasts and creeping things at the command of the Creator.

The transmutation of spirits into new bodies after death was effected by the soul's plastic nature, a concept obtained from More and Cudworth, hypothesizing a force capable of forming matter into new shapes:

And when the said brutish spirit returns again into some body, and has now dominion over that body, so that its plastic faculty has the liberty of forming a body, after its own idea and inclination (which before in the humane body, it had not); it necessarily follows, that the body, which this vital spirit forms, will be brutal, and not humane. . . . Because its plastic faculty is governed of its imagination, which it doth most strongly imagine to itself, or conceive its own proper image; which therefore the external body is necessarily forced to assume.<sup>19</sup>

Leibniz, differing from Conway and Van Helmont on this point, not only argued against transmigration or metempsychosis in animals, but also against the idea of plastic natures. Plastic natures could not move, alter, or change

the direction of a body, all motion being consonant with the system of pre-established harmony. In a letter of 1710, he called plastic natures an outmoded theory.<sup>20</sup>

Anne Conway radically opposed Hobbes and Spinoza, both of whom had reduced nature to a monistic materialism that denied any distinction between God and his creation. Like Conway, they accepted the interconvertibility of all things, but their materialism admitted no distinction between lower and higher forms and saw God as interconvertible with corporeal species.<sup>21</sup>

In much of her discussion of the essential spiritual vitality of the whole world, Anne Conway's thought converged with that of Leibniz, and she was for this reason held in high esteem by him. Like Leibniz, who believed that in each portion of matter here was a whole world of creatures each one containing within it also an entire world, Anne Conway wrote that "in every creature, whether the same be a spirit or a body, there is an infinity of creatures, each whereof contains an infinity, and again each of these, and so ad infinitum."<sup>22</sup>

Like Leibniz, who wrote that there was nothing dead or fallow in the universe, Conway asked, "How can it be, that any dead thing should proceed from him or be created by him, such as is mere body or matter. . . It is truly said on one that God made not death, and it is true, that he made no dead thing: For how can a dead thing depend of him who is life and charity?" Death was not annihilation, but "a change from one kind of and degree of life to another." Dead body could not receive goodness nor perfect itself in any way; changes in motion or shape would not help it to attain life or improve itself intrinsically. This idea was echoed in Leibniz's statement that "Every possible thing has the right to aspire to existence in proportion to the amount of perfection it contains in germ."<sup>23</sup>

Like Leibniz, who stressed the interconnectedness of all spirits (or minds) in a "kind of fellowship with God," so that the totality composed the City of God, Lady Conway based her system on the interdependence of all creatures under God in a "certain society or fellowship. . . whereby they mutually subsist one by another, so that one cannot live without another." Each creature had a "central or governing spirit" having dominion over the other spirits which composed it. "The unity of spirits that compose or make up this center or governing spirit, is more firm and tenacious than that of all the other spirits; which are, as it were, the angels or ministering spirits of their prince or captain." Akin to this was Leibniz's dominant monad unifying the simple monads.<sup>24</sup>

But unlike Leibniz, who held to a system of preestablished harmony to solve the problem of the dualism between the body and the spirit, and unlike More and Cudworth, who used plastic natures to unify the two worlds, Conway followed the Kabbalah Denudata and the ancient system of the Hebrews. She argued that the soul was of one nature and substance with the body, "although it is many degrees more excellent in regard of life and spirituality, as also in swiftness of motion, and penetrability, and divers other perfections." Between the two extremes of gross and subtle bodies were "middle spirits," which either joined body and soul or, if absent, dissolved its unity. Similarly, Jesus Christ functioned as a middle nature or medium uniting the soul of man to God.<sup>25</sup>

Yet Anne Conway's philosophy ultimately did not go beyond the limits of the categories of substance philosophy within which she worked. Her monistic resolution of the mind-body problem, although more parsimonious than the dualism of Descartes, was simply a reduction of all of reality to the idealist category of spirit. By denying the validity of body as an explanatory category, her philosophical framework was unable to provide a satisfactory descrip-


tion of empirical phenomena. Unlike Leibniz, whose system of preestablished harmony and "well-founded Phenomena" obeying mechanical laws also fell short of a solution, she did not even address herself to the issue of bodies and their interactions.

Furthermore her assumption of the transmigration of souls, and the concepts of "middle natures," plastic natures, and vital virtues that composed the core of her vitalism were based neither on rigid logical consistency nor on firm empirical evidence, a problem that continued to weaken the case for vitalists and holists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as German biologist Hans Driesch, French philosopher Henri Bergson, and South African statesman Jan Christiaan Smutts. Like other protagonists in the mechanist-vitalist debates that have continued ever since the rise of mechanism, her embracement of vitalism was based on metatheoretical commitments. Her philosophy falls within a post-Cartesian scientific tradition that operates on the assumption that the living and nonliving constitute two fundamental categories of reality. Her commitment to spirit as the solution to the dualistic dilemma derived not only from the logic of philosophical alternatives, but from psychological needs connected to her physical health and her adoption of Quakerism as a spiritual refuge friendly to women.<sup>26</sup>

Despite its philosophical weaknesses, vitalism represented an important reaction to Cartesian mechanism and dualism. At a time when mechanism was turning all of nature into something dead, inanimate and void of sensation thereby creating a subtle justification for the domination and control of nature, the vitalists along with the Cambridge Platonists raised voices of protest. They perceived the dangers in the reduction of matter to dead, inert atoms the motion of which stemmed from externally imposed forces rather than from the immanent spontaneity of vital principles. The older organic view of nature, however, was dying along with an inherent value system that paid recognition to the life and worth of all things, the concept of cyclical renewal, and the binding of nature into a close-knit holistic unity. In the light of our current ecological crisis, which stems in part from the loss of this organic value system, we might regret that the mechanists did not take their vitalistic critics more seriously.

The almost total neglect by historians of philosophy of the work of Anne Conway raises a question about a cluster of women who studied and contributed to the philosophy, science, and educational literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Do they not also deserve more detailed study and evaluation than has been accorded them? Besides Anne Conway, other women with great intellectual gifts whom Leibniz took seriously as students of philosophy included Sophie, the Electress of Hanover; her daughter Sophia Charlotte, queen of Prussia after 1701; the latter's ward, Princess Caroline (1683-1737, later queen of Great Britain, in answer to whose questions the entire Leibniz-Clarke correspondence of 1716 was directed; and Lady Damaris Masham (1658-1708), daughter of Ralph Cudworth, who educated her, a friend and student of John Locke, and a theological writer with whom Leibniz carried on an extensive correspondence. One of the most brilliant women of the eighteenth century, Madame Gabrielle Emelie du Chatelet (1706-1749), was a principal expounder of Leibniz's system. An expanding group of educated women began to participate in the philosophical and intellectual life of the period.<sup>27</sup>

By the late seventeenth century, upper-class English women were noticing and reacting to the economic and educational advances men had made, while their own opportunities had been by comparison significantly constricted. They argued that differences in male and female achievement stemmed not from female intellectual inferiority, but from differences in childrearing prac-



tices, educational opportunities, and social position. Hannah Wooley, writing in 1655, Bathsua Makin, writing in 1673, and Mary Astell, writing in 1694, deplored women's lack of education and advocated the study of philosophy, foreign languages, medical care, household accounts, and writing. Their ideal went far beyond the emphasis on morals, Christian virtue, chastity, and the reading of the scriptures that had characterized women's education in the Renaissance.<sup>28</sup>

NOTES

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The following discussion of Anne Conway is reprinted with modifications from Carolyn Merchant. "The Vitalism of Anne Conway: Its Impact on Leibniz's Concept of the Monad." The Journal of the History of Philosophy (July, 1979) by permission of the editor. Portions also appeared in C. Merchant, "The Vitalism of Francis Mercury Van Helmont," Ambix (November, 1979) and C. Merchant, The death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and The Scientific Revolution (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), pp. 254-69.

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7. A. Gottesman [Coudert] "Francis Mercurius Van Helmont," pp. 463, 584-85, 597.
8. Henry More, Conjectura Cabbalistica: or a Conjectural Essay of Interpre-

ting the Mind of Moses, in the Three First Chapters of Genesis, According to a Threefold Cabbala: viz. Literal, Philosophical, Mystical, or, Divinely Moral (first published 1653), in A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings of Dr. Henry More (London, 1712). On this work, see Marjorie Nicolson, "Milton and the Conjectura Cabbalistica," Philological Quarterly 6 (1927): 1-18.

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12. Ritter, vol. 12, pp. 26, 27, 30.

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14. Ibid., pp. 208, 210, 202.

15. Ibid., p. 221.

16. Ibid., pp. 191, 205, 206, 202, 204.

17. Ibid., pp. 224, 225, 285.

18. Ibid., pp. 182-3.

19. Ibid., p. 185.

20. G.W. Leibniz, "Considerations of Vital Principles and Plastic Natures, by the Author of the System of Pre-Established Harmony" (written 1705), Philosophischen Schriften, vol. 6, p. 539; trans. in Leroy E. Loemker, ed. and trans. Philosophical Papers and Letters, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956) vol. 2, p. 954; William B. Hunter, Jr., "The Seventeenth Century Doctrine of Plastic Natures," Harvard Theological Review 43 (1950): 212; G.W. Leibniz, Opera Omnia, ed. Ludovici Dutens (Geneva, 1768), vol. 5, p. 359.

21. Conway, pp. 222, 227.

22. Leibniz, Philosophischen Schriften, vol. 3, p. 217; Leibniz, "The Monadology," in Philosophischen Schriften, vol. 6, pp. 607-23, sec. 66, 67; Conway, p. 160.

23. Leibniz, "The Monadology," secs. 69, 54; Conway, pp. 196, 219, 197-8.

24. Leibniz, "The Monadology," secs. 84-84, 1, 2, 70; Conway, pp. 209, 210.



25. Conway, pp. 214, 168, 216.
26. On the mechanist-vitalist debates, see Hilda Hein, "Mechanism and Vitalism as Theoretical Commitments," The Philosophical Forum 1, no. 1, n.s. (Fall 1968): 185-205; Hilda Hein, "The Endurance of the Mechanism-Vitalism Controversy," The Journal of the History of Biology 5, no. 1 (Spring 1972): 159-88; L.R. Wheeler, Vitalism: Its History and Validity (London: Witherby, 1939).
27. On Princess Caroline of Wales, pupil of Leibniz at Hanover, see Leibniz, "The Controversy Between Leibniz and Clarke," Philosophical Papers, vol. 2, pp. 1095-1169; Leibniz, Philosophischen Schriften vol. 7, pp. 345-440, Leibniz's correspondence with Lady Masham is collected in Leibniz, Philosophischen Schriften, vol. 3, pp. 336-75. On Gabrielle Enelle du Chatelet as an exponent of Leibnizian thought, see Carolyn [Merchant] Iltis, "Madame du Chatelet's Metaphysics and Mechanics," Studies in History and Philosophy of Science (1977): 29-48, and W.H. Barber, "Mme. du Chatelet and Leibnizianism: The Genesis of the Institutions de Physique," in W.H. Barber and others ed., The Age of the Enlightenment: Studies Presented to Theodore Besterman (Edinburgh and London: Oliver & Boyd, 1967), pp. 200-222.
28. Hannah Wooley, The Gentlewomen's Companion (London, 1673: first published, 1655); (Bathsua Makin), An Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen, in Religion, Manners, Arts, and Tongues (London, 1673); Mary Astell, A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest . . . (London, 1694). On seventeenth century feminist ideas concerning women's education, see Hilda Smith, Reason's Disciples: Seventeenth Century Feminists (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), pp. 75-114. On women's learning see Myra Reynolds, The Learned Lady in England, 1650-1760 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920).