

Adam Kadmon: Conway, Leibniz, and the Lurianic kabbalah

Bernardino Orio de Miguel

I

One of the most original 17th century philosophical books and at the same time one of the less known was written by a woman, the viscountess Lady Anne Conway.¹ It was written in English for her personal use between 1672-1677, and was translated into Latin and published incompletely by F. Mercurius Van Helmont in 1690, eleven years after Conway's death.² Leibniz felt philosophically closer to her work than to Cudworth's *True Intellectual System* or to any other of his contemporaries.³ I have tried to explain what Leibniz could see in PP and what Conway's philosophical system consisted in in a forthcoming monography.⁴ In a symposium on Adam, and in a country considered the Holy Land for us all, hardly a better stage could be found for what may be the first public homage paid to this Christian kabbalist philosopher in the last three centuries. Given the limitations of time, I will focus on one point, namely the position of Conway's essentialism between the Lurianic Kabbalah and Leibniz.

II

Prof. Scholem has explained in a number of his books that the Kabbalah – which was given a decisive new shape by Isaac Luria in 16th century Safed – is a synthesis, written as a myth, between neo-Platonism and the traditional Kabbalah of Provence and Spain, represented by the *Sefer Bahir* and especially by the *Sefer Zohar* (cf. Scholem 1957: 267-314; 1973: 22-44; 1971a; 1979: 95-129; 1971b: 37-48). The One, the *ein-soph* (the unlimited, the without-number), according to the Lurianists (in particular Hayim Vital), doesn't spread his infinite light through an immediate act of natural goodness, as the *Zohar* maintained, but it is that infinite kindness which induces him to an act of self-contraction, an act of retraction or autolimitation (*tzimtzum*), in order to produce a circular empty place (*tehiru*) into which he sends his light as a limited effect of his infinite causality.⁵ This place full of light is all that has been created, the "primum creatum", anthropomorphically described as *Adam Kadmon*, the Primordial Man. All the potentialities of the *Ein-Soph* are expressed in him in a determined way as in glasses or bowls (*kelim*). These are the ten Numerations or Sefiroth, which constitute Adam Kadmon's

cosmic structure, from Ketter or Crown, the Sefirah closer to Ein-Soph, through Hochmah or Wisdom, Bina or Intelligence, until we get through the right, left, and central line, to Malkut or Kingdom, the last Sefirah.⁶ All of them constitute the essence or soul of Adam Kadmon.⁷ Inside this, and through successive contractions coming from the irradiated light, the following worlds, all of them spirits, begin to be produced, each inserted inside the other in indefinite decreasing grades vis-a-vis the material world: microcosms inside microcosms, spirits inside spirits ... ad infinitum.⁸

In this way, Adam Kadmon is the divine place of all things; he contains and involves all of them, and they come from him and depend on him; he is present in all of them. He is, therefore, the first among all entities, their maximum expression, the intermediary between the Ein-Soph and the remaining creatures, through which all of them have been made and in which all of them subsist.⁹ But he is different from and inferior to the Ein-Soph, because – according to Plotinus's teachings – what overflows the One is not his essence, but only the determined effect of his infinite activity: "principiatum differt a Principio ratione possibilitatis principiatum" (*Eneades* III,9,4,1-6). Moses Cordouero, Luria's teacher and the most systematic theorist among the Lurianic kabbalists, says that Ein-Soph is everything that is real, he involves everything and he is all in each Sefirah of the Adam Kadmon; but each sefirotic manifestation, every real thing, is not the whole reality, the totality of Ein-Soph; he doesn't exist in the world as he exists in the substantial unity of the Ein-Soph. That is why Cordouero can assert that God is everything that exists but not everything that exists is God (Scholem 1957: 277; 1971a: 545-546).

However, Adam Kadmon, who is inferior and necessarily determined, is at the same time extremely similar to Ein-Soph. He is unique; he is the sole immediate *principiatum* who comes from Ein-Soph; hence he is different from the remaining creatures in the continuous emanative chain of beings. Adam Kadmon is strictly the *MEDIUM* between the Ein-Soph and the creatures. This concept of "Medium" will be a very important part of Conway's essentialistic ontology.

III

Among all the Lurianic Kabbalists, it was Abraham Cohen Herrera, Isaac Sarug's disciple, who studied the mediative function of Adam Kadmon more deeply. Herrera was born in Cordoba (Spain) and belonged to a crypto-Jewish family, which had been obliged to convert to Christianity. He ran away to Italy, where he got in touch with the Italian neo-Platonists. Later on he settled in Amsterdam. His main work, *La Puerta de los Cielos* (henceforth PC), is a thick manuscript written in Spanish (the only kabbalist book written in this

language), which is kept untouched, but unfortunately unpublished. It constitutes, together with Cordouero's work, the best kabbalistic neo-Platonic synthesis in the Jewish tradition. After the author's death the Jew Isaac Aboad translated a selection of the work into Hebrew, which appeared in Amsterdam in 1655. Knorr von Rosenroth translated into Latin this Hebrew text, which was published in his monumental *Kabbala Denudata*.¹⁰ This Latin translation of Herrera's work, even before being printed, was the main textbook used by Lady Conway when writing PP.¹¹

Herrera devotes the whole Second Dissertation of PC to a demonstration that "from the First Principle only the One and Perfect Principium emanated immediately".¹² In order to understand the Spanish kabbalist we must consider the doctrine that passes from Plotinus to Pseudo-Dionysius and Scotus Erigen. The Ein-Soph, the One, is not a being, a nature, an essence; he is beyond any being, essence or idea; he is the Super-Being, the cause or principle of every being.¹³ Hence the One, as One, who is beyond any numeration, beyond any multiplicity or alterity, cannot emanate but One; he must immediately appear as a principiated unity. Consequently, it is in this one emanated Principium, and not in the Principle, that the multiplicity takes place, because he is already a nature which includes all nature and entity, an intelligible that contains all the intelligible ones, and becomes every intelligible (Knorr von Rosenroth 1677: I,3,31-32; *Eneades* V,3,11,1-16; VI,7,15,20-22). That is why he is essentially a Medium between the Ein-Soph and the rest of the principiated things.¹⁴ Other arguments taken from the Platonic Principle "agens agit simile sibi" (the agent acts in a way similar to itself) are of the following type: The Perfect Cause can only produce the perfection, or the most similar to himself; but the Principiated can only be one, because if there were more than one, these would be different in some aspects and none of them would be the most perfect one and the most similar to the Perfect Cause. We get to the conclusion that there must be a unique principiated as perfect as possible ("quantum per naturam principii possibile fuit"), as similar and near to the Ein-Soph as possible, in which all the remaining beings are contained and from which they derive.¹⁵ So Adam Kadmon is considered, in the Platonic speculation of Herrera, as the necessary link that permits the continuity between the Ein-Soph and creatures, and explains their ontological reality.

Aware of the difficulties of this doctrine, Herrera tries to explain and solve them in three chapters. I will only refer to one of them, where Herrera handles objections that Leibniz raised some years later against this same doctrine defended by Van Helmont and Lady Conway. Regarding the emanation from the side of creatures, Leibniz's objection refers to a "an infinite process": there can always be a bigger finite (or infinite), so that there would be several Adam Kadmons or we would never reach the infinite, as

happens in arithmetic.¹⁶ The kabbalist's answer is immediate and detailed. The "processus in infinitum" – answers Herrera – is only valid in numbers, taking the unity (the number one) as a starting point. But it is not applicable in any way to the "caused things": "between caused things there is no infinite ascent".¹⁷ And he explains as follows: If the First Cause in his universal production of beings *had to rise* from the lowest to the highest or perfect caused without reaching to the infinite caused, he could indefinitely produce a bigger one than the biggest; this way he would never reach such a one, that would not be a higher one and he would never produce such a perfect caused which could not be overcome by a more perfect one, as in numbers, where an ascent from unity can obtain, though in fact it doesn't, an increase to the infinite, as any other number can be added to every number. However, as the First Cause *doesn't rise* from the minimum caused to the maximum, but *descends* from the highest to the lowest, where a descent into the infinite cannot take place (because if it did, the Earth would not be the last among the bodies nor would Hylé or Matter be the absolute potentiality, the last and lowest among the natures, near to non-being); so we get to the conclusion that the One, who is the closest to the First Cause, must occur, one and the most perfect, Medium and the first, the first grade, through which the descent to all other things is verified (Knorr von Rosenroth 1677: I,3,5,55-56,§7).

Therefore, for a neo-Platonic like Herrera, Leibniz's 'arithmetic' objection is out of focus: an ontological explanation of the chain of beings and its infinite grades of perfection can never be achieved from the lowest degree ascending to the highest; logic of numbers is wrongly identified with the ontology of being. We are only able to understand the chain through a descending enumeration. This chain has its own rules: in the first place, if the First Cause, the Ein-Soph, is not a being or substance, then it is unnumerable and unmeasurable and cannot multiply: his production has to be one and only one principiated, extremely perfect being, limited only by the inevitable determination of his principiated nature; only one generated substance exists in origin: Adam Kadmon. But, secondly, this principiated is already a substance, and therefore he is numerable, multiplicable in the infinite descending manifestations of the chain of beings; that is how the created substance is produced, i.e., the infinite multiplicity of the creatures. Thirdly, and according to the neo-Platonic principle (which is also a relevant element within Leibniz's thought) which says that "there is reason for being and there is none for the non-being",¹⁸ the descent in the chain of beings cannot get to the null step of perfection and, therefore, Hylé or Matter, absolute potentiality, is in no way a different principle of being; its opacity or darkness is only the lowest grade or the maximum possible limitation of being in its necessity to show itself. There is not, consequently, any ontological duality, but the monistic unity of a unique principle. Lady Conway's essentialistic ontology starts from these considerations, following Herrera's doctrine.

IV

The viscountess dedicates chapters 4 and 5 of PP to Adam Kadmon, which she identifies with Christ or Messiah. In this she follows Rosenroth's programme, which Van Helmont (1684) had developed with prolix and exhaustive biblical arguments.¹⁹ In a kind of mystic-kabbalistic Christianity, inspired in the 4th Gospel and especially in Philo, Jesus Christ is, for Conway, not only the historical man who lived and died in Jerusalem, but also the First-Born among all creatures, so that not only his divinity but also his celestial humanity was joined with divinity before he existed in this world, i.e., before he became flesh (PP,V,1,3).²⁰ In this First Created, through which the Ein-Soph appears in the visible world, all the things subsist and have their existence (PP,IV,2,28); they have come out from him as branches from their root, but without ceasing to be in him and remaining somehow in him (PP,IV,3,28-29); they are inferior and subsequent to him by nature (PP,IV,4,29; V,1,31), but not in time (PP,V,5,37); things can never change into him, just as he can never become the Father (PP,IV,4,29). In this way, Adam Kadmon or Christ First-Born participates in God's immutability and in creatures' mutability, and that is the reason why he is *medium* between what is absolutely immutable and what is completely mutable. We can say, therefore, that he participates in eternity, which is God's prerogative, as well as in time, which is a quality of the creatures (PP,V,5,36).

But beyond the mystic or religious programme of her dear masters, with whom she shares some contradictions about Adam Kadmon, Conway is really interested in the meaning of the notion "medium" itself, in order to develop her ontology against Descartes. Her aim is, then, philosophical. Referring to Herrera's "Second Dissertatio", she asserts the necessity of a mediator being between God's absolute immutability and the creature's complete mutability, so that there cannot be a break or gap in the chain of being (PP,V,2-4,31-36). The immutability is an incommunicable divine attribute; the creature is wholly changeable and transformable into good and evil; and as there can be no being which turns completely into evil because "there is no infinite specimen of Evil",²¹ the completion of the chain of being requires an intermediate being only mutable towards the good and not towards the evil – Adam Kadmon or Christ First-Born.

Here is therefore a threefold Classis or rank of Beings: The First whereof is that which is wholly unchangeable (God); The Second changeable only to Good; so that that which in its own Nature is Good, may become yet better (Christ); The Third is that which though it was in its own Nature indeed Good, yet could be indifferently changed, as well into Good, as from Good into Evil (Creature). The first and last of these are Extrems; and the second is a Natural MEDIUM between them, by which the Extrems are united, and this MEDIUM partakes of both

Extreams, and therefore is the most convenient and proper MEDIUM; for it partakes of the one Extream, viz. Mutability, to wit, from Good to a greater degree or measure of Goodness, and of the other Extream, viz. that it is altogether unchangeable from Good into Evil; and such a MEDIUM was necessarily required in the very Nature of Things; for otherwise there would remain a Chasm or Gap, and one Extream would be united with another, without a MEDIUM, which is impossible, and repugnant to the Nature of Things, as appears in the whole Course of the Universe (PP,V,3,33-34; Loftson 1982: 169).

With this apparently naive doctrine and in a language very close to that of the kabbalists and followers of Paracelsus of her time, Lady Conway, in chapters 6-9 PP, touches on the deepest difficulty of Cartesian dualism, while sharing its metaphysical assumption: the essentialist concept of the world. Conway's argumentation can be summed up as follows.

A property is said to be an essential or metaphysically necessary attribute of a thing when the thing is inconceivable or cannot exist without it. This is how Descartes conceived of Thought and Extension as essential attributes of the only two kinds of world substances. Accordingly, a man is not "essentially" a rational animal, as Aristotle believed, but a thinking substance, so that it is impossible that it could exist and be non-thinking; the same is true of the extended substance. These assertions were for Descartes as evident as mathematical laws. They entail that being a horse or being a non-horse is not an essential attribute of the horse nor of any material substance and therefore, strictly speaking, every material substance of any kind could turn into any other material substance of any other kind; and the same is true of the thinking substance. In fact, according to Descartes's essentialism, there are only two separate types of substance; all the other presumably "essential" attributes can be changed.²²

Lady Conway thought seriously about this essentialistic conception of the world. But she doesn't consider extension and thought as essential and contrary properties which result in two different kinds of created substances.²³ She doesn't rely on Cartesian dualism, for it is unreasonable and cannot be empirically tested. It cannot be proved that animals or plants lack thought nor that spirits lack extension or subtle corporality (PP,IX,2,127-128).²⁴ She thinks that what essentially defines every creature is being mutable or changeable and being endowed with a kind of inner organized force; consequently, there cannot be two created substances, but only one, which contains all the essence there is (PP,VI,1,43; IX,2,128). This is what God created and what experience shows us. Therefore, every creature can change: no thing in nature will have any property, which cannot be had by any other thing; all creatures, from the lowest to the highest, are in origin one and the same substance and, consequently, all of them, in their nature, are

convertible and transformable from one to another.²⁵

But the "individuum", every member of the created nature, cannot change without destroying the intelligible objective order: if Peter turned into Judas or Paul, if the "individual essences" turned into "others", there would be no objective truths nor, consequently, true propositions; things would not have a real being, we could never get real knowledge about them and, therefore, the moral and intelligible order established by God would be destroyed (PP, VI, 2, 43-44).²⁶

Consequently, every "created individuum", insofar as it belongs to the one substance of all creatures, can change from one kind into another without losing its created nature and individual identity. *I* cannot become *that* horse, but I can become *a* horse, since the horse and me belong to the same nature or essence and our respective subkinds only differ "in modo" but not "in essentia" (PP, VI, 6, 51-56; VI, 4, 46-48).

In all Mutations which we observe in Things, the Substance or Essence always remains the same, and there is only a change of MODUS or Manner; so that when a Thing ceases to be after this manner, it then begins to be after another manner (PP, VI, 3, 45; Lopton 1982: 177).

It is very interesting to observe Conway's effort to establish metaphysically the universal transformation of *every* creature. Neither those who reduce everything to one entity (the pantheists, many kabbalists, and Spinoza, according to her; PP, IX, 3, 128; VI, 5) nor those who identify "natural species" with "essences" can explain the multiplicity and variation of activities and the progress of things towards perfection (PP, VI, 5, 49-50). According to the viscountess, any metaphysics must reduce its 'essentialist' requirements to the minimum if it wants to be open to every possibility of transformation, as daily experience seems to demand.

This is Conway's radical essentialism: her notion of essence or unique created substance allows only the pure 'contingency' of real individuals, which can adopt all the forms except that of God and the Christ. Conway's essentialism is a *metaphysical nominalism*, just like Leibniz's.²⁷ Every real being, she says, is only a singular nature.²⁸ In a universe where things only have in common 'being limited', each by its own mutability, it is obvious that they can only be defined by their 'difference' and not by what they have in common, because all of them have in common everything they can, that is to say, nothing, or the possibility of being everything. Each one has its limited existence and its several relations with the rest of infinite beings. There are no entitative genres, there aren't 'animals' on the one hand, and 'rationals' on the other, nor are stones here and men there. Every creature can – it always could – turn into any other creature, without ceasing to exist itself. And, once

the transformation has taken place, it will be the same under the appearance of a different subspecies or different ways of showing itself.

Conway knew that Hobbes had made a very similar criticism to Cartesian dualism. The English philosopher considered essence as a pure arbitrary name and maintained the contingent existence of each corporeal thing. From this principle the possibility of a universal transformation of every being from the lowest to the highest can be established. It is not likely that Hobbes himself arrived at this conclusion (Loftson 1982: 14); but somehow it could be inferred from his writings. If all the things are corporeal and lack other essential properties, so that species are only classifications made by us, it is clear that nothing impedes the possibility of one body turning into another. Whether this was Hobbes's intention or not, this is how Conway interpreted him. Both philosophers were absolute monists; hence, both were in favour of the identity between bodies and spirits and their universal convertibility.

If it be objected, that this our philosophy seems, at least, very like that of Hobbes, because he taught that all Creatures were originally one Substance, from the lowest and most ignoble, to the highest and noblest ..., and by consequence the most Noble Actions thereof, are either Material and Corporeal, or after a certain Corporeal manner; Now I answer ... I grant that all Creatures are originally one Substance, from the lowest to the highest, and consequently convertibles or changeables... (PP,IX,4,128-129; Loftson 1982: 222-223).

But Hobbes denied the possibility of knowing any reality other than a movement of physical particles. He was a materialist who even attributed a physical nature to God, or better said, he denied that we can give any other explanation of God and mind or spirit but the physicalist. Since this explanation depends upon arbitrary names, God himself and every spiritual thing are pure names. Hobbes was opposed to Cartesian dualism, but for reasons quite different from those of Conway. He was, for the viscountess, a more subtle and shrewd opponent than Descartes himself. Indeed, one could only be monist in two ways: as Hobbes, explaining the functions called spiritual in terms of movements of physical particles (PP,IX,9,136-137); or as Conway and Leibniz, considering radical reality as spirit, inner energy or activity, and locating in the phenomenal world the mechanical non-substantial aspects of the unique substantial reality, the spirit or energetic atom.

V

The brilliant pages Conway devotes to solving this problem drew Leibniz's attention when Van Helmont suggested that he read PP. It is impossible to discuss here the multiple links between Conway's and Leibniz's philosophy. I

will limit myself to making some brief suggestions about this convergent path.

After regretting the poor concept that Descartes and Hobbes have of the notions of 'body' and 'matter', the viscountess continues bravely:

If it be demanded, what are those more excellent Attributes (of the bodies), I answer, these following, Spirit, or Life, and Light, under which I comprehend a capacity of all kind of Feeling, Sense, and Knowledge, Love, Joy, and Fruition, and all kind of Power and Virtue, which the noblest Creatures have or can have; so that even the vilest and most contemptible Creature, yea, Dust and Sand, may be capable of all those Perfections (PP,IX,6,133; Loftson 1982: 225; PP, VII,1,71-72;2,82-83).

Bodies and spirits only differ modally (PP,VI,11,70); the body is only the condensed spirit, and the spirit is nothing but the volatile and refined body (PP,VIII,4,122). However, being a body, considered as a pure extensive inert mass, is no essential property of anything (PP,VI,11,67).²⁹ What our senses perceive phenomenally as matter, as body, is not a substance but the 'image' or 'resistance' which the plastic force of the spirit produces to be able to act and to transfer its vital activity towards the mechanical world.³⁰ According to the principle of analogy, the paracelsists and helmontians and, after them, Lady Conway, conceived of the universal organization of the cosmos as a magic continuity. There is an intentional interaction between things, which is verified through the imagination. But an image here is more than a representation of an object. The spirit, the 'Archaeus', with its creative or plastic power, turns the matter in which it lives into a 'mould' or 'pattern' of itself and 'pours itself out' into it, transforming it in its image; the image becomes the body of Archaeus; the bodies are the 'signature', the external 'engraving' or 'inprint' of the spirits. The spirit can reproduce and convey its image in the system of universal correspondences.³¹ In any case, continues Conway, each spirit, according to its specific activity, has its respective organic body as a vehicle of its action. Local or mechanical movement and vital activity are, therefore, two different attributes, and they cannot be separated nor can they be contrary, but one, the first, is an instrument of the other (PP,IX,7,135-136; VII,1,77; VII,3,85). Mechanical movement, which of course is measured by mechanical laws (PP,IX,2,127), can only be something phenomenal, the indispensable outward appearance of the unique real movement, i.e., the vital movement.³² But what is vital movement? Conway answers in the last pages of her work, leaving us at the door of young Leibniz's philosophy. Vital movement, she says, is something more noble and divine than any local or mechanical movement (PP,IX,9,137), which contains in itself a wonderful, divine subtlety and spirituality, over and above all created substances (PP,IX,9,137-138); vital movement is not matter, nor

substance, nor does it move (PP,IX,9,142). Vital movement or action is a *modus* of substance, a 'way of existing' of substance, which is in each subject from which is *modus*; it exists in the substance "per presentiam intimam" (PP,IX,9,138). This 'intimate presence' has to be understood as a special kind of penetration, not as substances penetrating each other and filling the pores or gaps of their respective parts, but as God and the Christ penetrating with their presence the substantiality of each creature. Consequently, the force, the power and the activity, in their infinite degrees of manifestation, constitute the ontological root of the specification of each created individual, which is shown in mechanical movement.

Conway stumbles in the "labyrinth of the continuum" at the same time the young Leibniz faced this problem, in his "Pacidius Philalethi" of 1676. If vital movement or action is a *modus* of substance – the viscountess wonders in the last page of her book – and the *modus*, by definition, can only exist inherently in substance, how can it be moved to another substance? How can virtual extension be transmitted from one spirit to others? If a movement were propagated by local translation, such a movement should be propagated by another one, and this in turn by another different one, and so on – which is completely nonsense. Therefore, she concludes, this propagation has to be done through real production or 'creation' (PP,IX,9,142-144), or rather by 'trans-creation', as Leibniz puts it.³³ But thus we risk denying the self-activity of substance and falling into occasionalism, which had been previously avoided. The viscountess had tried to explain the interaction of substances through the doctrine of images, which she had learnt from the Van Helmonts. But this solution mixes up the two kingdoms. We would have to wait a number of years for Leibniz's theory of expression.

There are many other points Conway and Leibniz share, which I cannot mention here. My intention has been to show that the study of the three unique existing substances in the chain of being, Ein-Soph, Adam Kadmon, and Creature, which the viscountess had learnt from the kabbalists, led her to an original conception about the creature, which introduces us, beyond Descartes, Hobbes, and even beyond Henry More and Ralph Cudworth, into Leibniz's metaphysical nominalism.

Madrid

Notes

- 1 *Principia Philosophiae Antiquissimae et Recentissimae de Deo, Christo et Creatura; id est, de Spiritu et Materia in genere. Quorum beneficio resolvi possunt omnia problemata, quae nec per Philosophiam Scholasticam, nec per communem modernam, nec per Cartesianam, Hobbesianam vel Spinosianam resolvi potuerunt. Opusculum Posthumum. E Lingua Anglicana Latinitate donatum, cum Annotationibus ex Antiqua*

Hebraeorum Philosophia desumptis. Amsterdam 1690.

- 2 *Principia Philosophiae* (hereafter PP, chapter, paragraph, page in the Latin edition) was published in a collective volume under the title *Opuscula Philosophica*. It contained a *Philosophia vulgaris refutata*, which is a long dialogue between a "gallus", supporter of the "Ancient's recondite doctrine", and an "hispanus", who represented the "philosophia vulgaris". This text had been published in Frankfurt in 1668 and in Paris in 1670 with a dedication to "Serenissimo Gallorum Delphino", signed by J.G. (J.Gironnet). The third treatise in the volume is the *CC problemata de revolutionibus animarum humanarum*, which Van Helmont had composed while he was in Lady Conways's residence as a chemist. For more information about Van Helmont's life and work in relation to Leibniz and Conway see Orio de Miguel (1988) and Nicolson (1930). The English translation of PP by J.C. (probably John Clark, another disciple and admirer of Van Helmont), appeared in London in 1692, with the title *The principles of the most ancient and modern philosophy*. Both texts, Latin and English, have been republished, with a very interesting introduction, by P. Loftson (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982).
- 3 Cf. To Burnett, 24th August 1697 (GP,III,217); NE (1.1; GP,V,64); To Lady Masham, December 1703 (GP,III,336-337).
- 4 Wilson (1990) believes that Leibniz's praises of Conway are secretly addressed to Cudworth. I don't think so. Neither Cudworth's 'plastic natures' nor H. More's 'hylarchic principle' were capable, according to Leibniz, of join organic matter and spiritual entelechy. Both Platonists remained *dualist* not only in their phenomenical explanation of the world, but also in the inner reality they assigned to substances. Conway's essentialism and her notion of 'matter', on the other hand, differed from her masters'. They undoubtedly offered for Leibniz, with the limitations that we will see, a new perspective toward which he felt a greater affinity.
- 5 Luria-Vital, "Tractatus Primus Libri Druschim, seu Introductio Metaphysica ad Cabbalam, Autore R. Jischak Loriensi", chap.II, in Knorr von Rosenroth (1677, pars 2, tract.4, 32-33): "Scito, quod antequam emanarent emanantia et creata essent creata, Lux Suprema extensa fuerit plenissime et impleverit omne Ubi, adeo ut nullus daretur Locus vacuus in Notione Lucis, nullumque spatium inane, sed omnia essent plena Luce illa Infiniti hoc modo extensa, cui sub omni notione sua finis non erat, eo quod nihil esset, nisi extensa illa Lux, quae una quadam et simplici aequalitate ubique sibi erat similis; atque ista vocabatur *or-aen soph*, Lux Infinit. Cum autem in mentem veniret Extenso huic, quod vellet condere mundos, et emanando producere emanantia, atque in lucem proferre Perfectionem potentiarum suarum activarum, et Nominum atque Cognominum suorum, quae erat causa impulsiva creandi mundi, prout

supra dictum est, cap.I,quaest.I, tum *compressa quadatenus Lux ista*, a puncto quodam medio circumcirca ad Latera *recessit*; atque sic *relictus est Locus quidam vacuus*, dictus spatium inane, aequidistans a puncto illo, exacte in medio ejus constituto. Compressio autem illa undiquaque sibi aequalis fuit circa centrum dictum per omne spatium, adeo ut locus ille vacuus exacte esset *circularis* sub perfectissima aequalitate".

- 6 "Primum emanant 10 Numerationes Notionis Circularis, et quidem initio decem *Vasa*, singula partibus exterioribus et interioribus constantia; his decem Vasis autem vestiuntur ipsae X Numerationes, Lumina nempe quae Nephesch dicuntur seu Psiche (...)" "Suntque decem *Vasa sub figura hominis*, omnia illa continente (...)" "Illis (Vasis) vestiuntur ipsae X Numerationes, Lumina scilicet quae vocantur Spiritus; praeter quae tamen et alia sunt Lumina decem Ambientia, ut in circulis; quae quidem et ipsae sunt Spiritus: et *omnia quidem sub forma hominis*; idque per omnes mundos emanantes, creatos, formatos, et factos intra Spatium hoc vacuum, de quo supra" (Knorr von Rosenroth 1677: 39-40).
- 7 "Scito, quod Lumina prima emanatione introducta in Spatium hoc, per modum lineae rectae extensae ab Infinito, et undique circumactae contineantur sub Notione X Numerationum, quarum essentia in genere vocatur Adam Primus inter omnia prima. Et hae sunt illae, quae primo prodierunt et manifestatae sunt forma circulari, sub notione Psyches hujus Adami Primi" (Knorr von Rosenroth 1677: 41).
- 8 "Notum autem atque perspicuum nobis est, quot mundorum species emanent, creatae et formatae atque factae sint, millies nempe mille et myriades myriadum; quae omnes simul subsistunt intra locum hunc vacuum supradictum, quippe extra quae nihil est horum. Quilibet autem mundus decem habet Numerationes speciales, et quaelibet Numeratio specialis cujuscumque Mundi composita est e decem Numerationibus specialioribus, quae omnes figuram habent circulorum homocentricorum, et sic in infinitum" (Knorr von Rosenroth 1677: 36).
- 9 "Primum igitur hic dicendum de speciali illo, quod totum Spatium continet et amplectitur, et e quo omnes mundi protenduntur, dependentque et procedunt. Huic nomen est Adam Primus inter omnia prima. Iste enim prior est omnibus entibus, ejusque Celsitudo Summa, et mundus ejus maximus omnium" (Knorr von Rosenroth 1677: 41; see also p 43).
- 10 Cf. Knorr von Rosenroth (1677, pars 3: "Liber 'Shar ha-Samayim', seu 'PORTA COELORUM', in quo Dogmata Cabbalistica de Aen-Soph, Adam Kadmon, Zimzum, Aziluth, Briah, Jezirah, Ashiah, Nomine Tetragrammato, Revolutionibus Alphabeticis..., philosophice proponuntur et explicantur, cumque Philosophia Platonica conferuntur. Autore R. Abrahamo COHEN IRIRA, Lusitano: e Lingua Hispanica primo in Hebraicam translatus, nunc in Latinam contractus". The work includes its

own pagination I-V + 1-192. It consists of eight Dissertations subdivided into chapters, some of which were not translated by Knorr von Rosenroth, and others were only summarized.

- 11 For more details, and the possible influence of Herrera's book on Spinoza's *Ethics*, see Scholem (1984: 15-25).
- 12 "a Principio primo immediate emanaverit Principiatum Unum tantum et perfectum" (Knorr von Rosenroth 1677: 31).
- 13 "His addimus – says Herrera (PC,II,2,§3) – quod scripsit Plotinus his verbis: Unitas Perfecta et Simplicitas divina tam sublimis atque elevata est super omnem essentiam et naturam, ut nulla reperiatur unitas ipsi similis, nec ipsa cum illis ullo modo comparari possit. Unde non reflectendo vel applicando se ad aliud quoddam Unum, simul constituit et perficit omnia. Sed quatenus Numen hoc benedictum et Bonum Perfectum, omni Ente eminentius; hinc omnia simul produxit: et quatenus est Unitas Absoluta perfecta et simplex, non emisit e se proxime nisi Ens Unum tantum, ita ut illud, quod immediate emanavit ab Uno simplici, quod omni sublimi sublimius est, sit Ens unum, vel natura, quae comprehendit omnem naturam et entitatem, intelligibile unum, quod continet omnia intelligibilia, quodque simul sit intellectus primus, qui intra se complectitur omnes intelligentias separatas et simplices" (Knorr von Rosenroth 1677: 40). See *Eneades* (III,8,9,45-53; V,3,15,27; V,5,13,35-36, etc.).
- 14 "a quo (Principio) immediate emanavit Principiatum hoc primum, quod post emanationem suam Medium est ad omnia principia alia" (Knorr von Rosenroth 1677: 32; see p.36,§13).
- 15 "Iam scito, quod Infinitum illud Numen benedictum, Efficiens Causa omnium perfectissima, sibi simile fecerit Principiatum suum essentielle et primum in perfectissimo gradu; illique infundat, quidquid in hoc, per aptitudinem ejus, immiti potest: cum enim sit principiatum, hoc ipso finitum est; et simile illi factum, ad imaginem et similitudinem ejus, quantum per naturam principiatum possibile fuit, modo scilicet magis finito, quam est causa ejus, quae infinita est" (Knorr von Rosenroth 1677: 37. See also 44,§9).
- 16 *Seder Olam, sive Ordo Seculorum*, a similar work to PP, appeared anonymously in Amsterdam in 1693, and was written by Paulus Buchius under Van Helmont's inspiration. Referring to I.10-26 of this work Leibniz writes to his secretary Lorenz Hertel: "Si l'auteur du livre avoit entendu les Mathematiques, il n'auroit point dit que le Messie ou l'Adam celeste, est un Estre moyen entre Dieu et les creatures. On ne sçauroit trouver de moyen entre le fini et l'infini, qui ne soit ou fini, ou infini luy même. Et la ligne moyenne proportionnelle entre la ligne finie, et l'infinie doit estre elle même infinie. Il est vray qu'on peut concevoir comme des

degrés dans l'infini, ce qui se doit entendre des infinis inférieurs; mais à ce compte il y auroit plusieurs Messies, puisque les degrés de ces infinis inférieurs sont innombrables. Cependant l'infini supreme, c'est à dire l'estre absolu est incapable de proportion à l'égard du reste des choses, et il n'y a point de milieu entre cet estre souverain et les creatures. La veritable philosophie ne permet point, qu'il y ait un estre inférieur à Dieu, et supérieur à tous les autres estres possibles" (A,I,11,18-19).

- 17 "inter causata non datur *ascensus* in infinitum" (KD,I,3,4,51,§14).
- 18 Leibniz says in "Arcana de Summa Rerum": "Once things are rightly considered, I establish as a principle the harmony of things, that is, that there must exist as much of essence as possible. And from this follows that there is more reason for the existence than for non-existence. And if it were possible, all things would exist" (JAG,97). This neo-Platonic concept is, undoubtedly, the deepest origin of Leibniz's controversial doctrine about the essences which tend to existence in proportion to their quantity of essence (cf. "De Rerum Originatione Radicali", GP,VII,303).
- 19 "*Adumbratio Kabbalae Christianae*, id est, Syncatabasis hebraizans, sive brevis applicatio doctrinae hebraeorum cabbalisticae ad dogmata Novi Foederis, pro formanda hypothesi, ad conversionem Judeorum proficua", Frankfurt 1684. See mainly chapter 3, pp.7-26. The work was published as Appendix to volume II of *Kabbala Denudata*.
- 20 Leibniz was surprised by this assertion, when reading *Seder Olam* (I,25-26). See letter to Hertel (A,I,11,19-20).
- 21 "Atque hinc natura cujuslibet creaturae haec est, ut semper sit in motu, semperque mutetur a bono in bonum, vel e bono in malum, vel e malo iterum in bonum. Et quia non potest in infinitum procedere ad malum, eo quod istius non detur exemplar infinitum, hinc necessario eandem reverti oportet, vel prolabi in aeternum silentium, quod naturae ipsius contrarium est" (PP,VII,1,74-75). There is only reason for being, which is good; but there is no reason for non-being, which would be evil, because there is not "an infinite exemplar" of evil. Every bad action of a creature is a descent in the chain of being-good, but it is not a way to the no-being-evil, which doesn't exist. Hence the final regeneration (the kabbalists' "tikkun"), the survival of every created substance through its own transformation, the inexistence of eternal punishments, etc. All these doctrines were defended by Conway, and with some corrections by Leibniz too.
- 22 For the example of the horse, see PP,VI,6,51-57. Loftson (1982: 10-13, 41-43) discusses this point thoroughly.
- 23 "Haec tamen non est essentialis proprietas alicuius rei, ut sit corpus; sicut nec proprium ejus est, ut sit tenebrosa. Nihil enim tam est tenebrosus, quod non fieri queat luminosus, imo tenebrae ipsae fieri possunt lumen ...

Et revera quodlibet corpus est spiritus et nihil aliud, nihilque differt a spiritu, nisi quod magis sit tenebrosum. Quo crasius ergo illud fit, eo magis spiritus a gradu removetur, adeo ut distinctio hic tantum sit modalis et gradualis, non essentialis vel substantialis" (PP,VI,11,67-68).

- 24 Chapters 7 and 8 are entirely devoted to demonstrating 'empirically' the falsity of Cartesianism: bodies and spirits are the same substance; 'penetrability' and 'discerptibility' or divisibility' are attributes of both, bodies and spirits.
- 25 "Sicut Deus est unus ... et sicut Christus est unus simplex Christus ..., ita et creatura, sive tota creatio, similiter unica etiam sit substantia vel essentia in sua specie, quamvis multa comprehendat individua, in subordinatis speciebus suis collocata, et modaliter quidem, sed non quoad substantiam vel essentiam ab invicem distincta" (PP,4,47-48; see IX,4,129).
- 26 This is exactly the same argument Leibniz used to demonstrate to Arnauld the principle of the complete notion of individual substances (GP,II,53). It can also be found in Van Helmont (1694: 56-60).
- 27 Lopton (1982: 49-50) compares this ideas with proposition 2.0232 of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*: "In a manner of speaking, objects are colourless".
- 28 "Ens tantum est Terminus Logicus et notio, quam Logici vocant, genus generalissimum, quod in nuda et abstracta notione sua non est in rebus ipsis, sed saltem in conceptu, sive intellectu humano. Et propterea quodlibet ens verum natura est quaedam singularis" (PP, VII,3,90; see also p.82).
- 29 "Cum materia mortua non participet ullum communicabilium Dei attributorum, omnino concludendum est, eandem esse merum non ens, vanamque fictionem et chimaeram adeoque rem impossibilem" (PP,VII,2,83).
- 30 "Quicumque ergo spiritus tunc est fortissimus et fortissimam habet imaginem sive ideam in semine ...; ille spiritus praedominans est in semine, corpusque format quam proxime secundum imeginem suam, atque sic quaelibet creatura formam accipit externam" (PP,VI,11,68). See also VI,7,60-61 and VII,4,102-104. Conway develops metaphysically Paracelsus's and Van Helmont's doctrines about "images" and "archaei".
- 31 Leibniz's criticism of this solution, which "mistakes the two kingdoms: the spiritual and bodily kingdom", is well known. See, for instance, GP,VII,539ff. Without denying Leibniz's criticism of these ideas, I think that the Helmontians' approach to Leibniz's conception about the relation between matter and spirit is deeper than what Leibniz himself asserts. See a detailed study of this topic in Orio de Miguel (1988: II,900-946), and a briefer treatment in Orio de Miguel (1990).

- 32 "Actio vitalis minime esse possit sine omni motione locali, quia haec illius est instrumentum" (PP,IX,9,136). "Merum autem corpus mortuum et materia nullam requirit motionis vel figurae speciem, nec in seipso magis perficitur per unam motionem vel figuram, quam per aliam: aequaliter enim indifferens est ad omnes motiones vel figuras qualescumque" (PP,VII,2,84).
- 33 "Hoc non puto explicari posse melius, quam si dicamus corpus E extingui quodamod et anihilar in B, creari vero denuo ac resuscitari in D, quod posses novo sed pucherrimo vocabulo appellare 'trans-creationem'" (C,624).

References

- Conway, A. (1690). *Principia Philosophiae Antiquissimae et Recentissimae de Deo, Christo et Creatura; Id est, de Spiritu et Materia in Genere*. Amsterdam.
- . (1692). *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*. English trans. of Conway (1690). London.
- van Helmont, F.M. (1684). *Adumbratio Kabbalae Christianae*. In Knorr Von Rosenroth (1677).
- . (1694). *Spirit of Diseases*. London.
- Knorr von Rosenroth, C. (1677). *Kabbala Denudata*. Sulzbach.
- Loptson, P. (1982). Reprint, with an introduction, of Conway (1690 and 1692).
- Orio de Miguel, B. (1988). *Leibniz y la Tradición Teosófico-Kabbalística: Fco. M. Van Helmont*, 2 volumes. Doctoral dissertation. Madrid: Universidad Complutense.
- . (1990). "Leibniz und die 'Physischen Monaden' von F.M. van Helmont". *Studia Leibniziana*, Supplementa 27: 147-156.
- . (Forthcoming). *La Filosofía de Lady Anne Conway: Un Proto-Leibniz*.
- Nicholson, M. (1930). *Conway Letters. The Correspondence of Anne Viscountess Conway, Henry More, and their Friends. 1642-1648*. London.
- Scholem, G. (1957). *Die Jüdische Mystik in ihren Hauptströmungen*. Zürich: Rheinverlag.
- . (1973). *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah*. Trans. Z. Werblowski. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . (1960). *Zur Kabbalah und ihrer Symbolik*. Zürich: Rheinverlag.
- . (1971a). "Kabbalah". In *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 10.
- . (1971b). *The Messianic Idea of Judaism*. New York: Schocken.
- . (1984). "Die Wachtersche Kontroverse über den Spinozismus und ihre Folgen". *Wolfenbütteler Studien zur Aufklärung* 12: 15-25.
- Wilson, C. (1990). "Nostalgia and Counterrevolution: the Case of Cudworth and Leibniz". *Studia Leibniziana*, Supplementa 27: 138-146.