Calvin University

Calvin Digital Commons

Calvin Theological Seminary Dissertations

Calvin Theological Seminary

2012

In Defense of Leibniz's theodicy

Nathan A. Jacobs
CalvinTheological Seminary

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.calvin.edu/cts_dissertations

Part of the Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons

CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN DEFENSE OF LEIBNIZ'S THEODICY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

NATHAN A. JACOBS

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

MAY, 2012

This dissertation entitled

IN DEFENSE OF LEIBNIZ'S THEODICY

written by

NATHAN A. JACOBS

and submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

has been accepted by the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary

upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:

Richard A. Muller, Ph.D.

Ronald J. Feenstra, Ph.D.

Lee Hardy, Ph.D.

Donald Rutherford, Ph.D.

Ronald J. Feenstra, Ph.D.
Dean of Academic Programs

Date May 19, 2012

To Mom and Dad

For my part, I used to consider that nothing happens by chance or by accident .... So I was not far from the view of those who think that all things are absolutely necessary; who think that security from compulsion is enough for freedom, even though it is under the rule of necessity, and who do not distinguish the infallible ... from the necessary. But I was dragged back from this precipice by a consideration of those possibles which neither do exist, nor will exist, nor have existed.

—Leibniz, "On Freedom"

CONTENTS

PART 3: REMAINING DIFFICULTIES AND THEODICY TODAY

NOTE ON LEIBNIZ CITATIONS

Citations of Leibniz are embedded in the body of the text. Works are identified using the shorthand listed below. Works are followed by the relevant volume number (if applicable) and page number(s). The Academie collection is cited by series (*Reihe*), volume (*Band*), and page number(s).

A	*Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*. Ed. The Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Darmstadt, 1923-, Leipzig, 1938-, Berlin, 1950-.
B	*Die Leibniz-Handschriften der Königlichen öffentlichen Bibliothek zu Hannover.* Ed. Eduard Bodemann. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1966.
C	*Opuscules et fragments inédits de Leibniz*. Ed. L. Couturat. Paris, 1903.
CA	*The Leibniz-Arnauld Correspondence,* ed. / trans. H. T. Mason. Manchester, 1976.
Careil	*Nouvelles lettres et opuscules inédits de Leibniz*. Ed. A. Foucher de Careil. Paris, 1857. Reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1971.
E	*Opera philosophica quae exstant latina, gallica, germanica omnia.* Eds. J. E. Erdmann. Berlin: G. Eichler, 1839-40.
G	*Die philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, ed. C. I. Gerhardt, 7 vols. Berlin, 1875-90.
GP	*G. W. Leibniz, Mathematische Schriften*. 7 vols. Ed. C. I. Gerhardt. 1849-63, reprinted 1971 Hildesheim: Olms.
Grua	*G. W. Leibniz: Textes inédits*. Ed. G. Grua. Paris, 1948.

P   *Leibnizens Gesammelt Werke*. Ed. G. H. Pertz. Hanover, 1847. Reihe I,

vol 4.

NOTE ON LEIBNIZ QUOTATIONS

Quotations of Leibniz are drawn from a variety of texts. The translations employed have been modified, where necessary, based on the original Latin or French. The following translations are used or referenced throughout:

Dissertation on Predestination and Grace. Ed. / Trans. Michael J. Murray. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: Philosophical Papers and Letters. 2 vols. Ed. / trans. Leroy E. Loemker. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956.

The Leibniz-Arnauld Correspondence, ed. / trans. H. T. Mason. Manchester, 1976.

Leibniz: Discourse on metaphysics. Eds. P. G. Lucas and L. Grint. Manchester, 1961.

Leibniz: Logical Papers. Ed. G. H. R. Parkinson. Oxford, 1966.

Leibniz: Philosophical Papers and Letters. Ed. G. H. R. Parkinson. Oxford, 1966.

Leibniz Philosophical Papers and Letters, ed. L. E. Loemker, 2nd ed. Dordrecht, Holland, 1969.

Leibniz: Philosophical Writings. Ed. G. H. R. Parkinson. Trans. Mary Morris & G., H. R. Parkinson. London: J M Dent & Sons, 1973.

New Essays Concerning the Human Understanding. Ed. A. G. Langley. New York, 1896.

Philosophical Works of Leibniz. Ed. G. M. Duncan. New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, 1890.

Refutation Recently Discovered of Spinoza by Leibniz. Trans. O. F. Owen. Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1855.

The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings. Ed. & trans. Robert Latta. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898.

Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God and the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil. Trans. E. M. Huggard. La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1997.

ABSTRACT

G. W. Leibniz professes a commitment to historical Christian theism, but the depth and orthodoxy of his commitment has been questioned throughout the past three centuries. In this project I defend both the cogency and the orthodoxy of Leibniz's philosophical theology and, by extension, its application to the Christian task of theodicy. At the heart of this defense is the central claim of this project, namely, that Leibniz's philosophical theology represents a traditional brand of Augustinianism. In short, I argue that Leibniz's theodicy is not his own, but is the tacit claim of a longstanding theological tradition made explicit and brought to bear on the problem of evil as articulated in Leibniz's day. Accompanying this central claim are a number of subordinate claims, the most significant of which center on how we read Leibniz on providence and on free choice. Regarding the former, I argue that Leibniz's understanding of providence has precedence in and is a recapitulation of older Augustinian views of the God-world relationship. As for free choice, I maintain that the Augustinian tradition is not only incompatiblist, or libertarian, but was recognized as such in Leibniz's day. Hence in adhering to this tradition, Leibniz is knowingly adhering to a libertarian theology. I show that his adherence to this tradition and its views of freedom has significant textual support. My method of defense is both historical and constructive. On the historical side I focus primarily on contextual and textual analysis. However, insofar as this defense includes the viability of Leibniz's theodicy for Christian theology and theodicy today, constructive engagement with Leibniz's contemporary objectors and the current literature on the problem of evil is also required. Therefore, I devote the latter part of this defense to lingering objections and interlocution with current approaches to the problem of evil. In the end I conclude that

Leibniz's theodicy, when read in the light of the Augustinian tradition, is not only orthodox, cogent, and defensible, but is perhaps the most viable response to the problem of evil for traditional Christian theology, if not the inevitable response for a traditional Augustinian.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the past three centuries, Gottfried Leibniz has been accused of

determinism,[1] deism,[2] and various degrees of Spinozism.[3] Yet, Leibniz places himself

---

[1] E.g., Leonhard Euler, *Lettres a une princesse d'allemagne sur divers sujets de physique et de philosophie* (London: la Société Typographique, 1775), 17-20; J. Th. C. of Wirtembergh, "Philosophiæ *Leibnitianæ & Wolphianæ* Usus in Theologia, per præcipua Fidei capita: Præmittitur Disseratio de *Ratione & Revelatione,* de *Natura & Gratia,*" in *Historia Litteraria: Or, An Exact and Early Account of the Most Valuable Books Published in the Several Parts of Europe*, ed. Archibald Bower (London: N. Prevost, 1732), vol. 4, no. 20, 195-96; François Aubert, *Entretiens sur la nature de l'ame des bêtes* (A Basle, 1760), 294; Marquis d'Argens, *New memoirs establishing a true knowledge of mankind, by discovering the affections of the heart, and the operations of the understanding, [...] By the Marquis d'Argens, [...] with letters from the Baron de Spon, ... two novels, Spanish and French; and [...] Thoughts on the art of beautifying the face. By Mademoiselle Cochois, [...]*, 2 vols. (London: D. Browne, et al., 1747), vol. 2, 208-12; Anthony Collins, *A philosophical inquiry concerning human liberty* (London: R. Robinson, 1735), 30ff.; Voltaire, *Philosophical, Literary, and Historical Pieces*, 2nd ed., trans. W. S. Kenrick (London: Fielding and Walker, 1780), 411-2; Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* (Edinburgh: John Bell, et al., 1788), 334-5; Richard Falckenberg, *History of Modern Philosophy*, 3rd English ed. from 2nd German ed., trans. A. C. Armstrong, Jr. (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1897), 274 (First edition: 1888; second edition: 1892); Alfred Weber, *History of Philosophy,* trans. Frank Thilly (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896)*,* 359-60; Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *History of Modern Philosophy in France* (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1899), 118; Wilhelm Max Wundt, *Ethics: An Investigation of the Facts and Laws of the Moral Life*, trans. Margaret Floy Washburn (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1897), 97-9; Friedrich Ueberweg, *History of Philosophy from Thales to the Present Time* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, & Co., 1876), vol. 2, 116; S. H. Mellone, *The Dawn of Modern Thought: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), 97-115; B. A. G. Fuller, *A History of Modern Philosophy*, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, et al., 1960), 118 (first published in 1938); R. P. Sertillanges, *Le Problème du Mal l'Histoire* (Paris, 1948), 234-35; Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre: A History of Philosophy* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), 273; C. D. Broad, *Leibniz: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975); D. W. Hamlyn, *A History of Western Philosophy* (London: Viking, 1987), 160-64; R. C. Sleigh, Jr., *Leibniz & Arnauld: A Commentary on Their Correspondence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); R. C. Sleigh, Jr., "Leibniz on Freedom and Necessity: Critical Notice of Robert Adams, *Lebniz: Determinist, Theist, and Idealist,*" *The Philosophical Review* 108:2 (April, 1999), 245-77; Robert Sleigh, Jr., Vere Chappell, and Michael Della Rocca, "Determinism and Human Freedom," in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, 2 vols., eds. Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), vol. 2, 1195-1278; and Robert Merrihew Adams, *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[2] E.g., Sir Isaac Newton, "An Account of the Book Entitled 'Commercium Epistolicum Collinii Aliorum, De Analysipromota; Published by order of the Royal-Society, in relation to the Dispute between Mr. Leibnitz and Dr. Keill, about the Right of Invention of the Method of Fluxions, by some call'd the Differential Method'," *The Royal Society of London, Philosophical Transactions (1683-1775)* 29:342 (1715): 178-216; Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, 338-39; Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual and Active Powers of Man*, 3 vols. (Dublin: P. Byrne and J. Milliken, 1790), vol. 1, 263-64; Julien Offray de La Mettrie, *Œuvres philosophiques* (Berlin: Jean Nourse, 1751), 222-26; and Falckenberg, *History of Modern Philosophy*, 270-80.

within historical Christian orthodoxy throughout his mature writings (e.g., A 6.4:2355-455). Though some would dismiss such posturing as a public façade,[4] such a dismissal has much to account for. Leibniz's writings display unusual mastery of and attention to historical theology and scholastic minutia (e.g., G 6:49-101); his corpus is littered with detailed notes on theological figures and disputes (e.g., C 25-7; Grua 1:76-80, 150-55, 338-46, 347-59, 380-88; 2:560-1; A 6.1:508-13; 6.4:1680-90);[5] and he himself penned several theological treatises, including *Examen religionis Christianae* and *De praedestinatione et gratia dissertatio*. Moreover, the former work professes to be Leibniz's own theological system (A 6.4:2355), a system that is itself thoroughly traditional. In addition, unlike some philosophers in his day, such as Pierre Bayle,

---

[3] E.g., F. W. J. Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy,* trans. Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 77-83; Falckenberg, *History of Modern Philosophy*, 277f.; Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena*, trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Oxford, 2001), vol. 1, 6-8 (first published in 1851); Ueberweg, *History of Philosophy*, vol. 2, 111; and 116.Note also the exchange between Louis Racine, Le Chevalier De Ramsey, and Alexander Pope which nowhere references Leibniz, only fatalism, Spinozism, and deism (Louis Racine, *La religion, poëme; par Monsieur Racine, De l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres*, 2 vols. [London, 1785], 299; 301; 303; and 306); yet, Pope gathers the exchange under the heading, "As some passages in the Essay on Man have been suspected of favouring the schemes of Leibnitz and Spinoza, or of a tendency towards Fate and Naturalism, it is thought proper here to insert the two following Letters, to show how ill-grounded such a suspicion is," thus treating Leibniz as synonymous with fatalism, Spinozism, or (weak disjunctive) deism. Pope, *The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope, with His Last Corrections, Additions, and Improvements. From the Text of Dr. Warburton. With the Life of the Author.*, 2 vols. (London: C. Cooke and Paternoster-Row, 1795), vol. 1, 243; Bertrand Russell, *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz with an Appendix of Leading Passages* (London: Routledge, 1997), xi.

[4] E.g., Russell, *Critical Exposition*, x; and Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945)*,* 581-96. This narrative also appears in Russell's "Recent Work on the Philosophy of Leibniz," *Mind* 12, no. 2 (1903): 177-201. This review is reprinted in *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, eds. Alasdair Urquhart and Albert C. Lewis (New York: Routledge, 1994).

[5] For an extended treatment of Leibniz's various writings on Trinity and Incarnation, see Maria Rosa Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, trans. Gerald Parks (New Haven: Yale, 2007).

Leibniz does not isolate his theology from his philosophy.[6] As *Essais de theodicée*
shows, Leibniz sides with the historical Christian stance on faith and reason (G 6:49-
101); he casts the problem of evil on a Christian backdrop of God's eternal decrees and
the Christian creation-fall-redemption-consummation narrative (G 6:102-5); and he gives
special attention to problems that emerge out of sacred Scripture (G 6:143ff.).

Though one could try to dismiss these numerous theological forays as the mere
byproduct of Leibniz's prolific genius, theology was no mere curiosity for him. Leibniz
devoted a great deal of effort to reconciling protestant and Catholic divisions, both in his
writings and in his person. Leibniz dedicated numerous works, brief and lengthy, to the
effort; he met with Cristóbal de Rojas y Spinola, Bishop of Tina, who had received papal
permission to negotiate reunion with the Princes of Germany; Leibniz was privy to the
plan for Catholic-protestant reunion, drafted by Lutheran theologian Gerhard Molanus—a
plan about which Leibniz himself corresponded with French bishop, Jacques Bossuet;
and Leibniz continued to play a role in protestant-Catholic negotiations at the behest of
Georg Ludwig after the apparent failure of these negotiations in 1691. Perhaps most
noteworthy, however, is that in such dialogs, while Leibniz conceded that ecclesiastical
reunion could be had via civil union and tolerance, he was committed to theological
reunion—a strange ideal for one who does not advocate the type of theology at issue.
This ideal is embodied in Leibniz's *De praedestinatione et gratia dissertatio* (1706),
wherein he navigates the fine points of predestination among protestants by commenting

---

[6] On the relationship between philosophy and theology in the works of Pierre Bayle, see Hubert
Bost, "Pierre Bayle, un «protestant compliqué»," in *Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), le philosophe de Rotterdam:
Philosophy, Religion and Reception, Selected Papers of the Tercentenary Conference held at Rotterdam,
7–8 December 2006*, eds. Wiep van Bunge and Hans Bots (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 83-101. An
English translation of this essay appears in *The Persistence of the Sacred in Modern Thought,* eds. Chris L.
Firestone and Nathan A. Jacobs (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), ch. 7.

on bishop Gilbert Burnet's exposition of article 17 of *The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion* in an effort to show how theological divisions might be mended.[7] The resulting treatise, much like his other writings, demonstrates not only Leibniz's thorough grasp of theological minutia, but his own rather traditional theological commitments within the discussion.

Leibniz's intellectual biography also gives reason to think that confessional Christian theology was of great importance in his intellectual formation. Leibniz's father, Friedrich, a professor of moral philosophy at University of Leipzig, provided Leibniz with a living example of intellect mingled with Christian piety (see P 165).[8] Following his father's death, Leibniz gained access to his father's library, and gave himself over to Latin classics, Hellenistic philosophy, patristic works, and scholastic theology (both medieval and then-contemporary) from age eight onward.[9] As E. J. Aiton notes, "Alongside the logical exercises performed in school, Leibniz pursued at home, in his father's library, the study of metaphysics, both scholastic and more recent, as well as theology, concentrating especially on the works of the famous Catholic and protestant controversialists" (see P 168).[10] The significance of the scholastic facet of Leibniz's studies is testified to by which works Leibniz chose to keep from his father's library. As Maria Rosa Antognazza notes, when Leibniz reluctantly agreed to sell off the library to settle his schooling debts, he requested to keep only a handful of books:

---

[7] For a complete synopsis of Leibniz's role in the above protestant-Catholic dialogs, see G. W. Leibniz, *Dissertation on Predestination and Grace,* ed. / trans. Michael J. Murray (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), §1.

[8] See also E. J. Aiton, *Leibniz: A Biography* (Bristol, England: Adam Hilger Ltd., 1985), 9.

[9] Aiton, *Leibniz*, 10-2.

[10] Aiton, *Leibniz*, 13.

These included works by five figures closely related to the post-Ramist tradition and the Herborn school—most notably Keckermann's voluminous *Opera omnia*, the juridical encylopaedia of the famous Herborn political theorist, Johannes Althusius (1557-1638), and the brilliant logical and encyclopaedic works of Johann Heinrich Bisterfeld, several of which the young Leibniz had annotated apparently between 1663 and 1666. Miscellaneous sources also document Leibniz's familiarity with other key writers in this tradition around the same time. By 1664 he was acquainted with some of Alsted's writings; in 1667 he quoted several works by Comenius; and by the latter date he had read works by Johannes Piscator (1546-1625), the longstanding rector of the Herborn academy and pioneer of its Ramist approach to philosophy and theology. Later still, his private library included works of Alsted, Althusius, Keckermann, Johann Rudolph Lavater, and Anton Matthaeus, as well as Clemens Timpler (1563/4-1624), Alsted's philosophical tutor in Herborn.[11]

Such influences are additionally noteworthy when we consider that in 1961, Leroy E. Loemker made the case that one of the main influences on Leibniz was the Herborn encyclopedists. As Loemker points out, "From its foundation in 1584 the old university at Herborn flourished as a center of Reformed theology and philosophy, in close relationship with schools with like convictions in England (particularly Cambridge) and the protestant Netherlands."[12] Yet, Loemker observed then that Leibniz studies has yet to fully account for this influence. Regrettably, not much has changed since Loemker first made this observation. Though Leibniz scholarship has made great strides throughout the 20th century and beyond on various features of Leibniz's philosophical theology,[13] there remains surprisingly little by way of theological readings of Leibniz.[14]

---

[11] Maria Rosa Antognazza, *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 41-2.

[12] Leroy E Loemker, "Leibniz and the Herborn Encyclopedists," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22:3 (1961): 323.

[13] See Donald Rutherford and J. A. Cover, "Introduction," in *Leibniz: Nature and Freedom,* eds. Donald Rutherford and J. A. Cover (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[14] Recent exceptions include Paul R. Hinlicky, *Paths Not Taken* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009); Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation;* Michael J. Murray, "Introduction," in *Dissertation on Predestination and Grace,* ed. / trans. Michael J. Murray (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); Michael J. Murray, "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge of Future Contingents and Human

Yet, it is this very type of reading that, in my assessment, casts suspicion on the all-too-common determinist, deist, and Spinozist portraits of Leibniz that continue to decorate the halls of contemporary scholarship.

The goal of this project is to help fill the theological lacuna in Leibniz studies by offering a theological reading of Leibniz on free choice, providence, and evil. This reading argues that, at least on matters of free choice and providence, Leibniz is a traditional Augustinian, and that his subsequent theodicy is a natural extension of this tradition's theological claims. I have labeled this reading a "defense" of Leibniz's theodicy because the results (a) cast suspicion on the respective determinist, deist, and Spinozist portraits of Leibniz, and (b) argue for not only the orthodoxy but the cogency of Leibniz's response to the problem of evil.

1. Outline of Chapters

This project consists of three parts and six chapters. In Part 1, we will look at the current state of the question concerning Leibniz on free choice and providence, and examine some challenges that these trends face when considered in the light of the Augustinian tradition. I first offer a survey of theologically suspect portraits of Leibniz from his death in 1716 to the present (chapter 1). My aim throughout is threefold: (1) to bring to light the spectrum of interpretations found throughout the past three centuries and how the necessitarian reading compounds over time; (2) to demonstrate the dominance of the necessitarian reading in the literature; and (3) to highlight the presuppositions that undergird the determinist, deist, and Spinozist interpretations of the

---

Freedom," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 55, no. 1 (Mar., 1995); Michael J. Murray, "Spontaneity and Freedom in Leibniz," in *Leibniz,* eds. Rutherford and Cover.

past three centuries. Concerning the third of these goals, I bring to light eight

interpretative assumptions that play a pivotal role in the necessitarian portrait of Leibniz,

the majority of which assume either that libertarian choice requires freedom of equipoise

or that moral necessity is incompatible with libertarian choice.

The centrality of these interpretive assumptions proves significant as we set this

interpretive history in contrast with the Augustinian tradition (chapter 2). My goal here is

to establish (1) that the Augustinian tradition displays an incompatibilist commitment in

its ancient, medieval, and post-Reformation incarnations; (2) that the Augustinian

tradition was recognized as incompatibilist in Leibniz's day; (3) that despite its

incompatibilist commitments, this tradition rejects equipoise and advocates moral

necessity; and (4) that the Augustinian tradition stands at odds with at least five core

interpretive assumptions identified in chapter 1. Taken together, these points open the

door to an interpretive possibility untried in the history of Leibniz interpretation, namely,

that Leibniz is a libertarian, not because he accepts the then-new assumptions of many

libertarian proponents in his day, but because he is in agreement with an older

Augustinian philosophy that both advocates incompatibilism and likewise rejects the

then-new assumptions regarding what libertarian choice requires.

Part 2 marks my turn to Leibniz himself. Leibniz scholars disagree over whether

Leibniz's pre-1700 views on free choice match his post-1700 views on free choice;[15]

hence my exposition of Leibniz consists of a pre-1700 treatment of Leibniz's

philosophical theology, followed by an examination of his philosophical theology in

Essais de theodicée (1711). My exposition of Leibniz aims at demonstrating that his

---

[15] See, e.g., Sleigh, et al., "Determinism and Human Freedom," vol. 2, 1195-1278, esp. 1265-7. These same arguments also appear in Sleigh, "Leibniz on Freedom and Necessity," 245-277.

mature understanding of free choice, providence, and evil sits comfortably within the Augustinian tradition, as does his application of these insights to the problem of evil in *Theodicée*. My pre-1700 exposition of Leibniz (chapter 3) focuses on his 1686 essay, "Vérités necessaries et contingents," which (a) is one of the more systematic pre-1700 treatments of Leibniz's philosophical theology, (b) pulls together into one place claims scattered throughout his other 1680s writings, and (c) has been recognized in Leibniz studies as a seminal representative of Leibniz's early views on free choice.[16] The findings of chapter 3 give good reason to think Leibniz's early thought on free choice and providence is both libertarian and Augustinian. Following this initial exposition, I move directly into Leibniz's application of his philosophical theology in *Theodicée* (chapter 4). In the end, we will see (1) that Leibniz remains consistent in his understanding on free choice and providence, (2) that his understanding of these matters is deeply rooted in the Augustinian tradition, and (3) that Leibniz's application of this understanding to the problem of evil is a natural extension of his Augustinian commitments.[17]

Having established in part 2 Leibniz's Augustinian commitments, I turn in Part 3 to a lingering challenge to the rereading of part 2 and the contemporary task of theodicy. Regarding the former, I examine a difficulty surrounding Leibniz's talk of possible worlds, namely, the problem of superessentialism (chapter 5). This problem states that

---

[16] In 1902, Louis Couturat used the essay to argue for the Spinozist reading and successfully persuaded Bertrand Russell of his case. Russell went on record, admitting the falsehood of his published compatibilist-theist interpretation (see note 4 above). In 1992, R. Cranston Paull used "Vérités" to argue for a rare, if not singularly unique, incompatibilist reading of Leibniz (see Paull, "Leibniz and the Miracle of Freedom"). In 1998, Jack Davidson argued, contra Paull, that "Vérités" demonstrates Leibniz's affirmation of compatibilism, not incompatibilism (see Davidson, "Imitators of God").

17. When using the term "Reformed scholastics" or "Reformed scholasticism" in this work, I am affirming the conclusion of Richard Muller (et al.) that a specific method of medieval theology was employed by Reformed theologians of the 16th and 17th centuries. See Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003), vol. 1, "Introduction."

Leibniz's view of identity makes every act an essential property of the given individual; hence, no individual can be conceived in any possible world other than his own possible world, nor can he be conceived as doing in that world other than he in fact does. After considering the failings of a number of contemporary solutions, I highlight the ways in which both the charge of superessentialism and these solutions build on the sensibilities of contemporary modal logic. Yet I argue that there are significant differences between the older, metaphysical approach to possible worlds and the approach in contemporary modal logic, and that Leibniz is best read in the light of the former. By appeal to this more metaphysically robust view of possible worlds, I show how Leibniz could answer the problem of superessentialism raised by his critics.

After answering the problem of superessentialism, I look at objections to Leibniz's theodicy in the current literature, and consider the ramifications of this reinterpretation of Leibniz for the contemporary task of theodicy (chapter 6). My assessment has two stages. The first stage revisits four objections leveled against Leibniz's notion of "the best" that remain unaddressed by the reading of part 2. I show how these challenges presume a picture of Leibniz very unlike the one painted here, and how these challenges can be overcome under the rereading here offered. The second stage looks at the constructive task of theodicy as it exists today and Leibniz's potential contribution once revised along lines suggested here. I survey some of the dominant approaches to theodicy today and scrutinize how these positions compare with Leibniz's own. While some approaches to theodicy are incompatible with Leibniz, I will show (1) that Leibniz's approach to theodicy is strongly accommodating of and compatible with most affirmative theodicies, and (2) that while Leibniz is often dismissed in

contemporary literature as a rationalist who is too optimistic, his approach is far more humble than those of his critics.

In the end, I conclude that the determinist, deist, and Spinozist portraits of Leibniz remain at some distance from Leibniz's true visage. While Leibniz is not entirely without philosophical innovation (in his monadology, for example), a theological rereading of Leibniz makes clear that he sits squarely within the Augustinian tradition on matters of free choice and providence. Though one may object to aspects of this tradition, Leibniz's approach to theodicy is arguably the inevitable reply to the problem of evil available to its adherents.

2. Terminological Issues and Clarifications

Before moving into the arguments to follow, several terminological issues should be addressed. The first set of terminological issues surrounds the meaning and limits of a trio of terms already used above, namely, "deism," "Spinozism," and "Augustinian."

Deism, in its modern incarnations, has two primary traits. The first is that that the God-world relationship is such that the possibility of divine interruption is impossible, unnecessary, or simply unworthy of God.[18] The second, to quote Allen Wood, is that "there is such a thing as rational or natural religion, religion based on natural reason and not on supernatural revelation."[19] This latter conviction is often accompanied, among the modern rationalists, by either a dismissal of the necessity of divine revelation or an

---

[18] This trait is the point of concern in 18th century charges of deism leveled against Leibniz. See Anonymous, "An Account of 'Commercium Epistolicum Collinii Aliorum, De Analysipromota […]'"; Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, 338-39; de La Mettrie, *Œuvres philosophiques*, 222-26; and Falckenberg, *History of Modern Philosophy*, 270-80.

[19] Allen W. Wood, "Kant's Deism," in *Kant's Philosophy of Religion Reconsidered,* eds. Philip J. Rossi and Michael W. Wreen (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 7.

account of how revelation, if it were to occur, could serve a catalytic role in awakening reason to *a priori* truths.[20] In what follows, my references to Leibniz's suspected "deism" center on the impossibility of God-world interaction, per the first of these traits, and will more often than not hover around Leibniz's doctrine of pre-established harmony.

Spinozism, as I will use the term, has less to do with whether Leibniz was a follower of Spinoza *per se* and more to do with the type of necessitarianism Spinoza represents. Unlike charges of determinism generally, suspicions of "Spinozism" question whether the difference between Spinoza and Leibniz on the necessity of things is as substantial as Leibniz claims. In other words, though Leibniz speaks of possibles that are nowhere actual (e.g., Grua 1:236), his claims cast suspicion on whether these "possibles" are anything more than semantic possibilities. In short, Leibniz is suspected of "Spinozism" when he is read as saying all things are necessary. Yet, this is only a "virtual Spinozism," since even those who press Leibniz in this direction admit that Leibniz retains the very slight distinction that there are logical possibles (i.e., contradiction-free, subject-predicate combinations) that lack being, even if he denies that there are metaphysical conditions sufficient to bring about these possibles.[21]

Augustinian can be taken in the strict sense of the theology of St. Augustine of Hippo and of only St. Augustine. Alternatively, this term could be used in reference to

---

[20] For two different rationalist approaches to supernatural revelation, see G. E. Lessing, *The Education of the Human Race,* §§4 and 7 (in German) in *Lessings sämtliche Werke,* 6 vols., ed. Robert Petsch (Berlin, 1907); or (in English) in *Lessing's Theological Writings,* trans. Henry Chadwick (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957). These positions are also discussed in I. A. Dorner, *History of protestant Theology, Particularly in Germany, Viewed According to Its Fundamental Movement and Connection with the Religious, Moral, and Intellectual Life* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1871), vol. 2, bk. 2, div. 2, pt. 3, ch. 1ff.; and Emanuel Hirsch, *Geschichte der Neuern Evangelischen Theologie. Im Zusammenhang mit den allgemeinen Bewegungen des europãischen Denkens* (C. Bertelsmann Verlag Gutersloh, 1949), vol. 1, pt. 1, chs. 47-8.

[21] E.g., Louis Couturat, "Sur la Métaphysique de Leibniz," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 10 (1902): 1-25; and Russell, *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*, x-xi.

the Augustinian tradition more broadly—that is, in reference to Augustine and the reception of his thought in Western theology. On such usage, the term would certainly refer to the theology of Augustine but would include ancient and medieval receptions of Augustine's thought in Boethius, Anselm, Aquinas, et al., and would extend into Reformation and post-Reformation receptions, both Roman Catholic and protestant. My use of the term *Augustinian, Augustinianism,* and other cognates, will be in keeping with the latter usage. In suggesting that Leibniz is "Augustinian," I am not suggesting that Leibniz limits his theological and philosophical resources to Augustine's corpus. Leibniz draws heavily on medieval Augustinianism, as well as on Reformation and post-Reformation Augustinianism. Therefore, my use of the term *Augustinian* in reference to Leibniz acknowledges that he is a *protestant-Augustinian.*

Given this characterization, a word should be said regarding the protestant reception of pre-Reformation Augustinian theology and what we should expect to find in Leibniz if this characterization is correct. No doubt confessional protestants (especially Lutheran and Reformed) maintain that they sit within the Augustinian tradition as faithful recipients of Augustine's theology and of much of medieval scholasticism. Hence, among the "high-orthodox" Reformed scholastics of the 16th and 17th centuries, for example, we find regular appeal to Augustine and employment of various aspects of medieval scholasticism, both in terms of method and content.[22] For this reason, in establishing Leibniz's continuity with the Augustinian tradition, I will look for the same type of reception. That is to say, if Leibniz is in fact a protestant-Augustinian, what we should

---

[22] By "high orthodox" Reformed thought, I mean that theology developed ca. 1640-1725 in which Reformed thought reaches its most refined, scholastic development. In employing such a heading, I am presuming the threefold breakdown of the development of Reformed theology by Muller in *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 1, "Introduction." Muller's entire *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* is useful in drawing out the Augustinian and scholastic nature of protestant theology.

expect to find in his texts is appeal to and use of the pre-Reformation Augustinian tradition generally—both ancient and medieval—alongside uniquely protestant commitments, especially regarding soteriology. As we will see, this is precisely what we find throughout Leibniz's writings.

One last caveat should be added here. While Leibniz's soteriological commitments place him within the Augustinian tradition, and indeed the protestant wing of this tradition, this does not mean that Leibniz feels bound to ignore or marginalize the Eastern (or Greek) Church fathers. We will see that Leibniz, like those in Western medieval and protestant theology, draws on the writings of Easterners, such as John Chrysostom and John of Damascus, even though Leibniz takes his soteriological cues from the Augustinian camp. In short, what we find in Leibniz on this point is much what we find elsewhere in the Augustinian tradition: Leibniz invokes Eastern fathers wherever useful and to whatever extent their views are consonant with Augustinian theology, but in matters of soteriology, he tends in a more Western direction and thus gravitates more often than not toward distinctly Augustinian sources.

A number of additional terms are in need of clarification before we proceed, namely, those that are invoked in contemporary discussions regarding free choice. A historically minded reader will notice that I have already begun employing contemporary labels such as "determinist," "libertarian," "compatibilist," "necessitarian," and so forth. Given that these labels correspond to contemporary positions on free choice, applying them to Leibniz and others of previous eras runs the risk of anachronism. That said, the positions on free choice that these labels identify are not entirely foreign to the historical discussion. Thus, while the labels themselves may be anachronistic, the broader positions

to which they refer are not. We may therefore legitimately ask to which of these contemporary positions, if any, is Leibniz's position (and the respective positions of others) most similar. But to do so properly, we must first flesh out the content of these labels and the discussions in which they appear. In the space remaining, I will lay bare my understanding of the contemporary positions on free choice and the terms used therein, as well as how I will be using them throughout this project.

Determinism has a relatively uniform definition in contemporary literature: "determinism is the general philosophical thesis which states that for everything that ever happens there are conditions such that, given them, nothing else could happen."[23] In this basic sense, determinism does not refer to a position on free choice *per se.* Instead, determinism is a position on the happenings of our world generally—*all that occurs in our world* is such that, for whatever reason, it could not be otherwise. Human acts are merely one of many occurrences included among these happenings. I say "for whatever reason" because there are various types of determinism, each of which gives different reasons for why things could not be otherwise. We can identify five contemporary brands of determinism. They are physical, psychological, ethical, theological, and logical determinism.[24]

Physical determinism is rooted in a reductionistic materialist worldview. The guiding assumption is that all is reducible to matter in motion. Therefore, all happenings, including human choice, are determined solely by the laws of physics. Choice, while

---

[23] Richard Taylor, "Determinism," 359, in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 8 vols., ed. Paul Edwards (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1967), vol. 2. Cf. Ted Honderich, "Determinism," 567, in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, 6 vols., ed. Maryanne Cline Horowitz (New York: Thomson Gale, 2005), vol. 2.

[24] My synopsis of these five types of determinism is based on those exposited in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* See Taylor, "Determinism," 359-68.

seemingly above the material realm, is in fact determined by material movements and the laws that bind them, and thus could not be otherwise.

Psychological determinism, while distinguishing mind from matter, presumes that the mind functions in such a way as to be determined by its own psychology. On this view, the will is bound by prior causes, but these causes are inner psychological events rather than purely physical events. According to psychological determinism, an agent may "freely" choose in accord with his desires (no one coerces the agent), but what he desires is predetermined by factors outside his control, namely, his own psychological makeup and mental events.

Ethical determinism is a species of psychological determinism. On this view, the will necessarily follows the final judgment of the practical intellect, and since the intellect seeks the good, the will is bound to choose whatever the intellect judges to be good. When combined with the assumption that psychological events invariably lead to a specific judgment, the case is made that both the judgment and the action to follow are determined by the psychological and moral makeup of the agent. If, as in the case of God, the intellect knows the good, then the inevitable judgment is the infallibly known good from which action necessary follows. If, however, the agent is ignorant of the good, the will is still determined by the perceived good, the judgment of which is based on the psychological limitations and ethical disposition of the individual. Therefore, whether one knows the good or fallibly aims at the good, the agent operates according to moral necessity. Hence, no contrary choice is possible.

Theological determinism is rooted in the assumptions of divine foreknowledge, providence, and predestination. The foreknowledge problem is well known, running roughly as follows:

1. If God foreknows at T_1 that Joe will choose p at T_2, then it is impossible that Joe choose $\sim p$ at T_2.

2. If it is impossible that Joe choose $\sim p$ at T_2, then Joe is not free regarding p.

3. Therefore, if God foreknows at T_1 that Joe will choose p at T_2, then Joe is not free regarding p. (1 & 2)

Since, granting the traditional understanding of divine foreknowledge, the above syllogism can be applied to all future contingents, the argument is quite simply that divine foreknowledge and free choice are incompatible. This issue is compounded by the belief that all things depend ontologically on God for existence and movement; that history is meticulously ordered by divine decree; and that the salvation and damnation of souls is predetermined by God. Theological determinism could go the extra step of asserting that God himself operates out of necessity, thus espousing that everything (i.e., God and all he decrees) is absolutely necessary, or it could defend divine freedom and assert that determinism applies to the world only. Regardless of which route is chosen, both positions fall under the *theological determinism* heading so long as they concede that divine foreknowledge, decree, or providence negate the contrary choice of creatures.

Logical determinism unfolds in a manner similar to the foreknowledge problem with the important exception that logical determinism does not require God to make its case. The problem concerns the law of excluded middle, which states that propositions are either true or false. So the argument goes, if future contingents have an affirmative

truth value—regardless of whether a deity knows that truth value—then alternative outcomes are impossible, and if alternative outcomes are impossible, so is contrary choice.

With the various forms of determinism defined, we reach the complimentary terms "compatibilism" and "incompatibilism."[25] These terms concern the follow-up question: *If determinism is true, then is this state of affairs compatible or incompatible with free choice?* As their respective titles indicate, the compatibilist asserts that determinism describes a state of affairs that is compatible with free choice, while an incompatibilist maintains that the state of affairs described by determinism is incompatible with free choice.

Incompatibilism can be associated with one of two positions on free choice, namely, libertarianism or hard determinism.[26] Since incompatibilism embraces a strong disjunctive, *either free choice or determinism ($q \veebar r$)*, one end of the disjunctive must be accepted and the other rejected. Which position is taken indicates which end of the disjunctive the person accepts and which he rejects.

Hard determinism accepts the incompatibility of determinism and free choice, and rather than rejecting determinism, the hard determinist rejects freedom as an irrational concept that should not be applied to humans or any other beings. In short, the fact of determinism shows freedom and all it implies to be chimerical.

---

[25] My treatment of the contemporary incompatibilist/compatibilist divide draws on Robert Kane, "The Contours of the Contemporary Free Will Debate," in *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, ed. Robert Kane (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 11-26, as well as Honderich, "Determinism" and Taylor, "Determinism."

[26] My distinction between hard and soft determinism is based on the synopses in Taylor, "Determinism," 368; and Kane, "The Contemporary Free Will Debate," 27-32.

Libertarianism, by contrast, sees the incompatibility of freedom and determinism as indication that determinism is false. Since we have a clear sense that we do possess contrary choice, and our concepts of morality and justice hang on the accuracy of this sense, determinism must be rejected and freedom defended.

Given the rarity with which one finds hard determinists, I will use the term "incompatibilist" solely in reference to the libertarian position, though recognizing that an incompatibilist need not be a libertarian.

Compatibilism is straightforward and, unlike incompatibilism, is without sub-species, except perhaps in the form(s) of determinism it assumes. Regardless of why the compatibilist thinks choice is determined, the claim is the same: If freedom is properly defined, we see that freedom can co-exist with determinism.

The Principle of Alternative Possibility (henceforth PAP) is integral to the compatibilist-incompatibilist dispute and has been implicit in much of the foregoing. This principle identifies the central libertarian assumption that a free act is one that entails "alternative possibilities" or "could have been otherwise" or "was avoidable" or "could have been done otherwise." Robert Kane sets up the libertarian position thusly:

1. The existence of alternative possibilities (or the agent's power to do otherwise) is a necessary condition for acting freely, or acting "of one's own free will."

2. Determinism is not compatible with alternative possibilities (it precludes the power to do otherwise).[27]

---

[27] Kane, "The Contemporary Free Will Debate," 11.

The contemporary debate between compatibilism and incompatibilism centers on these two propositions. The incompatibilist is bound to defend both propositions, while the compatibilist is bound to dispute either one or both.

A typical libertarian defense uses the "consequence argument": If my choices are determined by prior causes, and those causes are traceable to prior causes, and so on, then the chain of causes that determine all of my choices can be traced to causes that are prior to any exercise of my will. If my choices are determined by causes that are prior to my will, then I have no control over my choices. Therefore, if I do have control over my choices, then those choices cannot be determined by prior causes but must be chosen in a way that satisfies PAP.

Compatibilism denies PAP, arguing that it suffices that we choose in accord with our desires. Take the hypothetical decision: Joe chooses *p*. The compatibilist points out that Joe chooses *p* because he desires *p*. When one asks whether Joe had the ability to choose ~*p*, the reply should be conditional: Yes, *if* Joe had desired ~*p*. Since Joe did not desire ~*p*, however, he did not choose ~*p*. The implication is that Joe is free to do as he pleases. He is free from constraint and coercion, and he has the raw capacity (say, the physical strength necessary) to perform either *p* or ~*p*. But what Joe desires is determined by factors outside his control. This fact, however, is irrelevant, according to the compatibilist. For even though Joe is determined to choose *p*, Joe's choosing meets the requirements of freedom properly defined: he has the capacity to do ~*p* if he so desires, and he is free from coercion and constraint regarding *p*. His willing is thus his own.

There is a third position on these matters that has emerged in recent years, namely, semi-compatibilism. This position is rooted in recent efforts to undermine PAP.

The two types of argument used are "character examples" and "Frankfurt-style examples" (the latter being named for Harry Frankfurt).[28] Because Frankfurt-style examples tend to be more persuasive, I will focus there.

Frankfurt-style examples attempt to demonstrate that moral responsibility does not require PAP. Let us imagine that a young man, Chas, sits among his peers in a classroom while his teacher rattles off questions to the class. And let us suppose that Raleigh, who sits next to Chas, has hooked electrodes up to Chas' brain. Using a remote control, Raleigh can hit a button and make Chas raise his hand. Raleigh, taking great delight in his ability to determine Chas' future, has determined that Chas will raise his hand to answer the next question posed by the teacher. However, Raleigh has also decided that he will refrain from hitting the button should Chas choose to raise his hand on his own. The next question comes and Chas chooses to raise his hand, so Raleigh leaves the remote untouched. What this scenario is intended to show is that the raising of Chas' hand does not satisfy PAP (Chas' hand would rise in either scenario); yet Chas is responsible for his action.

Semi-compatibilism is a position that has arisen in reaction to Frankfurt-style examples. The position holds that Frankfurt-style examples demonstrate the compatibility of determinism and moral responsibility, but they do not demonstrate the compatibility of determinism and freedom. The semi-compatibilist, being unconvinced that freedom and determinism are compatible, accepts hard determinism and rejects freedom as chimerical, but the semi-compatibilist presumes nonetheless that humans are responsible for their

---

[28] See Kane, "The Contemporary Free Will Debate," 15-8.

actions. This position is semi-compatibilist, rather than compatibilist, because it holds that only moral responsibility (not freedom) is compatible with determinism.

Semi-compatibilism is perhaps the one point at which contemporary discussion is completely novel; and thus semi-compatibilism will likely play no role in the chapters to follow. However, the Frankfurt-style examples on which it is built do have historical precedent worth mentioning.

Stoic fate, while often treated as a form of determinism, should be distinguished from contemporary denials of libertarian freedom, and when considering the difference between fate and determinism, Frankfurt-style examples are helpful. To draw out the distinction, I will highlight the great weakness in Frankfurt-style examples.

Using the scenario involving Chas and Raleigh, a careful examination shows that the example does not in fact undermine PAP. The example purports to show that because Chas' hand will rise regardless of what he chooses, PAP goes unsatisfied. However, this conclusion stands only if we limit "outcome" to Chas' hand. Taking into account the whole of the scenario, however, the two outcomes are very different. In the first outcome, four possibles obtain:

(1) Chas chooses to raise his hand.

(2) Chas' hand rises.

(3) Raleigh does not touch the remote.

(4) Chas is culpable for his action.

In the second outcome, only (2) fails to satisfy PAP, while (1), (3), and (4) all yield alternative possibilities:

(5) Chas choose not to raise his hand.

(6) Raleigh presses the button on his remote.

(7) Chas' hand rises.

(8) Chas is not culpable for his actions.

Such differences are significant, to say the least. In fact, when considering these differences, it becomes apparent that Frankfurt-style examples involve a sleight of hand. The above example assumes that Chas satisfies PAP *internally*—he can choose to raise his hand or not raise his hand—and this assumption is why his culpability is granted. The example then turns to Chas' inability to satisfy PAP *externally* in order to demonstrate that responsibility does not require PAP. Yet, it is only because PAP is satisfied internally that responsibility remains. Thus, the example fails to demonstrate the compatibility of responsibility and the absence of PAP as it claims. Quite the contrary, its employment of an internal satisfaction of PAP proves the opposite, namely, that even Frankfurt-style examples assume that PAP is required for moral culpability.

What Frankfurt-style examples are useful in illustrating, however, is the logic of Stoic fate and, by extension, Stoic ethics. Stoic ethics, in a nutshell, argue that all that happens around us and to us is fated, being woven by Zeus and the fates before our birth.[29] However, according to the Stoics, our internal, emotive response is a matter of libertarian freedom. Epictetus, for example, is quite clear that man is bound by fate, but he is equally clear that the will is free and cannot be not-free. Fate does not and cannot touch the free powers of choice, for *free* is the very nature of *will*: "like a good prince and a true father, [God] has placed [the] exercise [of our free faculties] above restraint, compulsion, or hindrance, and wholly within our own control; nor has he reserved a

---

[29] Cf. Epictetus, *The discourses,* 1.1; 1.14; 2.6; 2.14, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* vol. 131, ed. T. E. Page, et al., (Cambridge: Harvard Univesrity Press, 1967), 6-15; 100-105; 246-255; 306-315.

power even to himself, of hindering or restraining them."[30] As in Frankfurt-style

examples, the circumstances in which we find ourselves are fated—external scrutiny of

them does not satisfy PAP. But inwardly our response does satisfy PAP, and that is

precisely why we are culpable for our reaction to what befalls us.

     While semi-compatibilism may be far afield from the historical discussion of free

choice and providence, the distinction between fate and determinism, brought into sharp

relief by Frankfurt-style examples, is not. The former concerns the external satisfaction of

PAP, while the latter concerns the internal satisfaction of PAP. This distinction will prove

important when discussing Augustine's view of free choice and providence, which he

places in juxtaposition with Stoic fate, and which I will argue is the theological

antecedent to Leibniz's own view.

     Two lingering terminological issues remain that merit brief attention. The first

concerns the term discussed at the opening of this section, namely, "determinism." While

throughout this introduction I have used this term, I do so reluctantly. As any etymologist

can testify, the meanings of words change with time. "Determined," and by extension

"determinism," is one such word. The necessitarian connotations of this terminology are

foreign to medieval and early modern thought, arguably originating in the 18th century.[31]

Determinatio was once tied to final causality and the rational choices made in reference

to a given end—hence its literal rendering "concerning an end" (*de termino*). It was thus

linked with free choices, or self-determination, made in reference to specified ends—the

hallmark of the medieval view of freedom—not with the denial of free choice. Whether

---

[30] Epictetus, *The Discourses of Epictetus*, trans. George Long (New York: Scott-Thaw, 1903), vi.

[31] See "Determinisme," in *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, ed. André Lalande, 7th ed. (Paris: P.U.F., 1956), 221-24, esp. 221.

this matches Leibniz's usage remains to be seen. But for other purposes here, I will more often than not shy away from the word "determinism" in the chapters to follow, substituting instead "necessitarianism" as often as possible. Though, by the latter, I mean what contemporary literature labels determinism.

The final terminological issue I will address here concerns the words "free will." A careful reader may have noticed that I consistently substituted the words "free choice." This is based on the terminology of the literature from which Leibniz draws. While contemporary dialogue uses "free will" almost without exception, scholastic and later Reformed discussions use "will" (*voluntas*) in reference to the choosing faculty, while the question of freedom concerned the operation of choice, or in contemporary jargon, whether our choosing satisfies PAP. Hence the more classical literature uses *liberum arbitrium*, or "free choice." Given that Leibniz retains this phraseology, so will I.

With these terms before us, we can now turn to the meat of this project. I will begin with those interpretative assumptions at play in Leibniz studies that become questionable on a theological rereading of Leibniz. It is to these we now turn.

PART 1

CHALLENGING THE STATE OF THE QUESTION

CHAPTER 1

Interpreting Leibniz on Free Choice and Providence

German idealist F. W. J. Schelling once quipped that, "according to an ancient but by no means forgotten tradition, the idea of freedom is said to be entirely consistent with the idea of system, and every philosophy which makes claim to unity and completeness is said to end in denying freedom."[1] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz is, to many, the proverbial example of this tradition. The name *Leibniz* conjures thoughts of a rationalist who constructed a fanciful metaphysic filled with an infinity of souls—some sleeping, others wakeful—and which, in its final assessment, is the best of all possible worlds. As for the price Leibniz paid for such a world, some would argue it was the abandonment of free choice for both God and creatures in favor of a thoroughgoing necessitarian system, subject to charges of deism and Spinozism.

Leibniz supplies ample materials for those who would paint him as a necessitarian. One rather serious difficulty facing Leibnizian freedom is his claim, found at least as early as 1686, that all affirmative truth is analytic (C., 16-8; 518-23). That is to say, whether a truth is necessary or contingent, Leibniz maintains that the given predicate is contained within its subject. *Caesar crossed the Rubicon in 49 B.C.* is therefore an analytic truth in which the predicate, *crossing the Rubicon in 49 B.C.*, is in the subject, *Caesar*. To be clear, Leibniz understands the subject-predicate relationship to be such that the predicate *crossing the Rubicon in 49 B.C.* does not attach to Caesar at the

---

[1] *Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling Sämmtliche Werke,* 14 vols., ed. K. F. A. Schelling (Stuttgart and Augsburg: J. G. Cotta, 1856-61), vol. 7, 336. Translation taken from: F. W. J. Schelling, *Of Human Freedom*, trans. James Gutmann (Chicago: Open Court, 1936).

crossing of the Rubicon or after the crossing of the Rubicon; instead, this predicate, says Leibniz, is eternally within the very concept of the subject, Caesar (C., 19)—a position sometimes referred to as *superessentialism*.[2] One cannot help but ask: How can Caesar possibly be free with regard to crossing the Rubicon if Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon is a predicate eternally within the very notion of Caesar?

One could attempt to soften Leibniz's claim by suggesting that, by *predicate*, he simply means something true of the subject—which certainly fits the terminology, *prædico*.[3] Yet, Leibniz's phraseology works against this reading. The predicate is not true *of* the subject (genitive); it is *in* the subject (ablative) (*cujus prædicatum inest subjecto*) (C., 16). When looked at through the lens of the monadology, we see at least one very clear explanation for why Leibniz held this position. According to Leibniz, all substances are windowless and self-moving (E., 705). Just as pain is not secreted by one substance and absorbed by another but is internal to the subject, so it is with force. Substances do not transfer force to one another; force is innate in substance. Monads move themselves in accord with their perception of surrounding monads. Thus, the subject-predicate relationship of which Leibniz speaks is overtly ontological. The predicate is in the subject as part of its yet-to-be-manifest properties, just as a child's future height is in her while not yet fully actualized (cf. C., 19). If such is the case, how can Leibniz's understanding of choice be anything less than necessitarian?

---

[2] See, e.g., David Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism, Counterparts, and Freedom," in *Leibniz Critical and Interpretive Essays,* ed. Michael Hooker (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

[3] See "prædico" in Matthias Martinez, *Novum dictionarium tetraglotton: in quo voces Latinae omnes, & Graecae his respondentes, cum Gallica & Teutonica singularum interpretatione, ordine alphabetico proponuntur* (Amsterdam: Henricum Wetstenium & Rodolfum & Gerhardum Wetstenios, HFF., 1714); see also *A Latin Dicionary; founded on E. A. Andrew's edition of Freund's Latin-German Dictionary*, rev. Charlton T. Lewis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980; first edition: 1879), 1416.

Such difficulties only amplify the problems that emerge as readers explore Leibniz's view of the will. Leibniz is often understood to affirm an intellectualist model—the will necessarily follows the final judgment of the practical intellect (cf. E., 711; G., 4, 362; 7, 309-10; C., 20). His application of this model is typically understood to yield such a strong connection between reason and choice as to require psychological determinism in God, angels, and the blessed (i.e., the Saints in heaven). Unlike fallen humanity, these beings *know* the good, and their intellect, judging it as such, necessitates that they necessarily choose in accord with that judgment (as per psychological and ethical determinism). Hence, Leibniz is unabashed in affirming that such beings operate out of moral necessity (C., 21; G., 7, 309-10). Though one might take this conclusion to mean that, for Leibniz, fallen humanity is free because we may err in our judgment of the good, Leibniz argues the opposite. Our imperfect grasp of the good and our susceptibility to the pull of our passions makes us less free than those bound by moral necessity. For we are still moved by our dominant inclination, but, as fallen, that inclination may emerge from moral obligations, our passions, or some other inward movement (G., 6, 115-16). In the end, it seems that, for Leibniz, whether blessed or fallen, the will is always determined by the inward makeup of the acting agent (cf. G., 6, 129-32); the only question is whether it determines toward virtue or vice.

The necessitarian reading of this evidence finds extra footing in three additional features of Leibniz's writing on choice. First, Leibniz consistently rejects indifference as an impossible chimera (e.g., C., 25; G., 6, 127-30). Many readers, taking indifference to be integral to libertarian choice, see this rejection as an overt denial of libertarian freedom. Second, Leibniz uses mechanical analogies when arguing for the

predetermination of the will. When showing the chimerical nature of determination arising out of indetermination, Leibniz employs Archimedes' definition of equilibrium as equal weights at equal distances from a common centre (e.g., C., 518-23; cf. C., 26).[4] Such polemics give the impression that will, like a scale, must be mechanically determined in one direction or the other or not at all. Likewise, when explaining a determined will, Leibniz uses the analogy of a magnetic needle that takes pleasure in moving northward (G., 6, 130). The mechanical reading of these analogies is reinforced by the fact that Leibniz concludes by labeling humans "spiritual automatons" (*d'automate spirituel*) (G., 6, 131). Third, all of these anti-indifferentist inklings are undergirded by Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason. According to this principle, nothing happens without a reason. Though contingent truths may not be necessary in the sense that they are part of the definition of the subject—the way *unmarried* is predicated of *bachelor*—the principle of sufficient reason states that nothing happens in such a way that it is impossible to give a reason for why it occur thusly rather than otherwise (C., 25-6; G., 7, 301; E., 716). When combined, the foregoing appears to indicate that Leibniz understands choice to be the mechanical sum total of a concatenation of causes—be they physical, psychological, or some combination of both—which is precisely what Leibniz seems to state in portions of his text (cf. G., 6, 115-16). On such a reading, the agent may be self-moving and free from external coercion (C., 19; 25), but what the agent chooses is predetermined by factors outside his control.

The deterministic implications of Leibniz's philosophy are taken by many to worsen—if that were possible—when coupled with his accompanying theology.

---

[4] Cf. *The Works of Archimedes*, trans. T. L. Heath (London: C. J. Clay and Sons; Cambridge University Press, 1897), 189.

Leibniz's apparent psychological determinism is understood to be not only applicable to

God but in many ways more flagrant in reference to the deity. Leibniz, as mentioned,

states explicitly that God operates according to moral necessity. In fact, Leibniz goes so

far as to say that it is a matter of *physical necessity* that God should do everything in the

best possible way (C., 21; cf. G., 7, 309-10). Unlike creatures, God *knows* the good—

indeed, knows the best—and cannot fail to accomplish all things in the best possible

manner (G., 6, 127-8). Therefore, divine decision-making requires no deliberation (G., 6,

345-7, esp. 346). For the veracity of all affirmative truths, whether contingent or

necessary, is apprehended *a priori* by the deity (C., 17; 19; 25-6); hence, the divine

intellect apprehends the best, and the divine will cannot fail to do it (C., 21; G., 6, 127-8;

7, 309-10). While these assumptions are intended to assure readers that our world must be

the best possible world, they have in point of fact assured readers that Leibniz is a

necessitarian. If God decrees out of necessity, and what God decrees comes to pass, then

all is determined. And Leibniz himself declares as much: *Tout l'avenir est determiné,*

sans doute (G., 6, 134).[5] The conclusion appears inevitable. For Leibniz, our world is not

simply the best possible world; it is the only possible world if, by *possible,* we mean a

world God might bring to pass. We can here draw on the formulation of the problem as

laid bare by David Blumenfeld:

> (1) N(God exists).
>
> (2) N(If God exists, God wills what is best).
>
> (3) N(If God wills what is best, God actualizes BPW).
>
> (4) N(If God actualizes BPW, BPW actually exists).

---

[5] "Without doubt, all the future is determined."

(5) Hence, N(BPW actually exists). (From (1)-(4)).

(6) If (5) is true, then everything that occurs, occurs necessarily.

(7) Thus, everything that occurs, occurs necessarily. (From (5)-(6)).

(8) If everything that occurs, occurs necessarily, then no one ever acts freely.

(9) Therefore, no one ever acts freely. (From (7) and (8)).[6]

In light of such considerations, it is difficult to read Leibniz's talk of possible worlds as anything more than formal. Leibniz cannot be referring to real possibilities—things that might have come to pass but did not—for God is bound by moral and indeed physical necessity to create the best. Possible worlds can signify only logical or conceptually consistent worlds—that is, semantic universes that are free of subject-predicate conflict. Yet, from the standpoint of ontology, Leibniz's theology prevents these alternative "worlds" from ever coming into being (cf. G., 6, 128). From the perspective of ontic grounding in the First Cause, they are in fact impossible worlds.

Were Leibniz's view of divine "choice" not troublesome enough in its own right, his understanding of how divine decrees are executed appears to level a death blow to any hope of genuine freedom. As mentioned above, Leibniz understands monads to be "windowless"; they are not moved by force received from causal collision, but are self-moving, in accord with their perception of surrounding monads (E., 705). Were this all Leibniz said on the matter, the monadology would not pose too serious a problem. But Leibniz adds to this claim his doctrine of pre-established harmony. Monadic "interaction" requires neither causal collision (per mechanical philosophy), nor an infinite number of moment-to-moment divine miracles (per occasionalism). Instead, monadic interaction is a

---

[6] Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism, Counterparts, and Freedom," 104. In the above argument, BPW = *Best Possible World* and N = *Necessarily*.

mere appearance, displaying the eternal decrees of God. Like two clocks moving in

perfect synch, the corresponding movements of monads are a relative harmony of wholly

independent self-movements (G., 4, 498-500), and this harmony displays the wisdom and

precision of the monads' common craftsman. This world, this best of all possible worlds,

is therefore a series of infinite, harmonious movements, each of which gives the

impression of causal interaction. But this appearance is just that, an appearance produced

by the perfect harmony of the windowless monads that dance in accord with the eternal

decrees of God. All that was and is and will be resides within the monads, manifesting

itself in its proper time. It is as if monads were an orchestra, deaf to one another, but

following perfectly nonetheless their respective parts in a grand symphony, penned by a

common composer. While picturesque, this metaphysic leaves the reader to wonder how

Leibniz could possibly affirm free choice amid such a system.

      Throughout this chapter, we will see the various ways in which the above

difficulties are painted into the necessitarian portrait of Leibniz. As we will see, the above

considerations slowly come to light over the course of three centuries of Leibniz

interpretation, compounding into an increasingly persuasive case for Leibnizian

necessitarianism. While there are dissenting voices in the history of Leibniz

interpretation, voices that counter the broad trends I will outline in this chapter,[7] the

---

[7] Eighteenth century exceptions include Johann Jakob Brucker, *The History of Philosophy, from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the Present Century; Drawn up from Brucker's Historia Critica Philosophiæ. By William Enfield, LL.D.*, 2 vols. (London: printed for J. Johnson, 1791), vol. 2, 563-65; and William Jones, who, while not giving an extensive treatment of Leibniz on free choice, recognizes Leibniz's affirmation of divine concourse, and leaves the charge of necessitarianism in the conditional: see William Jones, *An Essay on the First Principles of Natural Philosophy: Wherein the Use of Natural means, or Second Causes, in the Oeconomy of the material world, is demonstrated from Reason, Experiments of Various Kinds, and the Testimony of Antiquity* (Oxford: printed at Clarendon Printing House and sold by S. Parker, D. Prince, et al., 1762), 21-22. Nineteenth century exceptions include Charles Porterfield Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology: As Represented in the Augsburg Confession, and in the History and Literature of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1871),

history of Leibniz interpretation can be outlined roughly as follows. In the 1700s Leibniz

is most frequently read as a necessitarian deist. In the 1800s the inklings that led to the

charge of necessitarianism are codified, giving way to an interpretive push to reduce

Leibniz's metaphysic to a veiled form of Spinozistic necessitarianism. In the early 1900s

this Spinozistic interpretation gains more sophisticated scholarly traction, but fails to

eliminate the influence of earlier readings. Following the explosion of Leibniz research in

the mid-twentieth century, current literature offers at least four interpretive headings

under which Leibniz can be placed, ranging from *libertarian* to *necessitarian*.

1. Leibniz Interpretation in the 1700s

Much of eighteenth century talk of Leibniz focuses on his mathematical

contributions, his views on science, or his contribution to burgeoning discussions

concerning space and time.[8] When focused on Leibniz's metaphysic proper, the

---

340; 511; and 770; but most notably Jean Félix Nourrisson, who clearly grasps Leibniz's distinction between necessity and contingency, his distinction between the certain and the necessary, his talk of hypothetical necessity, his doctrine of divine concourse, and so forth: see Jean Félix Nourrisson, *La philosophie de Leibniz* (Paris: L. Hachette, 1860), 268-86. Early twentieth century exceptions include Clement C. J. Webb, *A History of Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915), 169-70; and Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 9 vols. (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne LTD., 1958), vol. 4, 264-82, who seeks to temper the deterministic implications of Leibniz's views (see esp. 280-82). More contemporary exceptions include R. Cranston Paull, "Leibniz and the Miracle of Freedom," *Noûs* 26, no. 2 (1992): 218-35, who defends a libertarian reading of Leibniz; David Ray Griffin, *God, Power, and Evil: A Process Theodicy* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 131-49; and Michael J. Murray, "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge of Future Contingents and Human Freedom," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 55, no. 1 (1995): 75-108; "Spontaneity and Freedom in Leibniz," in *Leibniz: Nature and Freedom*, eds. Donald Rutherford and J.A. Cover (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 194-216, who defends a tempered compatibilist reading via the Thomist tradition.

[8] See, e.g., John Collins, *Commercium epistolicum D. Johannis Collins, et aliorum, de analysi promota, jussu Societatis Regiae in lucem editum* (London: J. Tonson, & J. Watts, 1722), 241-44; *Scriptores logarithmic; or, A Collection of Several Curious Tracts on the Nature and Construction of logarithms, Mentioned in Dr. Hutton's Historical Introduction to his New Edition of Sherwin's Mathematical Tablets: Together with Some Tracts on the Binomial Theorem and Other Subjects Connected with the Doctrine of Logarithms*, 6 vols. (London: J. Davis, 1791-1807), vol. 2, 438; *A New and General Biographical Dictionary; Containing an Historical and Critical Account of the Lives and Writings of the Most Eminent Persons in Every Nation; Particularly the British and Irish; from the Earliest Accounts of Time to the Present Period [etc.]*, 15 vols., rev. William Tooke, et al. (London: printed for G. G. and J.

discussion is often cursory in its assessment, or, if sustained, polemical in tone.
Nonetheless, we have sufficient material to compile a clear interpretive trend from this
period.

Passing commentary on Leibniz in the 1700s typically carries deistic suspicions.
As early as 1714, two years before Leibniz's death, Leibniz was accused of deism by the
Royal Society. More specifically, he was accused of having a purely transcendent deity,
who creates a world with which he is incapable of interacting. The contrast is between
Newton's theology and Leibniz's. So it was argued, the contrast between "these two
Gentlemen" is this: "The one [Newton] teaches that God (the God in whom we live and
move and have our Being) is Omnipresent; but not as a Soul of the World: the other
[Leibniz] that he is not the Soul of the World, but *INTELLIGENTIA SUPRAMUNDANA,*
an Intelligence above the Bounds of the World; whence it seems to follow that he cannot

Robinson, et al., 1798), vol. 11, 207-9; Adam Alexander, A summary of geography and history, both ancient and *modern; containing, an account of the political state, and principal revolutions of the most illustrious nations in ancient and modern times; [etc.]* (Edinburgh: printed for A. Strahan, et al., 1794), 61; Benjamin Martin, *Biographia Philosophica. Being an Account of the Lives, Writings, and Inventions, of the Most Eminent Philosophers and Mathematicians Who have flourished from the Earliest Ages of the World to the Present Time* (London: W. Owen, 1764), 385-90; Fontenelle (Bernard Le Bovier), *Oeuvres diverses de m. de Fontenelle, De l'Academie Françoise* (Antoine van Dole, 1736), vol. 5, 26; 30-7; 119-20; and 296-7; J. T. Desaguliers, *A course of experimental philosophy* (London: printed for A. Millar, et al., 1763), 280; *Literary memoirs of Germany and the north, being a choice collection of essays on the following interesting subjects, viz. alchemy, ... [etc.]. Done from the Latin and High-Dutch by a Society of Gentlemen*, 2 vols. (London: printed for J. Warcus; and J. Ross, 1759), vol. 1, 384; *Histoire de l'Académie royale des sciences et des belles lettres de Berlin* (Berlin: Haude et Spener, Libraires de la Cour & de l'Académie Royale, 1749), 139-79; Lord James Burnet Monboddo, *Antient Metaphysics: or, the Science of Universals. With an Appendix, Containing an Examination of the Principles of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy* (Edinburgh: printed for T. Caadell, London; and J. Balfour and Co. Edinburgh, 1779), 367ff.; Dennis De Coetlogon, *An universal history of arts and sciences: ... The whole extracted from the best authors in all languages, ... By ... Dennis De Coetlogon, ...* (London: printed by John Hart, 1745), 34; *The philosophical transactions (from the year 1732, to the year 1744) abridged, and disposed under general heads, the Latin papers being translated into English. By John Martyn, ...*, 2 vols. (London: printed for W. Innys, et al.*,* 1747), vol. 1, 236.

do any thing within the Bounds of the World, unless by an incredible Miracle."[9] No

explanation is offered for the reading, but the likely source of suspicion, given similar

charges in the period, is Leibniz's doctrine of pre-established harmony, specifically his

analogical defense of the doctrine using synchronized clocks. Taken at face value as a

description, not of substance "interaction," but of God-world relations, the deistic

implications are clear.[10]

Similar inklings can be seen toward the close of the 1700s, coming out of

Alexander Pope. In 1742, a series of letters passed between Louis Racine, Le Chevalier

De Ramsey, and Pope. Racine, in his well-known poem, *La religion*, suggests that Pope

aligns himself with the fatalism of Spinoza and the errors of the deists. No doubt what

Racine has in mind are the classic lines from Pope's essay:

> *All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;*
> *All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see;*
> *All Discord, Harmony not understood;*
> *All partial evil, universal good:*
> *And Spite of Pride, in erring Reason's Spite,*
> *One truth is clear,* WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.[11]

These lines typify how many, especially those in the 1700s, understood Leibniz's

theodicy, and such an understanding is plainly the object of François-Marie Voltaire's

---

[9] Sir Isaac Newston, "An Account of the Book Entitled Commercium Epistolicum Collinii Aliorum, De Analysipromota; Published by order of the Royal-Society, in relation to the Dispute between Mr. Leibnitz and Dr. Keill, about the Right of Invention of the Method of Fluxions, by some call'd the Differential Method," *The Royal Society of London, Philosophical Transactions (1683-1775)* 29, no. 342 (1714): 224.

[10] One additional explanation may be found in Laurence Sterne's, *Yorick's Meditations upon Various Interesting and Important Subjects* (London: printed for R. Stevens, 1760). Sterne uses the monadology as an explanation of divinization, which, if not unique to Sterne, may have linked Leibniz's thought with concerns reminiscent of Cicero (e.g., Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 2). See Sterne, *Yorick's Meditations*, 89-90.

[11] Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man* (Upsala: printed for L. G. Berglund, 1799), 11.

attack in *Candide, ou l'optimisme*.[12] Thus, many inferred from these lines that Pope was a

Leibnizian, and Racine was no exception. Ramsey wrote to Racine in Pope's defense,

arguing that Pope was a confessional Anglican,[13] and Racine soon called Pope to account

for whether the charges were valid. Pope denied the charges outright; and in the 1785

edition of *La religion,* Racine included the exchange of letters.[14] What is particularly

interesting about these letters is that none mention Leibniz directly; they reference only

fatalism and the errors of the Spinozists and the deists.[15] Yet, Pope, in his *The Poetical*

Works of Alexander Pope, with His Last Corrections, Additions, and Improvements

(1795)[16] includes his correspondence with Racine under the heading, "As some passages

in the Essay on Man have been suspecting of favouring the schemes of Leibniz and

Spinoza, [etc.]."[17] Evidently, Pope understood fate and deism to be synonymous with

Leibniz, so much so that "the schemes of Leibniz" constitutes sufficient shorthand.

Tying Leibniz together with determinism and deism was not peculiar for the

eighteenth century. And, in more lengthy and openly polemical treatments of Leibniz's

thought, we find the explanation for the deism charge and why this charge presumes

determinism as well. Leonhard Euler is an excellent example. In a series of letters

---

[12] Voltaire, *Candide, ou L'optimisme* (London, 1759).

[13] Ramsey was not the only one to jump to Pope's defense. William Warburton argued that Pope never read Leibniz and certainly did not endorse him. See William Warburton, *A vindication of Mr. Pope's Essay on man, from the misrepresentations of Mr de Crousaz, ... By the author of The divine legation of Moses demonstrated. In six letters* (London: printed for J. Robinson, 1740), 115.

[14] See Louis Racine, *La religion, poëme; par Monsieur Racine, De l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres*, 2 vols. (London: La Veuve Desaint, 1785), 299-309.

[15] See Racine, *La religion*, 299; 301; 303; 306.

[16] Alexander Pope, *The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope, with His Last Corrections, Additions, and Improvements. From the Text of Dr. Warburton. With the Life of the Author.*, 2 vols. (London: printed for C. Cooke, 1795).

[17] Pope, *The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope,* vol. 1, 243 (emphasis added).

discussing Leibniz's pre-established harmony and later philosophical developments by

Christian Wolff, it becomes evident that the doctrine of pre-established harmony was

understood to be overtly deistic and necessitarian in nature. Alluding to Leibniz's

analogy of synchronized clocks which sparked the deistic reading, Euler argues that, if

the movements of the machine which is our body are as necessary as the swinging of

pendulum, then, when a thief engages in thievery, the movements of his body are also

wholly necessary. Thus, to be upset with the thief for his thievery makes as much sense

as being upset with a clock for showing it is 9 o'clock.[18] Despite the best efforts of

Leibniz and Wolff, whom Euler treats with little distinction, Euler is convinced that this

difficulty remains: without free choice, one cannot judge another's actions by which they

are just or criminal, for all actions are necessary.[19]

These same sentiments are echoed by one J. Th. C. of Wirtembergh, in his "*The*

Uses of the Leibnitian *and* Wolfian *Philosophy in Divinity*":

> Thus it appears that the Power of acting, so much talked of by *Leibniz* and his
> Followers, resolves at last into a mere *spiritual Mechanism*, if I may use that
> Expression, the Soul being really necessitated to have successively the Chain of
> Ideas allotted to it, without being able to alter them; just as a Clock is necessitated
> to shew and to strike successively all the Hours of the Day; since, according to
> *Leibniz*, the Will has no share in the Ideas we have.[20]

The author admits that, "Notwithstanding all this [Leibniz] endeavours to shew that the

Soul is really free";[21] but the author's own assessment is clear: "How this is consistent

---

[18] Leonhard Euler, *Lettres a une princesse d'allemagne sur divers sujets de physique et de philosophie* (London: La Société Typographique, 1775), 17.

[19] Euler, *Lettres de physique et de philosophie*, 19-20.

[20] J. Th. C. of Wirtembergh, "Philosophiæ Leibnitianæ & Wolphianæ Usus in Theologia, per præcipua Fidei capita: Præmittitur Disseratio de Ratione & Revelatione, de Natura & Gratia," in *Historia Litteraria: Or, An Exact and Early Account of the Most Valuable Books Published in the Several Parts of Europe*, ed. Archibald Bower (London: N. Prevost, 1732), vol. 4, no. 20, 196.

[21] *Historia Litteraria*, vol. 4, no. 20, 196.

with Liberty and Free-will, and with the *Power of acting* which *Leibniz* and his Followers

suppose the Soul enjoys, I don't understand."[22]

Such readers home in on Leibniz's talk of man as *d'automate spiritual* (e.g., G., 6,

131), seeing this language as an overtly mechanical description of humanity, and

confirmation that Leibniz's clockwork analogy for pre-established harmony applies to the

human machine. The inevitable conclusion, as articulated by François Aubert, is that,

while Leibniz retains the word *liberté*, in light of the doctrine of pre-established harmony,

there can be no doubt as to the implications for the content of this word: *Il me semble que

l'annéantissement de la liberté est une conséquence naturelle du système Leibnitien.*[23]

Such interpretive trends make evident two very closely related features of early

Leibnizian interpretation. First, Leibniz's description of pre-established harmony as a

clockwork was taken quite literally. Rather than seeing Leibniz's analogy of

synchronized clocks as an explanation of body-soul "interaction,"[24] Leibniz's opponents

took him to be asserting a more global description of the world and God's relationship

thereto. And this was ultimately taken as indicative of a deistic clockwork universe,

which operates without divine interaction or interruption. In fact, the mechanical

precision of our world undermines the very possibility, and indeed reasonability, of God

intervening in it. This led to the second feature, namely, that humans, as part of this

---

[22] *Historia Litteraria*, vol. 4, no. 20, 195.

[23] "It seems to me that the annihilation of liberty is a natural consequence of the Leibnizian system." François Aubert, *Entretiens sur la nature de l'ame des bêtes* (A. Basle, 1760), 294.

[24] Johann Jakob Brucker was one of the few in his day to recognize that Leibniz was not offering a deistic analogy for the God-world relationship but explaining mind-body interaction. See Brucker, *The History of Philosophy*, vol. 2, 565.

clockwork, and indeed as clockworks themselves, are bound by mechanical necessity. In short, we are spiritual machines.[25]

Outside of the deist-determinist reading of pre-established harmony, an additional factor at work in eighteenth century interpretation was the burgeoning tendency of the period to think of libertarian choice as requiring freedom of indifference. As mentioned in the opening of this chapter, Leibniz rejects indifference as an impossible chimera. Such a stance came to be seen as requiring some form of determinism—be it psychological, physical, or otherwise. The eighteenth century tendency to read *intellective preference* as *determinism* can be found both negatively among supporters of indifferentism, such as the aforementioned J. TH. C. of Wirtembergh,[26] as well as positively among figures, such as Anthony Collins, who himself embraces compatibilistic determinism, and thus applauds Leibniz for his apparent compatibilism.[27] I will focus on negative interpreters here, as these are more prominent in the period. Two good examples of this tendency are Voltaire and Thomas Reid.

While Voltaire is best known for his attack on Leibniz's theodicy in *Candide*, he offers more direct and analytic engagement with Leibniz's thought in other works. In his late work, Voltaire's confidence in libertarian freedom would be shaken, specifically by

---

[25] See Aubert, *Entretiens sur la nature de l'ame des bêtes*, 294; Euler, *Lettres de physique et de philosophie*, 17; *Historia Litteraria*, vol. 4, no. 20, 195-6. See also Marquis d' Argens, *New memoirs establishing a true knowledge of mankind, by discovering the affections of the heart, and the operations of the understanding, ... By the Marquis d'Argens, ... with letters from the Baron de Spon, ... two novels, Spanish and French; and ... Thoughts on the art of beautifying the face. By Mademoiselle Cochois, ...*, 2 vols. (London: printed for D. Browne; R. Hett; and A. Millar, 1747), vol. 2, 208-12.

[26] *Historia Litteraria*, vol. 4, no. 20, 197-8.

[27] See Anthony Collins, *A Philosophical Inquiry concerning Human Liberty* (London: printed for R. Robinson, 1735), 30ff.

the work of Collins,[28] but prior to this, he displays a wariness of Leibnizian freedom, common in the period. In Voltaire's *The Metaphysics of Sir Isaac Newton*,[29] we find his discussion of "the extreme Difficulty of reconciling Liberty with this pre-established Harmony."[30] The text displays clear evidence of an indifferentist's distrust of intellective preference. Voltaire places at juxtaposition Newton's *free* God and Leibniz's God who acts according to sufficient reason. Though aware of Leibniz's complaint that, for indifferentists such as Newton and Clarke, God's will is capricious and irrational, Voltaire's sympathies lie unwaveringly with the Newtonians, who see Leibniz's God as bound by the principle of sufficient reason, determined by that reason, and constrained in choice.[31]

In "Dialogue XVII: On Curious Subjects," Voltaire makes plain that he does not see Leibnizian freedom as the ability to choose between two possibles, but as freedom to act in accord with one's essence.[32] It is clear that Voltaire arrives at this conclusion because, for Leibniz, "liberty of indifference is a term void of meaning."[33] Without indifference, Voltaire can conceive of no other definition of freedom than the unrestrained liberty to actualize what lies within. In other words, the agent is free to act as

---

[28] See James O'Higgins, "Introduction," 7-8, in *Determinism and Freewill: Anthony Collins' A Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Human Liberty* (Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff/The Hague, 1976).

[29] Voltaire, *The Metaphysics of Sir Isaac Newton: or, a Comparison between the Opinions of Sir Isaac Newton and Mr. Leibnitz*, trans. David Erskine Baker (London: printed for R. Dodsley; and sold by M. Cooper, 1747). For the original see, Voltaire, *La Métapysique de Neuton ou Parallèle des Sentimens de Neuton et de Liebnitz* (Amsterdam: Jacques Desbordes, 1740).

[30] Voltaire, *The Metaphysics of Sir Isaac Newton*, 44.

[31] See Voltaire, *The Metaphysics of Sir Isaac Newton*, 19-21.

[32] Voltaire, *Philosophical, Literary, and Historical Pieces*, 2nd ed., trans. W. S. Kenrick (London: printed for Fielding and Walker, 1780), 411-2.

[33] Voltaire, *Philosophical, Literary, and Historical Pieces*, 412.

she pleases, but what she pleases is determined by factors outside her control, most notably her own nature. In both his direct treatment of Leibniz and elsewhere, Voltaire makes plain that, to his mind, libertarian freedom requires indifference, and without indifference one is forced down the road of determinism.[34]

Thomas Reid displays similar leanings to those of Voltaire. Reid recognizes Leibniz's favoring of the "schoolmen" in his opposition to indifference, as well as the importance of the principle of sufficient reason to this opposition.[35] Yet, Reid takes this principle to carry overtly necessitarian implications: "The determination of the will is an event for which there must be a sufficient reason, that is, something previous, which was necessarily followed by that determination, and could not be followed by any other determination; therefore it was necessary."[36] This, says Reid, is the logical fruit of the principle, as is its accompanying denial of indifference. Of this fruit any who embrace the principle must eat. Reid goes on to complain that Leibniz offers no proof for the principle of sufficient reason by which he undermines indifference—no proof, that is, other than Archimedes's definition of equilibrium. And, like others of his day, Reid takes this proof at its mechanical face-value: "[T]o apply this reasoning to a man, is to take for granted that the man is a machine, which is the very point in question."[37]

To be fair, Reid admits that the principle of sufficient reason—a principle he finds vague—could be interpreted three different ways, only two of which require

---

[34] See Voltaire, *Philosophical, Literary, and Historical Pieces*, 14-20.

[35] Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* (Edinburgh: printed for John Bell, and G. G. J. & J. Robinson, London, 1788), 334-5.

[36] Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, 335.

[37] Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, 336.

necessitarianism.[38] Nonetheless, Reid takes Leibniz's rejection of indifference to be a clear indication that he favors a necessitarian version of the principle; and so as to leave no doubt, Reid goes on to echo the charge of clockwork deism, leveled by the Royal Society, et al.[39] Reid, like others in his day, was convinced that Leibniz's rejection of indifference implied a mechanical view of choice, which was part of a much larger mechanical worldview. The implication, as articulated in *Essays on the Intellectual and Active Powers of Man,* was clear: in Leibniz's system there is an "irresistible necessity of all human actions."[40]

Figures such as Voltaire and Reid demonstrate the tendency of the eighteenth century to move decisively away from the older views of the scholastics, which presume that humans have intellective preference, and embrace instead the later innovation of freedom as indifference. Hence, to the minds of such interpreters, if Leibniz sides with the schoolmen, as he certainly does, the implication is none other than determinism. The newer models of freedom embraced by such interpreters leaves no hermeneutic room for *both* intellective preference *and* libertarian choice. Libertarian choice is either indifference or not at all. Leibniz's overt attacks on indifference coupled with his mechanical polemics made the implications undeniable to the minds of such readers. For Leibniz, choice is a set of mechanical, psychological inevitabilities.

One last feature of eighteenth century interpretation worth mentioning is that indifferentist readers saw quite clearly that their determinist charges could not be limited

---

[38] See Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, 336-7.

[39] Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, 338-39.

[40] Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual and Active Powers of Man*, 3 vols. (Dublin: printed for Byrne, and J. Milliken, 1790), vol. 1, 264.

to human choice. If intellective preference equals necessitarianism, then Leibniz's God is just as determined as humans. Defenders of indifference recognized this full well. Therefore, one accusation that emerges in passing in the eighteenth century in Voltaire, Reid, et al. is that there is a real sense in which, for Leibniz, our world is the only possible world. Leibniz may speak of God choosing from among many possible worlds, but, in the end, if God is bound by moral necessity and determined by his psychological makeup, the implication follows: the only truly possible world is our own. All others are incompatible with divine reason and will, and are thus ontologically groundless and impossible.[41]

2. Leibniz Interpretation in the 1800s

Moving into the 1800s, we find that the underlying assumptions of the 1700s continue, and thus a certain continuity of interpretation can be found between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Examples of this interpretive continuity include Richard Falckenberg, Francis Bowen, and Alfred Weber. All three of these readers share with one another and the 1700s the assumptions that (a) Leibniz's pre-established harmony implies a deistic God-world relationship, (b) Leibniz's related view of free choice, contra indifference, is deterministic, and (c) God's choice to create our world and all that it contains falls to the realm of necessity and is more properly understood as the only truly possible world.

Bowen, Falckenberg, and Weber each take Leibniz's understanding of the God-world relationship to be overtly deistic. Bowen, for example, calls Leibniz's world a

---

[41] See, e.g., Voltaire, *The Metaphysics of Sir Isaac Newton*, 19-20; Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, 335-37; see also Marquis d' Argens, *New memoirs*, 178-82.

"machine";[42] and, drawing on Leibniz's clockwork analogy, offers unblushingly deistic interpretation of the implications: "In the view of Leibnitz, ours is a mechanical universe, wound up, once for all, at the creation, and manifesting the perfections of its author by never afterwards needing his intervention or aid, in order to do perfectly its destined work."[43] Echoing interpreters of the 1700s, there is no possibility or need for divine interaction with the world. Falckenberg and Weber, in like manner, offer this same interpretation of Leibniz's worldview, both homing in on the same clock analogy.[44] Interestingly, Weber ignores Leibniz's affirmation of divine concourse, setting pre-established harmony in juxtaposition with this scholastic doctrine,[45] while Falckenberg recognizes Leibniz's intent to preserve divine concourse. For Falckenberg, however, Leibniz's affirmation of concourse is simply an inexplicable anomaly. Concourse presumes an intimate God-world relationship in which God upholds the world, supplying perpetual being to it, while pre-established harmony excludes God-world interaction entirely.[46]

As for the implications for free choice, Bowen, Falckenberg, and Weber affirm the necessitarian reading of the 1700s. All three take the mechanical analogy of the world, with its necessitarian connotations, to apply just as mechanically to human

---

[42] Francis Bowen, *Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Schopenhauer and Hartmann,* 9th ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), 114-5.

[43] Bowen, *Modern Philosophy,* 117.

[44] Richard Falckenberg, *History of Modern Philosophy from Nicolas of Cusa to the Present Time*, 3rd English ed. from 2nd German ed., trans. A. C. Armstrong, Jr. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1897), 275 (English first edition: 1888; English second edition: 1892); Alfred Weber, *History of Philosophy,* trans. Frank Thilly (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), 354-5.

[45] Weber, *History of Philosophy,* 355.

[46] Falckenberg, *History of Modern Philosophy*, 277.

choice.[47] And Falckenberg and Weber are clear that they take true choice to require

indifference; thus, Leibniz's defense of intellective preference over against freedom of

equipoise requires a form of determinism.[48] The implications for Leibniz's view of

creation, at least for Bowen and Weber, move explicitly in the direction suggested in the

1700s by Voltaire, Reid, et al., namely, that ours is the only possible world. Weber

begrudgingly admits that Leibniz has a doctrine of creation, but he thinks it clear that

both God's willing and what occurs in our world as a result are bound by necessity;[49] and

Bowen goes so far as to suggest that, despite Leibniz's distinction between necessary and

existential truths, God's act of creation and what he chooses to create falls under the

category of necessary truths among the ranks of mathematics.[50]

Numerous other interpreters appear in the 1800s, each of whom, while not

rehearsing all the staples of the eighteenth century necessitarian reading, are nonetheless

unambiguous as to their deterministic understanding of Leibniz. And their understanding

is more or less reflective of the deterministic reading of the previous era.[51] Yet, within

this next generation of interpreters, there appear three new features of Leibniz

interpretation, which deserve attention.

---

[47] See Bowen, *Modern Philosophy,* 106-8; Falckenberg, *History of Modern Philosophy*, 270-80; and Weber, *History of Philosophy,* 359-60.

[48] See Falckenberg, *History of Modern Philosophy*, 274; and Weber, *History of Philosophy,* 359-60.

[49] See Weber, *History of Philosophy,* 360.

[50] Bowen, *Modern Philosophy,* 108; and 115.

[51] See, e.g., Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *History of Modern Philosophy in France* (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1899), 118; and Wilhelm Max Wundt, *Ethics: An Investigation of the Facts and Laws of the Moral Life*, trans. Margaret Floy Washburn (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1897), 97-9. See also Friedrich Ueberweg, *History of Philosophy from Thales to the Present Time*, 2 vols. (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Co., 1876), vol. 2, 116, wherein Ueberweg, after offering one of the more charitable and well-nuanced readings of Leibniz of the 1800s, identifies Leibniz as the rightful source of later Leibnizian-Wolffian determinism.

The first can be seen in Henry Lewes, for example, who homes in on Leibniz's claim that all truths are analytic. This feature of Leibniz's thought received far less attention in the eighteenth century than pre-established harmony and Leibniz's rejection of indifference. Yet, Lewes highlights Leibniz's analytic view of truth in order to argue that Leibniz ultimately destroys the distinction between necessary and contingent truths. According to Lewes, it follows from this claim that, for Leibniz, all is necessary.[52]

The second addition to Leibniz interpretation in the 1800s is the expansion of freedom of indifference to include moral indifference. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, there had been a resurgence in semi-Pelagianism—or at least what was perceived to be semi-Pelagianism—among the latitudinarians;[53] and, according to Immanuel Kant, one of the positions taken by latitudinarians concerning humanity's moral nature was that we are morally neutral, able to determine ourselves toward either good or evil.[54] This view was upheld by Pelagius, and was thought by him to be a necessary requisite of free choice.[55] In the eighteenth century, this Pelagian assumption was added to the more general leaning toward indifferentism, and was brought to bear on Leibniz interpretation by readers such as Schelling. Schelling would go beyond former indifferentists, arguing that not only is indifference required for free choice but *moral*

---

[52] See George Henry Lewes, *The History of Philosophy from Thales to Comte*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1867), vol. 2, 273-4; and 278.

[53] Concerning the latitudinarians and the charge of semi-Pelagianism, see Donald Greene, "Latitudinarianism and Sensibility: The Genealogy of the 'Man of Feeling' Reconsidered," *Modern Philology* 75, no. 2 (1977): 159-183.

[54] Immanuel Kant, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* in *Kants gesammelte Schriften,* ed. Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences (Berlin: Georg Reimer; Walter deGruyter & Co., 1900-), 6:22.

[55] See, e.g., Pelagius, *Epistola ad Demetriadem Virginem* (PL 30: 16a-46c, and PL 33:1099b-1120).

indifference is required.[56] The inkling that moral necessity is contrary to true freedom

was a tacit assumption of some authors in the eighteenth century who, as evidence of

Leibniz's determinism, cite passages in which Leibniz speaks of moral necessity; but the

assumption was far less pronounced. In the nineteenth century, however, the charge

became explicit: *moral necessity is incompatible with libertarian free choice.* Given

Leibniz's affinities with Augustine's claim that choice between good and evil is a

defective form of freedom, inferior to that of God and the blessed,[57] necessitarian readers

of Leibniz took his affirmation of moral necessity to confirm his denial of free choice.

The third and final addition to nineteenth century Leibniz interpretation worth

noting is also the most unique feature of the period, namely, the emergence of a

Spinozistic rendering of Leibniz's metaphysic. As mentioned above, many within the

1700s took the logical implication of Leibniz's system to be that God himself operates by

necessity and thus our world is the only possible world. Voltaire gives hints that, if a

being's acts are the manifestation of essence, then the supreme deity must make actual all

that is possible and whatever is not actual is impossible.[58] Some readers in both the 1700s

and 1800s hint in the direction that Leibniz's view of creation is panentheistic.[59] Weber

and Falckenberg, playing on these inklings, come remarkably close to accusing Leibniz

---

[56] See, e.g., F. W. J. von Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, trans. Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 82-83 (suggested to have been written either 1833-34 or 1836-37—see ix). For the original, see, F. W. J. von Schelling, "Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie,"in *Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling Sämmtliche Werke*.

[57] Cf., e.g., Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 14.11 (PL 41: 418-20).

[58] Voltaire, *Philosophical, Literary, and Historical Pieces*, 411-2.

[59] E.g., Brucker, *The History of Philosophy*, vol. 2, 563; and Ueberweg, *History of Philosophy*, vol. 2, 111. Sertillanges also hints in this direction in the 1900s: see Antonin Gilbert Sertillanges, *Le Problème du Mal L'histoire*, 2 vols. (Paris: Aubier, Éditions Montaigne, 1948), 236.

of Spinozism,[60] and Weber goes so far as to suggest that Spinozism was likely Leibniz's

hidden or esoteric meaning.[61] But in all such cases, interpreters stop short of accusing

Leibniz of Spinozism, recognizing that this may be a logical trajectory and perhaps a

hidden intent, but it is ultimately not on the surface of Leibniz's writings. Beginning in

the nineteenth century, however, these inklings congeal into unveiled charges of

Spinozism, as readers argue that Leibniz's view of choice makes "creation" more akin to

a necessitarian, panentheistic emanation.[62]

One of the first figures to expound this reading of Leibniz in unambiguous terms

is Schelling. In *On the History of Modern Philosophy*,[63] Schelling makes plain that, to his

mind, Leibniz's divergence from Spinoza is no divergence at all. Hence Schelling's

suspicion emerges: "[O]ne would do the clever man an injustice if one considered his

doctrine of monads to be more than a hypothesis which he thought up, perhaps only to

oppose something different for a time to Spinozism, in order, so to speak, to divert the

---

[60] See Falckenberg, *History of Modern Philosophy*, 276-7; Weber, *History of Philosophy,* 347; and 359-60.

[61] Weber, *History of Philosophy,* 360.

[62] E.g., Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 77-83; cf. Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena*, trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Oxford, 2001), vol. 1, 6-8 (first published in 1851), for the original see, Schopenhauer, "Parerga und Paralipomena," in Sämtliche Werke: Textkritisch bearbeitet und herausgegeben, 5 vols., ed. Hans-Wolfgang Freiherr von Löhneysen (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961-5), vols. 4-5; and perhaps Friedrich Ueberweg, who, while recognizing that Leibniz's theodicy presumes free choice (113), lumps Leibniz in with the determinism of later Leibnizians, such as Christian Wolff and, without correction or qualification, Johann Joachim Lange (1670-1744), "who was the cause of Wolff's expulsion from Halle, [and] sought … to demonstrate the Spinozistic and atheistic character of the Wolffian doctrine and the danger with which it was fraught for religion; he took especial offence at the doctrine of Determinism taught by Wolff." See Ueberweg, *History of Philosophy*, vol. 2, 116; cf. also vol. 2, 111.

[63] F. W. J. von Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, ix.

world with it."[64] This quote sets the tone for the direction Schelling would push Leibniz's metaphysic at every turn.

Schelling emphasizes Leibniz's talk of God as *substantia originaria*, of monads as *productiones* and *derivatae*, and his imagery of "monads aris[ing] by continual *flashes of lightning*, or *storms* of the divinity."[65] Such terms and imagery, argues Schelling, point decisively toward emanationism. Leibniz's emanationism, however, follows from God while remaining in God; "his doctrine can be called an immanent doctrine of emanation."[66] To Schelling's mind, this explains the coupling of the immanence of concourse with the pre-established harmony of the monads. And, according to Schelling, when considering the pre-established harmony of these monads in the human person, Leibniz's veiled Spinozism comes to light: "[C]an everyone see here Spinoza's proposition in a stunted form? ... Spinoza says: the soul is nothing more than the immediate concept of the body, in the place of 'concept' Leibniz put the far less meaningful: power of thought (*Vorstellkraft*)."[67] For Schelling, the implication is clear, "[W]e can primarily regard Leibnizianism only as a stunted Spinozism."[68]

This Spinozism, in Schelling's estimate, is key to a proper reading of Leibniz's theodicy as well. For "if the *Theodicy* is properly understood it still cannot appear as really contradicting the Spinozist system, but only as a moderating and accommodating

---

[64] Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 78.

[65] Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 77.

[66] Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 78.

[67] Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 79.

[68] Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 79.

interpretation of it."[69] Schelling's Spinozistic reading of the theodicy is two-tiered. First, he sees Leibniz's treatment of evil as reducible to the inevitable metaphysical evil of finitude.[70] Second, Schelling turns to God's "willing" of this world. Schelling, though recognizing that Leibniz distinguishes intellect and will in God and does so to preserve free relationality, thinks it is clear that Leibnizian choice is the actualizing of one's essence, per Voltaire's reading. Thus, while Leibniz may speak of God "deciding" to create this world, "does not this decision as well belong finally to the nature of God, could He deny Himself it? Obviously not. The decision was, then, a necessary one in view of God Himself."[71] Picking up on Leibniz's talk of moral necessity, Schelling argues, "[I]f the moral necessity of choosing the good, and, in certain conditions, the best, belongs to the *nature*, to the *essence* (*Wesen*) of God, as Leibniz maintains, then this is only an attempt to mediate and make comprehensible the necessity with which, as Spinoza says, everything flows from the divine essence, not, though, an attempt to remove that necessity."[72]

Leibniz interpretation in the 1800s thus moves well beyond the mere charge of a mechanical view of man and world that carry deterministic-deistic implications. Interpreters add to the catalog of Leibnizian ills Leibniz's talk of moral necessity and his analytic view of truth; and, in figures such as Schelling, inklings of Spinozistic necessitarianism develop into full fledged charges of Spinozism. With these

---

[69] Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 81.

[70] See Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 80-1.

[71] Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 82.

[72] Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 82; see also 83. Cf. Marion le Roy Burton, *The Problem of Evil: A Criticism of the Augustinian Point of View* (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1909), 185. Burton also takes the Augustinian view of evil as privation to necessitate the falling of finite substances.

developments in the nineteenth century, Leibniz is moved from a mere deterministic deist to an advocate of Spinozistic necessitarianism and panentheism. This is perhaps the peak of the necessitarian rendering of Leibniz's thought within this interpretive history. Although the twentieth century would soften this rendering to a point, it would not do so immediately.

3. Early-20th-Century Leibniz Interpretation

In the early 1900s, the Spinozistic reading would advance even further in scholarly support than it had in the previous century. This embellished version would employ Leibniz's analytic view of truth, and use his claim that all possibles strain toward existence (G., 7, 303) as a wedge, arguing against a voluntaristic view of God's act of creation. In this form it would gain even more respectable scholarly traction, specifically in the well-known exchange between Bertrand Russell and Louis Couturat.[73]

In Russell's early appraisals of Leibniz, he defends a relatively charitable compatibilist reading.[74] In standard fashion, Russell identifies Leibniz's two principles, contradiction and sufficient reason, and distinguishes their respective relationships to necessary and contingent truths. Rather than labeling both as analytic, however, Russell identifies the former as analytic and the latter as synthetic: "As regards the range of analytic judgments, Leibniz held that all the propositions of Logic, Arithmetic and

---

[73] My synopsis of Couturat's view is based on Louis Couturat's "Sur la Métaphysique de Leibniz (avec un opuscule inédit)," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 10, no. 1 (1902): 1-25. Quotations and citations refer to the translation of this work "On Leibniz's Metaphysics" found in *Leibniz: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Harry G. Frankfurt (New York City: Anchor Books, 1972).

[74] Bertrand Russell's appraisal of Leibniz's thought appears in both Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945); and Bertrand Russell, *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1937). Quotations and citations to *A Critical Exposition* in what follows are to the second edition: Bertrand Russell, *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz with an Appendix of Leading Passages* (London: Routledge, 1997).

Geometry are of this nature, while all existential propositions, except the existence of God are synthetic."[75] E. M. Curly characterizes Russell's early position thusly: "[I]t seems clear that necessary truths carry no commitment to the existence of anything, whereas contingent propositions are related in some special way to existence and time."[76] Russell was convinced that, unless all of history is demonstrable in a way akin to the ontological argument, we must hold that existential truths (save "God exists") are synthetic, even though Russell was unable to offer direct evidence from Leibniz's texts in support of this conviction. As for how synthetic truths come to pass, Russell recognizes Leibniz's claim that not all possibles are compossible,[77] and attributes to divine "freedom" which compossibles are actualized.[78] Of course, Russell was convinced that, by "freedom," Leibniz assumes a type of psychological determinism in both God and creatures: "The actions of free spirits hold a peculiar place in relation to necessity. Not only do their states, in so far as they are the results of previous states, have only hypothetical necessity, but the consequence itself has only hypothetical necessity, as involving a psychological law which the spirits are not compelled to obey, though they always do obey it."[79]

In response to the work of Couturat, who brought to light numerous texts that were previously unavailable, Russell would retract his early contention that necessary truths are analytic while contingent truths are synthetic as well as his compatibilistic take

---

[75] Russell, *Critical Exposition*, 16. For Russell's full assessment, see 16-24.

[76] E. M. Curley, "The Root of Contingency" in *Leibniz: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Harry G., Frankfurt (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1972), 73.

[77] Russell, *Critical Exposition*, 66f.

[78] Russell, *Critical Exposition*, 68.

[79] Russell, *Critical Exposition*, 69; see also 191-202.

on Leibniz's talk of God creating.[80] Couturat corrects Russell's division between analytic truths and existential truths, noting that, for Leibniz, "The principle of identity states: every identity (analytic) proposition is true. The principle of reason affirms, on the contrary: every true proposition is an identity (analytic)."[81] This, Couturat argues, is the basis of the entire monadology. With even contingent predicates residing in the notion of the subject, the very notion of a monad includes its past, present, and future; in its own way it reflects all successive states of the universe, and this yields the pre-established harmony: "In a word, it is the entire *Monadology* which Leibniz thus progressively derives from the principle of reason and which he presents in rational order and in proper perspective."[82] Couturat corrects Russell by name, noting that it is undeniable in light of (then) newly published texts that, in Leibniz's view, contingent truths are not synthetic but just as analytic as necessary truths.[83] Couturat argues that Leibniz thinks he escapes necessitarianism by affirming that, despite their analytic character, contingent truths are not reducible to identity claims. And thus, while contingent truths are analytic, they are not finitely analytic the way necessary truths are—that is, they cannot be broken down to more basic truths. In a contingent truth, then, the predicate is in the subject in such a way that an opposing predicate could be in the subject without yielding contradiction.[84]

---

[80] See Russell's reviews of Couturat's work in "Recent Work on the Philosophy of Leibniz," *Mind* 12, no. 2 (1903): 177-201 and "New Books," *Mind* 13, no. 1 (1904): 131-2, respectively; as well as the "Preface" to the Second Edition of *Critical Exposition*. Both of Russell's reviews have been reprinted in *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, eds. Alasdair Urquhart and Albert C. Lewis (New York: Routledge, 1994), 537-63.

[81] Couturat, "On Leibniz's Metaphysics," 22.

[82] Couturat, "On Leibniz's Metaphysics,"23.

[83] Couturat, "On Leibniz's Metaphysics,"24-5.

[84] Couturat, "On Leibniz's Metaphysics,"25.

Looking to Leibniz's *De libertate* (Careil, 178), Couturat argues that, by Leibniz's own account, what rescued him from Spinozism was the consideration of non-existent possibles. Since, according to Leibniz, nothing is necessary of which the opposite is possible (G., 4, 438), it follows that if contingent predicates are in their subject in such a way that the opposite predicate could be in the subject without contradiction, then the opposite is possible—that is to say, the opposite is free from formal contradiction.[85] If there are unrealized possibles, to wit, the obtaining of predicates opposite of those that obtain, then those possibles that are realized are contingent. Couturat believes this insight is traceable to Leibniz's meeting with Spinoza:

> By 2 December 1676 (the day after his meeting with Spinoza), Leibniz was denying the Spinozistic thesis—"everything possible exists"—and he was already opposing to it his own theory that only those compossibles containing the greatest reality exist. The point is that not all possibles are compossibles (otherwise there would be no reason why all possibles should not exist).[86]

On Couturat's reading, the insight that not all possibles are compossible—as per contingent subject-predicate relationships discussed above—is thus the sole mark distinguishing Leibniz from Spinoza.

As for the actualization of the maximal set of compossibles (Leibniz's ontological definition of the best of all possible worlds), Couturat casts suspicion on the notion of a volitional act of creation on the part of God. While Couturat affirms Russell's conclusion that Leibniz has a type of psychological determinism at work,[87] he argues that, for Leibniz, the movement toward existence is implicit in the possibles themselves. Possibles are in some sense within God, straining for existence. Couturat writes: "All possibles

---

[85] Couturat, "On Leibniz's Metaphysics," 26-7.

[86] Couturat, "On Leibniz's Metaphysics," 27.

[87] See Couturat, "On Leibniz's Metaphysics," 32-3.

struggle among themselves for existence in the Mind of God, which is 'the land of the possible realities,' and the outcome of this struggle is the infallible and automatic (not to say necessary) triumph of the system of compossibles which contains the most essence or 'perfection'."[88] This, argues Couturat, was the true basis for Leibnizian optimism. We can be assured that only those compossibles that maximize the ontic perfections in the world burst through the divine doorway into actuality; hence, our world is of necessity the best possible world (cf. G., 6, 115-16).

Russell, after being persuaded by Couturat's arguments, characterized the implications of Couturat's insights as follows:

> [T]here was no act of Creation: the relations of essences are among eternal truths, and it is a problem in pure logic to construct that world which contains the greatest number of coexisting essences. This world, it would follow, exists by definition, without the need of any Divine Decree; moreover, it is a part of God, since essences exist in God's mind. Here, as elsewhere, Leibniz fell into Spinozism whenever he allowed himself to be logical; in his published works, accordingly, he took care to be illogical.[89]

The last remark embodies what came to be Russell's standard mode of explaining the apparent distinction between these Spinozistic implications and Leibniz's assertions elsewhere of divine choice and decree: Leibniz kept to himself his good philosophy, while publishing his bad philosophy in pursuit of public acclaim.[90]

With Couturat's work and Russell's concession, the Spinozistic necessitarian reading was given legitimacy in the early twentieth century by two of its most well-respected Leibniz scholars. Despite the importance of the Russell-Couturat exchange, not

---

[88] Couturat, "On Leibniz's Metaphysics," 28.

[89] Russell, *A Critical Exposition*, xi.

[90] See Russell, *Critical Exposition*, x; and Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy,* 581-96. This narrative also appears in Russell's first review of Couturat in *Mind* 12, no. 2 (1903).

all embraced the Spinozist read. Some, such as Ludwig Noiré, retain the deistic understanding of Leibniz's clockwork universe, along with its necessitarian connotations.[91] Others, such as S. H. Mellone and Samuel Enoch Stumpf, emphasize Leibniz's necessitarianism, and even root this in Leibniz's "spiritual" clockwork; but they resist heading down the road of either deism or Spinozism.[92] And still others, such as B. A. G. Fuller and A. G. Sertillanges, are more ambiguous with regard to the implication of Leibniz's system for God-world relations, but are wholly unambiguous as to their affirmation of freedom as indifference and the deterministic implications they see in Leibniz's rejection thereof.[93] Thus, while the Spinozistic interpretation found endorsement from two preeminent Leibniz scholars in the early 1900s, no uniformity of interpretation was forthcoming.

4. Four Contemporary Interpretations of Leibniz on Free Choice

Amid this diversity of twentieth century interpretations more charitable portraits also arose,[94] and since the flood of literature on Leibniz in the mid-1900s, there has appeared a variety of interpretations of his thought on free choice. By and large deistic

---

[91] See Ludwig Noiré, *A Sketch of the Development of Philosophic Thought from Thales to Kant* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1900), 278.

[92] See S. H. Mellone, *The Dawn of Modern Thought: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), 94-8; 102; 109; and 113-4; and Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre: A History of Philosophy* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966), 273.

[93] See B. A. G. Fuller, *A History of Modern Philosophy,* 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), 118; (first published 1938); and Sertillanges, *Le Problème du mal l'histoire*, 234-5.

[94] See, e.g., Clement C. J. Webb, *A History of Philosophy*, 170, who takes at face-value Leibniz's assumption of free choice in *Theodicy*; Paul Hazard, *European Thought in the Eighteenth Century: From Montesquieu to Lessing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 312, who understands Leibniz to retain a Creator-creature divide and sees creation as a volitional act; and Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 4, 264-82, who seeks to temper the deterministic implications of Leibniz's views (see esp. 280-82).

readings of Leibniz have faded, as recognition of Leibniz's doctrine of divine concourse has taken hold. And even if Leibnizian choice is not understood in a libertarian manner, readers seem hesitant to walk the Spinozistic trail blazed by Couturat, and thus largely accept the fact that Leibniz affirms a volitional understanding of God's act of creation. Nonetheless, determinist readings still abound.[95]

In the remainder of this section, I will look at four contemporary interpretative options. These four interpretive headings are (a) necessitarianism, (b) compatibilism, (c) libertarianism, and (d) indeterminism. As representative of the necessitarian reading, I have chosen Robert Sleigh, Jr. My chosen exemplar of the compatibilist read is Jack Davidson. And, though in the clear minority, we do find one libertarian reader, namely, R. Cranston Paull. Indeterminism represents the reading of Michael J. Murray.

4.1. The Necessitarian Reading of Robert Sleigh, Jr.

Robert Sleigh, Jr. identifies three components that Leibniz thinks essential to freedom: (1) spontaneity, (2) freedom from intersubstantial causality, and (3) freedom

---

[95] See, e.g., Robert Merrihew Adams, *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); S.H. Mellone, *The Dawn of Modern Thought*, 97-115; B. A. G., Fuller, *A History of Modern Philosophy*, 118; Sertillanges, *Le Problème du mal l'histoire*, 234-5; Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre*, 273; E. M. Curley, "The Root of Contingency"; C. D. Broad, *Leibniz: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975); D. W. Hamlyn, *A History of Western Philosophy* (London: Viking, 1987), 160-4; Nicholas Rescher, *Leibniz: An Introduction to his Philosophy* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1979); R.C. Sleigh, Jr., *Leibniz & Arnauld: A Commentary on Their Correspondence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); "Leibniz on Freedom and Necessity: Critical Notice of Robert Adams, Lebniz: Determinist, Theist, and Idealist," *The Philosophical Review* 108, no. 2 (1999): 245-77; R. C. Sleigh, Jr., Vere Chappell, and Michael Della Rocca, "Determinism and Human Freedom," in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, 2 vols., Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers, eds. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), vol. 2, 1195-1278; Donald Rutherford, *Leibniz and the Rational Order of Nature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Jack Davidson, "Imitators of God: Leibniz on Human Freedom," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 36, no. 3 (1998): 387-412; Steven Nadler, *The Best of All Possible Worlds: A Story of Philosophers, God, and Evil* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008).

from metaphysical necessity.[96] Distinguishing between metaphysical and physical

necessity, Sleigh points out that the metaphysical emphasis of (3) is to the exclusion of

physical necessity. Therefore, Sleigh argues, "[I]t is natural to suppose that [Leibniz] was

a compatibilist in the sense that he thought that a choice might be causally necessitated

and yet free. At any rate, it appears that Leibniz was a compatibilist in this sense, at least

in his mature period, dating from 1700."[97] While Sleigh acknowledges that Leibniz

rejects physical necessity in his early work, suggesting that freedom is a type of private

miracle that interrupts the series of efficient causes that act on the will (e.g., C., 20),

Sleigh suggests that a shift took place in Leibniz's views after 1700. Sleigh notes that, in

Theodicée, Leibniz states, "[A]bsolute necessity, which is called also logical and

metaphysical, and sometimes geometric, and which alone is to be feared, does not exist in

free actions" (G., 6, 37). The claim that such metaphysical necessity alone is to be feared

is clear indication, to Sleigh's mind, that physical necessity is not to be feared; and thus,

we can take Leibniz as affirming the compatibility of physical necessity and freedom.

Building on this contention, Sleigh points to Leibniz's letter of 1707 to Coste as a

key piece of evidence for this claim. The passage of interest reads as follows:

> When we propose a choice to ourselves ... whether to leave or not, it is a question
> whether, with all the circumstances, internal or external, motives, perceptions,
> dispositions, impressions, passions, inclinations taken together, I am still in a state
> of contingency, or whether I am necessitated to take the choice to leave, for
> example, i.e., whether in fact this true and determined proposition—in all these
> circumstances taken together, I will choose to leave is contingent or necessary. I
> reply that it is contingent, because neither I nor any other more enlightened mind
> could demonstrate that the opposite of this truth implies a contradiction. And

---

[96] Sleigh, et al., "Determinism and Human Freedom," vol.2, 1262-1265. My synopsis of Sleigh relies on "Determinism and Human Freedom," but the same arguments can be found in Sleigh, "Leibniz on Freedom and Necessity: Critical Notice of Robert Adams, Lebniz: Determinist, Theist, and Idealist," 245-77.

[97] Sleigh, et al., "Determinism and Human Freedom," vol. 2, 1265.

> assuming that by freedom of indifference we understand a freedom opposed to
> necessity . . . I agree with that freedom. (G., 3, 401)

Sleigh sees this letter as evidence of Leibniz's new found affirmation of compatibility of physical necessity and free choice. Sleigh comments, "There is no requirement that it lack physical necessity. And the clear suggestion of the passage . . . is that that is all the indifference Leibniz was then prepared to admit."[98]

In addition to this bit of evidence, Sleigh notes Leibniz's claim that our freedom consists not only in positive choices, but in the suspension of choice; and therefore the predictability of free actions remains elusive because choice does not merely consist in what the intellect identifies as preferable or good. Sleigh acknowledges that Leibniz retains this idea after 1700, but Sleigh points out that, "the thesis that this power is such that exercises of it are in principle unpredictable by creatures is not to be found," and he goes on to argue that some relevant texts "suggest that Leibniz then regarded suspension of deliberation as causally ordered in much the same fashion as any other choice is."[99] In short, while finite minds may not know the causal complexities that determine creaturely choice, this is due to the finitude of the creaturely mind and the infinite complexity of the causal order; it is not because there is no determining order of causes to be known.

By raising the question of whether key aspects of Leibniz's compatibilism disappear after 1700, Sleigh employs Leibniz's doctrine of pre-established harmony and Leibniz's notion that all truth is analytic to exacerbate the problem. Sleigh takes these two points of Leibnizian metaphysics to point decisively toward necessitarianism. He makes no effort to solve this problem on Leibniz's behalf, except to suggest that Leibniz

---

[98] Sleigh, et al., "Determinism and Human Freedom," vol. 2, 1266.

[99] Sleigh, et al., "Determinism and Human Freedom," vol. 2, 1267.

developed an alternative model of freedom. This alternative model, according Sleigh, replaces the third requirement of freedom mentioned above, namely, contingency. Contingency is replaced with "possibility in its own nature."[100] Using God as the supreme example, we can say that God wills the best of all possible worlds because it is contrary to the very idea of God that he make any other world. Yet, the creation of an alternative world can be said to be possible if the idea of that world is internally consistent, or logically possible. Similarly, Caesar's decision to cross the Rubicon may be necessary but still said to be "free," "provided that there were alternatives, each of which was internally consistent."[101] In the end, Sleigh does not think Leibniz's talk of possible worlds provides any real relief to the necessitarian problem. Sleigh therefore sees Leibniz facing a rather serious brand of necessitarianism, one bordering on, if not of one accord with, that of Couturat.

4.2. The Libertarian Reading of R. Cranston Paull

R. Cranston Paull, in contrast to Sleigh, offers a spirited and creative defense of Leibniz's incompatibilism—a position virtually without precedent in the history of Leibniz interpretation. In his 1992 essay, "Leibniz and the Miracle of Freedom," Paull emphasizes "the *theory of miraculous freedom*"[102] found in Leibniz's 1686 essay "Vérités necessaries et contingents" (C., 16-24).[103] There Leibniz states, "But free or intelligent substances . . . in a kind of imitation of God . . . are not bound by any certain subordinate

---

[100] Sleigh, et al., "Determinism and Human Freedom," vol. 2, 1268.

[101] Sleigh, et al., "Determinism and Human Freedom," vol.2, 1269.

[102] Paull, "Leibniz and the Miracle of Freedom," 219.

[103] The title by which it has come to be known is provided by Couturat.

laws of the universe, but act as it were by private miracle, on the sole initiative of their own power, and by looking towards a final cause they interrupt the connection and the course of the efficient causes that act on their will" (C., 20-1). Picking up on Leibniz's talk of intelligent creatures being "a kind of imitation of God" and acting "by private miracle," Paull suggests that Leibniz sees intelligent (free) agents as having the capacity to interrupt the nexus of efficient causes, rather than being determined by it.

In the realm of efficient cause, such as found among stocks and blocks, the future of a thing is entirely predictable. Therefore, "Truths about the future of non-intelligent things like stones," Paull notes, "are said to be knowable by created minds on the basis of their knowledge of laws of nature, provided these laws are not suspended by God."[104] The closing provision is the most important to Paull's thesis. Given that miracles represent a unilateral, free (and therefore unpredictable) act contrary to the series of efficient causes, miracles constitute the one hindrance to the predictability of physically determined subjects. Running with this premise, Paull argues that what makes human willing an imitation of God is that human freedom is not subject to its preceding efficient causes, but, as with divine miracles, may interrupt the series of efficient causes that precede it. A human agent, when functioning in accord with prior causes, is predictable on a level akin to stocks and blocks; but, given that humans, as intelligent agents, have the capacity for "private miracle[s]," their future acts stand above the realm of efficient causality and remain hidden to creaturely intellects.

Paull seeks to demonstrate that this notion of miraculous freedom is completely consistent with Leibniz's philosophy. He considers three potential problem spots. First,

---

[104] Paull, "Leibniz and the Miracle of Freedom," 221.

Paull looks at Leibniz's claim in *Discourse on Metaphysics* that "all things that happen to [substances, including miracles] are only consequences of their nature" (A., 6.4, 1554). Paull argues that, insofar as freedom is part of the intelligent nature, "even miracles are in accord with a substance's nature."[105] In other words, if it is the nature of humans to be imitators of God and to choose freely, then we need not take Leibniz to be suggesting that all which happens happens as a consequence of efficient causes pressing in on us. Rather, we may take "consequences of their nature" to include the nature of acting agents, which, in the case of intelligent substances, encompasses the imitation of God by the private miracle of freedom.

Second, Paull argues that miraculous freedom does not contradict Leibniz's notion of pre-established harmony—that is, the principle that, "Each of these substances contains in its nature *a law of the continuation of the series of its own operations* and everything that has happened and will happen to it" (E., 107). Paull argues that, while freedom may not submit to the series of efficient causes that precede it and in this sense is above natural law, an intelligent substance's willing does not contradict its own nature. Rather, it is the nature of an intelligent subject to choose freely. Hence, "[T]his pre-established harmony between monadic perceptions is perfectly compatible with the (Leibnizian) fact that some intelligent monads sometimes have miraculous thoughts."[106] Succinctly put, "when I act miraculously, I do not contradict my nature."[107]

Third and finally, Paull addresses Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason—if p obtains, there must be sufficient reasons for p obtaining as opposed to $\sim p$. Paull points

---

[105] Paull, "Leibniz and the Miracle of Freedom," 223.

[106] Paull, "Leibniz and the Miracle of Freedom," 227.

[107] Paull, "Leibniz and the Miracle of Freedom," 227.

out that Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason does not prevent free decisions from constituting sufficient reasons. Therefore, "[T]he fact that the chooser has the specific [nature] that he does provides a sufficient reason for the miraculous choice."[108]

In the end, Paull's case is meant to demonstrate two points. The first is that "the theory of miraculous freedom ... is not an unreasonable (or, really, an uncharacteristic) one for the mature Leibniz to have held." The second is that "it is consistent with a plausible version of some basic Leibnizian doctrines."[109]

4.3. The Compatibilist Reading of Jack Davidson

I have chosen Jack Davidson to represent the compatibilist reading of Leibniz. The reason is because Davidson published a compatibilist response to Paull's essay, which helps highlight the dissonance between the two readings. Davidson recognizes the development in Leibnizian scholarship that Paull's stance represented;[110] moreover, Davidson concedes that these developments raise the question of whether there is a legitimate lacuna in current understandings of Leibniz on freedom. He even argues that the imitation of God theme, as expressed in "Vérités necessaries et contingents," "does indeed contain a central and overlooked element in Leibniz's thinking about freedom, according to which human freedom is grounded in a kind of imitation of God's nature."[111] The difference between Paull and Davidson, however, is that Davidson argues

---

[108] Paull, "Leibniz and the Miracle of Freedom," 228.

[109] Paull, "Leibniz and the Miracle of Freedom," 232.

[110] Jack Davidson, "Imitators of God: Leibniz on Human Freedom," 387-412.

[111] Davidson, "Imitators of God," 388.

that this talk of an imitation of God does not open the door to a libertarian reading; rather, "Leibniz's theory, far from undermining compatibilism, requires it."[112]

The reading Davidson espouses echoes in many ways the pre-Couturat reading of Russell. According to Davidson, Leibniz's view of freedom is theo-centric, not anthropocentric. That is to say, for Leibniz, "God is the paradigm of freedom, and we are only free in so far as we are like him.... In so far as we approximate and imitate God ... we are free."[113] When Davidson says this, he does not mean that Leibniz considers goodness to be freedom and evil to be bondage—although this may be a consequence of Leibniz's view. Instead, Davidson argues that the aspect of God we must mirror is his supremely rational nature. Drawing on the principle of sufficient reason, Davidson argues that, for Leibniz, "free actions must be nonrandomly grounded," which implies freedom must be grounded "in an agent's mind and character."[114]

Davidson understands this rational ideal of freedom to be rooted in Leibniz's theo-centric starting point: "[Leibniz] does not shirk the claim that God too is subject to the laws of teleological causality."[115] To the contrary, Leibniz views God as free *because* "his intellect perfectly perceives the value of the alternatives available to him, and because his will is determined by the judgment of his intellect."[116] Davidson's understanding of Leibniz boils down to this: "[W]hat matters most for freedom is

---

[112] Davidson, "Imitators of God," 388.

[113] Davidson, "Imitators of God," 396.

[114] Davidson, "Imitators of God," 402.

[115] Davidson, "Imitators of God," 402.

[116] Davidson, "Imitators of God," 402.

rationality."[117] On this reading, compatibilism is not a necessary evil which must be defended as "free" despite itself; instead, the idea of a will wholly determined by reason is Leibniz's ideal freedom, in contrast with which all other models pale.

In this reading of Leibnizian freedom, fallen humans are not free. Our lack of freedom is not due simply to intellectual finitude. Instead, "[W]e, unlike God, have passions that disrupt our cognitive processes."[118] Davidson understands our "sin and weakness of will" to be the reason why our practical intellect offers only a "perception of the best," as contrasted with God whose intellect knows the best *a priori*.[119] Because creaturely willing is a mixed bag of passions, inclinations, and intellectual judgments, there exists a sharp distinction between God, who acts on pure intellect, and creatures:

> In the light of sin and weakness of will, Leibniz's considered view is that our will is determined by the intellect's perception of the best .... All free creatures, then, act in accordance with their greatest inclination, but in God this means acting in accordance with the practical judgment of the intellect. Thus God always acts in accordance with the actual best. [120]

On Davidson's reading, Leibniz's ideal of freedom is a type of extreme intellectualism, wherein the will always follows the final judgment of the intellect, and the intellect's practical judgment perceives the good as it is. Such impassible intellectual willing is modeled in God, and therefore, to the extent we imitate God, so we are free.

Davidson's reading of Leibniz is compatibilistic because, on this reading, the most ideal form of freedom (viz., God's freedom) is determined, thus indicating the compatibility of freedom and determinism. God does not act randomly but rationally and

---

[117] Davidson, "Imitators of God," 403.

[118] Davidson, "Imitators of God," 404.

[119] Davidson, "Imitators of God," 405.

[120] Davidson, "Imitators of God," 405.

always in accord with the actual good—the judgment of the divine intellect determines

the acting of the divine will. Creatures likewise will in accord with their practical

judgments, and do so in a determinist manner, but given the non-rational influences of the

passions on creaturely willing, creaturely freedom is not true freedom, for it is not

determined solely by reason. On Davidson's reading, Leibniz sees the final state of

blessedness as that which brings about the type of freedom displayed in God. In the

eschaton, the blessed always act well, for they perceive and always choose the true good.

The reason, says Davidson, is that, "after seeing God face to face, the irresistible

summum bonum and thus the proper object of the will, their passions and perceptions are

determined by the true good."[121] In such a state, humans are imitators of God.

4.4. *The Indeterminist Reading of Michael J. Murray*

Michael J. Murray provides the fourth and final reading of Leibniz we will

consider here. Murray's position draws on the Thomist intellectualist view of freedom

(i.e., the will necessarily follows the final judgment of the practical intellect), a model

which can be read as similar to the one employed by Davidson. In Murray's early work, it

is unclear whether he understands Leibniz's intellectualism to yield compatibilism.

Robert Kane, for example, lumps Paull and Murray together as defenders of Leibnizian

"indeterminism," and yet, Murray appears to believe that the practical intellect provides

an inclining motive sufficient for action.[122] Whether (and if so, how) Murray's

"indeterminist" reading is intended to avoid psychological determinism is unclear to me.

---

[121] Davidson, "Imitators of God," 410.

[122] See Robert Kane, *The Significance of Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 229-30, n. 8.

Yet, in his more recent writings, it is clear that Murray understands intellectualism to be a form of compatibilism and equipoise (which Leibniz rejects) to be a requisite condition for libertarian freedom.[123] Hence, it is clear that Murray's "indeterminism" is indeed a compatibilist reading of Leibniz. While a compatibilist reading of Leibniz is far from novel, Murray's unique contribution to Leibniz studies centers on the relationship between free choice and providence as the crux of Leibniz's position.[124]

Murray establishes a dichotomy between the Dominicans and the Jesuits as the background against which Leibniz's view of providence and free choice is best understood. Murray characterizes Dominican theology as carrying strong ties to the doctrine of divine concourse; and Murray sees the relationship between human freedom and concourse as follows:

> For the Dominicans, every causal event in nature requires divine causal involvement of at least two sorts. First, God acts on the agent and "reduces its power from potency to act" so that the creature can in fact exercise the powers with which it has been created. Second, God acts on the patient by giving it being or *esse*, a requisite condition for any effect's obtaining. These two modes of divine involvement in every causal event in nature permit God to know the specific outcome of any such event, i.e., the effect.[125]

Such a view of creaturely freedom contrasts with that of the Jesuits, who, following Molina and Suarez, felt that human willing "must be determined independently of any divine volition."[126] As Murray understands it, the Dominicans felt divine

---

[123] Robert Kane lumps Paull and Murray together as defenders of Leibnizian "indeterminism," but, even in Kane's assessment, it appears that Murray takes inclining motives to be a sufficient (as opposed to necessary) condition for acting, which is in a way reminiscent of psychological determinism. See Robert Kane, *The Significance of Free Will*, 229-30, n. 8.

[124] See "Introduction," in G. W. Leibniz, *Dissertation on Predestination and Grace,* ed. and trans. Michael J. Murray (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), §§2-4.

[125] Murray, "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge," 76-77.

[126] Murray, "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge," 78.

foreknowledge rests on "[God's] own causal contribution to the act," a foundation of foreknowledge the Jesuits felt "compromise[d] the freedom of the creature's action."[127] As an alternative, the Jesuits forwarded what is known as "middle knowledge" (*scientia media*), which, as Murray explains it, "permits [God] to know, prevolitionally, what a free creature would freely choose under any circumstance in which it might be created."[128] The creation of the circumstance is therefore the basis on which God works out his own providential ends without violating the creature's freedom.

According to Murray, Leibniz took issue with both of these positions. On the side of the Dominicans, Leibniz felt "invoking efficacious concurrence is just superfluous," and "the Dominican scheme, incorporating as it does the determining divine concurrence, amounted to hard determinism."[129] Since Murray reads divine concourse in contrast to what a free creature would freely choose, Murray sees Leibniz's affirmation of spontaneity and his rejection of physical necessity as a rejection of divine concourse:

> Although I know of no passage where Leibniz makes the point quite this way, it seems likely that his argument for the above claim [that concurrence amounts to hard determinism] amounts to the fact that divine predetermination, as it is understood by the Dominicans, violates the creature's spontaneity .... When a free act was in view, Leibniz characterized spontaneity as the absence of any external, determining, proximate, "phenomenal" cause.[130]

This reading of concourse and its incompatibility with spontaneity leads Murray to understand Leibniz as affirming the possible worlds of Molina, over against the scholastic notion of concourse.

---

[127] Murray, "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge," 78.

[128] Murray, "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge," 78-79.

[129] Murray, "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge," 79.

[130] Murray, "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge," 79-80.

Having said this, Murray does not treat Leibniz as a pure Molinist. He recognizes Leibniz's objection to Molinistic freedom, which he understands to require indifference of equipoise. Such a picture of freedom Leibniz thought inconsistent since a free agent would then be incapable of choosing among options, and even if a choice were (somehow) made, the choice itself would violate the principle of sufficient reason.[131]

In this light, Murray suggests that Leibniz's view is an admixture of Dominican and Molinistic premises. Murray names three premises that he takes to comprise the Leibnizian view: (a) creaturely freedom must be foreknown in the prevolitional sense of the Molinists, apart from any divine causal activity; (b) the prevolitional choosing of the creature in various circumstances of various possible worlds must be the product, not of indifference, but of "sufficient reason"—that is, with the Dominicans, there must exist "some sufficient reason in the antecedent circumstances" for the choice made; and (c) the sort of sufficient reasons involved must be "of a sort that do not violate the spontaneity, and thus the freedom, of the creature as the Dominican account does."[132]

According to Murray, these three conditions, *The Prevolitional Condition*, *The Sufficient Reason Condition*, and *The Spontaneity Condition*, constitute the basic form of Leibniz's system of freedom.[133] Murray therefore reads Leibniz's possible worlds as decisively Molinistic, but he understands Leibniz to affirm the Dominican rejection of absolute indifference in favor of Dominican intellectualism. Murray is aware that he cannot avoid the fact that Leibniz upholds the notion of divine concurrence (see, e.g., C.,

---

[131] Murray, "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge," 82.

[132] Murray, "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge," 83.

[133] See Murray, "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge," 84.

22; cf. G., 6, 347-50);[134] but, given that Murray understands Dominican concourse to be a type of physical or causal imposition on the creature that violates freedom, Murray sees Leibniz's notion of concurrence as a type of after-the-fact concurrence, as if it were a mere instantiating of a possible world known via middle knowledge. Therefore, "God first foresees how it is that the creature inclines, and from this knows how he will concur with the act of the creature."[135] As for the basis for inclination, this is found in the intellectualist model, wherein the intellect inclines the creature toward a given option, and this inclination is sufficient for willing the subsequent act.[136]

> In the end, Murray's understanding of Leibnizian freedom comes to this:
>
> [T]he actions of free creatures under specified circumstances are not under the control of the divine will. Thus, transitions between states within freely willing rational substances are not under immediate divine control. Rather, the transition from state to state in such substances is fixed by moral necessitated final causality. Since this sort of relation between intellect and will, and correspondingly, between successive states of the substance, is sufficient to secure spontaneity ... and since it is on such grounds that God governs his own concurrence with the actions of substance, divine causal involvement in creaturely free acts neither destroys freedom nor implicates God in sin.[137]

This last clause captures the heart of Murray's reading. In the end, Murray believes that Leibniz intends on preserving some form of creaturely freedom *and* avoiding making God the author of sin. Though an incompatibilist may object to the compatibilist view of free choice here espoused, Murray's portrayal of Leibniz is ultimately one in which he aims at making man, not God, the author of his own actions and thus of his own foibles.

---

[134] See Murray, "Spontaneity and Freedom in Leibniz," 212-13.

[135] Murray, "Spontaneity and Freedom in Leibniz," 213.

[136] See Murray, "Spontaneity and Freedom in Leibniz," 212.

[137] Murray, "Spontaneity and Freedom in Leibniz," 212.

5. Eight Pivotal Interpretative Assumptions

From the above survey, the flow of Leibniz interpretation on free choice and providence has a definite shape. The earliest polemical readings of Leibniz focus on his doctrine of pre-established harmony, along with its apparent implications of determinism and deism. These polemics are expanded in the next century to include additional insights that bolster the case for Leibnizian necessitarianism, and the growing case gives way to suspicions of something far more serious, namely, Spinozism. By the early twentieth century, the suspicion of Spinoza develops into a more developed and scholarly reading of Leibniz. Today scholarship has reopened the case against Leibniz, creating room for any number of interpretations. Paull provides the sole voice in advocacy of a libertarian-theism reading of Leibniz—or at least its possibility—while the majority of readers tend either toward a hard necessitarian, bordering on Spinozism, or a softer compatibilist theism. Nonetheless, the clear consensus favors a determinist understanding of Leibniz, regardless of how the ramifications are understood.

Key to the above history of interpretation is eight assumptions, which come in and out of the interpretative history in different combinations and degrees. These assumptions are as follows:

(1) Leibniz's clockwork analogy for pre-established harmony indicates a deistic God-world relationship.

(2) The clockwork universe, assumed in pre-established harmony, indicates that humans, as part of this clockwork, are mechanically determined.

(3) Libertarian free choice is not possible without indifference, while intellective preference yields psychological determinism.

(4) If God is not indifferent, then God is psychologically determined and our world, the world he chose to create, is the only possible world.

(5) If the future is the product of divine decree, then the future is determined and incompatible with libertarian free choice.

(6) If future contingents are analytic, future acts are not free but determined.

(7) Free choice requires the freedom to do good or evil, or moral indifference, while moral necessity amounts to determinism.

(8) *All possibles strain for existence* means that possibles are self-actualizing, pressing themselves from potentiality to actuality.

Various combinations of these assumptions appear throughout the history of Leibniz interpretation. In the 1700s, points (1) through (5) are prominent; in the 1800s, points (6) through (8) are added to the list of Leibnizian ills; and, while the mid-1900s to the present has given way to a flood of research that has transformed the interpretive landscape, the catalogue of above assumptions remain in various combinations and incarnations.

In the next chapter, we will scrutinize the above interpretive assumptions in light of the Augustinian tradition. In particular, we will look at evidence that the Augustinian tradition is not only libertarian but was understood as such in Leibniz's day. Moreover, we will see that, despite its libertarian commitments, many within the Augustinian tradition resist the very types of assumptions numerated above. In other words, what we will see is that the assumptions that color the history of Leibniz interpretation represent a shift in thinking that only begins to emerge in the 18th century, and this shift often stands at odds with traditional Augustinians of the 16th and 17th centuries. Hence, if Leibniz is

indeed a traditional Augustinian, as I will argue in later chapters, we have reason to question whether the above assumptions are rightly brought to bear on his work, and reason to question whether Leibniz is so easily forced down the necessitarian road if these assumptions are removed.

CHAPTER 2

The Augustinian Tradition and Leibniz's Interpreters

In the previous chapter, I identified eight interpretive assumptions that are common to the history of Leibniz interpretation, but are suspect when scrutinized in light of the Augustinian tradition. If, then, there is any validity to the claim of this project, namely that Leibniz is a traditional Augustinian, this divide between Leibniz's interpreters and older Augustinian theology casts suspicion on the common portraits of Leibniz. For they proceed from an entire set of assumptions that older and more traditional Augustinian thinkers would reject out of hand.

My contention presumes three points, already identified above, which must be defended prior to moving into Leibniz's texts. The first point is that the traditional Augustinian view of free choice and providence is libertarian. This point must be defended because there is no consensus in the current literature regarding where this tradition is best placed between the poles of libertarianism and determinism. A growing number of interpreters would affirm my assumption, as they too maintain that Augustine and his followers are advocates of libertarian freedom. So the argument goes, aspects of Augustinian soteriology may be monergistic, but on the whole, the tradition aims at protecting libertarian choice and understands providence to be synergistic—except, perhaps, in matters of salvation. For God's decrees include the decree that humans possess free choice and achieve what they freely choose. Thus, the First Cause upholds, rather than stifles, the proximate cause of human freedom.[1] Others, however, dispute this

---

[1] For examples of libertarian readers of Augustine, see Eugène Portalié, *A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine* (London: Burns & Oates, 1960); Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (New York:

reading, arguing that the Augustinian tradition is a form of determinism in which God's

decrees are the First and only true Cause—pure monergism. On this read, human freedom

is free in only a compatibilist sense: creatures are free to choose as they please, but they

have no control over their desires, being physically or psychologically determined by the

nature given to them by God, the First Cause of all things.[2]

The second point that requires a defense is the rather crucial claim that, not only is

the Augustinian tradition libertarian, but Leibniz would most likely grant that it is

libertarian. This point is crucial because a convincing case that traditional

---

Herder and Herder, 1970); and John M. Rist, Augustine on Free Will and Predestination," *Journal of Theological Studies* 20, no. 2 (1969):420–447; for examples of libertarian readers of Aquinas and Scotus, see Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (Routledge: London, 2003), 304–305; Norman Kretzmann, "Philosophy of Mind" in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, eds. Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 147; Hannes Möhle, "Scotus' Theory of Natural Law" in *Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 326; Bernardino M. Bonansea, *Man and His Approach to God in John Duns Scotus* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America,1983), 51, 80–81; Thomas Williams, "From Metaethics to Action Theory" in *Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 347–8; and Antonie Vos, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 413-30; and for libertarian readers of the Reformed scholastics, see, e.g., Antonie Vos, "Always on Time," in *Understanding the Attributes of God*, eds. Gijsbert van den Brink and Marcel Sarot (New York: Peter Lang, 1995); A.J. Beck and Antonie Vos, "Conceptual Patterns Related to Reformed Scholasticism," *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 57, no. 3 (2003): 223-233; Richard A. Muller, "Grace, Election, and Contingent Choice: Arminius's Gambit and the Reformed Response," in *The Grace of God: The Bondage of Will*, eds. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 271; W.J. van Asselt and E. Dekker, eds., *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), esp. A.J. Beck, "Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676): Basic Features of His Doctrine of God," 205-26, and Antonie Vos, "Scholasticism and Reformation," 99-119; Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520-1725*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2003); and Willem J. van Asselt, "The Theologian's Tool Kit," *Westminster Theological Journal* 68, no. 1 (2006): 23-40; and Willem J. van Asselt et al., eds., *Reformed Thought on Freedom: The Concept of Free Choice in the History of Early-Modern Reformed Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010).

[2] Lord Henry Home Kames, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* (London: J. Bell and J. Murray, 1779), 158-89; Monsieur Le Clerc, *The Lives of the Primitive Fathers, viz., Clemens Alexandrinus, Esebius, Bishop of Caesarea, Gregory Nazianzen, and Prudentius, the Christian Poet* [. . .] *Also a Short History of Pelagianism* (London: Printed for Thomas Ballard, 1701), 348-349; Johann Lorenz Mosheim, *An ecclesiastical history: antient and modern, from the birth of Christ, to the beginning of the present century*, 5 vols., trans. Archibald Maclaine, (printed for A. Millar, 1768), vol. 4, 373; *The Athenian Oracle: Being an Entire Collection of all the Valuable Questions and Answers in the Old Athenian Mercuries. Intermix'd with many cases in Divinity, History, Philosophy, Mathematicks, Love, Poetry* (London: J. and J. Knapton, 1728), vol. 2, 193; "*Die Christliche Lehre von der Sünde*: von Julius Müller. Breslau, 1844," *The North British Review* 12, no. 24 (Nov 1849-Feb 1850): 438.

Augustinianism is libertarian only beckons the question of whether Leibniz would admit this fact. If he would, all is well. But if he would not, then his continuity with the tradition on numerous points does not, in itself, demonstrate his advocacy of libertarian free choice. Rather, it demonstrates only his use of the tradition's terms and concepts.

The third and final point I must defend is that the interpretive assumptions identified in the previous chapter as common to Leibniz interpretation are at odds with traditional Augustinian theology. This third point, however, requires the preliminary substantiation of the first point. To illustrate, let us take one assumption on which I believe Leibniz's interpreters differ from traditional Augustinianism, namely, equipoise. According to Leibniz's interpreters, to reject equipoise is to embrace determinism. I believe a traditional Augustinian would reject this entailment. However, while it is easy to establish that more traditional Augustinians reject equipoise, unless the libertarian nature of Augustinianism is also established, then this rejection of equipoise does not demonstrate dissonance between these Augustinians and Leibniz's interpreters. For the Augustinian tradition could well reject equipoise because it embraces necessitarianism. Hence, this last point will hang largely on the strength of the first point.

The strategy of this chapter will follow the above order of assumptions and reflect the conjoined nature of these points. In section 1, I will offer three subsections that highlight key piece of evidence that Augustine, medieval Augustinians, and post-Reformation Protestant Augustinians uniformly disapprove of determinism and operate under an incompatibilist commitment (point 1). In section 2, I will supply evidence that the libertarian nature of Augustinianism was well-known prior to the eighteenth century, and was only later contested in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (point 2). In

sections 3, I will devote attention to the differences between traditional Augustinian theology and the assumptions of Leibniz's interpreters (point 3). This groundwork will set the stage for the exegetical chapters to follow, wherein I will draw out textual evidence that Leibniz is a traditional Augustinian who affirms libertarian freedom, but does so under a set of assumptions contrary to many of his interpreters.

1. Incompatibilism in the Augustinian Tradition

My examination of the Augustinian tradition on necessitarianism is chronological. We will begin by looking at Augustine's response to Cicero on fate and foreknowledge. We will then turn our attention to the high medieval reception of Augustine's views, looking at the intellectualism of Thomas Aquinas and the voluntarism of John Duns Scotus, respectively. Finally, we will turn to key representatives of post-Reformation Reformed scholasticism, the prime example for some of Augustinian necessitariansim. What we will see at each stage is that the Augustinian tradition displays an unwavering commitment to incompatibilism.

1.1. Augustine's Incompatibilism in Civitas Dei

While there are numerous places in Augustine's corpus to which we could look for a discussion of freedom, I will focus on a particularly relevant passage in book 5 of *civitas Dei.* Therein Augustine addresses the apparent conflict between foreknowledge and free choice, as propounded by Cicero, and his subsequent answer to whether

Christianity affirms or denies fatalism.[3] As we will see, Augustine's comments in this passage systematically eliminate the prospect of a necessitarian reading.

In *De Divinatione,* Cicero lays bare his fear that divination, or foreknowledge, is incompatible with free choice.[4] He thus makes every effort to undermine purported instances of foreknowledge in order to protect freedom.[5] Augustine summarizes Cicero's concern as follows: "if all events are foreknown, they will happen in the precise order of that foreknowledge; if the order of events is determined, so is the causal order.... If the causal order is fixed, determining all events, then all events ... are ordered by destiny. If this is true, nothing depends on us and there is no such thing as free will."[6] The basic problem, as Augustine sees it, is one of causality: Cicero believes that foreknowledge implies a fixed order of causes; free choice is incompatible with a fixed order of causes; therefore, if foreknowledge exists, free choice does not.[7] Augustine's response is simple: "Our wills themselves are in the order of causes."[8] That is to say, our free choices are included in the fixed order of causes foreknown by God.

Augustine's reply in itself does not demonstrate that he is an incompatibilist. After all, Lord Henry Homes Kames would claim the same thing, arguing that it is the determined nature of things, in which our wills are included, that makes those future

---

[3] See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.8-5.10. All patristic references utilizing "PG" or "PL" refer to J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completes* (Parisiis: Venit apud editorem in vico dicto Montrouge, 1844-66). Citations identify the relevant volume and page and column numbers.English quotations are taken from St. Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin Books, 1984).

[4] Augustine outlines the problem of fate in *De Civitate Dei* 5.8. For Cicero's express concerns over the implications of foreknowledge, see *De Divinatione* 2.

[5] See Cicero, *De Divinatione* 2.56; and *De Fato*, 17.40.

[6] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.9.

[7] Cf. Cicero, *De Fato* 10.20ff.

[8] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.9.

events certain.[9] However, as we consider Augustine's own exposition of his reply, we will see clear evidence that Augustine rejects physical determinism, theological determinism, and psychological determinism in favor of a libertarian view of freedom.

Augustine's rejection of physical determinism becomes unmistakable in his discussion of voluntary causes. Physical determinism (as discussed in the Introduction) is rooted in a materialist worldview, which presumes that laws of motion are a brute fact of reality and innate in matter. The guiding assumption is that all events are reducible to matter in motion; hence, all happenings in our world, including human choice, are determined solely by the laws of physics. Choice, while seemingly above the material realm, is in fact determined by material movements and the laws that bind them.[10]

The claims of physical determinism are diametrically opposed to what we find in *civitas Dei.* Augustine notes that there are various "causes" one may claim—"fortuitous causes, natural, and voluntary causes."[11] According to Augustine, Christianity denies "fortuitous" (or fated) causes and does not detach "natural" causes from God. What Augustine goes on to argue is that "voluntary causes"—causes produced by God, angels, and humans—are in fact "the only efficient causes of events…."[12] Augustine makes the case that laws of motion (or what we call physical laws) are not "natural," if by this we mean independent of God; rather, these laws are a product of God's continual willing of a certain world order. Unsuspended objects, for example, tend downward because God

---

[9] See Kames, *Essays,* 171-2.

[10] See Richard Taylor, "Determinism," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 8 vols., ed. Paul Edwards (New York: The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1967), vol. 2, 363-365.

[11] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.9.

[12] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.9.

wills that they tend downward. Gravity is not an innate rule of matter or of motion, but is a free act of God. And so it is with the rest of our world.

For our purposes, Augustine's claim is significant. Unlike the physical determinist, Augustine presumes that inanimate material objects remain inanimate unless acted on by volitional agents. Hence, not only does Augustine reject the notion that voluntary acts are a product of physical determinism; Augustine rejects the very premise that there are causes external to the voluntary—a position entirely incompatible with physical determinism.

Augustine's rejection of theological determinism is apparent in two aspects of his argument. The first is his discussion of divine concurrence. Augustine denies that the will is bound by necessity such that its acts are inevitable. If *necessity* is to be applied to the will, it applies only to the natural necessity that the will as will must be free, for such is the nature of *voluntas*.[13] We will return to this point in our discussion of psychological determinism, but with regard to theological determinism, Augustine's subsequent discussion of God's permissive will is more pertinent.

Augustine notes that while the will cannot be anything but free (as per its natural necessity), obtaining what one chooses is another matter. Augustine is here wrestling, not with determinism, but with fatalism: *Does God allow free agents to achieve what they freely choose?* The question is a Stoic one.[14] Augustine recognizes that, though determinism is a form of fatalism, not all fatalism presumes determinism. Some Stoics, such as Epictetus, grant that God has given man free choice that not even he can thwart,

---

[13] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10.

[14] See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.8.

but these same Stoics reject the idea that this entails that God has given it to man to achieve whatever he chooses.[15] This distinction between *choice* and *achievement* is the very rationale for Stoic ethics: Though our outward lot is fated, our inward response to that lot is free. Granting my existence and freedom, not even God can hinder me from freely choosing to raise my arms to type (again, as per natural necessity), but God need not permit my arms to rise, and God can employ any number of circumstantial devices to prevent me from typing. Augustine's question is thus one of achievement, not choice: *Does God uphold or concur in the free choices of rational agents?*[16]

Though Augustine's answer is a noteworthy—*Yes*, *providence works permissively and synergistically with freedom*[17]—more interesting is the question itself. Notice that for a compatibilist, such as Kames, God's will is accomplished because of what he has put into creatures (e.g., the psychological and moral makeup he gives them).[18] These personal properties, in combination with the circumstances God sets around them, is what guarantees "that a certain train of actions must necessarily follow…."[19] On such a view, the question of divine concurrence disappears entirely. For the determination of creaturely choice is a unilateral affair: Whatever choice God desires from a creature, he places into the creature via psychological wiring and circumstantial impetus. There is nothing for God to concur with, since the choice of any given creature was chosen for

---

[15] Epictetus, *The Discourse of Epictetus,* 6.

[16] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.9-5.10. Cf. Augustine, *De spiritu et littera*, xxxi, 53.

[17] See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10.

[18] See Kames, *Essays,* 171.

[19] See Kames, *Essays,* 172.

that creature by God. The very fact that Augustine raises the question of divine concurrence indicates that he does not hold Kames's view.

This conclusion is made additionally clear by a second aspect of Augustine's argument, namely, his subsequent discussion of foreknowledge, which comes on the heels of his talk of divine concurrence. In this discussion, Augustine admits the very point made above, namely, that the God-world relationship he espouses implies a subject-object relationship between God and creatures. In distinguishing between willing and achieving, and in placing the achieving in the hands of the supreme will (viz., God's), it follows, argues Augustine, that God's foreknowledge does not undermine freedom, but rather establishes it. For if our will were the mere product of fate or unilateral determination, our will would be no will at all, and there would be nothing in us for God to foreknow. To use Augustine's words, "It does not follow, then, that there is nothing in our will because God foreknew what was going to be in our will; for if he foreknew this, it was not nothing that he foreknew. Further, if, in foreknowing what would be in our will, he foreknew something, and not nonentity, it follows immediately that there is something in our will, even if God foreknows it."[20]

Augustine thus makes plain that a view such as Kames's is not, in Augustine's estimate, foreknowledge. For what Kames describes is not a will with its own free choices that are foreknown by the divine mind, but a nonentity into which God places choices. Such is not *fore*-knowledge but *self*-knowledge of what God has determined for the agent.

---

[20] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10.

Augustine's rejection of psychological determinism is apparent in Augustine's discussion of necessity and the will. As mentioned above, Augustine makes plain that, despite God's knowledge of future contingents, this does not indicate that the choices of the will are necessary. To clarify the point, he distinguishes between two types of necessity—*the inevitable* versus *natural necessities*. The former is clear enough, referring to that which cannot be prevented or avoided. The latter has already been touched on above. Natural necessity refers to the essential properties of a thing, such as the necessity that God be omnipotent or that a circle have a flowing circumference. Augustine is clear that inevitability does not apply to the choices of the will. But there is a natural necessity that applies to the will, namely, the necessity that the will, if it is indeed a will, choose freely.[21] The claim in itself is (a) a clear rejection of internal necessity in the will's exercise of choice and (b) an insistence that the very nature of its operations be free. In short, Augustine appears to offer a straightforward affirmation of libertarian choice, and this appearance is confirmed by three additional features of his argument.

The first feature is the occasion of his argument, namely, Cicero's concerns regarding divination. As discussed at the opening of this section, Cicero's fear is that if foreknown acts can be known because they are produced by a preceding chain of causes, then the act is not free.[22] Clearly, Cicero is an incompatibilist. Yet, if we read Augustine as espousing compatibilism in response, Augustine's reply to Cicero is no reply at all; it is a concession. It would be strange indeed for Augustine to reply to the charge that foreknowledge implies determinism by affirming determinism! While the compatibilist

---

[21] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10.

[22] See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.8.. Cf. Cicero, *De Divinatione* 2.56; and *De Fato*, 17. 40.

must attribute this rather odd strategy to Augustine, this is plainly not what we find in *civitas Dei*. Augustine's argument does not begin by conceding Cicero's fear (i.e., determinism), and then attempt to alleviate Cicero's anxiety now that his worst fears are confirmed—a common compatibilist strategy. We find no effort on Augustine's part to offer a compatibilist justification of law or reward and punishment or justice, despite man's lack of freedom. Nor do we find Augustine redefining freedom so as to be compatible with determinism. On the contrary, Augustine puts forth great effort to *refute* Cicero's claim that foreknowledge implies determinism. To be sure, this is the very point of Augustine's argument! The fact that Augustine proceeds with this aim is itself a clear indication that he is positively disposed toward Cicero's incompatibilism; he simply rejects Cicero's conclusion that incompatibilism cannot survive alongside divine foreknowledge.

The second feature of Augustine's argument that confirms the appearance of libertarianism is that Augustine separates the question of choosing from the question of achieving. As discussed above, Augustine's discussion of divine decree and foreknowledge is aimed at the latter question: *Does God permit creatures to achieve what they choose?* The initial question that Augustine asks regarding choice is one of internal fate: *Are the choices of the will inevitable?* Unlike Kames and other compatibilists who answer in the affirmative, Augustine denies the inevitability of choice, affirming instead that the only necessity by which the will is bound is the natural necessity that, as will, it is free. I, for one, cannot understand what this denial of inevitability, or fated choice, means unless it is a denial of determinism in favor of libertarian powers of contrary choice.

The third feature of Augustine's argument that confirms the libertarian reading comes in the midst of his exposition on voluntary choice and his subsequent rejection of physical determinism (discussed above). As stated in the Introduction, the compatibilist maintains that for an act to be free, it suffices that the acting agent chooses in accord with his desires.[23] If a compatibilist were to try and force Augustine down the compatibilist road, the best means to do so would be to use his argument regarding voluntary causes against him. That is, if all causes in our world fall under the rubric of the *voluntary,* then irrational animals must also possess freedom—a claim that fits compatibilism, but not incompatibilism. However, such a strategy is doomed to failure precisely because Augustine offers one important caveat in his argument: all voluntary causes "come from God, or from angels, or men, *or animals—if indeed one can apply the notion of will to the movements of beings devoid of reason.*"[24] Augustine is explicit on the point: True *voluntas* requires the faculty of reason. Hence, while there are numerous self-moving, or "voluntary," agents in the world, only those having a rational soul possess free choice. Augustine does not here expound on what the unique quality is that the rational soul brings to self-movement, but when combined with his sympathies for Cicero's incompatibilism and his rejection of internal necessity, the unique quality appears to be the libertarian power of contrary choice.

What we find, then, is that Augustine rejects physical, theological, and psychological determinism, and defends instead that the will is free by natural necessity, that the freedom of the will is compatible with foreknowledge, and that foreknowledge

---

[23] See the above Introduction, pp. 14-16. See also Robert Kane, "The Contours of the Contemporary Free Will Debate," in *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will,* ed. Robert Kane (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 11ff.

[24] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.9 (emphasis added).

itself testifies to a synergistic subject/object relationship between God and free creatures. Moreover, the compatibility to which Augustine's defense speaks is not a concession of determinism that leads to a compatibilist redefining of freedom as uncoerced necessity, but rather a case that the incompatibilist commitments of Cicero are in no way threatened by divine foreknowledge, contrary to Cicero's fears.

1.2. Incompatibilism in Medieval Augustinianism

Having seen evidence of Augustine's own incompatibilist commitments, we turn to a key piece of evidence that medieval Augustinianism retains this commitment. The evidence I here consider is best set against the backdrop of eighteenth and nineteenth century compatibilism. As compatibilist writers advance in earnest in these centuries, the view takes up residence in a variety of theological circles. Some compatibilists, such as Joseph Priestley, unblushingly admit that their position is innovative.[25] However, those compatibilists that seek a home in confessional Christian circles take a different approach. Two strategies emerge.

The first strategy appears in a dispute between William Hamilton and William Cunningham over the orthodoxy of compatibilism. Hamilton—a prominent Reformed philosopher—argued that Jonathan Edwards's determinism is heretical by the lights of the Westminster Confession.[26] Cunningham, an advocate of necessitarianism and a

---

[25] See Joseph Priestley, *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated; being an appendix to the Disquisitions relating to matter and spirit* (London, 1777), xxix-xxx, and 157; and Joseph Priestley, *An Examination of Dr. Reid's Enquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense, Dr. Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, and Dr. Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion* (London: J. Johnson, 1774), xvi-xviii.

[26] See William Hamilton, in Dugald Stewart, *The Collected Works*, 10 vols., ed. Sir William Hamilton,(Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1854-1860), vol. 6, 402.

professing Calvinist, took it upon himself to defend compatibilism as a legitimate option

for Reformed theology. Cunningham dared not dispute the fact that Augustine and his

followers advocate free choice. Instead, what Cunningham argues is that, despite the

Augustinian advocacy of freedom, the door to psychological determinism remains open

because none in this tradition went so far as to explore whether uncoerced self-

determination is itself predetermined by the psychological makeup of the acting agent. In

other words, traditional Augustinians may have insisted that acting agents move

themselves by uncoerced volition, but unless these authors clearly reject psychologically

determinism, a compatibilist could agree with the Augustinian tradition on this point.[27]

Cunningham thus claims the tradition is neutral on the compatibilist question.

A second, more aggressive strategy of eighteenth century compatibilists is found

in the work of Lord Henry Home Kames. Kames, like Cunningham, acknowledges the

push for free choice in the Augustinian tradition, but attempts to use its intellectualist

representatives to argue that psychological determinism is an acceptable stance for

Augustinians. Kames submits that because the intellectualist holds that the will

necessarily follows the final judgment of the practical intellect (*voluntas necessario

sequitur ultimumm judicium intellectus practici*), the position defaults into psychological

determinism. In other words, choice is the product of a chain of psychological events;

these events are determined by the capacities of intellect (or the psychological make of

the agent), not by the will; and these psychological events culminate in a final judgment

---

[27] See Cunningham,"Sir William Hamilton on Philosophical Necessity and the Westminster Confession," *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, 7 (1858): 211 ; see also William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1866), 483, 486-88.

of the intellect, from which the choice of the will necessarily follows (à la psychological determinism).[28]

The above subsection on Augustine shows that both Kames and Cunningham have an uphill battle with regard to Augustine himself. Putting aside Augustine, however, is it true that his followers were less clear on matters of determinism and free choice? Is it true that the medieval intellectualists stood on the opposite side of the issue from Augustine, advocating psychological determinism? Because neither Kames nor Cunningham dispute whether the Augustinian tradition affirms human volition nor deny that God's decrees uphold human volition, I will not rehearse the medieval echoes of Augustine on these topics, discussed above.[29] Rather, I will focus on the question of whether either of the above compatibilist strategies is defensible in reference to medieval Augustinianism.

Perhaps the best place to look when assessing the respective claims of Kames and Cunningham is the medieval discussion of divine freedom. For this discussion makes clear that the respective claims of Cunningham and Kames are both false. Within this context, we find a clear recognition of the prospect of psychological determinism (contra Cunningham), as well as the rejection of psychological determinism by both intellectualists and voluntarists alike (contra Kames). As we will see, this dual

---

[28] Kames, *Essays*, 158-9, and 207.

[29] For examples of medieval texts that echo Augustine's claims regarding the natural necessity that the will is free, the subject-object relationship of divine foreknowledge, and the permissive synergistic nature of divine decree, see, e.g., Anselm, *De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis* in *Opera Omnia*, 2 vols.ed. Franciscus Salesius Schmitt (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag [Günther Holzboog] 1968), 1.1-7, 3.3-4; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* in *Summa Philosophica seu De Veritate Catholicae Fidei Contra Gentiles,* ed. P. Lethielleux (Parisiis: Imprimerie Laloux fils et Guillot, 1877), 1.47, 1.68; Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* in *Summa Theologiae*, Textum Leoninum ed. (Rome, 1888), Ia q82; John Duns Scotus, *Lectura* in *Opera Omnia,* 26 vols. (Paris, 1891-1895), I.39.5.41; I.39.5.51-56; I.39.5.80-81.

recognition and rejection of psychological determinism testifies to a common incompatibilist commitment among medieval Augustinians.

The issue of psychological determinism emerges in reference to God because of a series of premises that stem from the traditional Christian understanding of the deity. It was not uncommon for medieval figures, along with the Church fathers before them, to hold that God (being omniscient) necessarily knows the best possible means to any given end, and that God (being omnibenevolent and incorruptible) cannot but incline toward the good, and indeed the best.[30] The former negates the possibility of deliberation—none is needed.[31] And the latter appears to necessitate action on the known good.[32] In light of such assumptions, the danger of psychological determinism looms large. For if God need not deliberate and cannot do anything but the best, then it seems to follow that both the content of divine judgment and the divine choices that follow from this judgment are necessary in an absolute sense. If God is free at all, he can be free in only a compatibilist sense: He is a self-moving agent, free from external coercion.

The danger of such a conclusion is fully recognized from the patristic period onward. But what we do not find among either patristic or medieval figures is acceptance of divine determinism or a compatibilist defense of divine freedom. Rather, we find opposition to psychological determinism as utterly incompatible with free choice, and thus a rejection of the apparent necessity in divine choice.

---

[30] See, e.g., John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa,* 2.29 (PG 94:963a-970b); and Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q19 aa.3-5.

[31] Augustine, *De Trinitate* 15; John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa* 2.29 (PG 94:963a-970b); and Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia. q14 a7.

[32] Cf. John of Damscus, *De Fide Orthodoxa,* 2.29 (PG 94:963a-970b).

In patristic literature, the danger of divine determinism is acknowledged and dismissed outright, but the dismissal is so uniform and uncontroversial that it involves little by way of sustained argumentation. More often than not, the problem is identified as entailing fatalism, which Christianity denies; it is recognized as a threat to creaturely freedom, which Christianity affirms; and it is dismissed as falsified by the fact that God can do things that he does not in fact do.[33] In the medieval era, however, the question of divine determinism receives more thorough scholastic attention.[34] Despite this change in approach, the common thread running through the two eras is the claim that divine determinism is incompatible with Christian theology and must be avoided. The respective positions of Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus on the matter are helpful, since they represent the respective camps of intellectualism and voluntarism on free choice, and go to the heart of the respective claims of Hamilton and Kames.

Beginning with Aquinas, we find that he is well aware that necessitarianism could follow from his intellectualism. Having identified free choice as the free connection between ends and means,[35] the necessitarian implications of his denial of divine deliberation are evident: God necessarily sees the given end in conjunction with its best possible means, and because the will necessarily follows the final judgment of the intellect, God necessarily chooses as he does.[36] To use Aquinas's words,

---

[33] See, e.g, Irenaeus of Lyons, *Contra Haereses,* 2.1.1 and 2.5.4 (PG 7a:709c-710a; 723c-724a); Ambrose of Milan, *De Fide* 2.3 (PL); and John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa,* 1.14 (PG 94:860a-862a).

[34] Early medieval figures offer less scholastic treatment, reflecting the more basic impulse found among the Patristics. Anselm, for example, takes as axiomatic that God is the freest of beings and is not bound by modal necessity in his choice. Cf. Anselm, *De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis,* 1.3 with 3.4.

[35] See, e.g., Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q82, esp. aa2 and 4.

[36] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Ia q9 a1; q14 a7; a15; and q19 a3.

> The will of God is entirely unchangeable…. This cannot happen [i.e., that the will be change], unless we presuppose change either in the knowledge or in the disposition of the substance of the willer. For since the will regards good, a man may in two ways begin to will a thing. In one way when that thing begins to be good for him, and this does not take place without a change in him. Thus when the cold weather begins, it becomes good to sit by the fire; though it was not so before. In another way when he knows for the first time that a thing is good for him, though he did not know it before; hence we take counsel in order to know what is good for us. Now it has already been shown that both the substance of God and His knowledge are entirely unchangeable. Therefore His will must be entirely unchangeable.[37]

How Aquinas responds to this chain of reasoning is pivotal for unearthing whether his commitments are compatibilist or incompatibilist.[38] For, if Aquinas is a compatibilist, then the implication of psychological determinism should be satisfactory. So long as God is free from external coercion and is self-moving in accord with his own nature, the compatibilist definition of freedom is satisfied. Only if one is an incompatibilist does there emerge a need to avoid the necessary movement from judgment to choice. What we find in Aquinas is an effort to break the chain of necessity from judgment to choice in God, an effort that indicates his incompatibilist commitments.

Aquinas's solution to the problem of divine freedom presumes standard medieval faculty psychology. All free agents operate under an innate final cause (a fact of ontology, not of choice),[39] and the ordinary sense of *ends* and *means* in choice refers to *ends subordinate to a being's final cause* and *means to these subordinate ends*.[40] For

---

[37] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q19 a7.

[38] Although the above synopsis of the problem comes from the *Summa Theologiae* Ia q19 a7, the solution to which I here refer comes prior to it in the *Summa Theologiae* Ia. q19 a3. Yet, a3 is still rightly identified as his reply, since Aquinas's reply to objection 4 in a7, which regards modal necessity, refers back to his claims in a3.

[39] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q82 a1.

[40] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q19 a3; and q82 a2.

example, the final cause of man is happiness—this man wills necessarily.[41] A subordinate

end to this final cause may be the satisfaction of hunger, and deliberation occurs when

considering particular means by which to satisfy this end. For creatures, freedom centers

on both subordinate ends, since various subordinate ends are compatible with happiness,

and deliberation regarding means to these ends—for example, one may eat salad,

pastrami, or some other food to satisfy hunger.[42]

In the case of God, however, Aquinas argues that omniscience and

omnibenevolence require that God see every subordinate end in conjunction with its best

possible means. Hence, no deliberation occurs.[43] As for the final cause under which

God's judgment operates, Aquinas identifies this as God's own goodness.[44] By

combining this final cause with a key ontological difference between God and creatures,

Aquinas arrives at his solution to the problem of psychological determinism. That key

difference is this: Unlike creatures, which consist of both potentiality and actuality,

knowing both ontological increase and corruption, God is pure actuality.[45] God's

goodness is thus complete in itself.[46] The implication is that acts of creation and

providence that cohere with divine goodness do not enhance God's goodness; they only

display it. In this light, Aquinas argues that God's goodness does not necessitate any

subordinate end. In Aquinas's words, "since the goodness of God is perfect, and can exist

---

[41] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q19 a3; and q82 aa1-2.

[42] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q82 a2.

[43] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q14 a7; q19 a3; and a7.

[44] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q19 a7.

[45] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q9 aa1-2.

[46] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Ia q6 a3.

without other things inasmuch as no perfection can accrue to Him from them, it follows

that His willing things apart from Himself is not absolutely necessary."[47] Given his

ontological self-sufficiency, God may act (*volo*) or not act (*non volo*). For inaction does

not threaten God's goodness, and should God act, the particular action need only be

reflective of divine goodness; it is never necessitated by it.[48] In short, by affirming the

pure actuality of God, Aquinas can maintain that God's final cause (i.e., his own

goodness) has need of nothing, and thus God may freely couple this final cause with a

variety of subordinate ends or with none at all. To use Aquinas's words, "God necessarily

wills His own goodness, but other things not necessarily.… He has free will with respect

to what He does not necessarily will."[49]

Regardless of whether Aquinas's solution is successful, the fact that Aquinas

seeks to break the chain of necessity in this way testifies to his incompatibilist

commitment. He is cognizant of the danger of psychological determinism (contra

Cunningham), given what he affirms about God and the intellect-will relationship, and he

insists on avoid such determinism (contra Kames).

Despite Aquinas's best efforts, medieval voluntarists, such as John Duns Scotus,

maintain that the intellectualist position cannot successfully avoid necessitarianism.[50] To

be sure, Scotus's concern is not Aquinas's intentions. He recognizes that Aquinas intends

to avoid divine determinism and, by extension, to preserve the contingency of creation—

evident in the fact that he sees Aquinas's approach as one among many proposed

---

[47] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q19 a3.

[48] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q19 a3.

[49] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q19 a10.

[50] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.42.

solutions to the problem of necessitarianism.[51] Yet, Scotus argues that so long as choice

necessarily follows from intellective judgment, the modal necessity of divine knowing

will be distributed to divine choice and ultimately to the thing chosen.[52]

While Scotus disagrees with Aquinas on the nature of divine choice, he

nonetheless agrees that divine determinism is unacceptable. What is particularly

interesting about Scotus's case is that he takes (what he perceives to be) the failings of

intellectualism as proof of voluntarism. That is, Scotus sees the existence of freedom and

contingency in our world as an axiomatic part of Christian theology.[53] Because

intellectualism threatens freedom and contingency, Scotus thinks this is proof enough that

intellectualism is false and voluntarism is true.[54] For if our world is free of modal

necessity—as Scotus presumes it is[55]—then the First Cause of our world must also be

free from modal necessity. This Scotus thinks is possible only in a voluntarist

framework.[56]

We will explore the details of Scotus's defense of divine freedom in chapter 5.

For now, suffice it to say that Scotus's own solution to divine determinism is rooted in

the question of how possibles are grounded. He insists that complex truth claims, such as

future contingents, are not grounded in God's necessary knowledge (contra Aquinas[57])

but are voluntarily grounded by the divine will and only then judged by the divine

---

[51] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.18-26; I.39.5.31; and I.39.5.35-36.

[52] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.42.

[53] E.g., Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.40.

[54] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.42.

[55] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.40 and I.39.5.91.

[56] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.42.

[57] Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q14 a9.

intellect.[58] In other words, rather than leaving choice strictly on the post-judgment side of God's intellective acts, Scotus bookends the divine intellect with voluntary action—the first act being the voluntary grounding of possibles, and the second being the voluntary choice regarding the final judgment of the intellect.

For our purposes here, the feature of this solution that is most relevant is the fact that Scotus, like Aquinas, looks for a way to break the chain of necessity in divine choice, so as to avoid psychological determinism. Aquinas aims at this end by affirming the actuality of divine goodness and its compatibility with numerous subordinate ends; Scotus aims at this end by rejecting the idea that future contingents are part of God's necessary knowledge, and argues that they are freely grounded by the divine will and only then submitted to the intellect for judgment. In both cases, however, the aim is to avoid psychological determinism. Thus, the respective claims of Cunningham and Kames fail, since the medieval Augustinians are not only aware of psychological determinism (contra Cunningham) but are committed to avoiding it (contra Kames). Regardless of whether one believes that either school of medieval thought can succeed in avoiding determinism, the fact that both voluntarists and intellectualists have every intention of doing so indicates a common incompatibilist commitment in both schools of thought.

1.3. Incompatibilism in Post-Reformation Protestant Scholasticism

We have now seen evidence that Augustine and his medieval followers were incompatibilists. But does this commitment change with the post-Reformation era? To answer this question, we will focus on Protestant theology, and specifically the Reformed

---

[58] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.42-44.

scholastics, for several reasons. First, Leibniz sits on the Protestant side of the post-Reformation fence, so it is worth directing our focus there. Second, Leroy E. Loemker identifies the Reformed scholastics as one of the main influences on Leibniz.[59] Third, the Reformed have long been accused of embracing necessitarianism,[60] so if later Augustinians abandon incompatibilism for determinism, we should expect to find this amongst the Reformed. We will begin by looking at the question of divine freedom addressed in the previous subsection.

Now, it must be noted that Reformed theology is not fully formed upon the dawn of the Reformation, but undergoes development. Granting Richard Muller's threefold breakdown of this development, early Reformation theology is less scholastically sophisticated than the "high orthodox" Reformed theology of ca. 1640-1725.[61] As a result, early Reformed theology continues to affirm the reality of divine freedom, but does so with less scholastic clarity than many medievals.

All within early Reformed theology agree that God is free. However, some early figures, such as Wolfgang Musculus (1497-1563), explicitly shy away from speculation into the mechanics of free choice—the very speculation that is required to adjudicate the

---

[59] Leroy E Loemker, "Leibniz and the Herborn Encyclopedists," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22, no. 3 (1961): 323. Cf. Maria Rosa Antognazza, *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 41-43; and Eric J. Aiton, *Leibniz: A Biography* (Philadelphia, PA: Taylor & Francis, 1985), 10-13.

[60] E.g., Arthur E. Murphy, "Jonathan Edwards on Free Will and Moral Agency," in *The Philosophical Review*, 68, no. 2 (1959):188; C. Samuel Storms, "Jonathan Edwards on the Freedom of the Will," in *Trinity Journal* 3, no. 2(1982):132, citing Benjamin B. Warfield, *Studies in Theology* (New York: Oxford University Presss, 1932), 530; George Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 439, 443-445; Harold P. Simonson, "Jonathan Edwards and his Scottish Connections," in *Journal of American Studies* 21, no. 3 (1987): 355; Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (Cleveland: World, 1969), 115, 252-253, 259-260; Conrad Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1974), 2-6, 56, 190-191, 196-200; William J. Wainwright, "Theological Determinism and the Problem of Evil: Are Arminians Any Better Off?" *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 50 (2001):81-96.

[61] See Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 1, "Introduction."

psychological-determinism question.[62] Others, such as Girolamo Zanchi (1516-1590),

affirm that God possesses every type of freedom, including freedom from necessity,[63] but

are unclear as to what this entails and what it excludes; hence, the claim remains

susceptible to a compatibilist reading of freedom as mere lack of coercion.[64] In these

vague cases, however, one would be hard pressed to demonstrate conclusively a

commitment to either compatibilism or incompatibilism, since there is neither opposition

to medieval incompatibilism nor sufficient echo of it.

Thankfully, some within early Reformed theology comment with sufficient clarity

to label their position with confidence. Franciscus Junius (1545-1602), for example,

begins with standard fare for the Reformed, namely, the outlining of various types of

freedom with indication of which types belong to which beings.[65] He reiterates the

standard Augustinian view that the freedom to do either good or evil (i.e., moral

indifference) is a product of fallibility and corruptibility, and that such freedom is inferior

to the freedom of God, who operates by moral necessity, doing only good. However,

Junius adds to this rather standard claim an added measure to avoid psychological

determinism. After identifying God as the freest of beings, and insisting that neither

---

[62] See, e.g., Jordan Ballor, "Covenant, Causality, and Law in the Theology of Wolfgang Musculus" (University of Zurich: Ph.D. dissertation, 2011), 3.1.1.

[63] See, e.g., Zanchi, *De operibus Dei intra spantium sex dierum creatis* 3.3 in *Omnia Opera Theologica,* 8 tom. (Genevae: Ex typographia Samuelis Crispini 1619); and Zanchi, *De primi hominis lapsu, de Peccato & de Lege Dei* 1.6.

[64] Cf. Zanchi, "De libero primorum parentum ante lapsum arbitrio," 3 in *De operibus Dei intra spantium sex dierum creatis*.

[65] Franciscus Junius, *Theses theologicae Leydenses et Heydelbergenses* 22. *De libero arbitrio*, in *Opuscula theologica,* ed. Abraham Kuyper (Amsterdam: F. Muller com soc. et J.H. Kryt, 1882). Cf. Girolamo Zanchi, "De libero primorum parentum ante lapsum arbitrio," 3 in *Omnium Operum Theologicorum,* 8 tom. (Genevae: Ex typographia Samuelis Crispini, 1619); and Franciscus Gomarus (Gilbertus Jacchaeus), *Disputatio theologica de libero arbitrio* (Leiden, 1602); Gisbertus Voetius and Engelbertus Beeckman, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica, continens quaestiones duas, de Distinctione Attributorum divinorum, & Libertate Voluntatis* (Utrecht: Joannes à Waesberge, 1652).

moral necessity nor omniscience negates this freedom, Junius insists that God retains

freedom of contradiction with regard to singular goods (viz., the best) and freedom of

contrariety with regard to multiple goods.[66] In short, Junius makes clear that God is never

bound to act on any given judgment, but retains contrary choice whether faced with the

best or multiple comparable goods.

We find further confirmation of this libertarian commitment as we move into the

writings of the high orthodox Reformed scholastics. For as Catholic polemics against

Reformed theology become more sophisticated, the Reformed are forced to offer more

scholastically robust defenses of their positions and respond to the charges of

necessitarianism. Franciscus Gomarus (1563-1641), who debated Jacobus Arminius at

Leiden and whose theology became in many ways constitutive of Reformed orthodoxy

after the Synod of Dort, makes quite plain his libertarian commitments. Gomarus is

explicit that a mere lack of coercion (à la compatibilism) is inadequate for true freedom.

After all, notes Gomarus, even falling rocks and dogs are free from coercion. Freedom of

contrariety and contradiction, he argues, are required and these refer to the real possibility

of the opposite outcome or action by the given agent, *the knowledge of the object

remaining the same*.[67] Notice that Gomarus' insistence that the outcome could be

otherwise even if the knowledge is not otherwise is aimed specifically at psychological

determinism, which requires a change in knowledge (i.e., the psychological events) in

order for the choice to be otherwise. By adding this very specific condition, Gomarus

makes painfully clear his rejection of psychological determinism.

---

[66] See Junius, *Theses Leydenses* 22..

[67] See the second definition of a "free act" in Gomarus, *Disputatio theologica de libero arbitrio*; see also Gomarus's pupil, Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica*.

Gomarus' opposition to psychological determinism would echo in his student, Gisbertus Voetius. Voetius reiterates Gomarus' insistence that freedom requires not only freedom from coercion but also from necessity. As for what freedom from necessity entails, Voetius is quite clear that he means freedom from all intrinsic, absolute, and natural necessity.[68] In this triad, Voetius distances himself from every form of determinism, including psychological determinism (intrinsic). Were Voetius not clear enough on the point, his comments on indifference make plain his libertarian commitments. Voetius argues that despite his belief that equipoise is a chimera[69] (an opposition to which we will return in section three), there are two legitimate senses in which the will can be said to be indifferent. The first is that the presentation of a judgment by the intellect to the will is offered in such a way that no psychological necessity from judgment to choice follows from the presentation. The second legitimate use of indifference refers to a root freedom in the will prior to it binding itself to any particular choice. Suffice it to say that this second form of indifference can be read as nothing other than an affirmation of the will's power of contrary choice, or libertarian capacity to actualize any number of possibilities.[70]

To these voices, we could add many others,[71] such as Johannes Maccovius who goes to great pains to demonstrate that while God provides existence to free agents via concourse and supplies movement via premotion, the character of the act itself is freely

---

[68] Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* 1.

[69] Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* 3.

[70] Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* 2.

[71] For additional bibliographic considerations, see the sources catalogued in note 1 above.

determined by the agent,[72] or Anglican Bishop Lancelot Andrews who identifies freedom

as an essential property of the soul, and includes among its capacities the power to

redirect thought (contra psychological determinism).[73] Yet, for our purposes here, these

choice glimpses of incompatibilism in the post-Reformation Reformed tradition should

suffice.

The consistent pattern highlighted throughout this section is that the Augustinian

tradition displays an incompatibilist commitment in opposition to determinism. In

Augustine himself, we find that he rejects every form of determinism, and pours great

effort into demonstrating that libertarian free choice can exist alongside divine decree and

foreknowledge. In the medieval Augustinians, we see this same incompatibilist

commitment amid their efforts to avoid the snare of psychological determinism in God.

And these commitments continue to echo throughout the post-Reformation Reformed

scholastics. However, we still face the question of whether any in Leibniz's day would

have recognized this. It is this question to which we turn in our next section.

2. Perceptions of the Augustinian Tradition on Free Choice

Though we have good evidence that the Augustinian tradition is committed to

incompatibilism, would any in Leibniz's day have granted this? I will address this

question in two parts. We will first consider the recent essay by Richard Muller,

---

[72] Johannes Maccovius, *Collegia Theologica, quae extant omnia. Tertio ab auctore recognita, emendata, & plrimis locis aucta, in partes duas distributa* (Franekerae: Impensis Vlderici Balck: 1641), ix, 120. See also Willem J. van Asselt, "The Theologian's Tool Kit," 23-40.

[73] Lancelot Andrewes, *Apospasmatia sacra, or A Collection of Posthumous and Orphan Lectures: Delivered at St. Pauls and St. Giles his Church, by the Right Honourable and Reverend Father in God Lancelot Andrews, Lord Bishop of Winchester* (London: Printed by R. Hodgkinsonne, for Moseley, [et al.], 1657), 95-96. Cf. Andrewes, *Apospasmatia sacra* 259, where he chastises Eve for not redirecting her thoughts from what she could not have to what she had been abundantly given.

"Jonathan Edwards and the Absence of Free Choice," in which Muller looks at 18th century reactions to this one very clear instance of "Calvinist" determinism. His findings indicate that those involved the 18th century discussion agree that Edwards' compatibilism is innovative and far from the Reformed position, which affirms incompatibilism. After considering Muller's findings, we will look at how perspectives on the Augustinian tradition evolve from the 16th century through the 19th century. We will see that there is a clear and uncontroversial recognition of the libertarian nature of Augustinianism in the 16th and 17th centuries, and this general consensus goes unchallenged until the 18th century, where it remains a minority report. Not until the 19th century does the determinist reading of Augustinianism become commonplace, but this reading still does not meet with consensus, as many continue to defend the older reading of the tradition. In the end, we will see that both the findings of Muller and the developmental understanding of the Augustinian tradition provide good reason to believe that a writer in the 17th to early 18th century, such as Leibniz, would recognize the incompatibilist commitments of the Augustinian tradition defended above.

2.1. 18th Century Reactions to Jonathan Edwards

In "Jonathan Edwards and the Absence of Free Choice," Muller chastens the all-too-common contemporary opinion that Edwards' position on free choice represents the standard "Calvinist" position.[74] Over against this notion, Muller notes the opinion of older scholarship that Edwards does not belong to traditional Reformed thought at all, but

---

[74] Richard A. Muller, "Jonathan Edwards and the Absence of Free Choice: A Parting Ways in the Reformed Tradition," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011), 3-4. For examples, see note 60 above. I place *Calvinist* in quotes because the term is foreign to older Reformed literature, being a later invention.

is of the lineage of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Anthony Collins.[75] By drawing on the respective writings of Joseph Priestley, George Hill, William Cunningham, and William Hamilton, Muller demonstrates that this older scholarship, whether in favor of or opposed to Edwardsian determinism, agrees that Edwards' necessitarian views are innovative and untethered to traditional Reformed theology, which is committed to libertarian free choice.

Muller begins by comparing the respective perspectives of Priestley and Hill on Edwards. Priestley, a famous philosopher and Unitarian universalist minister, characterizes the Reformed and Remonstrant positions as in agreement with one another on the issue of free choice: They both affirm, argues Priestley, the indifference of the will with regard to particular acts, denying mechanism in the human mind that would necessitate one action over the other. Hence, according to Priestley, both positions stand in contrast to the doctrines of necessitarianism.[76] (Whether the Reformed presume indifference of equipoise is an issue to which we will return in the next section.) As Muller points out, Priestley, an advocate of necessitarianism, does not trace his own position back to the Reformed, but rather to Thomas Hobbes, chastising Locke for his confused treatment of freedom in *Essays on Human Understanding,* and praising the compatibilist Anthony Collins for clearing up the matter.[77]

---

[75] See, e.g., George Park Fisher, "The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards," in *The North American Review*, 128, no. 268 (1879):289-293; Conrad Wright, "Edwards and the Arminians on the Freedom of the Will," in *Harvard Theological Review,* 35, no. 4 (1942):241-261.

[76] Priestley, *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity*, 157.

[77] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 6. See Priestley, *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity*, xxix-xxx; and Priestley, *An Examination of Dr. Reid's Enquiry*, xvi-xviii.

Muller notes the rather significant fact that one of Priestley's opponents, William

Cockin, not only agrees with Priestley that Hobbes is the source of necessitarianism, but

sets necessitarianism in contrast with the Reformed doctrine of predestination as a

doctrine that presumes free agency, denying freedom only in reference to the procuring of

salvation. This concession by Cockin is significant because Cockin loathed the Reformed

understanding of predestination, and thus had no personal investment in defending it

from the charge of necessitarianism.[78]

Priestley recognizes that a number of "Calvinists" in his own day embrace

necessitarianism, but he states quite explicitly that he understands Edwards to be the first

to embrace this innovation.[79] Priestley thus takes Edwards to be disingenuous in

representing his own position as Reformed and presenting philosophical liberty as

Arminian, since Priestley, like Cockin, recognizes that philosophical liberty is the

position held by Reformed and Remonstrant alike; the dispute is about the role of the will

in salvation, not about freedom per se.[80] In Priestley's assessment, Edwards was right to

side with necessitarianism, but no other Reformed figures prior to Edwards did so.[81]

After drawing out this material from Priestley, Muller looks at George Hill. Hill

offers a rather bleak assessment of older Reformed theology, but suggests that his own

more enlightened age had produced a new and more persuasive alliance between

---

[78] See William Cockin, *The Freedom of Human Action Explained and Vindicated: In Which the Opinions of Dr. Priestley on the Subject are Particularly Considered* (London: for the Author, 1791), 127-131; and 144.

[79] Priestley, *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity,* 160-61.

[80] Priestley, *An Examination of Dr. Reid's Enquiry*, xvii.

[81] Priestley, *An Examination of Dr. Reid's Enquiry*, xvi-xviii; see Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 8.

philosophy and theology that is manifest in the necessitarian brands of "Calvinism."[82]

Unlike Priestley, however, Hill attributes this shift not to Hobbes, but to the

developments in Lutheran theology from Leibniz to Wolff and on into Israel Gottlieb

Canz, which eventually made their way into Reformed thought.[83]

Muller draws out some key similarities and differences between the respective

accounts of Priestley and Hill, which are instructive—especially for our purposes here.

The first obvious difference is the philosophy to which Priestley and Hill trace

"Calvinist" necessitarianism. Muller submits that the difference is less a matter of

historical scholarship and more one of strategy:

> If the issue underlying these comments were a purely historical one, Priestley's account would certainly be closer to the truth, but the issue was more one of pedigree, with Priestley identifying the line of thought leading to his own philosophy and Hill identifying the line of development, leaving out the notorious Thomas Hobbes, that would be more acceptable among Protestant theologians.[84]

A second difference is that Priestley understands Edwards to be departing from

Reformed thought in advocating necessitarianism, while Hill characterizes the shift as an

effort to place Reformed thought on more sure philosophical footing.[85] Having said this,

Muller rightly points out that Hill's characterization does not claim continuity between

older Reformed theology and then-contemporary Calvinism on the issue of freedom.

Rather, as Muller puts it, Hill saw that "there had been a major philosophical shift in

Protestant thought and that the shift was illustrated prominently by the work of Jonathan

---

[82] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 9. See George Hill, *Lectures in Divinity*, ed. Alexander Hill (Philadelphia, PA: Herman Hooker, 1842), 599. The Wolffian movement toward necessitarianism is also argued by Friedrich Ueberweg, *History of Philosophy from Thales to the Present Time*, 2 vols. (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Co., 1876), vol. 2, 111; 116.

[83] Hill, *Lectures in Divinity*, 599.

[84] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 9-10.

[85] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 10.

Edwards. Hill … identified the older Reformed theology as philosophically inept."[86] On this point, there is agreement between Hill and Priestley, namely, that the necessitarian trend is innovative and divergent from older Reformed thought.

Muller spends the latter part of his essay on the dispute between Hamilton and Cunningham, referenced in the previous section. As noted above, Hamilton argued that Edwards' views on freedom are not only heterodox but heretical by the lights of the Westminster Confession. Hamilton offers this assessment in both his *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature* and in notes on a text of Dugald Stewart, which Hamilton edited.[87] As Muller points out, "Hamilton's comment stood very much in agreement with Stewart's own conclusion that 'the argument for Necessity' as 'insisted on both by Collins and Edwards,' if carried forward to the point of arguing the opposition of human liberty and divine foreknowledge, would serve to 'identify … the creed of the Necessitarians with that of the Spinozists.'"[88] Muller also points out that Stewart's association of Edwards with Collins affirms the lineage offered by Priestley, and links Edwards more with 18th century rationalism than Reformed theology.[89]

Despite whatever agreement may have existed between Hamilton and Stewart, Cunningham responded quite pointedly to this line of attack on necessitarianism, and he had personal reasons for doing so. Not only was Hamilton a highly respected Calvinist philosopher, but, as Muller points out, "an Edwardsian doctrine of predestination as philosophical necessity had been espoused by quite a few eminent Scottish Presbyterian

---

[86] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 10.

[87] See William Hamilton, in Dugald Stewart, *The Collected Works,* vol. 6, 402.

[88] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 16.

[89] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 16.

divines of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Identifying Edwards as a heretic might become the basis for extending the compliment to the revered Thomas Chalmers, and probably to Cunningham himself."[90]

Significantly, Cunningham does not dispute the philosophical lineage of Edwards' position espoused by Priestley.[91] Cunningham's strategy for defending necessitarianism (touched on in the previous section) is to argue that the Westminster Confession and Calvinist theology are both neutral on the issue, and thus can be coupled with necessitarianism, though it need not be.[92] The Westminister Confession simply argues that divine foreordination does not imply that God is the author of sin, nor does it do violence to the will of creatures or deprive them of liberty or contingency. Yet, Cunningham somehow concludes from this that liberty is excluded. And, so the argument goes, since Edwards did not take philosophical necessity to make God the author of sin or to do violence to the will of creatures, necessitarianism must be compatible with the Westminster Confession.[93]

Cunningham takes the same tactic in dealing with Augustine, Calvin, and Turretin. He argues that neither of them explored the notion of psychological determinism, and thus, while they defend the view that man is free to choose what he desires, their views do not exclude the possibility that man's desires are themselves determined.[94]

---

[90] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 17.

[91] William Cunningham, "Sir William Hamilton on Philosophical Necessity," 206.

[92] Cunningham, "Sir William Hamilton on Philosophical Necessity," 211.

[93] See Cunningham, "Sir William Hamilton on Philosophical Necessity," 218; and Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 18.

[94] Cunningham, "Sir William Hamilton on Philosophical Necessity," 213-216; and 227.

Muller raises a number of issues that Cunningham neglects in his treatment of the Reformed tradition, including "the fact that the Confession affirmed contingency and Edwards denied it,"[95] and the fact that "Turretin is quite clear that the will, considered absolutely or simply, in its primary actuality, is free not merely because it is spontaneous and uncoerced but also because it has a root indifference prior to its act of willing and, given that root indifference, it has both freedom of contrariety and freedom of contradiction."[96] But regardless of whether his case is successful, Cunningham's strategy, given the lack of connection between philosophical necessity and traditional Reformed theology, is to create room for necessitarianism by arguing the tradition's neutrality on the issue, not its advocacy thereof. However, as Muller points out, "[Cunningham's] response to Hamilton did not settle the issue of Edwards's theology and its relation to the older Reformed confessional tradition. In the same year of the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, a substantial anonymous commentary on Edwards and the New England theology appeared, much in line with Hamilton's critique, highlighting Edwards' determinism, identifying its affinities with pantheism, and questioning its Orthodoxy."[97]

While Muller himself foregoes the question of Edwards' orthodoxy,[98] he does conclude that Edwards' determinism "stands in marked contrast to the resolution found among Reformed orthodox writers like Gijsbert Voetius, Francis Turretin, and indeed,

---

[95] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 18. On the latter point, Muller cites Turretin, *Institutio theologiae elencticae, in qua status controversiae perspicu exponitur, praecipua orthodoxorum argumenta proponuntur et vindicantur, et fontes solutionum aperiuntur* (Geneva: Samuelem de Tournes 1688), VIII.i.8; X.iii.4, 12.

[96] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 19.

[97] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 20. See "Edwards and the Theology of New England," *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 7 (1857): 544-562.

[98] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 21.

Edwards' own favorite theologian, Petrus van Mastricht."[99] The contrast Muller

summarizes well and is worth quoting at length:

> Among the differences between Edwards' views on freedom and those of the earlier Reformed tradition, perhaps the primary point concerns the basic language of freedom itself. Whereas the older tradition consistently presented the problem in terms of free *choice* or *liberum arbitrium*, understood as the interactive act of intellect and will, Edwards presented the issue in terms of freedom of *will* and grounded the issue in the will itself without reference to the arbitrative function of intellect. In other words, the older Reformed theology followed a traditional faculty psychology whereas Edwards did not. The older tradition understood that there had to be a root indifference prior to the engagement of will and intellect, defined by the potency of the will to multiple effects and characterized by freedom of contradiction and contrariety, in order for there to be freedom of choice—Edwards' formulation not only denies these points, it associates them with Arminianism.[100]

These shifts, argues Muller, constitute a major divergence from the older confessional

Reformed orthodoxy, and it is historically significant that, following the

deconfessionalizing of the early eighteenth century,[101] both proponents and opponents of

philosophical necessity in the eighteenth recognized this fact.[102] In light of this evidence,

Muller concludes:

> It is, then, to Edwards and to those who followed him in this path, as well as to the Wolffian Reformed thinkers on the continent, that Reformed theology owes much of its reputation for being a form of determinism or compatibilism, rather than to the theologians from the time of Calvin to the time of Turretin and van Mastricht who have typically been viewed as the arbiters of Reformed

---

[99] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 20.

[100] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 20-1.

[101] I am here presuming Muller's sketch of the history of Reformed orthodoxy, in which it moves through three stages, the last of which is a movement away from firm confessional stances. See Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 1, "Introduction."

[102] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 20. My reference to "deconfessionalizing" presumes Muller's own sketch of the history of Reformed orthodoxy, in which it moves through three stages, the last of which is a movement away from firm confessional stances. See Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 1, "Introduction." See also Richard A. Muller, "Philip Doddridge and the Formulation of Calvinistic Theology in an Era of Rationalism and Deconfessionalization," in *Religion, Politics, and Dissent: 1660-1832, Essays in Honour of James E. Bradley,* eds. Robert D. Cornwall and William Gibson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 65-84.

orthodoxy. In short, the nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship that tended to characterize the entire older Reformed tradition as a form of predestinarian metaphysic not only rested its claims on the work of nineteenth-century theologians like Alexander Schweizer but also, probably with Schweizer, viewed the tradition primarily through the glass of then rather recent developments in the tradition, namely, the eighteenth-century rise of Calvinistic philosophical determinism.[103]

Muller's findings are significant for several reasons. First, Muller's assessment of the matter confirms the conclusion of the previous section that Reformed theology is committed to incompatibilism. Second, these findings indicate numerous figures in the 18th century—both proponents and opponents of compatibilism—recognize compatibilism as an innovation that is contrary to the position affirmed by traditional Reformed theology. Third, compatibilists, such as Cunningham, who wish to dispel the charge of heretical innovation do not attempt to jump over Reformed theology to medieval or patristic Augustinianism because they recognize that compatibilism is an innovation, foreign to the older literature.

2.2. Perspectives on Augustinianism from the 16th to the 19th Century

With Muller's findings before us, we turn now to the evolution of perspectives on the Augustinian tradition from the 16th century through the 19th century. As we will see, the incompatibilist assessment of the Augustinian tradition remains dominant in the 16th and 17th century, and does not meet with significant challenge until the 18th and 19th centuries. Yet, even there, it advances with nothing like consensus.

Beginning with the 16th and 17th centuries, what we find is a general agreement that the Augustinian tradition is bent on the affirmation of free choice. We have already

---

[103] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 21-2.

seen Muller draw a contrast between the compatibilism of Edwards and incompatibilism

of the 16th / 17th century Reformed orthodox, Voetius, Turretin, and van Mastricht.[104]

This incompatibilist reading of Reformed orthodoxy is reinforced by the way the

Reformed/Remonstrant discussion is framed in this period. While Edwards and other

determinists, such as Kames, would later frame this discussion as a dispute between

incomaptibilism (Arminian) and compatibilism (Calvinist),[105] this is not what we find in

the 16th and 17th centuries. Neither the Reformed nor Remonstrant of this period paint the

dispute as a controversy regarding whether man has free choice, but rather as a dispute

regarding whether free choice plays a role in regeneration. The accusations of

Pelagianism or of *semi-Pelagianism* center on whether prevenient grace is synergistic or

monergistic—that is, the question is whether the will cooperates with regeneration or is

merely a passive object being acted on by God in regeneration. The question is not

whether the will is free in general. As Voetius, the pupil of Gomarus who debated

Arminius, explains it, the Reformed deny that free choice plays a role in regeneration

precisely because the will is a passive object being acted on by God in conversion, while

the "Papists" and "Arminians" believe the will has a cooperative role to play.[106] Or as

Arminius characterizes his own position, grace sufficient for salvation is given to the

individual, but this grace must be rightly used in order to affect salvation.[107]

---

[104] Muller, "Jonathan Edwards," 20.

[105] See, e.g., Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will,* ed. Paul Ramsey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 2.1 and 2.5; and Kames, *Essays,* 210-11.

[106] See Franciscus Gomarus (Gilbertus Jacchaeus), *Disputatio theologica de libero arbitrio*.

[107] Jacobus Arminius, *Apologia adversus Articulos XXXI* in *Opera theologica* (Leiden, 1629), *xxxi*, viii (xxviii).

This understanding of the dispute is also reflected in the historical theology of the period. Arminian theologians pour great effort into demonstrating Patristic precedent for their position. Their goal is often to show that the Greek fathers or Augustine or both affirm that God's foreknowledge of future free acts plays a role in his decrees regarding election. We can see this in Arminius himself, and more robustly in Gerardus Joannes Vossius' 830 page treatise on the history of Pelagianism.[108] Vossius makes the case that the Greek Church fathers unanimously view predestination as rooted in God's foreknowledge of pious living, faith, and perseverance, and Augustine's views are novel in comparison.[109] Vossius' claim is not that Augustine's view of *freedom* is novel (Vossius presumes continuity here); his claim is that Augustine's understanding of *election* and his notion of *monergistic regeneration* are novel, and therefore, the synergistic alternative espoused by the Remonstrants should not be labeled *Pelagian,* lest one label the whole of the Greek fathers *Pelagian* as well.[110]

This jockeying for Augustine (et al.) is not unique to the Arminians, but exists throughout the literature—Remonstrant versus Reformed, Reformed versus Remonstrant, Reformed versus Catholic; and Catholic versus Reformed.[111] Among the Reformed

---

[108] See Arminius, *Apologia adversus Articulos*, *xxxi*, viii(xxviii)-x(xxx); and Gerardus Joannes Vossius, *Gerardi Johannis Vossii Historiæ de controversiis: quas Pelagius eiusque reliquiæ moverunt, libri septem*, 2ⁿᵈ ed. (L. & D. Elzevirios, 1655), respectively.

[109] See, e.g., Vossius, *Historiæ de controversiis*, 6.x.

[110] Cf. C. S. M. Rademaker, *Life and Work of Gerardus Joannes Vossius (1577-1649)* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981), 112-3. See also Josiah Tucker, *Letters to the Rev. Dr. Kippis* (Glocester: Printed by Raikes, 1773), 79; and John Fletcher, *The Works of the Reverend John Fletcher, Late Vicar of Madeley,* 4 vols. (New York: Lane & Scott, 1851), vol. 2, 209.

[111] See, e.g., John Davenant, *A Treatise on Justification: Or the Disputatio de Justitia Habituali Et Actuali*, 2 vols. (London: Hamilton, Adams and Co., 1844-1846), ch. 23; and Nicholas French, *The Doleful Fall of Andrew Sall, Jesuit of the Fourth Vow, from the Roman Catholick and Apostolick Faith; lamented by his constant friend; with an open Rebuking of his embracing the Confession contained in the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England* (London, 1749), 71-2.

apologies, there is no corrective offered to the belief that Augustine advocates free choice. On the contrary, the Reformed frame the dispute precisely as the Arminians and Catholics do, namely, as a dispute regarding the role of will in regeneration and predestination. Hence, even Gomarus himself expounds on a libertarian view of free choice, and offers no indication of a Reformed distinctive until coming to the question of the abilities of freedom to affect salvation. Only here does he indicate a difference between the Papists, the Remonstrant, and the Reformed.[112] In short, how the literature treats the topic indicates that, contrary to the claim of later compatibilists, the dispute is not over the nature of freedom itself (viz., compatibilism versus incompatibilism). Rather, the evidence points to agreement on the nature of freedom, but dispute over (a) its post-lapsum abilities regarding salvation, and (b) where Augustine (and the other Church fathers) stand on this very specific issue.

Now, if there is a dispute regarding the nature of freedom in the 16th and 17th centuries, it is not incompatibilism versus compatibilism. Rather, the dispute is over whether equipoise is required for libertarian free choice. The notion of indifference of equipoise emerges during the 16th and 17th centuries, being commonly associated with Jesuit theologians Luis de Molina and Francisco Suárez.[113] In many cases in the 16th and 17th century, the given thinker's position on indifference is unclear. What is clear is that not all who affirm libertarian freedom advocate equipoise. As Willem van Asselt (et al.) points out, "This was a hotly debated issue in Voetius' days, especially in the aftermath

---

[112] See Gomarus, *Disputatio theologica de libero arbitrio*.

[113] See, e.g., Luis de Molina, *Liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providential, praedestinatione et reprobation Concordia,* ed. Johannes Rabeneck (Madrid: Collegium Maximum, 1953), q14 a13 disp2, sec3; and Francisco Suárez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae* , in *Omnia opera* (Paris: Vives, 1866), disp 19 sec 4 n 1.

of Luis de Molina's *Concordia* … and the controversy between Molinism of the Jesuits

and Banezianism of the Thomists. As recent research has pointed out, this controversy

was resembled to a surprising level of detail by the famous controversy within Reformed

Protestantism between Arminius and orthodox theologians like Gomarus."[114] Both the

Thomists (whom we have seen oppose psychological determinism) in their disputes with

the Molinists and the Reformed in their disputes with the Remonstrants share a common

skepticism over the viability of equipoise as a theory of freedom—though we have seen

that both camps advocate incompatibalism.

Voetius is a good representative of the concern surrounding equipoise. As we saw

in the previous section, both Voetius and his teacher, Gomarus, insist on a libertarian

view of choice. Yet, Voetius goes on to oppose equipoise as a form of "chimerical

indifference."[115] As Voetius explains, there are certain valid uses of the term *indifference*

that accompany a rejection of necessity, such as his own. Those uses include *objective*

indifference and *vital, internal,* and *choosing* indifference. The former refers to the way

in which the intellect displays to the will a possible choice. To wit, it presents the choice

to the will without any necessary connection to the intended end, so that any danger of

psychological determinism—as per the necessary movement from judgment to act—does

not follow. The latter indifference refers to the innate libertarian capacities of the will,

"which belongs to the free potency that is not yet finally determined by the practical

---

[114] A. J. Beck, trans., "The Will as Master of Its Own Act: A Disputation Rediscovered of Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676) on Freedom of the Will," in *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 154. The recent scholarship here refered to includes Eef Dekker, "Was Arminius a Molinist?" *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27 (1996): 337-52; and Richard A. Muller, *God, Creation, and Providence in the Thought of Jacobs Arminius: Sources and Directions of Scholastic Protestantism in the Era of Early Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991).

[115] Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* iii.

judgment."[116] Voetius sees both forms of indifference as essential to freedom, and the implication is that contrary choice is possible and culpability is preserved. As Voetius puts it, "Given these indifferences, no external agent, not even God, can overturn freedom in its natural mode of acting. Thus the ownership of the will's own acts is permanently left to it."[117] If indifference is taken in the above two senses, Voetius has no objection. However, this is not what he believes is being claimed by proponents of equipoise. According to Voetius, indifference of equipoise suggests that "someone who is determined to one component remains at the same instance indifferent to two, or perhaps more, components."[118] In other words, Voetius' opposition to equipoise is it presumes that after the agent has removed its indifference in favor of a particular choice, it still remains indifferent to that which it has chosen. Such a claim, argues Voetius, ends in contradiction, namely, *That which is self-determined is simultaneously indeterminate*.[119] Hence, Voetius thinks *this* form of indifference is nothing but empty words, having no referent in reality—hence its chimerical status.

What Voetius' assessment of equipoise represents is the 16th and 17th century dispute over (a) whether equipoise is a coherent concept, and (b) whether it is a requisite condition for libertarian free choice. Though many embrace equipoise, there are just as

---

[116] Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* ii. Despite this very clear affirmation of a root libertarian indifference, thesis v could give the impression that the intellect determines the will and does so in a way akin to psychological determinism. On this point, *objective indifference* of thesis ii is aimed precisely at psychological determinism. See also Voetius, *Selectae Disputationes* (Utrecth: Joannes à Waesberge, 1648), 1:831-850; and A. J. Beck, trans., "The Will as Master of Its Own Act," in *Reformed Thought on Freedom,* 167-69.

[117] Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* ii.

[118] Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* iii.

[119] Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* iii.

many Augustinians within this period who, like Voetius, advocate libertarian free choice but reject equipoise as chimerical.

In the 18th century, the array of voices on Augustinianism undergoes a very distinct change. Just as in 18th century Leibniz studies (see chapter 1, §1), a number of figures emerge in Augustinian interpretation who presume that equipoise is synonymous with libertarian freedom, and thereby maintain that to deny equipoise is to deny philosophical liberty. This way of casting the dispute is absent in 16th and 17th century treatments of the Augustinian tradition. Older literature often argued that an opposing tradition was not tenable (e.g., *the concept espoused is chimerical*) or risks falling into error (e.g., *determinism cannot be avoided in that theory*), but it also recognized that neither incoherence nor determinism were not the intended ends of the given position.[120] Yet, in the 18th century, some interpreters begin to cast the dispute more polemically and thus matter-of-factly as a dichotomy between libertarians (pro-equipoise) and determinists (anti-equipoise). The results are very much like what we see in Leibniz studies. To wit, compatibilist readers begin to argue that the mere denial of equipoise or affirmation of inclining reasons is an affirmation of psychological determinism. The work of Kames is a good example. As noted in §1.2, Kames argues that the intellectualist position, with its denial of equipoise and affirmation of intellective preference, is a medieval theory of psychological determinism, and he proceeds to trace this faculty psychology from Calvin forward as proof of the Reformed tradition's affirmation of determinism.[121]

---

[120] Cf. Scotus's assessment of Aquinas on divine freedom in §1.2 above.

[121] See Kames, *Essays,* 208-16. Humphry Ditton may be in this camp as well, given that he sees *liberty* as *fallibility* or moral indifference, which he recognizes as a product of finitude and corruptibility;

These compatibilist proponents also initiate a shift in 18th century treatments of

the historical-theological question of free choice. Whereas the 16th and 17th centuries did

not dispute Augustine's affirmation of free choice, only his stance on its role in

regeneration and predestination, 18th century compatibilists separate Augustine from the

larger world of patristic theology, thus distinguishing Augustinian theology

(compatibilism) from Pelagianism, semi-Pelagianism, and Greek patristic theology

(libertarianism). Monsieur Le Clerc, for example, reads Augustine as a compatibilist who

understands *freedom* as mere uncoerced spontaneity, and sees providence as pure

monergism. Yet, Le Clerc does not thereby conclude that Christianity as a whole is

compatibilistic, for he reads the Pelagian-Augustinian divide as a divide between Greek

and Latin theology—the former being bent on upholding libertarian freedom and a

synergistic view of providence, while the latter defends monergistic determinism.[122]

Similarly, John Dunton (et al.) casts the positions of Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin as

outright denials of free choice in favor of pure monergism (in all things, not merely

regeneration), which he presumes to be true of Augustine as well. Dunton places this

position in contrast to Erasmus, who he takes to be a semi-Pelagian and thus a "moderate

free choice" advocate.[123] Likewise Johann Lorenz Mosheim places the Catholic

understanding of freedom at odds with Jansenius, and then paints the latter as identical

---

hence, liberty has nothing to do with contrary choice. Humphry Ditton, *A discourse concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ: In three parts* (printed by S. Palmer, for J. Batley, and T. Cox, 1722), 426-27.

[122] Monsieur Le Clerc, *The Lives of the Primitive Fathers,* 348-349; and 351-352. Cf. Tucker, *Letters to the Rev. Dr. Kippis*, 79, n. *.

[123] See *The Athenian Oracle: Being an Entire Collection of all the Valuable Questions and Answers in the Old Athenian Mercuries. Intermix'd with many cases in Divinity, History, Philosophy, Mathematicks, Love, Poetry* (London: J. and J. Knapton, 1728), vol. 2, 193. The Athenian Society was founded by John Dunton and included a small number of members. The group would answer questions from readers on any number of topics. The specific question and answer to which I am here referring is unsigned; hence, I am merely attributing to Dunton, et al.

with Augustine's views, which he takes to be overtly necessitarianism.[124] He goes on to identify Augustinian necessitarianism as the view reflected in the Calvinists.[125] (It is noteworthy that Mosheim reads Leibniz as a necessitarian because he presumes that Leibniz is a follower of Augustine.[126])

Despite the emergence of these compatibilist readings of the Augustinian tradition, the trend was far from uniform or even dominant. As we saw in §2.1, those 18th century British authors who weigh in on Edwards (e.g., Priestley, Cockin, and Stewart) agree that Edwardsian compatibilism is foreign to the Reformed tradition, which advocates libertarian freedom just as the Remonstrants do. And these voices are far from the only representatives who carry on the 16th / 17th century understanding. To cite just a few examples, Nicholas French argues that Augustine and the Greek fathers are in agreement in their advocacy of free choice.[127] Likewise, Alexander Pope discusses the synergistic nature of Augustine's talk of God's permissive will; he presumes continuity between Augustine and the Greek fathers on the point;[128] and lest he be read as a compatibilist, he makes clear that he rejects a compatibilist definition of freedom,[129] invoking the traditional libertarian case that reward and punishment presume contrary

---

[124] Johann Lorenz Mosheim, *An ecclesiastical history: antient and modern, from the birth of Christ, to the beginning of the present century*, trans. Archibald Maclaine, 5 volumes (printed for A. Millar, 1768), vol. 4, 373.

[125] Mosheim, *An ecclesiastical history*, vol. 4, 378.

[126] Mosheim, *An ecclesiastical history*, vol. 4, 373.

[127] Nicholas French, *The Doleful Fall of Andrew Sall*, 71-2.

[128] Alexander Pope, "Letter LXVII. To Prevent the Mistake Notions Some may entertain from the Reading of M. de Voltaire's Candid, or All for the Best," in *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* (Pub. for J. Hinton, July 1759), vol. 25, 15-19.

[129] Cf. Pope's denial of animal "freedom" (i.e., uncoerced self-movement) in "Letter LXVII," vol. 25, 16.

choice.[130] Augustin Calmet, too, distinguishes the Greek and Augustinian views on predestination, but not on freedom.[131] As for the distinction between Augustine and the Pelagians or semi-Pelagians, he takes this to be a distinction of *moral* freedom—that is, whether post-lapsum man has liberty to work "advantageously to salvation" or not.[132]

Not until the 19th century do we find the more significant shifts in perspective on the Augustinian tradition. The dawn of the 1800s brings with it (a) an increasing number of compatibilist advocates within theological circles, (b) an increasing tendency to equate equipoise with libertarian freedom, and (c) a resulting presumption that the affirmation of intellective preferences and/or the denial of equipoise constitutes an affirmation of determinism. As these three trends converge, we find a number of authors who propound the position—absent from the 17th century and obscure in the 18th century—that Pelagianism is libertarian, Augustinianism (associated with Protestantism) is determinist, and semi-Pelagianism (associated with Catholicism and Arminianism) is a middle ground position that aims at preserving some modest amount of post-lapsum contrary choice.[133]

Despite an increase in 19th century determinist readings of Augustine, this position does not replace the older reading. Hence, Cunningham's strategy in the period is to argue the neutrality of the tradition rather than its compatibilist bent, and there are

---

[130] Pope, "Letter LXVII," vol. 25, 16.

[131] Augustin Calmet, *Calmet's great dictionary of the Holy Bible . . . Revised, corrected, and augmented, with an entirely new set of plates, Explanatory, Illustrative, and Ornamental, under the direction of C. Taylor*, 2 vols. (London: printed for Charles Taylor, Hatton-Garden, Holborn, 1797-1801), art. "Predestination."

[132] Calmet, *Calmet's great dictionary of the Holy Bible*, arts. "Liberty" and "Pharisee."

[133] See, e.g., "*Die Christliche Lehre von der Sünde*," 438; *The Encyclopaedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and General Literature*, 9th ed., ed. Thomas Spencer Baynes (New York: Henry G. Allen & Co., 1888), arts. "Pelagius," "Pelagianism," and "Semi-Pelagianism," vol. 18; M'Clintock / Strong, *Cyclopaedia*, vol. IV, 561; and "The Augustinian System," *The Dublin Review* 109 (July-Oct, 1891): 54-63 (The author is identified only as "The Author of 'St. Augustine; An Historical Study'").

strong Reformed voices, such as Hamilton and Hill (et al.) who unequivocally deny not only the tradition's neutrality but its compatibility with determinism. In addition, it is noteworthy that most who defend Augustinianism from a compatibilist reading also oppose the notion of equipoise as a condition for libertarian choice.[134] Hamilton, for example, is quite clear that equipoise is untenable as an actual phenomenon of human experience, since we always have intellective preference and motives; but he is equally clear that neither intellective preference nor post-lapsum moral corruption undermine libertarian free choice evident in his opposition to Edwardsian compatabilism. And this he takes to be the stance of the Augustinian tradition in general (including its Reformed proponents), so much so that he labels compatibilism heresy.[135]

Samuel Harris, then-professor of Systematic Theology at Yale, makes the same point, affirming that Augustinianism advocates libertarian free choice, but he keenly points out the confusion that occurred in then-recent scholarship, namely, of conflating libertarian freedom and moral liberty. Harris notes that libertarian freedom and moral liberty are not the same thing. Moral liberty was lost in the Fall—post-lapsum man cannot do works unto salvation—while libertarian freedom was not. The distinction, Harris argues, is one that older theology recognized and thought important, but which the newer theology of then-recent years had regrettably lost.[136]

---

[134] There are some exception in which libertarian readers of the Augustinian tradition advocate the presence of equipoise in Augustine's thought, but these readers are far from common. See, e.g., "The Augustinian System," 54-63.

[135] See "Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* 28, no. 1 (Jan-April, 1853): 83.

[136] Samuel Harris, *The Philosophical Basis of Theism: An Examination of the Personality of Man to Ascertain His Capacity to Know and Serve God, and the Validity of the Principles Underlying the Defence of Theism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883), 388-89.

Both the findings of Richard Muller and the above survey of literature from the 16th century to the 19th century point in a common direction. Muller's research indicates that those British authors who discuss the theology of Jonathan Edwards agree that his compatibilism is divergent from the Augustinian tradition generally and the Reformed tradition specifically. Whether libertarian or determinist, Reformed or Unitarian, these authors agree that the Reformed and Remonstrant are of one accord in their rejection of compatibilism. This reading of the tradition is consistent with the above survey of 16th and 17th century texts on the Augustinian tradition. Moreover, we found that the more controversial point of the period is not whether libertarian freedom is part of the Augustinian tradition, but whether such freedom requires equipoise. While the advocacy of equipoise is found among Jesuits, et al*.,* we saw that figures such as Hamilton and Voetius who plainly oppose compatibilism in favor of incompatabilism but nonetheless take serious issue with both the cogency of equipoise and its importance to libertarian free choice.

3. Implications for Leibniz Interpretation

Applying the above findings to Leibniz studies, a number of implications emerge. First, given the evidence that the Augustinian tradition is not only libertarian but is recognized as such in the 16th and 17th centuries, we have good reason to believe that *if* Leibniz's views are a faithful extension of this tradition, as I will argue, *then* Leibniz is knowingly employing an incompatibilist theology. This, in itself, should cast suspicion on the compatibilist/necessitarian reading of Leibniz. Second, if the evidence supports an Augustinian rereading of Leibniz, this creates difficulties for a number of the

interpretative assumptions, identified in chapter 1, that are integral to the respective

necessitarian, deist, and Spinozist readings of Leibniz. By way of refresher, the eight

interpretative assumptions identified are:

(1) Leibniz's clockwork analogy for pre-established harmony indicates a deistic

God-world relationship.

(2) The clockwork universe, assumed in pre-established harmony, indicates that

humans, as part of this clockwork, are mechanically determined.

(3) Libertarian free choice is not possible without indifference of equipoise, while

intellective preference yields psychological determinism.

(4) If God does not choose from a place of equipoise, then God is psychologically

determined and our world, the world he chose to create, is the only possible

world.

(5) If the future is the product of divine decree, then the future is determined and

incompatible with libertarian free choice.

(6) If future contingents are analytic, future acts are not free but determined.

(7) Free choice requires the freedom to do good or evil, or moral indifference,

while moral necessity amounts to determinism.

(8) *All possibles strain for existence* means that possibles are self-actualizing,

pressing themselves from potentiality to actuality.

When considering these assumptions in the light of sections 1 and 2 above, a great many

of them prove problematic.

Assumptions (3) and (4) (i.e., *Libertarian free choice is not possible without*

indifference of equipoise, while intellective preference yields psychological determinism

and *If God does not choose from a place of equipoise, then God is psychologically determined and our world, the world he chose to create, is the only possible world*) both build on a conflation of equipoise with libertarian choice. This conflation aligns with the post-17th century compatibilist reading of the Augustinian tradition, not with the older literature.[137] We saw in §2.2, this assumption is not a given in traditional Augustinian theology, and we have clear instances of Augustinian theologians who emphatically oppose determinism and reject equipoise (e.g., Hamilton and Voetius). Assumptions (3) and (4) thus presume rather than demonstrate that Leibniz's thought is reflective of 18th/19th century compatibilism. While one is certainly within his intellectual rights to argue that Leibniz is rightly labeled a compatibilist and thereby submit that (3) and (4) are justified, to presume it at the outset begs the question of whether Leibniz is a compatibilist and runs the risk of becoming circular—*We know that Leibniz's rejection of equipoise is not a libertarian-Augsutinian rejection because Leibniz is a compatibilist, and we know Leibniz is a compatibilist because he rejects equipoise.* Therefore, we must revisit the equipoise question in both its larger historical and textual context in order to see if Leibniz's rejection of equipoise is intended to prove psychological determinism (à la Kames) or is reflective of a more traditional Augustinian-libertarian position that challenges both the coherence and the importance of equipoise to libertarian free choice (à la Hamilton and Voetius). Our findings in this inquiry will also determine the viability of assumption (7) (i.e., *Free choice requires the freedom to do good or evil, or moral*

---

[137] For an excellent example of how close contemporary Leibniz studies comes to the post-17th century compatibilist renderings of the Augustinian tradition, see Michael Murray's, "Introduction," in G. W. Leibniz, *Dissertation on Predestination and Grace,* ed. andtrans. Michael J. Murray (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), xxi-l. Therein, Murray identifies the Calvinist-Arminian dispute as a compatibilist-libertarian divide; he identifies Calvinist compatibilism with intellectualism and Arminian libertarianism with voluntarism; and he identifies libertarian-voluntarism with equipoise.

indifference, while moral necessity amounts to determinism). For this assumption reflects

the very conflation of liberty and moral liberty that Harris identifies as common among

compatibilist innovators but as contrary to traditional Augustinian theology.

Assumption (5) (i.e., *If the future is the product of divine decree, then the future is*

determined and incompatible with libertarian free choice) is also rather problematic from

a traditional Augustinian perspective. For as we saw in §1.1, Augustine argues the

compatibility of divine decree and human freedom on the very grounds that if creatures

are going to be free, God must (a) decree their existence, (b) decree their freedom, and (c)

decree to uphold their freedom. By appeal to this view of providence, over against fate,

Augustine argues that God's decrees preserve rather than hinder the freedom of man.

Augustine's position on the matter would be commonplace for future Augustinians. Thus,

Aquinas insists that God's decrees preserve the free and contingent nature of the object

foreknown;[138] Scotus likewise insists that the First Cause causes in a way that preserves

the contingency of the proximate cause;[139] and the post-Reformation Reformed

scholastics insist that divine predetermination reflects God's knowledge of the object and

his preservation of its free and contingent choices.[140] One may critique the success of the

Augustinian insistence that divine decree does not violate free choice, but the fact that the

tradition has insisted on this compatibility is clear. Hence, assumption (5) must contend

with the question of whether Leibniz espouses the point from a tradition Augsutinian

incompatibilist perspective, or is doing something much more innovative.

---

[138] See, e.g., Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* 1.47.

[139] See, e.g., Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.41.

[140] See, e.g., Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* ii-iv; Maccovius, *Collegia Theologica* ix, 120; and Turretin, *Institutio* VI, v, 11.

More could be said on the theological precedent of Leibniz's clockwork analogy[141] or regarding assumptions (6) and (8) (i.e., *If future contingents are analytic, future acts are not free but determined* and All possibles strain for existence *means that possibles are self-actualizing, pressing themselves from potentiality to actuality*), but we will leave these points to be looked at in their textual context. For now, suffice it to say that there are reasons to believe that these claims, too, are not as innovative as they may appear on first blush, and may well have their roots in traditional Augustinian soil.

What we can say in light of the foregoing is that there is a clash between traditional Augustinian assumptions and many key assumptions of Leibniz's interpreters. The former is reflective of an older libertarian tradition that sees its incompatibilist commitments as perfectly compatible with intellective preference, divine decree, and post-lapsum moral determination, while the latter bears a set of assumptions foreign to this tradition, except among compatibilist innovators of the 18th and 19th centuries. If Leibniz is indeed a 17th / 18th century compatibilist, as the majority of his readers insist, then this clash should not be surprising, and his assumptions, like the assumptions of his interpreters, are likely antithetical to those of traditional Augustinianism. If, however, Leibniz is a proponent of traditional Augustinian theology, then, by implication, Leibniz has been read through lenses that wrongly color his theological and philosophical claims, creating a distorted visage.

---

[141] On the Christian, as opposed to deist, roots of clockwork analogies, see John North, *God's Clockwork: Richard of Wallingford and the Invention of Time* (London: Continuum, 2005), 201-2; Nicholas of Cusa, *De docta ignorantia,* in *Nicolai de Cusa Opera Omnia Jussu et Auctoritate Academicae Litterarum Heidelbergensis ad Codicum Fidem Edita* (Leipzig-Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1932-2007), 2.11-13; Nicole Oresme, *Le livre du ciel et du monde* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968) 2.2; and Christopher B. Kaiser, *Creational theology and the History of Physical Science: the Creationist Tradition from Basil to Bohr* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 107-8.

In the chapters to follow, we will revisit Leibniz's texts with the above findings in hand and with a view to placing his claims relative to the Augustinian tradition. I will highlight the textual indications that Leibniz's philosophical theology is a recapitulation of traditional ancient, medieval, and post-Reformation Augustinianism. Moreover, we will see that this textual evidence favors Leibniz's commitment to the older incompatibilist understanding of this tradition. The end result will demonstrate that the reading of Leibniz as a traditional Augustinian incompatibilist theist is not only possible, but viable in light of the textual and historical evidence.

PART 2

LEIBNIZ ON FREE CHOICE, PROVIDENCE, AND EVIL

CHAPTER 3

Leibniz on Free Choice and Providence Prior to 1700

As we now transition into Leibniz's texts, several points should be made at the outset. First, Leibniz scholars disagree over how many stages of intellectual revolution Leibniz undergoes. It is safe to say that most all agree to the following:

(1) Leibniz parts ways with Aristotle at an early age—according to his letters to Burnett and Foucher, respectively, by age fifteen (G 3:205; 1:371).

(2) Following his departure from Aristotle, Leibniz embraces the burgeoning atomism of his day (see G 6:56-7), espousing it explicitly by 1665 in *De arte combinatorial* (1665).

(3) Leibniz comes to doubt the adequacy of atomism by 1668—doubts he expresses in *Confessio naturae contra atheistas* (1668) and later echoes in *Demonstratio contra atomos sumpta ex atomorum contact* (1690) (G 6:108-9; 7:284-8)—and rejects it outright between 1668 and 1669, as testified to in two letters (Oct 1668 and April 1669) to his former teacher, Thomasius.

(4) By 1671 Leibniz espouses a new metaphysic.

The disputed aspects of Leibniz's intellectual development include, first, whether there is a transitional philosophy between 1668 and 1671.[1] Since we will be looking exclusively

---

[1] Milič Čapek, "Leibniz's Thought Prior to the Year 1670: from Atomism to a Geometrical Kinetism," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 20 (1966): 249-56, sides with Arthur Hannequin in suggesting that Leibniz's movement during this three years is toward a "Cartesianisation of Aristotle" (Čapek, 254; cf. A. Hannequin, *Etudes d'histoire des sciences et d'histoire de la philosophie* [Paris: F. Alcan, 1908], ii, 46); and goes on to defend both the Cartesian flavor of Leibniz's burgeoning ideas (254-56) and a tension that results, which endures throughout Leibniz's thought (256). Others, such as O. Bradley Bassler, argue that there is transitional position found *Theoria motus abstricti* that, while anticipating, is not yet the fully articulated position of *Specimen demonstrationum de natura rerum corporearum ex phaenomenis* (1671). See O. Bradley Bassler, "Motion and Mind in the Balance: The

at post-1671 texts, I will forego this question. The second more relevant question is whether Leibniz's views on free choice and providence change after 1700. Some suggest Leibniz is consistent, while others, such as Robert C. Sleigh, Jr., argue that Leibniz moves from soft determinism (pre-1700) to hard determinism (post-1700).[2]

In light of this second dispute, I have divided my exposition into pre- and post-1700 expositions. As we move through Leibniz's pre-1700 work in this chapter and his post-1700 thought in the next, we will be attentive to shifts in Leibniz's thinking on free choice and providence. However, for our purposes here, suffice it to say that the reading of Leibniz I here advocate is so fundamentally different than that of Sleigh—and other necessitarian readers who take this view—that the evidence he forwards carries little weight in the present context. And though I believe it is possible that some subtle shifts occur in Leibniz's thought after 1700 (possible shifts I identify in the next chapter), none are so significant as to give me pause when drawing on post-1700 texts that help illuminate aspects of pre-1700 texts. Hence, while I have chosen to respect the pre-1700/post-1700 dividing line in the structure of this project, I proceed under the conviction that Leibniz remains generally consistent throughout his post-1671 writings. I

Transformation of Leibniz's Early Philosophy," *Studia Leibnitiana* 34, no. 2 (2002): 221-31. Bassler sets his position in contrast with that of D. Garber and André Robinet, who do not recognize this nuance in their treatment of *Theoria motus abstricti* (see D. Garber, "Motion and Metaphysics in the Young Leibniz," in *Leibniz: Critical and Interpretive Essays,* ed. M. Hooker [Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1982, 160-84; and A. Robinet, *Architectonique disjunctive, automates systémiques et idéalité transcendantale dans l'œuvre de G. W. Leibniz. Nombreux texts inédits* [Paris: Vrin, 1986], 166.) Other commentators, such as Christia Mercer, focus on the more global transition in Leibniz's thought, and thus see commentators such as Bassler (as well as Beeley and Arthur) as too concerned with the minutia of the transition period: see Christia Mercer, *Leibniz's Metaphysics: Its Origin and Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 261, n. 12; 414, n. 105.

[2] See, e.g., Robert Sleigh, Jr., Vere Chappell, and Michael Della Rocca, "Determinism and Human Freedom," in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, 2 vols., eds. Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), vol. 2, 1195-1278, esp. 1265-7. These same arguments also appear in R.C. Sleigh, Jr., "Leibniz on Freedom and Necessity: Critical Notice of Robert Adams, *Lebniz: Determinist, Theist, and Idealist,*" *The Philosophical Review* 108, no. 2 (Apr., 1999):245-277.

will thus minimize but not refrain entirely from drawing upon post-1700 writings where I think it is helpful in expositing Leibniz's pre-1700 claims.

Now, a word should be said regarding the specific role of this chapter in the current project, which helps illuminate my chosen pre-1700 point of focus. Because this project focuses on Leibniz's views on free choice and providence and how these views play out in his theodicy, I am here less concerned with Leibniz's stance on justification, Trinity, Christology, or other tangential theological topics that could be expounded in reference to *Examen religionis Christianae,* for example. Instead, I have chosen to focus this chapter on Leibniz's early treatment of modality, freedom, divine knowledge, divine decree, divine predetermination, and possible worlds. For these topics will ultimately serve as the building blocks for Leibniz's later and more systematic response to the problem of evil in *Theodicée.*

Given our focus, I have chosen to look at Leibniz's 1686 essay, "Vérités necessaries et contingentes" (henceforth "Vérités").[3] The reasons for this are two. First, I find that the claims of "Vérités" match Leibniz's claims in other writings from the period, such as "Primae veritates" (C 518-23), "De la nature de la véritaté" (C 401-3), Brief: "sur la nature de la liberté humaine"[4] (B 115-17), et al. Moreover, "Vérités" not only echoes the claims found in these other writings, but expounds on these claims with greater clarity and systematic thoroughness than most other writings by Leibniz during this time. Second, the reception of "Vérités" in Anglophone Leibniz studies confirms my assessment. "Vérités" has played a significant role in Leibniz studies on the topic of free

---

[3] "Vérités necessaries et contingentes" is found in C 16-24. Courturat provides the title by which it has come to be known ("Necessary and Contingent Truths").

[4] I here identify the letter by its subject, identified by Leibniz in the first line, namely, *on the nature of human freedom.*

choice and providence, trends discussed above in chapter 1. The essay played a key role in Louis Couturat's case, made in 1902, that Leibniz is in fact a Spinozist, and it was the evidence taken from "Vérités" that persuaded Bertrand Russell to abandon his own published compatibilist/theist interpretation.[5] More recently, in 1992, R. Cranston Paull used "Vérités" to argue for a rare, if not singularly unique, incompatibilist reading of Leibniz.[6] And in 1998, Jack Davidson argued, contra Paull, that "Vérités" demonstrates Leibniz's compatibilism, not incompatibilism.[7] Suffice it to say, the piece has been recognized by Leibniz scholars as singularly significant to how we understand Leibniz's pre-1700 views on free choice and, by extension, his larger philosophy.

Positioning my own exposition of "Vérités" in the context of the above readings, I will say that Paull's insights into "Vérités" are, in my assessment, on the right track, despite Davidson's rebuttal. Yet, the great weakness of Paull's essay is that it is purely speculative and constructive, offering only *ad hoc* rejoinders to common staples of the necessitarian reading. Paull supplies no historical basis on which one might prefer the libertarian reading of the evidence over the more standard one. Such was the nature of Paull's speculative project, but this gap is where the Augustinian background of

---

[5] See Louis Couturat, "Sur la Métaphysique de Leibniz," *Revue de Métaphysique et de morale* 10, no. 1 (1902): 1-25; Couturat's Spinozistic reading of Leibniz came in response to Bertrand Russell's *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1937), which defended the idea that Leibniz's God chooses to create the world, even though Russell understood Leibnizian choice in determinist terms. Russell was eventually persuaded by Couturat, evident in his reviews of Couturat's *La Logique de Leibniz d'après des documents inédits* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1901) and *Opuscules et fragments inédits de Leibniz*. Russell's reviews appeared in "Recent Work on the Philosophy of Leibniz," *Mind* 12, no. 2 (1903): 177-201 and "New Books," *Mind* 13, no. 1 (1904): 131-32, respectively. Both reviews have been reprinted in *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, eds. Alasdair Urquhart and Albert C. Lewis (New York: Routledge, 1994), 537-63.

[6] See R. Cranston Paull, "Leibniz and the Miracle of Freedom," *Noûs* 26, no. 2 (June, 1992): 218-235.

[7] See Jack Davidson, "Imitators of God: Leibniz on Human Freedom," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 36, no. 3 (1998): 387-412.

"Vérités," on which we will focus here, is helpful. As we will see, in "Vérités" Leibniz systematically echoes many of the theological resources used by the Augustinian tradition to reconcile free choice and providence, and this resonance gives reason to question the compatibilist/determinist renderings of "Vérités."

1. Divine vs. Human Knowledge of Necessary and Contingent Truths

"Vérités" opens with Leibniz's peculiar contention that all truths are analytic. That is to say, "An affirmative truth is one whose predicate is in the subject"; and this is true, says Leibniz, whether the particular affirmative truth is necessary or contingent (C 16; see also C 518-23). Therefore, "if anyone were to understand perfectly each of the two notions [i.e., subject and predicate] just as God understands it, he would … perceive that the predicate is in the subject" (C 17). This feature of Leibniz's philosophy has been a serious hurdle for those who would seek to deliver him from necessitarianism. But, as we will see, Leibniz's aim is to defend free contingencies, not deny them.

Despite their common analytic character, Leibniz sees a clear difference between necessary and contingent truths. Necessary truths, says Leibniz, are propositions grounded in the laws of identity and contradiction: "An *absolutely necessary* proposition is one which can be resolved into identical propositions, or [*sive*], whose opposite implies contradiction" (C 17).[8] His preferred example is numerical: *every duodenary* (a number divisible by twelve) *is a senary* (a number divisible by six) (C 17; see also Careil 183). This type of truth is necessary because, "by the analysis of terms of a proposition, and by substituting for the defined term a definition or part of a definition, one shows a certain

---

[8] *Seu*, or *sive*, is a weak disjunctive participle. See B. L. Gildersleeve and Vonzalez Lodge, *A Latin Grammar* (London: MacMillan, 1963), §474-97.

equation or coincidence of predicate with subject in a reciprocal proposition, or in other cases at least the inclusion of the predicate in the subject, in such a way that what was latent in the proposition and … contained in it virtually is rendered evident and express by the demonstration" (Careil 182).

Contingent truths, by contrast, cannot be so reduced or demonstrated. Take, for example, the contingent truth *Caesar crossed the Rubicon in 49 B.C.* According to Leibniz, the relationship between the predicate and the subject is such that negating the predicate does not yield contradiction. The opposing proposition, *Caesar did not cross the Rubicon in 49 B.C.*, is thus possible, which means the subject/predicate relationship is contingent.

Now, even though the subject/predicate relationship of contingent truths is unnecessary, Leibniz still believes contingent truths are analytic. The reason is this. Leibniz defines an affirmative truth as "one whose predicate is in the subject" (C 16). In addition, Leibniz maintains that *crossing the Rubicon in 49 B.C.* is part of God's concept of *Caesar* in eternity. Yet, because neither Caesar nor the Rubicon nor our world is necessary, this concept does not entail existence. Hence, God's concept of Caesar (along with the Rubicon and our world) must logically precede his decree to bring Caesar into existence (cf. C 23-4). God's grasp of the subject-predicate relationship between *Caesar* and *crossing the Rubicon in 49 B.C.* must therefore be grasped apart from experience. In other words, God understands this subject/predicate relationship *a priori* (C 16; 19). Leibniz thus concludes that were we to perceive truth as God does, we too would see that the predicate is in the subject, even though it is in the subject contingently. It is thus

Leibniz's theology (i.e., his understanding of divine knowledge and decree) that requires him to affirm that even contingent truths are analytic.

How Leibniz vindicates this conviction is by a comparison of expressible ratios with surd ratios. Expressible ratios can be reduced to smaller ratios and given demonstration along lines similar to *Every duodenary is senary.* But surd ratios, such as √2, are irrational numbers—their decimal never ends and has no repeating pattern. As such, they cannot be reduced nor given demonstration the way *every duodenary is a senary* can be (cf. C 17-8). Leibniz takes this difference to be significant because it mirrors the difference between the created mind and the divine mind with regard to contingent truths. In the case of surd ratios, we (creatures) discover these truths by calculation, and even then never fully. For √2, when calculated, yields an infinite decimal. Yet, God, "who comprehends the infinite at once," comprehends surd ratios fully, immediately, and *a priori* (C 17). Leibniz is convinced that the difference between our knowledge of surd ratios and God's provides an apt illustration of the difference between creaturely and divine knowledge of contingent truths.

Leibniz's surd ratio analogy is meant to demonstrate that a truth can be analytic, and yet not subject to the type of reduction or demonstrate absolutely necessary propositions are; that it may be accessible to the created mind in only limited ways that are bound by temporal discursive reasoning, and yet grasped fully, immediately, and *a priori* by the divine mind. Such is the case with surd ratios, and so it is with contingent truths.[9] While the creaturely mind comes to know contingent truths *a posteriori,* the

---

[9] Leibniz offers one caveat concerning this analogy, to wit, our ability to calculate surd ratios and offer some demonstration thereto is the one point at which the analogy breaks down, for "in the case of contingent truths not even this is conceded to a created mind" (C 18).

divine mind grasps contingent truths apart from experience, and this *a priori*

apprehension indicates that these affirmative truths are analytic, not synthetic.

Nonetheless, because the subject/predicate relationship is such that it could be otherwise,

Leibniz insists that when contingent truths are grasped by the divine mind, the

subject/predicate relationship is grasped without necessity. Or, as Leibniz later puts it in

Theodicée: "in the region of the possibles they are represented as they are, namely, as

free contingencies" (G 6:126).

Ironically, Leibniz's claim, *All affirmative truths are analytic*, is a feature of his

thought that is often taken to require necessitarianism.[10] I say this is ironic because

Leibniz's own assessment is quite different. After offering his surd-ratio comparison, he

states: "And so I think that I have disentangled a secret which had me perplexed for a

long time; for I did not understand how a predicate could be in a subject, and yet the

proposition would not be a necessary one" (C 18). Leibniz, unlike many of his

interpreters, is confident that he has successfully countered necessitarianism. When his

case is properly understood, one can see why: By numerical analogy Leibniz has supplied

an example of an analytic truth that is not subject to the type of reduction or

demonstration that other absolutely necessary propositions are, and yet is (presumably)

grasped by God *a priori,* while known to created minds in only limited ways by

calculation. He has therefore given analogical reason to think that it is possible for God to

grasp certain truths *a priori*, even if these same truths cannot be reduced to the definition

of the subject or be given demonstration or be grasped by creatured minds in advance.

---

[10] See, e.g., David Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism, Counterparts, and Freedom," in *Leibniz Critical and Interpretive Essays,* ed. Michael Hooker (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), 103. This feature of Leibniz's thought also played a central role in Couturat's case for Leibniz's Spinozism, which ultimately persuaded Russell.

For this is precisely the case for surd ratios. Leibniz's aim is not to show that contingent truths are necessary truths but to show the opposite, namely, although contingent truths are grasped by God *a priori* and must therefore be analytic, this does not mean they can be reduced or demonstrated the way absolutely necessary propositions can; rather, they retain their contingent character precisely because the subject/predicate relation is unnecessary and thus can be negated without contradiction.

Now, as mentioned, Leibniz's theology is what pushes him toward the claim that all affirmative truths are analytic. For Leibniz could concede that an affirmative truth is one whose predicate is in the subject, but deny that future contingents are affirmative truths, as did Aristotle and the Socinians of Leibniz's day (G 6:211-12). Yet, Leibniz's theological convictions are far more traditional, and Leibniz offers clues that these convictions are not only generically Christian but Augustinian.

First, Leibniz's terminology is noteworthy. He sets up his discussion of affirmative truth on the backdrop of God's perfect knowledge of propositions. More precisely, he distinguishes God's grasp of true and affirmative propositions by simple intelligence (*simplicis intelligentiae*), as in the case of necessary truths such as mathematics and the essence of things, from divine vision (*visionis*) of a thing or middle conditions concerning its existence (*media circa existentias conditionatas*) (C 17).[11] The distinction between *scientia simplicis intelligentiae* and *scientia visionis* is an explicitly Thomist one and became commonplace among a number of protestant scholastics.[12]

---

[11] Note that "mediating conditions" (*media ... conditionatas*), which is the likely intent of C, 22 as well, is mistranslated "mediate knowledge" in the Morris-Parkinson translation, giving the misleading impression of Molinistic connotations.

[12] See, e.g., Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* in *Summa Theologiae*, Textum Leoninum ed. (Rome, 1888), Ia q14 a9. (Bonaventure also discusses the distinction, giving credit to Aquinas: see Bonaventure, *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiaram* in *Doctoris seraphici S. Bonaventurae opera omnia,* 10

Whether this means that Leibniz is a Thomist is less clear. For, as Richard A. Muller notes, "In the definitions and explanations of the seventeenth-century Reformed orthodoxy … the more Thomistic language of *scientia simplicis intelligentiae / visionis* is often explained in a voluntaristic manner, yielding the more Scotist model under the Thomistic language."[13] We will return to the question of Leibniz's Thomism later in this chapter. For now, sufficient to say the fact that Leibniz uses traditional and indeed technical terminology from the Augustinian tradition when establishing his understanding of God's *a priori* knowledge is significant in its own right.

Second, Leibniz's claim that God has a concept of a given individual that includes his contingent actions logically (as opposed to temporally) prior to God decreeing the existence of that individual is not unique to Leibniz. Augustine himself sets the stage for this type of claim in his characterization of the subject/object relationship between God and creatures in foreknowledge. He states, "It does not follow, then, that there is nothing in our will because God foreknew what was going to be in our will; for if he foreknew this, it was not nothing that he foreknew. Further, if, in foreknowing what would be in our will, he foreknew something, and not nonentity, it follows immediately that there is something in our will."[14] While one could read Augustine as suggesting that God simply

---

vols. (Ad Claras Aqua (Quaracchi): Colegii S. Bonaventurae, 1882-), II d39 q1 q3, scholion.) Cf. Francis Turretin, *Institutio theologiae elencticae, in qua status controversiae perspicu exponitur, praecipua orthodoxorum argumenta proponuntur et vindicantur, et fontes solutionum aperiuntur* (Geneva: Samuelem de Tournes 1688), locus tertius, q13.

[13] Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520-1725*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2003), 408, vol. 3. Cf. Willem J. van Asselt, "Scholastic Protestant and Catholic: Medieval Sources and Methods in Seventeenth-Century Reformed thought," in *Religious Identity and the Problem of Historical Foundation: The Foundational Character of Authoritative Sources in the History of Christianity and Judaism,* eds. Judith Frishman, Willemien Otten and Gerard Rouwhorst (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 457-70, see n. 27, which makes the very same point in reference to Turretin.

[14] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10.

foresees what is future, the fact that Augustine separates from foreknowledge the question of divine permission indicates that the *foreknowing* here identified does not entail the existence of the thing foreknown. This is a foreknowing that is (logically) prior to the decree of permitting.[15] This seems in keeping with how the reformed scholastics understood Augustine on this point, since their concept of predetermination and premotion presumes this as well. We find that reformed scholastics speak as if God has a (logically) prior understanding of what is in the creature, such that when God predetermines and premoves the creature permissively, that movement harmonizes with the prior concept of the free choice that is within the creature. To use Voetius' words, "The predetermination turns the will sweetly and nevertheless strongly to that very end, to which it—certainly being moved and premoved by God—would have turned itself."[16] Therefore, while Leibniz's characterization of contingent truths as analytic may seem novel, the premises that ground this characterization have clear theological precedent.

Third, it is noteworthy that, according to Leibniz, God has *a priori* knowledge of contingent truths because God has perfect knowledge of the subject in whom contingent predicates are found (C 16). As is evident from the above quotes of Augustine and Voetius, it is common Augustinian fare to suggest that the object known in God's grasp of future contingents is the will of the agent. As Augustine puts it, "God foreknew what was going to be in our will," and again, "If, in foreknowing what would be in our will, he foreknew something … it follows immediately that there is something in our will."[17]

---

[15] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10. See also chapter 2, §1.1 above.

[16] Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica, continens quaestiones duas, de Distinctione Attributorum divinorum, & Libertate Voluntatis* (Utrecht: Joannes à Waesberge, 1652), pt. II, thesis IV Cf. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10; Turretin, *Institutio* VI, v, 11.

[17] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10.

Likewise, Voetius focuses not on how the subject would turn himself but on how the will would turn itself: "The predetermination turns the will … to that very end, to which it … would have turned itself."[18] The notion is an extension of Augustine's claim that voluntary causes (*causa voluntaria*) are the efficient cause of free action, and thus the object known in God's foreknowledge of free choices is the will from which these choices proceed.[19] Augustine's claim would become standard among medieval and protestant scholastics alike,[20] and a careful examination of Leibniz's talk of God's knowledge of the subject indicates that this is what sits in the background of his claim as well.

In his 1677 essay, "Scientia media," Leibniz echoes the point made in "Vérités" that God's knowledge of future contingents is *a priori*, and argues that such knowledge consists in the knowledge of causes (*cognitione causae*). As Leibniz continues, it becomes plain that by *causes* Leibniz means *voluntary causes*, given that he goes on to talk of God's knowledge of "the nature of the will of Paul" (*natura voluntatis Pauli*), for example. He then goes on to point out that the perfection of God's knowledge of voluntary or free causes is something understood by "all true philosophers and Augustine" (C 26), making clear the theological roots of this claim. This very same concept echoes in "Vérités." Just as God knows surd ratios fully, without calculation, and *a priori,* so with future contingents: "God, who comprehends the infinite at once, … can see how the one is in the other, and can understand *a priori* the perfect reason for

---

[18] Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* pt. II, thesis IV.

[19] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.9.

[20] See, e.g., Anselm, *De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis*in *Opera Omnia*, 2 vols.ed. Franciscus Salesius Schmitt (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag [Günther Holzboog] 1968), 1.1-1.2; Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia. q14 a13, and Turretin, *Institutio* VI.ii.3.

contingency" (C 17). This is why, says Leibniz, God's knowledge of voluntary causes is *infallible,* not *necessary.* For God perceives *how* the predicate is in the subject, and therefore perceives the relationship to be contingent precisely because the subject/predicate relationship is free, or voluntary, and thus could be otherwise (C 17; also Careil 178, and G 6:392).

Fourth and finally, the distinction Leibniz here uses between the *infallible* and the *necessary* is noteworthy because it gives additional weight to the case for an Augustinian backdrop. This very distinction is used by Augustine himself in his discussion of voluntary causes. In his reply to Cicero's concern that if foreknowledge exists then determinism follows, Augustine is quite clear that though God knows the will of acting agents and the future is therefore "utterly assured," this does not mean that the will of agents is governed by necessity. To the contrary, God foreknows future contingents as they are: To wit, as free and contingent. Thus future contingents, though certain in God's mind, are not modally necessary.[21] This insistence on distinguishing the *infallibly certain* from the *modally necessary* would remain as standard throughout the Augustinian tradition.[22] We will return to the necessary/infallible distinction shortly, but for now suffice it to say that Leibniz's use of the distinction is not surprising, given that his appeal to voluntary causes unblushingly credits Augustine.

What we see, then, in the opening remarks of "Vérités" are clues of the Augustinian background of Leibniz's claims. His theological terminology; his understanding of the relationship between divine knowledge and decree; his

---

[21] See, e.g., Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.9.

[22] Cf. Anselm, *De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis*1.1-1.3.

understanding of voluntary causes and the object of divine foreknowledge; and his distinction between the infallible and the necessary all point in this direction. Leibniz fleshes out the distinction between the modally necessary and the modally contingent, we find only further confirmation of this reading.

2. Modal Necessity and Contingency

After distinguishing necessary truths from contingent truths and defending God's *a priori* knowledge of both, Leibniz moves into a more thorough discussion of the dividing line between the necessary and the contingent. There are propositions, says Leibniz, that are "for the most part true; there are also propositions which are almost always true, so that an exception would be ascribed to a miracle"; there are even "certain propositions which are true with absolute universality, and which cannot be violated even by a miracle" (C 19). Those propositions that are beyond God's ability to overturn are necessary truths, such as those of mathematics. Here Leibniz echoes the medieval realists who maintain that contradiction is beyond the purview of omnipotence.[23] With the realists, Leibniz also identifies essences (*essentia*) as among necessary truths. That is to say, the subject/predicate relationship displayed between a given essence (e.g., *human*) and its essential properties (e.g., *rational*) is such that, like mathematical truths, it "can be demonstrated by the resolution of terms; these are necessary, or virtually identical, and so their opposite is impossible, or virtually contradictory. The truth of these is eternal; not only will they hold whilst the world remains, but they would have held even if God had

---

[23] See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q25 a4.

created the world in another way" (C 18; cf. G 6:131-32).[24] Yet, all other truths whose

negation does not imply contradiction are contingent. Take, for example, the laws of

motion. Though typically stable, they could be otherwise, as they do not constitute

absolutely necessary propositions. Thus, echoing Augustine, who identifies laws of

motion as rooted in a voluntary cause (viz., God's will), Leibniz contends that the

stability of such laws is found entirely in the fact that, having decreed them, "by that very

act [God] decreed that he would observe them" (C 19).[25] But, given that such laws have

no inherent necessity, a miracle poses no logical difficulty (cf. G 6:51-54). For example,

though unsuspended objects typically tend downward, there is no contradiction in them

not tending downward. Were such a miracle to occur, it would simply constitute a rare

instance in which God identified a weightier (*potioris*) final cause that merited the repeal

of his otherwise stable decree (C 19). Leibniz's point, in short, is that a great many stable

and universal propositions are not necessary in the proper sense because they depend

entirely on God's free decrees (*libero DEI decreto*).

The implication of Leibniz's claim here is that all existential truths (save *God*

exists) are contingent. As such, he concludes that they are "hypothetical yet necessary"

(*hypotheticè tamen necessarie*) (C 20), alluding to the scholastic label for such

---

[24] There is debate in Leibniz studies over the extent to which Leibniz is a realist, and how this plays out in his posture toward hylomorphism versus idealism. See, e.g., Michael K. Shim, "Leibniz on Concept and Substance," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 46, no. 3(2006): 309-325; Justin Erik Halldór Smith, "Christian Platonism and the Metaphysics of Body in Leibniz," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 12, no. 1 (2004): 43-59; Jean-Baptiste Rauzy, "An Attempt to Evaluate Leibniz' Nominalism," *Metaphysica* 5, no. 1 (2004): 43-58; Daniel Garber, "Leibniz on Form and Matter," *Early Science and Medicine* 2, no. 3 (1997): 326-52; Massimo Mugnai, "Leibniz on Substance and Changing Properties," *Dialectica* 59, no. 4 (2005): 503-16; Christia Mercer, *Leibniz's Metaphysics: Its Origins and Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Brandon Look, "The Platonic Leibniz," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 11, no. 1 (2003): 129-40. While I believe Leibniz to be a realist, what seems relatively uncontroversial is that Leibniz affirms the Platonic Ideas in the mind of God, however this plays out in his view of substance.

[25] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.9.

contingencies: *hypothetical necessity*. Leibniz uses this scholastic label in other works

with clear awareness of its historical/theological roots and its philosophical impart (e.g.,

G 7:389; A 6.4:1652 and 6.4:1457-8; cf. A 6.4:1457-8; 6.4:2577). The term is linked to

medieval developments surrounding Augustine's infallible/necessary distinction, which

Leibniz previously employed in "Vérités," and was utilized by medieval (and later

protestant) scholastics in the context of divine decree on which Leibniz is here focused.

As the infallible/necessary distinction became common in medieval theology, high-

medieval theologians, such as Aquinas and John Duns Scotus, among others, formalized

the logic of it. Scotus points out that a sentence, such as *Everything which is, when it is, is*

necessary, can be read in two ways. Read in the divided sense, *when it is, is necessary*

modifies *Everything which is.* On this reading, the sentence indicates a modal necessity,

namely, *Everything which is, is necessary when it is.* This type of necessity indicates that

the consequent thing (*necessitas consequentis*) is modally necessary and cannot be

otherwise. Read in the composite sense, however, *is necessary* modifies all that precedes

it, indicating only a necessary entailment, or necessity of the consequence (*necessitas*

consequentiae), that *Everything is when it is*. The consequence is thus only a hypothetical

necessity. The distinction offered a formal way of identifying the difference between that

which cannot be otherwise because it is a modal necessity (necessity of the consequent),

and that which is infallibly certain but could be otherwise (necessity of the consequence).

Now, as already noted above, Leibniz understands hypothetical necessities to

include more than just free choices. He admits, as per his discussion of created laws, that

a stone tending downward when unsupported "is not a necessary but a contingent

proposition" (C 20), for laws of motion are not strictly necessary but depend upon God's

free concurrence, and "[God] alone knows whether he will suspend by a miracle that subordinate law of nature by which heavy things are driven downwards" (C 20). Hence, even if it is infallibly certain that a given rock will tend downward, the subject/predicate relationship this entails is contingent because (a) there is no contradiction in the rock not tending downward, and (b) the rock only tends downward because of a free choice by God, not due to a logical necessity that binds the subject and predicate. This said, though both creaturely choice and the movements of inanimate objects are contingent, Leibniz is clear that "free substances" are unique. For free creatures, unlike rocks, are self-moving substances that may interrupt the natural course of efficient causes that act upon them. To use Leibniz's words, "free or intelligent substances possess something greater and more marvelous, in a kind of imitation of God. For they are not bound by any certain subordinate laws of the universe, but act as it were by a private miracle, on the sole initiative of their own power, and by looking towards a final cause they interrupt the connection and the course of the efficient causes that act on their will" (C 20).

In this rather remarkable passage, Leibniz indicates that free or intelligent substances are unique precisely because they "act … on the sole initiative of their own power." And by this power, they perform a "private miracle," interrupting the course of efficient causes that act upon them. The deeds of free substances, unlike the motion of falling rocks, are therefore grounded in something other than God's monergistic concurrence in typically-stable laws of motion. Free substances may in fact interrupt the natural course of physical laws by looking to a final cause. The comparison with God is apt. For, as Leibniz has already pointed out, a miracle is God's suspension of physical laws in view of a final cause he deems worthy of such suspension. Free deeds, in like

manner, are those deeds by which free creatures interrupt the natural course of physical

laws by acting in accord with their identified final cause.

The emphasis here on final causality is also significant, since it is yet another

echo of the medieval and protestant scholastic understanding of free choice. As Richard

Muller points out, traditional theologies and philosophies of the 16th and 17th centuries

> had argued the very nature of free choice as resting on the assignment of final
> causes by rational agents in their engagement with concatenations of efficient and
> material causality in the natural order—what could be identified as necessities of
> the consequence (i.e. contingencies), specifically as "complex hypothetical
> necessities." Final causality, in this view, was intrinsic to the freedom of rational
> agents—without it, free agency, even in the case of God, might be excluded.[26]

Leibniz, as mentioned, employs the connection between free choice and final causality

earlier in "Vérités" when discussing the basis on which God might perform a miracle (see

C 19); and final causality is here identified as the grounds on which other free substances

also interrupt the concatenation of efficient causes that act upon them. Hence, added to

the string of scholastic reverberations already heard in "Vérités" is Leibniz's emphasis on

final causality as the foundation for free choice (see also G 7:389).

One additional feature of this passage worth noting is that Leibniz's description of

free substances argues against both psychological and physical determinism. Choice, in

both forms of determinism, is itself part of the efficient cause nexus. While acting agents

are more complex than falling rocks, the determinist does not see freedom as dependent

---

[26] Richard A. Muller, "God and Design in the Thought of Robert Boyle," 94 in *The Persistence of the Sacred in Modern Thought,* eds. Chris L. Firestone and Nathan Jacobs (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012). Muller here cites Johannes Combachius, *Joh. Cambachii Metaphysicorum: libri duo vniversam primae philosophiae doctrinam theorematibus brevissimis comprehendentes, & commentariis necessariis ilustrantes: studiosis ejus disciplinae perquam utiles & fructuosi* (Oxford: W. Hall, 1662), I.xiii, commentaries (183-84).

on the possibility of doing otherwise, or PAP.[27] Instead, freedom is uncoerced liberty to

act in accord with one's desires, but what one desires is determined by prior causes.[28] By

saying that free substances "interrupt the connection and the course of the efficient causes

that act on their will" (C 20), Leibniz makes clear that he is no physical determinist. For

the will stands above the efficient cause nexus. But is Leibniz a psychological

determinist? Based on "Vérités," the answer would again seem to be *no*. For Leibniz goes

on to deny that the will is determined by even psychological causes. He argues instead

that the will has the power to direct and redirect the mind—that is, the psychological

events that precede choice. More specifically, Leibniz extends the analogy of miraculous

redirection to the "mind's thoughts," indicating that these psychological events are

included in the sequence of efficient causes that are interrupted by the private miracle

performed by the will. As Leibniz puts it, "just as the course of the universe is changed

by the free will of God, so the course of the mind's thoughts is changed by its free will"

(C 20).[29]

Necessitarian readers are quick to pounce on Leibniz's seemingly epistemic

application of these points as a way of countering the libertarian thrust of the passage. In

particular, they home in on the following: "[I]n the case of minds, no subordinate

universal laws can be established (as is possible in the case of bodies) which are

---

[27] See, e.g., Robert Kane, "The Contours of the Contemporary Free Will Debate," in *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will,* ed. Robert Kane (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 11. PAP = Principle of Alternative Possibilities; for a brief summary of PAP, see chapter 1, §2 above.

[28] See Richard Taylor, "Determinism," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* 8 vols., ed. Paul Edwards (New York: The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1967), 359-68.

[29] Cf. Leibniz's letter to Basnage in which Leibniz identifies spontaneous, uncoerced psychological determinism as a view of freedom with which even Spinoza would be pleased (G., 3, 133), as well as Leibniz's comments in "On Freedom," used as the epilogue to this essay, in which he identifies the compatibilist view of freedom as his *former* position (Careil 178).

sufficient for predicting [*praedicendam*] a mind's choice" (C 20). On a necessitarian

reading, Leibniz's emphasis on "predicting" indicates that he is not saying that minds are

free from determinative causes, but simply that the number of causes involved is so vast

as to be beyond the grasp of finite minds—much like the infinite decimal of surd ratios.

If, however, we could perceive the infinite, as God does, we could know all relevant

causes acting on the will (which compatibilist readers presume determine the will) and

thus predict human choice. The difficulty with this reading is twofold. First, Leibniz's

point, taken in context, is that the mind is not bound by the order of causes but may

redirect it. Hence, the necessitarian reading requires that we read Leibniz as saying the

mind is not determined by prior causes, only to do a *volte-face* and grant that the mind is

determined by prior causes. Second, such a reading reduces God's knowledge of future

contingents to an inductive inference from cause to effect.[30] Yet, such a view of divine

knowledge is the very view Cicero fears and Augustine rejects in his defense of voluntary

causes,[31] and as shown above, Leibniz credits Augustine for his position on God's

knowledge of causes. In this light, the more likely reading is a libertarian one in which

the contrast between human inability to predict choice and divine knowledge of future

contingents is a reiteration of the contrast established at the opening of "Vérités" between

human *a posteriori* knowledge of contingents and divine *a priori* knowledge of

contingents.

---

[30] See, e.g., Sleigh, et al., "Determinism and Human Freedom," 1267. Cf. Davidson, "Imitators of God," 402-3.

[31] Cf. Augustine's description of Cicero's fear in *De Civitate Dei* 5.9

3. Moral Necessity and Physical Necessity

Bracketing some passing comments on the divine decree to which Leibniz returns at the close of "Vérités," we run headlong into the centerpiece of compatibilist readings, such as Davidson's. After describing various forms of mental deliberation, Leibniz makes the following statement: "This [deliberation] at any rate holds in the case of minds which are not sufficiently confirmed in good or evil; the case of the blessed is different" (C 21). The difference, Leibniz goes on to explain, is this: "It is in a way a matter of physical necessity that God should do everything in the best way possible…. It is also a matter of physical necessity that those who are confirmed in the good—the angels or the blessed—should act in accordance with virtue" (C 21). This passage Davidson, et al., takes to be clear evidence that the power of contrary choice, possessed by sinful creatures, is not freedom at all, on Leibniz's view. For the blessed and God do not have this power. What this passage demonstrates, argues Davidson, is that Leibniz is a compatibilist, since his examples *par excellence* of freedom (viz., God and the blessed) are psychologically determined: They perceive the good and do it.[32]

In one sense, this reading of Leibniz is right, and in another sense, it is far from the mark. Leibniz does hold that our ability to reject the good in favor of evil is an imperfect form of freedom. But, to be sure, two very different issues are at stake here. The first is the question of whether or not Leibniz defines freedom as *moral* indifference—that is, as the ability to do good or evil. The second is the question of whether Leibniz understands freedom to require libertarian power of contrary choice—that is, to satisfy PAP. These are two different issues. Yet, in the compatibilist reading,

---

[32] Davidson, "Imitators of God," 402-5.

these issues are conflated. Such readers take Leibniz's affirmation that God and the

blessed act by moral necessity to be a denial of the libertarian power of contrary choice,

and thus an affirmation of psychological determinism. Yet, this is a leap without

precedent in the Augustinian tradition.

The key passage for grasping Leibniz's point comes just before his comments on

God and the blessed. It reads:

> And although it is most true that the mind never chooses what at present appears
> the worse, yet it does not always choose what at present appears the better; for it
> can delay and suspend its judgment until a later deliberation, and turn the mind
> aside to think of other things. Which of the two it will do is not determined by any
> adequate sign or prescribed laws. (C 21)

A careful reading of this passage, and of what follows, indicates that the difference

between our fallen freedom and the freedom of God and the blessed are the respective

moral possibilities that fall to each. When speaking of *which of the two* the mind will

choose, the two in view is the perceived "better" (*melius*) and "worse" (*deterius*). Given

that the juxtaposition is between fallen humanity and the blessed, the contrast should be

read as a moral one: The better or worse that does not determine fallen humans is a moral

better or worse. For we are open to choosing either good or evil; but this is not true of

God and the blessed. Note that both *deterius* and *melius* can carry moral connotations—

deterius meaning lewder or naughtier and *melius* meaning with greater justice.[33] And

such a reading seems inevitable for two reasons. First, Leibniz is clear that what is unique

about the blessed is that they always act out of virtue (*ex virtute agant*). Second, Leibniz

identifies our fallen ability to do the better or the worse as "that indifference which

accompanies freedom" (C 21). Given Leibniz's consistent rejection of intellective

---

[33] See, e.g., Adam Littleton, *Linguae latinae liber dictionarius quadripartitus* (London: D. Brown, et al., 1715): "melius" and "deterius," respectively.

indifference, or equipoise—a concept he elsewhere calls an "impossible chimera"

(*chimaera impossibilis*) (C 25)—such a passage makes sense only if read as a reference

to moral indifference (i.e., the ability to do good or evil).

On this point, Leibniz sits squarely within the Augustinian tradition. Contrary to

the Pelagian contention that freedom requires the ability to do good or evil,[34] Augustine

holds that the most perfect form of freedom is freedom to do only good. This is evidenced

in the fact that evil has no reality of its own but is a parasitic privation of good (*privatio*

boni); thus, a will incapable of regressing into evil is not deprived of a perfection but is

complete in its perfection, just as an eye lacking the ability to be blind is not the lesser for

it.[35] This theme continues throughout the Augustinian tradition into medieval theology,[36]

and is prominent in the writings of reformed scholastics. Common fare in reformed

treatises on free choice is the outlining of various types of freedom, with indication of

which types belong to which beings. In such treatises, the freedom to do good or evil

(moral indifference) is identified as inferior to the freedom of God and the blessed, which

does only good (moral necessity).[37]

Now, the question of whether moral necessity amounts to psychological

determinism, as Davidson, et al., suggests, is another matter entirely. On this point, we

---

[34] See, e.g., Pelagius, *Epistola ad Demetriadem Virginem* (PL 30: 16a-46c, and PL 33:1099b-1120). For an English translation, see ''To Demetrias,'' in *The Letters of Pelagius and His Followers,* ed. and trans. B. R. Rees (New York: Boydell Press, 1991).

[35] See, e.g., Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 14.11.

[36] Cf., e.g., Anselm, *De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis*3.4.

[37] See, e.g., Zanchi, "De libero primorum parentum ante lapsum arbitrio" and"De libero arbitrio in homine post ipsum non renato," both in *Omnium Operum Theologicorum,* 8 tom. (Genevae: Ex typographia Samuelis Crispini, 1619); and Franciscus Junius, *Theses theologicae Leydenses et Heydelbergenses*, xxii. *De libero arbitrio*, in *Opuscula theological,* ed. Abraham Kuyper (Amsterdam: F. Muller com soc. et J.H. Kryt, 1882).

may ask whether Augustinian scholasticism understood moral necessity to carry this connotation. The answer is plainly *no* in both its medieval and protestant incarnations. As discussed in chapter 2, patristic writers recognize that God operates by moral necessity, but reject outright divine determinism as contrary to Christian theology;[38] early medieval writers, such as Anselm, plainly identify God as operating in accord with moral necessity but reject the notion that God's choices displays modal necessity;[39] and both medieval intellectualists and voluntarists recognize the danger of inferring divine determinism from divine moral necessity but are committed to avoiding this conclusion.[40] The reformed scholastics, as we saw, also echo this conclusion. Franciscus Junius is clear that God is the freest of beings, and though recognizing that God operates out of moral necessity, Junius notes that God retains freedom of contradiction with regard to singular goods and freedom of contrariety with regard to multiple goods.[41] Franciscus Gomarus is equally clear on this point, and makes additionally clear his incompatibilism. For he sees a mere lack of coercion as inadequate for true freedom (even falling rocks and dogs are free from coercion); freedom of contrariety and contradiction refer to the real possibility of the opposite outcome (PAP), the knowledge of the object remaining the same.[42]

In light of the foregoing, why presume that Leibniz's affirmation of moral necessity, which increasingly looks to be rooted in the Augustinian tradition, implies

---

[38] See, e.g, Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses,* 2.1.1; and 2.5.4 (PG 7a:709c-710a; 723c-724a); Ambrose, *De Fide* 2.3; and John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa,* 1.14 (PG 94:860a-862a).

[39] Cf. Anselm, *De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis* 1.3 with 3.4.

[40] See chapter 2, §1.2 above.

[41] See Junius, *Theses Leydenses*, xxii.

[42] See the second definition of a "free act" in Franciscus Gomarus (Gilbertus Jacchaeus), *Disputatio theologica de libero arbitrio* (Leiden: I. Patii, 1603); see also Gomarus's pupil, Gisbertus Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica*.See also chapter 2, §1.3 above.

determinism? Only two features of the passage in question give reason to think this. First, Leibniz has already identified a rock's falling as a physical necessity; and in C 21, he suggests that God and the blessed also act out of physical necessity because they always act out of virtue. Thus, one could suggest that there is a one-for-one correlation between determinism and physical necessity. This reading, however, presumes a rather one-dimensional understanding of the term physical necessity. For a classically minded figure such as Leibniz, *physica* entails more than mechanical laws of motion; it includes the concept of *physis*, or secondary substance, as per book two of Aristotle's *Physica*.[43] If it is the nature of a thing to be free, one would rightly say it is a matter of physical necessity that the thing acts freely. Likewise, if it is the nature of a thing to be virtuous, it is a matter of physical necessity that the thing act virtuously. This type of necessity is no doubt what is in view when Augustine says the only necessity by which the will is bound is that it chooses freely, since *free* is its nature.[44] The reformed scholastics use physical necessity in precisely this way.[45] And, as we have seen, theologians of Leibniz's day understood moral necessity to apply to God and to the blessed without negating the physical necessity of freedom: It is a matter of physical necessity that God and the blessed act in accord with virtue, and in so doing, they retain the power of contrariety and contradiction because they have a will that is, by necessity, free.[46]

---

[43] Aristotle, *Physica* 193a30-193b18.

[44] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10.

[45] See, e.g., John Weemes, *Portraiture of the Image of God in Man*, 3rd ed. (London 1636), 128. My thanks to David Sytsma for this citation.

[46] Note that, while Leibniz's claim that it is a matter of physical necessity that the blessed act out of virtue is unqualified, he qualifies his claim that God always does the best: it is "in a sense" (*quodammodo*) a matter of physical necessity that God do everything in the best manner possible. Couturat identifies this as a later insertion into the text. This may be because Leibniz does not think God is bound to

The second feature of this passage that some read as necessitarian is Leibniz's suggestion that moral necessity could enable a prediction with certainty of what the elect angels or the blessed would do in certain circumstances. Two points are noteworthy here, however. First, Leibniz qualifies this claim: it holds only "in certain cases" (*in quibusdam*). In light of this qualification, Leibniz is claiming only that there are some situations in which there is only one virtuous option available to a creature, and thus the conduct of those confirmed in righteousness would be certain—unlike the conduct of the morally indifferent (see C 21-2). This contention is far from a blanket affirmation of compatibilism. Second, such a claim does not in itself negate the prospect of contrary choice, even in these circumstances. Note that Junius too acknowledges that there are instances in which there is only one good available to God, such that what he would do *if* he chose to act would be certain, but Junius insists that God retains freedom of contradiction in such instances, since withholding choice (*non volo*) is always possible.[47] Leibniz suggests the very same thing elsewhere: Though we may be certain that *if* God decrees a world, *then* it will be the best (as per the moral necessity by which he operates), nothing necessitates that God decree a world (A 6.4:1652). In this light, Leibniz's claim regarding instances of predictable choice can be read merely as a necessity of the consequence, or hypothetical necessity—*if* the virtuous were in this or that circumstance and choose (*volo*), then the choice would be *x*—but this is not a metaphysical necessity, since choice itself is never necessary. Read in this way, the statement hardly amounts to evidence that Leibniz has suddenly lapsed into determinism.

---

create, and thus, it is not truly a matter of physical necessity that he will the best; this necessity is conditional upon him willing, given his freedom of contradiction in singular goods (see A., 6.4b, 1652).

[47] See Junius, *Theses Leydenses*, xxii.

4. Free Choice and Divine Predetermination

With the above points established, Leibniz turns to a discussion of the "way contingent things, and especially free substances, depend in their choice and operation on the divine will and predetermination" (C 22). Leibniz's starting point in the matter is taken unblushingly from Augustine and consistently reiterated throughout his later works: "My opinion is that it must be taken as certain that there is as much dependence of things on God as is possible without infringing on divine justice" (C 22; cf. G 6:199-203; 339-40; 344; 383-84; 347-50). As in other contexts, Leibniz has in mind here Augustine's claim that all being is good and is caused by God, while evil is a privation of good. Therefore, God, in his extraordinary concourse, produces continually whatever perfection or reality a thing may have (*perfectionis sive realitatis est à DEO continuò produci*) (C 22; cf. G 6:347-50). By contrast, evil—whether metaphysical or moral—is a privation; it has no positive reality of its own and adds nothing to the perfections or realities God supplies. Hence, "their limitation or imperfection belongs to them as creatures" (C 22). Such a line of argumentation is precisely the point of Augustine's privation metaphysic, and it would continue to be so applied in medieval and later scholastic theology.[48]

Leibniz explains this line of argumentation using an analogy of force applied to an object that faces limitations based on the body's matter and mass. He uses this same analogy in *Theodicée*, though with a more thorough explanation. There, he writes,

---

[48] See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* .11.10, 11.22-23; *Confessiones* 3.11-12; *Enchiridion ad Laurentium de Fide et Spe et Caritate* 1-14; Anselm, *De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis* 1.7; and Johannes Maccovius, *Collegia Theologica, quae extant omnia. Tertio ab auctore recognita, emendata, & plrimis locis aucta, in partes duas distributa* (Franekerae: Impensis Vlderici Balck: 1641), ix, 120.

> Now God is the cause of all perfections, and consequently of all realities, when they are regarded as purely positive. But limitations or privations result from the original imperfection of creatures which restricts their receptivity. It is as with a laden boat, which the river carries along more slowly or less slowly in proportion to the weight that it bears: thus the speed comes from the river, but the retardation which restricts this speed comes from the load. (G 6:383)

In this passage from *Theodicée*, Leibniz goes on to cite Augustine, referring to his privation metaphysic as the background of this insight. But what is particularly remarkable about this analogy is its precedent in the writings of reformed scholastics. An example from Johannes Maccovius should serve to illustrate the point:

> The following objection is forwarded: If someone is knowingly and willingly the cause of an action to which deformity is attached, he truly and properly sins: God is knowingly and willingly the cause of actions to which deformity is attached: therefore God is truly and properly the cause of sin. I respond: This is false and this can be shown by an example: for if someone moves a limping horse, the horse limps, but that person is not the cause of its limping.[49]

The basic analogy is always the same: Motion is supplied by an external source, while the object being moved has some defect or trait that determines the character of the resulting movement. The point is straightforward: Though God may supply existence and motion to moral agents (as per divine premotion and concourse), the character of the act itself is located in the agent. Thus, while God is the source of all that has being within evil acts, the corrupt character of the act does not have being, since evil is privative and results when the will declines from the good. The parallel with Leibniz is unmistakable, as is his use of proper theological vernacular (e.g., *concurs*, *praedeterminatione*) throughout his discussion.[50]

---

[49] Maccovius, *Collegia Theologica* ix, 120.

[50] Cf. Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* pt. II, thesis IV; and Turretin, *Institutio* VI, v, 11.

Leibniz's subsequent comments on this analogy are equally in keeping with reformed views on predetermination and free choice. According to Leibniz, the foregoing is all that can be said regarding divine predetermination (C 22). In other words, the nature of predetermination is such that God supplies whatever is ontologically positive via his extraordinary concourse, so that the creature exists, moves, and is able to act freely, but the character of the free action that follows, though predetermined by God, is predetermined according to the character of the creature's choice. To use Gisbertus Voetius' characterization: "[T]he predetermination turns the will sweetly and nevertheless strongly to that very end [*terminus*], to which it—certainly being moved and premoved by God—would have turned itself."[51] Or, as Leibniz puts it, "God understands perfectly the notion of this free individual substance, considered as possible, and from this very notion he foresees what its choice will be, and therefore he decides to accommodate to it his predetermination in time" (C 22-3). It is noteworthy that for Leibniz, as for the reformed (among others in the Augustinian tradition), God supplies physical predetermination (*physica praedeterminatione*), not moral predetermination. That is to say, God supplies what is ontologically necessary for the agent to be and to act freely; God does not always approve of the creature's acts—hence, the analogy in which the character of the motion is located in the thing moved, not the source of its motion.

Now, one logical difficulty that faces the concept of predetermination is this. On the one hand, predetermination presumes that no creature can exist without God acting as the efficient, First Cause of the creature's existence, and yet, on the other hand, predetermination presumes that God has knowledge of the creature's (contingent) choices

---

[51] Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* pt. II, thesis IV Cf. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10; Anselm, *De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis* 2.3; Turretin, *Institutio* VI, v, 11.

logically prior to predetermining it. In other words, the view appears to argue from the standpoint of ontology that predetermination is prior to the existence, and thus choice, of the creature and then defend freedom by placing the choice prior to predetermination. This difficulty is not unique to Leibniz, but could be noted in reference to any number of proponents of predetermination.[52] Regrettably, Leibniz does not acknowledge the problem, so we are left to speculate as to how he might respond.

I suspect that this difficulty is the result of a misreading the implications of the term prae*determinatione*. Though the term, on the face of it, indicates a divine act that is prior to the human act it predetermines, this may not be entirely correct. Rather than presuming priority—choice preceding predetermination or vice versa—the position seems to presume simultaneity: God supplies existence and motion, and the created will, being permitted to achieve what it chooses, determines the character of the motion. In other words, the divine act and human act are concurrent. This is in keeping with the type of analogy employed by Maccovius, the reformed generally, and ultimately Leibniz himself: The efficient cause of the motion is the external force; the deficient motion results from an infirmity in the thing moved; but the efficient cause and the deficient cause are simultaneous.

Granting such simultaneity, however, we might ask: In what sense is God's predetermination of the subject prior? Here we could answer that the predetermination is prior because, though the divine act and human act are simultaneous in time, the future contingent itself is foreknown as a contingent truth from eternity. Thus, if God decrees from eternity to grant existence to a given subject and to move that subject in accord with

---

[52] Cf., e.g., Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* pt. II, thesis IV.

its own self-determination, then this decree constitutes a predetermination of the motion of the subject. Moreover, because this future contingent is a determinate truth, God knows in advance the character of the motion that will result from moving the subject in accord with its will. Thus, the act is predetermined not generically but specifically.

Immediately following his statements on predetermination, Leibniz moves into a brief discussion of "determination" (*Determinationem*). Leibniz's point on the matter is open to a good deal of misunderstanding, given contemporary connotations of "determinism." Such terminology, however, was foreign to early modern thought, originating only in the late 18th century.[53] In Leibniz's day, determination was tied to final causality, or the identification of a *terminus*—hence its literal rendering, "concerning an end" (*de termino*). It was thus linked with the free choice of a means relative to an end. An agent is thus "determined" when he is freely self-determined with regard to a chosen means to his end, or final cause.[54] This background is important for understanding Leibniz's comments on the matter.

Leibniz states, "I understand a determination to be produced when a thing comes into that state in which what it is about to do follows with physical necessity" (C 22); and he goes on to make clear that there is no metaphysical necessity in contingencies until they have occurred—that is, until they are past events. Nonetheless, the determination from which physical necessity follows is a sufficient grounding for their truth. Such determination never begins, says Leibniz, but is in the eternal notion of the subject and is known perfectly by God, infallibly and without necessity. Determinist readers, such as

---

[53] See "Determinisme," in *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, 7th ed., ed. André Lalande (Paris: P.U.F., 1956), 221-24, esp. 221.

[54] Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* ii.

Robert Sleigh, Jr., interpret such passages as indicating that Leibniz sees freedom from metaphysical necessity as a sufficient definition of free choice, while physical necessity (by which Sleigh means something akin to physical determinism) is compatible with freedom of a certain kind—to wit, compatibilist freedom.[55] However, taking into account (a) Leibniz's earlier rejection of physical necessity (so defined) in his talk of freedom as a private miracle that interrupts the order of causes and (b) the distinct use of *determinatio* in scholastic theology prior to the 18th century, Leibniz's comments likely carry a different meaning.

Rather than suggesting that determination follow from physical necessity, the more viable reading is that Leibniz is saying that physical necessities take hold after an agent is determined—that is, has made a choice in reference to a *terminus*. In other words, even if an agent interrupts the natural course of efficient causes by means of the private miracle of free choice (C 20), physical necessities still take hold after this interruption. This reading fits better Leibniz's earlier talk of free choice as a private miracle and accords with the logical order Leibniz gives to determination and physical necessity: Physical necessity, says Leibniz, is subsequent to (*consequatur*) the determination (C 22). In addition, this reading matches another aspect of Leibniz's thought, namely, his stance on equipoise. It will be recalled from chapter 2 that Voetius opposes equipoise as chimerical on the very basis that it yields a contradiction, to wit, it requires that the will is *indeterminate* after being *self-determined*.[56] Unlike proponents of equipoise, theological opponents of equipoise in the 16th and 17th centuries maintain that

---

[55] See, e.g., Sleigh, et al., "Determinism and Human Freedom," 1265.

[56] Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* iii.

determination does occurs at some point in free creatures, namely, after the creature has made a choice in reference to a judgment of the practical intellect.[57] Given on which side of the equipoise fence Leibniz stands, it should not be surprising to find Leibniz speaking of determination occurring at some point in free agents. For the more traditional position (to which Leibniz holds) is that choice does in fact determine the individual. Yet, such determination does not negate free choice; it presumes it. If read in this way, we can see why Leibniz would deny that this determination is necessary prior to its occurrence, and identifies this determination as a predicate that is contingently but eternally within God's concept of the subject. In the end, therefore, it would seem a misreading of Leibniz to take his talk of determination in this context to be an affirmation of determinism in the contemporary sense.

5. Divine Decree and Possible Worlds

Being satisfied that he has demonstrated the compatibility of free choice and providence, Leibniz raises a lingering issue for divine decree, which occupies the remainder of "Vérités." Leibniz introduces the difficulty as follows: "But if one examines the innermost reasons a new difficulty arises. For the choice of a creature is an act which essentially involves divine predetermination, without which it is impossible for that choice to be exercised" (C 23). Leibniz laid the groundwork for this issue in C 18. There, Leibniz identifies three types of contingent truths known by God: (a) the general possibility of things (*rerum possibilitatem*); (b) what is in fact actual (*quid actu existat*); and (c) what would exist contingently, granting certain conditions (*certis positis esset*

---

[57] Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* ii.

contingenter exiturum) (C 18). While the referent of (b) is clear enough, Leibniz's

distinction between (a) and (c) echoes the less obvious distinction between logical

possibles and real possibles asserted by some scholastic theologians.[58] According to this

distinction, while a subject/predicate combination may be free of contradiction and thus

possible in a semantic sense (what Leibniz dubs *the general possibility of things*),

contingent propositions are ontologically groundless unless somehow upheld by God. For

God's decrees are amongst the necessary conditions for the existence of contingent

things, and in the case of free actions, the act cannot be conceptually separated from

predetermination, premotion, and concourse—hence, the distinction between (a) and (c).

Yet, in what sense can such contingent truths, known *a priori* by God in eternity, be

volitionally upheld by God? This is the problem of C 23.

Leibniz's quandary has clear precedent in medieval theology, as does his

proposed solution. In the medieval context, the issue is framed relative to faculty

psychology. That is, what is the basis for the divine intellect's *a priori* understanding of

contingent truths, and what role, if any, does the divine will play in the grounding of

those contingent truths that are known by the divine intellect? This framing is precisely

where Leibniz heads in "Vérités." Looking to the medieval discussion, there are several

positions on the matter. Thomas Aquinas holds that God's knowledge of the effect (i.e.,

creation) is derived from his knowledge of the cause (i.e., his own essence).[59] Insofar as

God's essence is the "first and *per se* object" of divine knowledge, and all other things

are seen in his essence (be they necessary or contingent), Aquinas concludes that God's

---

[58] See Ria van der Lecq, "Duns Scotus on the Reality of Possible Worlds," in *John Duns Scotus: Renewal of Philosophy*, ed. E. P. Bos (Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1998), 89-99. Ria van der Lecq's article is based largely on Scotus' *Lectura* in *Opera Omnia,* 26 vols. (Paris, 1891-1895), I.39.

[59] Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* 1.49.

knowledge of possibles is just as much part of God's necessary knowledge as necessary truths.[60] Hence, Aquinas creates the strict delineation that the actual involves the divine will, while the possible involves the divine intellect only.[61] The antithesis of this position is the voluntarist approach of Henry of Ghent. According to this view, contingent truths require a decree on the part of God (as per the very issue Leibniz raises). Therefore, Ghent argues that contingent truths must be rooted in the divine will. If the divine intellect knows a contingent truth to be so, it knows it only because it sees that contingency is decreed by the divine will and knows that the will of God cannot be impeded.[62]

Leibniz's preferred solution in "Vérités" is neither the extreme intellectualist approach of Aquinas nor the extreme voluntarist approach of Ghent. Over against the intellectualist approach, Leibniz maintains that both intellect and will are involved in God's knowledge of contingent truths (C 23).[63] Yet, Leibniz does not thereby move to the voluntarist approach of Ghent. For Leibniz does not go so far as to suggest that contingent truths are rooted solely in the divine will. Rather, Leibniz creates a dynamic relationship between divine vision and God's voluntaristic predetermination. He grants that God sees contingent truths *a priori,* but suggests that in beholding these

---

[60] Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* 1.49; *Summa Theologiae* Ia q14 a5; and q14 a9.

[61] See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q14 a9.

[62] Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet VIII* in *Quodlibeta* (Paris: Vaenundantur ab Iodoco Badio Ascensio, 1518), *q*2. Cf. John Duns Scotus' synopsis in *Ordinatio* in *Opera Omnia,* 26 vols. (Paris, 1891-95), I.39.22.

[63] Notice that this concession is the heart of what has become known as the grounding objection against Molinism, an objection of which Leibniz is aware (G 6:125-6), and which casts suspicion on the claim of Michael Murray, et al., that Leibniz's possible worlds are Molinistic (see, e.g., Murray, "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge of Future Contingents and Human Freedom," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 55, no. 1 (1995): 75-108).

contingencies, the divine intellect also beholds the predetermination by the divine will

that grounds it as an affirmative truth.

The dynamic relationship between divine vision and predetermination Leibniz

proposes echoes the position of John Duns Scotus, which was later picked up by a

number of protestant scholastics.[64] Scotus' solution combines Aquinas' insistence that *the

ground of divine knowledge is the divine essence* with Ghent's insistence that *the ground

of contingent truths is the divine will*. How Scotus accomplishes this balancing act is by

separating the question of how contingent truths are grounded from the question of how

the divine intellect knows contingent truths. With regard to the former question, Scotus

sides with Ghent. He insists that a contingent proposition, considered in itself, has

nothing in it to determine its truth-value since contingents are conceptually inextricable

from the First Cause. Hence, a determination of the proposition by the divine will is

required. Positing such predetermination, however, (which is different than positing a

divine decree that this contingency exist) the given proposition has an affirmative truth-

value.[65] Yet, Scotus goes on to deny Ghent's claim that the intellect thereby knows

contingent truths via the will, siding instead with Aquinas. According to Scotus, God

knows his essence, and subsequently all things according to their being knowable.[66] The

---

[64] See Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, 408; Andreas J. Beck, "Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676): Basic Features of His Doctrine of God," in *Reformation and Scholasticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 222-23; Antonie Vos, "Conceptual Patterns Related to Reformed Scholasticism," *Nederlands theologisch tijdschrift* 57, no. 3 (2003): 229; and Willem J. van Asselt, "The Theologian's Tool Kit: Johannes Maccovius (1588-1644) and the Development of Reformed Theological Distinctions," *Westminster Theological Journal* 68, no. 1 (2006), 33-4.

[65] Scotus, *Ordinatio* I 39.64-5. To be sure, Scotus understands this predetermination to be an eternal decision by God; hence, propositions do not shift from being open to being affirmative truths. See Scotus, *Ordinatio* I.39.25; and I.39.64.

[66] Scotus, *Ordinatio* I.39.23: Tunc autem non sunt vera contingentia, quia nihil est tunc per quod habeant determinatam veritatem. Posita autem determination voluntatis divinae, iam sunt vera *in illo secundo instant*, et idem erit ratio intellectui divino—quod et in primo—intelligendi ista.

ground of divine knowing in reference to contingent truths is thus the same as in reference to necessary truths.[67] Scotus' concern is that we affirm that God know all truths *a priori,* regardless of why they are true (i.e., what grounds them); and he fears that Ghent's approach runs the risk of ascribing to God discursive knowledge—that is, knowledge that follows inferentially from what the intellect knows of and sees in the divine will.[68] Hence, while the divine will may provide grounding for the truth-value of contingent propositions, the basis on which the divine intellect apprehends truths is always the same, regardless of whether those truths are necessary or contingent, and thus regardless of how they are grounded.

Leibniz shows clear signs of having read Scotus on this point (e.g., C 27; G 6:184), and he takes this same line of argumentation in C 23. Along with Scotus, and indeed the predeterminators generally (cf. G 6:125-7), Leibniz identifies predetermination as an essential condition for the very possibility of creaturely action, since "the choice of a creature is an act which essentially involves divine predetermination" (C 23). This is the very reason why Leibniz, with Scotus, rejects Aquinas' claim that God's knowledge of possibles involves only the intellect. Because predetermination is an essential condition of creaturely action, Leibniz maintains that, whether actual or possible, "contingent truths involve the decrees of the will [*voluntatis decreta*]" (C 23). Leibniz's rejection of Aquinas in this context may be surprising to some readers, since, as noted in §1, Leibniz invokes Thomist terminology in reference to divine knowledge at the opening of "Vérités." However, as also pointed out in §1, Muller

---

[67] See Scotus, *Ordinatio* I.36.22; and I.39.93.

[68] See Scotus' characterization of Ghent's solution in *Ordinatio* I.39.64.

identifies a number of reformed scholastics who retain the very same Thomist terminology of *scientia simplicis intelligentiae / visionis* while invoking a more Scotist understanding of divine knowledge.[69] Hence, to find Leibniz doing so should not be surprising, especially given the impact of reformed scholasticism on his thought.[70]

Leibniz's concern with the intellectualist approach is that it risks the absurdity that God "decree something because he sees that he has already decreed it" (C 23). The circle Leibniz sees afoot runs something like this: If divine predetermination is essential to the very nature of creaturely action, but predetermination concerns the actual only, then the only contingent truths the divine intellect can know as possible are those that God has predetermined to be actual; yet, if God's knowledge of possibles logically precedes his decree that they be actual, then God first foresees that he has decreed that these possibles be actual and only then decrees what he has foreseen he decrees. Leibniz's solution follows Scotus. To wit, Leibniz posits two types of predetermination: one by which God determines contingent propositions but only as possible (i.e., *in decernendo*), and a second by which a specific series of contingent truths is granted existence—that is, "by which God decides to render this decree actual" (C 24). According to Leibniz, it is the former predetermination that the intellect sees in its *a priori* apprehension of contingent truths. As Leibniz puts it, "I grant that when God decides to predetermine the mind to a certain choice because he has foreseen that it

---

[69] See Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, 408. Cf. Beck, "Gisbertus Voetius," 222-23; Vos, "Conceptual Patterns," 229; and Willem J. van Asselt, "The Theologian's Tool Kit: Johannes Maccovius (1588-1644) and the Development of Reformed Theological Distinctions," *Westminster Theological Journal* 68, no. 1 (2006), 33-34.

[70] Leroy E. Loemker, "Leibniz and the Herborn Encyclopedists," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22 (1961): 323; Maria Rosa Antognazza, *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), 41-2; and Eric J. Aiton, *Leibniz* (Philadelphia, PA: Taylor & Francis, 1985), 13.

would choose in this way if it were admitted to existence, he foresees also his own predetermination and his own decree of predetermination—but only as possible; he does not decree because he *has* decreed" (C 23).

Leibniz's uniqueness on this topic is in two areas. The first is relative to the reformed scholastics who employ Scotus' theory of divine knowledge. Unlike these reformed thinkers, Leibniz utilizes this theory to undermine disputes over the order of divine decrees, such as the infralapsarian/supralapsarian debate. For Leibniz understands "the series" to be perceived by God in its entirety as a single whole, and insofar as the divine intellect considers any given world as a whole relative to competing possible worlds as a whole, Leibniz understands the decree to grant existence to one world to be a decree in favor of the entire series. While the series may have a logical, and indeed temporal, order of events, Leibniz takes the decree of existence to embrace all that the given world entails simultaneously. As Leibniz puts it, when God chooses one such series "by that very fact also [he] makes an infinite number of decrees concerning all that is involved in it, and so concerning his possible decrees or laws which are to be transferred from possibility to actuality" (C 24). In other words, if a given series includes both Adam's sin and the redemption of Christ, the decree to grant that series existence simultaneously decrees all the particular decrees that are part of the concept of that series; there is no logical order in which God first decrees the fall and then man's redemption (or vice versa). As we will see in the next chapter, this protestant dispute is precisely where Leibniz applies this insight in his post-1700 writings.

The second area of uniqueness that differentiates Leibniz from Scotus, namely, Leibniz utilizes this theory of divine knowledge to develop an entire theory of possible

worlds, while Scotus stops short of this.[71] As Leibniz goes on to argue, because the first

type of divine predetermination grounds contingent propositions as real possibles but

does not call them into existence—the decree of the actual is a distinct decree—it takes

only one additional step to suggest that not all propositions predetermined by the divine

will are granted existence. Leibniz takes this step; Scotus does not. Hence, Leibniz

conceives of God as first considering the innumerable ways in which he may create the

universe (i.e., its creatures and its laws) and grasps "that a different series of things will

come into existence if he chooses different laws of the series" (C 23). The implication is

that each series constitutes its own discrete world. Yet, each world is predetermined in

the realm of the possible only; existence is not granted to any of these possible worlds at

the outset. The divine intellect thus has before it innumerable possible worlds to judge

relative to God's final cause, and in light of this practical judgment, God is free to render

actual that series which the intellect judges best (C 24).

Employing this understanding of divine decree, and using the example of Judas,

Leibniz closes "Vérités" by laying the foundation for what would become *Theodicée*. He

does so by summarizing how God's decrees simultaneously preserve the freedom of

creatures, as per the above discussion of predetermination, while also fulfilling God's

own ends. "All that [God] decrees is that Judas, whom he foresees will be a traitor, must

nevertheless exist, since with his infinite wisdom he sees that this evil will be

counterbalanced by an immense gain in greater goods, nor can things be better in any

way" (C 24). This decree recognizes that if God decrees the existence of Judas—the

concept of whom includes free choice—and predetermines Judas according to what is in

---

[71] See Antonie Vos, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 492, n. 63.

his will, then Judas will freely and contingently betray Christ. This betrayal in no way appeals to God. Yet, God foresees not only the free betrayal by this possible Judas, but also how he (God) may counterbalance Judas' evil choice for greater goods that do appeal. Thus, "[God] allows it in his decree that Judas the sinner shall now exist, and in consequence he also makes a decree that when the time of betrayal arrive the concourse of his actual predetermination is to be accommodated to this" (C., 24). Yet, divine justice is in no way tainted by this concurrence, since, drawing on the already established metaphysic of good and evil, "this decree is limited to what there is of perfection in this evil act; it is the very notion of the creature, in so far as it involves limitation (which is the one thing that it does not have from God) that drags the act towards badness" (C 24). In other words, Leibniz insists that God's decree provides only what is ontologically positive in the creature and its act; the limitations that drag this good down into corruption belongs to the creature and his deficient exercise of choice. This evil is permitted only because it attaches by concomitance to a greater good. It is this greater good toward which God inclines, not the evil that occurs as a consequence.

In sum, Leibniz returns to the concept of predetermination utilized by Maccovius, et al. God's decrees and predetermination are in keeping with his understanding and preservation of the choices of free subjects, but God providentially utilizes these choices—be they for good or ill—for his own good ends. Moreover, because God's initial predetermination of contingent propositions grounds multiple possible worlds, he is not bound to any single world, but may decree that world which is best relative to his own final cause. In this way, both human freedom and God's ends are preserved.

***

The above exposition of "Vérités" gives good reason to think Leibniz was strongly influenced by the Augustinian tradition generally and its protestant manifestation in particular, and that this tradition was echoed with affirmation in Leibniz's early writings. Moreover, we have seen that the assumptions of this theological tradition on predetermination, physical necessity, and moral necessity are often diametrically opposed to the assumptions of Leibniz's necessitarian interpreters. The impact of the Augustinian tradition upon Leibniz thus gives reason to rethink the compatibilist and necessitarian portrayal of his thought, or at least the legitimacy of these portraits in reference to Leibniz's early writings. In the end, it must be remembered that whether one believes those of this tradition succeed in preserving free choice amid their theological commitments is a matter entirely different than whether this tradition aimed at this end and thought itself successful in reaching it. We have seen evidence that those of an Augustinian mind do not see moral necessity or physical necessity, intellective preference or divine foreknowledge, divine predetermination or divine decree as contrary to a dynamic interplay of free choice and divine providence. And we have seen evidence that Leibniz is of such a mind as well. We therefore have ample reason to question whether Leibniz was in fact a modern necessitarian with deistic, if not Spinozist sympathies, as some suggest, or has merely been labeled so by interpreters at odds with the theological tradition in which Leibniz sits and to which he is indebted. In the next chapter, we will look at Leibniz's writings after 1700 to see if the above theological leanings undergo a major shift or remain largely consistent.

CHAPTER 4

Leibniz on Free Choice and Providence in *theodicée*

In the previous chapter, we saw evidence that Leibniz's pre-1700 writings echo the Augustinian tradition on free choice and providence. Moreover, and in keeping with the assessment of this tradition in chapter 2, we have seen indications that Leibniz advocates incompatibilism. In this chapter, we move out of Leibniz's thought on free choice and providence more generally and into its application to the problem of evil in *Essais de theodicée* (1711). I will make the case (a) that Leibniz remains consistent in his understanding of free choice and providence, (b) that this understanding remains rooted in the Augustinian tradition, and (c) that Leibniz's application of this understanding to the problem of evil is a logical extension of his Augustinian commitments.

The structure of this chapter takes its cues from Leibniz himself, who identifies the major facets of the problem of evil that his theodicy aims to address. He suggests that there are two difficulties that must be answered in order "to place reason at the service of faith … in relation to evil" (G 6:102). The first concerns the apparent incompatibility of creaturely freedom and the divine nature. The second difficulty is that God appears to be far too involved in evil in both this life and the next (G 6:102-4). These problems, says Leibniz, could be derived from natural revelation alone (G 6:143). Special revelation, however, adds to these problems the difficulties of the Fall, election and reprobation, original sin, and hell (G 6:104-5). In keeping with this presentation, the breakdown of this chapter will be as follows. In section 1, we will examine the apparent tension between freedom and providence, focusing on Leibniz's post-1700 understanding of

necessary and contingent truths (§1.1); his understanding of the various aspects of providence (§1.2); and his understanding of the nature of free choice (§1.3). In section 2, we will study the relationship between God and evil. Under this second rubric, we will consider the three types of evil Leibniz identifies and how they relate one to another (§2.1); we will explore Leibniz's distinction between the antecedent and consequent will of God (§2.2); and we will examine Leibniz's thoughts on the possibility of a world without evil (§2.3). In section 3, we examine the difficulties emerging out of special revelation. In particular, Leibniz identifies four doctrines as problematic, namely, the Fall of man and other rational agents (§3.1), election and reprobation (§3.2), the problem of hell (§3.3), and the problem of original sin (§3.4).

In the end, our findings will echo those of the previous chapter. We will see that Leibniz's philosophical theology consistently takes its cues from and is situated within the Augustinian tradition. Moreover, we will see that Leibniz's understanding of this tradition echoes the older, libertarian reading of the 16th and 17th centuries. And we will see how Leibniz's answer to the problem of evil in each of its components is merely an application of this tradition to the difficulties raised in his day.

1. Free Choice, Providence, and the Best

My exposition begins with the relationship between free choice, providence, and God's decree of the best. Under this heading, I will consider three subjects. I will first consider Leibniz's comments on the difference between necessary and contingent truths, and why God's decree of the best follows by moral necessity from the very idea of God. Next I will look at Leibniz's view of providence, focusing on predetermination, possible

worlds, personal responsibility, and pre-established harmony. I will close this section by considering whether the incompatibilist reading of "Vérités" can be sustained in reference to *Theodicée*. As we will see, this trio of topics will serve as groundwork for Leibniz's more direct claims concerning the relationship between God and evil in *Theodicée*.

1.1. Necessary, Contingent, and Determinate Truths

In *Theodicée,* we find the same catalogue of modalities utilized throughout "Vérités." That which implies contradiction is *impossible*; that which implies no contradiction is *possible*; that who's opposite implies contradiction is *absolutely necessary*; and that which is an affirmative truth but can be negated without contradiction is *contingent* (e.g., G 6:217-8). By way of examples, *the square is a circle* lands in a formal contradiction, given that the essential properties of *square* are incompatible with circularity; hence, the subject-predicate relation is impossible. *Royal will return to his home on Archer Avenue tomorrow* is void of contradiction, and thus is possible. If *Royal will return to his home on Archer Avenue tomorrow* were an affirmative truth, albeit one that could be negated without contradiction, it would be contingent. *A square has four sides of equal length* is not only free of contradiction but cannot be negated without contradiction, and thus is necessary.

In addition to this trio of modalities, Leibniz distinguishes *metaphysical necessity,* which admits of no choice and cannot be otherwise (e.g., *God is omniscient*), and *moral necessity,* which constrains the genus of action to the good in those confirmed in righteousness and constrains the wisest (viz., God) to the best. Here we arrive at the

central claim of Leibniz's theodicy, namely, God is constrained to the best. On this point,

Leibniz makes clear that moral necessities are still matters of choice and are not bound by

metaphysical necessity; thus, the actions that follow from necessity of this kind are still

contingent (G 6:333). In keeping with this point, Leibniz continues to invoke the

distinction between the *necessity of the consequence,* which indicates a necessary if/then

relationship that is compatible with modal contingency, and the *necessity of the*

consequent, which indicates that the consequent within the hypothetical is modally

necessity. The former is a *hypothetical necessity*, while the latter is an *absolute necessity;*

and it is the former that applies to God's decree of the best (e.g., G 6:123-4; 391-2).

Leibniz's claim that God, of hypothetical necessity, decree the best builds on

three assumptions. The first is that, as per his advocacy of the ontological argument,

Leibniz presumes that the existence of God is *a priori* (G 4:405-6; 7:261-62; E 373-77).

Second, and as per the implications of this argument, Leibniz is a proponent of perfect

being theology, and thus grants the classical divine attributes. Finally, Leibniz presumes

classical faculty psychological, according to which the intellect judges the good, and the

will inclines toward the good (e.g., G 6:122-23). Leibniz's claim concerning the best

simply follows the premises to their conclusion:

1. An omniscient intellect is that which cannot fail to know the good and indeed
   the best.

2. God's intellect is an omniscient intellect.

3. Therefore, God's intellect cannot fail to know the good and indeed the best.
   (1 & 2)

4.   An incorruptible will is that which cannot fail to incline toward every good proportionate to its goodness and thus toward the best above all other goods.

5.   God's will is an incorruptible will.

6.   Therefore, God's will cannot fail to incline toward every good proportionate to its goodness and thus toward the best above all other goods. (4 & 5)

7.   If God's intellect cannot fail to know the best and God's will cannot fail to incline toward the best above all other goods, then if God chooses to create a world, the world he creates will be the best possible world.

8.   God chose to create our world.

9.   Therefore, our world is the best possible world. (3, 6, 7, & 8)[1]

The central claim of Leibniz's theodicy is thus a deductive (and valid) *a priori* argument. Granting the ontological argument, as Leibniz does, the existence of God itself is known *a priori* from the very idea of God. From this idea of God the above claims concerning omniscience and incorruptibility follow, as per the perfect being theology the argument (and Leibniz) presumes. Therefore, it becomes a matter of *a priori* certainty that if God creates a world, then it must be the best possible world. Now, Leibniz does not take this to mean that it is a matter of *a priori* certainty that the best exists. For, as noted, he insists that God has free choice; hence the conclusion is only a hypothetical necessity, or necessity of the consequence: *If* God creates, *then* he creates the best

---

[1] 1. All *q* is *r*.
 2. All *s* is *q*.
 3. ∴ all *s* is *r*. (1 & 2)
 4. All *t* is *u*.
 5. All *v* is *t*.
 6. ∴ all *v* is *u*. (4 & 5)
 7. ((All *s* is *r*) · (all *v* is *u*)) ⊃ (*w* ⊃ *x*).
 8. *w*.
 9. ∴ *x*. (3, 6, 7, & 8)

(proposition 7) (6:123-4; 391-2). The conclusion that our world is the best of all possible worlds follows from the coupling of this *a priori* hypothetical necessity with the *a posteriori* fact of creation (proposition 8).

Now, Leibniz suggests that reason proper concerns the *a priori* (G 6:49), and he goes so far as to suggest that "nothing ever comes to pass without there being a cause or at least a reason determining it, that is, something to give an *a priori* reason why it is existent rather than non-existent, and in this wise rather than in any other" (G 6:127). This is Leibniz's well-known Principle of Sufficient Reason (henceforth PSR). The connection between PSR and the hypothetical necessity *if God chooses to create a world, then the world he creates will be the best possible world* is apparent. If we follow the chain of causes from a contingency back to the First Cause, we will there arrive at the very hypothetical necessity of proposition 7. In other words, the reason why this set of contingencies and not another is because this set, if it is, is part of the best.

No doubt Leibniz's PSR beckons the question of whether everything is absolutely necessary. For if both the existence of God and his choosing of the best are the *a priori* truths that satisfy PSR with reference to every contingency, then is not everything that follows from God—which is quite truly everything—absolutely necessary? On this point, Leibniz makes the important distinction between *necessary* and *determinate truth.* A determinate truth can still be true contingently. For, according to the law of contradiction, of two contradictory propositions, one is true and the other is false, but this does not mean that the one that is true is modally necessary. A proposition may be true for contingent reasons. PSR merely asserts that there is a cause or a reason why the proposition is true; it does not require that the reason is modally necessary (G 6:127).

Quite the contrary, Leibniz has already made clear that the moral necessity that God will

the best gives us only a hypothetical necessity (*if God creates, then* etc.); no modal

necessity is found here (6:123-4; 391-2).

Three additional points are noteworthy regarding Leibniz's understanding of

truth, since each plays its own role in his theodicy. First, as in "Vérités," we find that

Leibniz affirms realism. Thus, he includes among the eternal verities not merely

mathematical truths, but the essences of things that span the Great Chain of Being. In

other words, Leibniz holds a realist view of essential properties, such that to negate these

predicates in reference to the species to which they are essential is to land in

contradiction (e.g., *rational* or *bipedal* cannot be negated in reference to human without

contradiction) (G 6:114-5; 131-2; cf. C 18).[2] Leibniz shies away from extreme realism,

however, denying that Ideas could subsist independent of the divine mind (G 6:226-7).[3]

Second and closely related to the first, Leibniz presumes that two truths cannot

contradict. This point is particularly relevant to miracles and mysteries of the Christian

faith. As in "Vérités," Leibniz denies that miracles and the mysteries of faith are contrary

to reason, since physical laws are freely ordained by God and are thus contingent—that

is, they can be negated or suspended without contradiction. Hence, no demonstration can

be made from the *a posteriori* observation of physical laws that a miracle contrary to

such laws is impossible. For a miracle is nothing more than a rare instance in which God

suspends an otherwise stable, but nonetheless contingent, physical law that he freely

---

[2] This is not to say that there are no humans without legs, for example, but it is to say that one whose legs are crippled is still *bipedal* in his essence, or immanent form, *human*; the defect, corruption, or deformity is located in the material reception, or lack thereof, of this essential property.

[3] Plato's theory of the Forms, which is the basis for extreme realism, is most famously espoused in *The Republic*, 506d-521b. The doctrine of recollection can be found in Plato, *Meno,* 80d-86c.

ordained (G 6:50-1; 53-4; cf. C 19). To be sure, Leibniz does not suggest that miracles are arbitrary. In keeping with PSR, God only performs miracles when wisdom deems this to be integral to the best; thus, miracles, like all contingent truths, are traceable to the moral necessity of God's will (G 6:80; 208-9).

Third, Leibniz presumes that God grasps all truths *a priori* by simple intelligence. As in "Vérités," the implication is that were we able to see truths as God does, we would recognize that all truths are analytic, regardless of whether they are necessary or contingent. Regarding the former, Leibniz affirms that the law of excluded middle (i.e., *a proposition is either true or false*) holds even in reference to future contingents (e.g., G 6:127; and 211-12). On the theological side, Leibniz presumes that God grasps all truth immediately and non-discursively; hence, future contingents are included in the determinate truths God grasps *a priori* by simple intelligence (G 6:126; 129; 131-2).

One last point should be made in reference to Leibniz's understanding of truth. Leibniz distinguishes affirmative truths from existential truths (save *God exists*). That is, Leibniz distinguishes God's *a priori* grasp of affirmative truths in the realm of the possibles from God's decree to grant existence to a specific set of possibles (G 6:131-2). For this reason, everything in our world is only a hypothetical necessity, since the existence of our world is contingent on a free act of God (G 6:216-7). We will discuss this point further below, but suffice it to say for now that this is an extension of Leibniz's realism. For, existence is understood as a predicate that is compatible with but not entailed by modally contingent propositions. Hence, possible worlds are quite truly worlds that subsist in the mind of God, identical to what they would be in reality with the

exception that, if admitted into the realm of the actual, they would there possess existence (cf. G 6:148).[4]

1.2. Concerning Providence

Leibniz's claim that if our world is, then it is best only beckons the question: *Whence cometh evil?* For, if God's infallible intellect cannot misjudge evil to be good (proposition 3) and God's incorruptible will cannot decline from the good toward evil (proposition 6), then God cannot will evil as such. Yet, evil is present in our world. How do we explain this without resorting to some type of metaphysical dualism? Before addressing this question directly, we must first excavate Leibniz's understanding of providence, on the one hand, and of free choice, on the other. We will begin with the former. Under the heading of providence, four topics are worthy of attention, namely, predetermination, possible worlds, the relationship of predetermination and possible worlds to personal responsibility, and Leibniz's theory of pre-established harmony.

Predetermination, as explained by Leibniz, is an extension of his ontology. Leibniz takes the very traditional understanding of modality, which is presumed in Aristotle's cosmological argument and continues to be presumed in Christian theology to Leibniz's day.[5] The basic idea is that creatures are modally contingent, given that

---

[4] Cf. Christian Wolff's *De Notione Entis* in *Philosophia Prima Sive Ontologia*, Joannes Ecole, ed. (Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung Hildesheim, 1962), 1.2.3.132. The fact that actuals and possibles are identical serves as the basis for Lessing's argument for idealism in *Über die Wirklichkeit der Dinge außer Gott* (1763) in *Lessings sämtliche Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, 20 vols., ed. Hugo Göring (Stuttgart: J.G. Cotta, Gebrüder Kröner, 1882), vol. 19; see also G. E. Lessing, *Philosophical and Theological Writings*, H.B. Nisbet, trans. & ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 30-1.

[5] See Aristotle, *Physics,* 254b6-260a19; *Metaphysics*, 1069a18-1072b18. Cf. Gregory of Nazianzen, *Oratio* 28.8 (PG 36:33d-36b); John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa,* 1.4 (PG 94:797a-800c); Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* in *Summa Theologiae*, Textum Leoninum ed. (Rome, 1888), Ia q.2 a.3; and Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles,* in *Summa Philosophica seu De Veritate Catholicae Fidei Contra Gentiles,* ed. P. Lethielleux (Parisiis: Imprimerie Laloux fils et Guillot, 1877), 1.13.

existence is conceptually compatible with but not entailed by the concept of these entities. Such entities require grounding in a First Cause that is modally necessary (e.g., G 6:106-7). As in Aristotle's cosmological argument, the First Cause is not a temporal *first* but an ontological *first*: contingent entities must be traced back to an ontological bedrock that has existence in itself (*a se*) and supplies being to those that do not possess existence innately. In Christian theology, this is the basis for the doctrines of divine concourse, premotion, and predetermination, according to which God supplies both existence and motion to creatures.[6]

Leibniz's understanding of predetermination reflects his assumption that God knows by simple intelligence the predicates that are in a subject, even if those predicates are in the subject contingently. As in "Vérités," Leibniz maintains that God knows the specific act that is contingently within each subject. Therefore, like Augustine (et al.) Leibniz presumes that if God decrees (i) that an agent exist, (ii) that he have free choice, and (iii) that he freely achieve what he wills, then this decree is specific (not general), since God knows what (iii) entails. As Voetius puts it, "the predetermination turns the will sweetly and nevertheless strongly to that very end, to which it—certainly being moved and premoved by God—would have turned itself."[7] In *Theodicée,* as in "Vérités," the divine contribution to a given act and the creaturely contribution are presented as concurrent: God supplies existence and motion, and the created will, being permitted to

---

[6] E.g., Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 5.10 (PL 41:152-153); Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q14 a13; Johannes Maccovius, *Collegia Theologica, quae extant omnia. Tertio ab auctore recognita, emendata, & plrimis locis aucta, in partes duas distributa* (Franekerae: Impensis Vlderici Balck: 1641), ix, 120; Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica, continens quaestiones duas, de Distinctione Attributorum divinorum, & Libertate Voluntatis* (Utrecht: Joannes à Waesberge, 1652), pt. II, thesis IV; and Francis Turretin, *Institutio theologiae elencticae, in qua status controversiae perspicu exponitur, praecipua orthodoxorum argumenta proponuntur et vindicantur, et fontes solutionum aperiuntur* (Geneva: Samuelem de Tournes 1688), VI, v, 11.

[7] Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* pt. II, thesis IV. Cf. Turretin, *Institutio* VI, v, 11.

achieve what it chooses, determines the character of the motion. Hence, Leibniz uses a boat analogy, to which we will return later in this chapter, in which the river (analogous to God) upholds and provides motion to the boat, but the traits of the boat itself (analogous to the created will) determine the character of the motion (G 6:120-1). The *pre*determination of the event resides, not in whether God or the creature act first, but in the fact that what is contingently within the will is already known by God in the realm of the possible and thus decreed to come to pass in the realm of the actual.

Does such predetermination negate free choice? As in his earlier writings, Leibniz insists it does not. He reiterates that those things that are predetermined are only hypothetical necessities, not absolute or metaphysical necessities. That is to say, despite God's decree that certain events will come to pass, "the events in themselves remain contingent" (G 6:131). The reason is one of ontology. Setting aside the issue of predetermination, the nature of the event is what makes it contingent: "the event has nothing in it to render it necessary and to suggest that no other thing might have happened in its stead" (G 6:131). As for God's prescience of these events, Leibniz is clear that "in the region of the possibles [free acts] are represented as they are, namely, as free contingencies" (G 6:126). Therefore, if the event is foreknown as contingent, and is predetermined to come about just as it is foreknown (i.e., contingently), and it comes about contingently as God decrees, then the ontology of the event is fully preserved. The fact that this contingency is known with certainty and decreed to come to pass as such does nothing to its modal status. If anything the decree protects, not undermines, its

contingency, which is the same line of response we saw in chapter 2 from Augustine to Cicero.[8]

Possible worlds, as theorized by Leibniz, follows quite naturally from the foregoing: The divine intellect apprehends all affirmative truth *a priori*. Included in the ranks of determinate truths are future contingents. Yet contingents have no existence in themselves but must receive this from God. If God decrees that a series become actual, he supplies it with existence by concourse and predetermines the subjects in this series according to what he knows is in the subject in the realm the possibles.

While the foregoing is clear in *Theodicée*, and how this translates into a theory of possible worlds is also evident, less clear is the precise relationship between the divine will and intellect in Leibniz's post-1700 writings. As we saw in the previous chapter, Leibniz's 1686 view reflects neither the intellectualist approach of Thomas Aquinas, which locates possibles in the divine intellect alone,[9] nor the voluntarist approach of Henry of Ghent, which locates possibles in the divine will and in the intellect's knowledge of the will,[10] but the middle way of John Duns Scotus, which locates the grounding of possibles in the divine will and the knowledge of possibles in the intellect's knowledge of all things knowable.[11] In *Theodicée* (and other post-1700 works), it is difficult to say whether Leibniz retains this earlier view. Of these positions, one may safely eliminate the voluntarist stance of Henry of Ghent. For a point about which

---

[8] See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10 (PL 41:152-153).. See also chapter 2, §1.1 above.

[9] Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles,* 1.49; Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q14 a5; and Ia q14 a9.

[10] Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet VIII* in *Quodlibeta* (Paris: Vaenundantur ab Iodoco Badio Ascensio, 1518)q2. Cf. John Duns Scotus' synopsis of Ghent's position in *Ordinatio* in *Opera Omnia,* 26 vols. (Paris, 1891-1895), I.39.22.

[11] Scotus, *Ordinatio* I.36.22; and I.39.93.

Leibniz is undeniably clear is that the eternal verities are in the divine understanding

independent of the divine will (G 6:114-5). Yet, he does not revisit the intellect/will

relationship as explicitly after 1700 as he does in "Vérités." Moreover, some interpreters,

such as Michael Murray, suggest that Leibniz's later dealings with Jesuit/Dominican

disputes indicate a preference for Molinism.[12] We have yet to explore this option, and

since Leibniz discusses the Jesuit/Dominican dispute in *Theodicée*, it is appropriate that

we do so.

Molinism, named for Jesuit theologian Luis de Molina, argues that God knows

not only the necessary, the possible, and what will be as a result of his decrees, but also

what would be under certain conditions. In other words, between God's necessary

knowledge and God's free knowledge is a pre-volitional middle knowledge (*scientia

media*), which displays what would obtain granting certain events, and it is with reference

to this middle knowledge that God orchestrates his providential determinations.[13] The

majority of Leibniz's engagement with Molinism centers on the failing of equipoise, the

view of freedom the theory presumes (e.g., G 6:126-30).[14] Where Leibniz does discuss

middle knowledge, he frames it as a dispute between advocates of *middle knowledge*

(viz., Molinists) and *predeterminators.* Leibniz identifies the grounding object as the

---

[12] Michael J. Murray, "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge of Future Contingents and Human Freedom," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 55, no.1 (Mar., 1995); and Michael J. Murray, "Spontaneity and Freedom in Leibniz," in *Leibniz: Nature and Freedom,* eds. Donald Rutherford and J. A. Cover (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[13] See Luis de Molina, *Concordai liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, Divina praescientia, providential, praedestinatione et reprobation, ad nonnullos primae partis D. Thomae articulos* (Lisbon: Antonium Riberium, 1588)*,* Pt. IV, q14 a13 d48-9. Cf. Suarez, *De divina gratia,* in *Opera Omnia*, 21 vols., ed. Carolo Berton (Paris: Vivès, 1861), prologue 2, c 7 n1 p24.

[14] See Luis de Molina, *Liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providential, praedestinatione et reprobation Concordia,* ed. Johannes Rabeneck (Madrid: Collegium Maximum, 1953)*,* q.14, a.13, disp.2, sec.3; see also Francisco Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, disp.19, sec.4, n.1, in *Omnia opera* (Paris: Vives, 1866).

central concern that emerges from advocates of predetermination. The objection is that when one traces the cause of the action back to its First Cause, one must arrive at the decree of God. Therefore, "it will not be possible to separate such actions from those causes so as to know a contingent event in a way that is independent of knowledge of its causes" (G 6:125). As we saw in the previous chapter, Leibniz is sympathetic to this view, as his entire theory of possible worlds in "Vérités" is built upon the presumption: One cannot isolate the concept of a creature from its First Cause. Yet, in *Theodicée,* Leibniz affirms that there is truth on both sides of this dispute. As he fleshes out this point, what becomes clear is that Leibniz continues to side with the predeterminators on divine predetermination and concourse. But his comments on middle knowledge are less clear.

Leibniz states that if it were shown that "contingent futurities consisting in free actions of reasonable creatures were entirely independent of the decrees of God and of external causes, there would still be means of foreseeing" (G 6:126). Such a remark makes plain that Leibniz does not think the case against middle knowledge is air tight, but this concession does not amount to the type of advocacy of middle knowledge that Murray suggests. Quite the contrary, the point is a hypothetical: *Were future contingents independent of God's decrees, then* etc. But Leibniz continues to side with the predeterminators on this point, denying that future contingents are independent of God's decrees. While this point does not yield the entire theory of possible worlds offered in "Vérités," it does tell us that Leibniz rejects the prevolitional view of future counterfactuals that Molinism presumes. Thus, Leibniz goes on to identify his own theory of possible worlds as belonging to neither camp: "For this result [i.e., of showing truth on

both sides of the dispute] I resort to my principle of an infinitude of possible worlds, represented in the region of eternal verities, that is, in the object of the divine intelligence, where all conditional futurities must be comprised" (G 6:126). On Murray's reading, truth favors the Thomists with regard intellectualism, while truth favors the Molinists with regard to middle knowledge. However, at least one serious problem for this reading (aside from Leibniz's affirmation of the grounding objection, as per his views on predetermination) is that Leibniz's disagreement with the predeterminators is that some of these "new Thomists" advocate equipoise (G 6:126-7). Thus, it is with reference to free choice that Leibniz finds falsehood on both sides. The mixture of *truth* with falsehood therefore falls to their respective views of the grounding of contingents and God's knowledge thereof. And this explains why he identifies his theory of possible worlds as his own and not that of Molina.

If Leibniz's possible worlds theory builds on neither the voluntarist theory of Henry of Ghent nor the middle knowledge of Molina, then we are left with one of two possibilities: Either Leibniz retains his broadly Scotist theory of divine knowledge (with his addition of possible worlds) or moves toward a more intellectualist view. In favor of a shift, one could argue several points. First, as noted, Leibniz is clear that the divine intellect apprehends the eternal verities independent of the divine will (G 6:114-5). Second, Leibniz includes in the eternal verities apprehended by the divine intellect, not only absolute necessities, but all future contingents and thus possible worlds (e.g., G 6:115). Third, Leibniz establishes a logical order of divine power, understanding, and will. Based on this hierarchy, it appears that divine power grounds possibles, divine understanding judges possibles, and divine will acts (G 6:198-9). Granting this reading,

the will enters into the equation only at the end. In light of these considerations, it could well be that Leibniz moves away from his earlier view toward something more Thomist.

However, counter arguments can be made on the side of continuity as well. First, the claim that the intellect grasps contingent truths apart from the will does not resolve the issue. Ghent, not Scotus, argues that the divine intellect grasps contingents via the will.[15] Scotus' position, in fear of ascribing discursive reasoning to God,[16] insists that the divine intellect grasps contingent propositions via the divine essence just as it grasps necessary truths; the position corrects only the grounding of these propositions.[17] Second, the fact that Leibniz locates contingent propositions in the *eternal* verities is not at odds with the Scotist position, since Scotus understands the determination of contingent propositions to be an eternal act of the divine will.[18] Third, the logical order of divine power, understanding, and will only shows that Leibniz affirms the standard scholastic distinction between God's *potentia absoluta* and his *potentia ordinata;*[19] this does not answer the question of the grounding of contingent propositions.

There are affirmative considerations in favor of continuity as well. Leibniz continues to affirm that physical laws are rooted solely in the free choice of God (G 6:50); he advocates specific, as opposed to general, divine concourse because the idea of the creature cannot be separated from its First Cause (G 6:118-21; cf. C 23-4); and he

---

[15] Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet VIII* q2.

[16] Scotus, *Oridinatio* I.39.64.

[17] E.g., Scotus, *Ordinato* I.39.22-3.

[18] Scotus, *Ordinatio* I.39.25; and I.39.64.

[19] On the topic of God's absolute power versus God's ordained power, see William Courtenay, *Capacity and Volition: A History of the Distinction of Absolute and Ordained Power* (Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina Editore, 1990); and Francis Oakley, "The Absolute and Ordained Power of God in Sixteenth- and Seventheenth-Century Theology," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59:3 (1998): 437-61.

argues that miracles and prayer are compatible with divine decree because these divine actions are part of the representation of our world in the realm of the possibles (G 6:132). If, then, possible worlds are represented to the divine intellect precisely as they would be in reality, save existence, we have reason to think that, for Leibniz, God's own possible actions are part of the general representation of things, ranging from physical laws to predetermination or miracles. But we need not argue the point, since Leibniz states explicitly that God's decrees are represented *in signo rationis* (G 6:147). Leibniz's continued insistence on this point means that the difficulty identified in "Vérités" remains, namely, if God sees his decrees before he decrees it, then are we left to conclude that he decrees thus because he has foreseen that he decreed thus (C 23)? As we saw in the previous chapter, Leibniz's solution in "Vérités" is to posit two decrees: God first decrees things in the realm of the possible and then decrees that the best possible world should be actual. Given that Leibniz (i) continues to affirm that God's decrees are represented in the realm of the possible and (ii) that not all possible worlds are granted existence, I see no alternative than to conclude that in *Theodicée* Leibniz continues to affirm God's two decrees, and thus the theory of divine knowledge articulated in "Vérités."

Granting that Leibniz retains his earlier theory of divine knowledge, the relationship between divine decree and possible worlds unfolds as follows. God decrees as possible a world system. In that system is free agents; God decrees that such agents are not only present but also freely achieve what they choose; and God thus moves these agents according to what he knows to be (contingently) within them. God orchestrates the history of this world in the realm of the possibles precisely as he would in the realm of

the actual, bringing out of it the most good (ontological and historical) possible. The end result is that both free contingencies and God's providential actions are represented to the divine intellect according to their knowability just as they would be in reality. If judged best and determined that this possible world should be brought into existence, God decrees that existence should be added to the sequence.

In the above theory, possible worlds are so like the real world that it is questionable whether possible individuals occupy more than one world. Is there one possible world in which Adam eats the apple and another possible world in which Adam does not eat the apple? There is reason to think Leibniz would say *no.* In A 6.1.490, he identifies three positions on the locus of identity. The first is the hylomorphic view of Aristotle, Aquinas, Bonaventure, et al., which submits that the entirety of the thing—its form and matter, essential and accidental properties—constitute the particularity of the thing.[20] The second position identifies individuation as something physical in the thing that determines its function or essence. The third is that of Scotus: Each individual, for Scotus, has one discrete property, namely, *haecceitas* or the property of *being this*.[21] The passage unfolds as follows: Individuation (p) is either the entire entity (q) or not the entire entity. If $p \neq q$, then this negation indicates either a negative property ($p = non\text{-}q$) that itself constitutes individuation or it indicates some positive property (r) that simply is some property other than q. If $p = r$, then r is either a physical trait (s) that determines the existence of the thing or a metaphysical property (t) that determines its nature. Leibniz

---

[20] For a treatment of the issue of particularity in medieval and post-Reformation thought, see Jorge J. E. Garcia, *Introduction to the Problem of Individuation in the Early Middle Ages* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1984); and *Individuation in Scholasticism, the Later Middle Ages, and the Counter-Reformation 1150-1650,* ed. Jorge J. E. Garcia (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1994).

[21] Scotus, *Lectura,* in *Opera Omnia,* 26 vols. (Paris, 1891-95), 2.3.

rejects $p = r$, and then embraces the view that individuation is a positive property ($p = q$), not a negative one ($p \neq non\text{-}q$). Thus, in the end, Leibniz embraces the hylomorphic view.

The claims of *Theodicée* reflect this position. Leibniz takes a realist stance on essence (G 6:114-5; 131-2); he sides with the moderate realist reading of *form* as immanent form or essence (not shape) around which matter organizes (G 6:150-1); and he holds that creaturely particulars cannot exist without location and situation, presuming the inevitability of both accidental and essential properties in created particulars (G 6:179). These points in themselves would suffice to show that Leibniz takes the hylomorphic view (though colored by the monadology, of course),[22] but his comments on identity and possible worlds make the point plain. Leibniz considers the question of whether God could assign the lot of this world to a group other than us (i.e., those to whom it has been assigned). To this, Leibniz replies: "If it were others, would not these others be those known as We?" (G 6:178) In other words, because Leibniz understands identity to be constituted by the totality of a thing's essential and accidental properties (as per the hylomorphic view of identity), the question of whether someone other than *Richie* could be *Richie* is equivalent to asking if u could be $\sim u$, or whether v, which is $\sim u$, could be u. The law of contradiction says *no*, and Leibniz agrees.

This conclusion also fits the monadology. Leibniz understands monads to be windowless and self-movement (E 705), which is yet another reason why he presumes the concept of the subject contains its predicates (C 16). Were a distinct set of predicates present in the monad, it would not be the same monad. The conclusion once again

---

[22] For a treatment of Leibniz's idiosyncratic hylomorphism, see Daniel Garber, "Leibniz on Form and Matter," *Early Science and Medicine* 2:3 (1997): 326-52.

reflects the hylomorphic view of identity: The particularity of the subject is the entirety of its essential and accidental properties; were these properties otherwise, *it* would not be *it*.

Now, this view of identity raises the problem of superessentialism. That is, if no property can be changed without altering the identity of the thing, then every property (and every choice) is essential to that subject, and this implies the strictest form of necessitarianism.[23] We will devote the whole of chapter 5 to this problem. For now, let two points on the matter suffice. First, those predicates that are in the subject are in the subject contingently. That is, they are in the subject in such a way that they could be otherwise. With regard to the claim that the subject would not be the same subject without these predicates (i.e., were they negated), this should not be read as suggesting that even contingent predicates are essential properties, since such a reading is utterly incompatible with Leibniz's claim that the predicate could be negated without contradiction (C 16-7; G 6:217-8). Rather, the claim should be read in light of Leibniz's infallible/necessary distinction and Leibniz's broader claims concerning possible worlds.

To illustrate what I mean on this point, let us say that Pagoda exists in possible world 1 (PW1), and in PW1 Pagoda freely chooses *w.* Leibniz's claim, I maintain, is this. The choosing of *w* is in Pagoda in such a way that it could be negated without contradiction—that is, Pagoda could have chosen otherwise but did not. Had Pagoda chosen otherwise, that otherwise (~*w*) would be the predicate that obtains in PW1, but God is certain that Pagoda in fact chooses *w,* not ~*w.* To posit the negation of *w,* therefore, is to imagine a world other than PW1 (say, PW2), and though we may imagine a figure in PW2 named Pagoda who chooses ~*w,* this Pagoda would be a discrete subject

---

[23] See David Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism, Counterparts, and Freedom," in *Leibniz Critical and Interpretive Essays,* ed. Michael Hooker (Machester University Press, 1982).

in a discrete possible world, and thus would not be the subject in PW1 who is known to choose *w*. In short, subjects in possible worlds, just like subjects in the actual world, constitute only one discrete subject in *that* world, and these subjects cannot simultaneously be a different subject in a different world.

Second, this way of understanding possible worlds echoes what we have seen in reference to Leibniz's realism, namely, that the actual and the possible are distinguished only by the addition of existence (G 6:148). In this light, the best starting point for thinking about possible worlds is not semantic or logical subject/predicate relations. The best starting point is the real world. For, this is the one possible world (granted existence) to which we have direct access, and from which we may conceptually work backwards by removing existence in order to arrive at a possible world.

Starting with our own possible world, we can better understand how Leibniz's claims concerning identity are compatible with contrary choice. Granting that subjects in our world have such choice, what we find is this. In the actual world, individuals face choices and, though having the power of contrary choice, must settle on one choice to the exclusion of other choices. This settling is no threat to freedom, however, because freedom resides in the nature of the choice itself—*Dusty chooses x contingently, or in such a way that he could have chosen ~x*. So in possible worlds, individuals do not float from world to world, choosing *x* in PW1 and *~x* in PW2. Rather, they are discrete subjects who must settle (albeit contingently) on single choice to the exclusion of other choices. Just like real individuals, possible individuals do not exist in multiple worlds with multiple lives, landing in multiple fates, but subsist with a single identity and a single fate in their discrete possible world. The only difference between these possible

individuals and real individuals is that those in the realm of the possible lack existence.

But it is this that God grants to a given possible world, should he decree that it move

from the realm of the possible to the realm of the actual. In doing so, he upholds the

respective natures of every particular thing in that world, including the contingency of

free choices made therein.

Providence and personal responsibility is no doubt an issue that beckons

attention in Leibniz's philosophy generally and his theodicy specifically. For if God has

decreed the best, and all choices are included in that decree, then all is determined, as

Leibniz admits (G 6:134). Moreover, prayer seems futile, given that God has already

decreed the whole and only that which serves his final aim matriculates into his decree (G

6:174). Thus, it would seem that God does what he will regardless of what men choose,

and one may easily slip from this conclusion into fatalism.

Though the concern is fair, a careful examination of Leibniz's claims regarding

providence reveal that fate has no place in Leibniz's philosophical theology. I will begin

by looking at Leibniz's answer to the problem of prayer. His response is a traditional one,

reflecting the sort of answer one finds in early Christian writers, such as Origen or

Augustine:[24] Because prayers, like other free actions, are known by God in advance,

these contingencies are already part of the world as represented to the divine mind in

eternity. In other words, there is a conceptual error afoot in the objection. It presumes that

because prayer asks God to act in a way that he might not otherwise act, prayer requires

that the world be one way first and then altered in light of prayer. Leibniz's point is

---

[24] See, e.g., Origen, *De Oratione* 6 (PG 11:433c-439b); Augustine, *De Dono Perseverantiae* 2.3; 6.10; 6.12; 13.33; 14.35; 16.39; 16.41; 17.46; 24.66 (PL 45:996; 999; 1000-1; 1012-3; 1014-5; 1017, 1018; 1021-2; 1033).

nothing new. God need not first decree the world void of answered prayers and then modify it; he merely needs to take into account the prayers that he infallibly knows will be offered. If God foreknows that a person will freely pray wisely and in faith, and God chooses to honor that prayer by acting in a way he otherwise would not have had they not prayed, then we can truly say that God answers prayers (G 6:132).

A noteworthy feature of this solution is that, according to Leibniz, God's synergistic interaction with rational agents is part of what God deems best about our world. In the context of prayer, Leibniz understands God to take prayers into account when determining his own actions, and this mode of providence is deemed superior (or best) in comparison with a unilateral determination of history, vis-à-vis, fatalism. We will discuss below Leibniz's notion that evil attaches by concomitance to the best (e.g., G 6:169-72), but it is additionally noteworthy here that one can see immediately why evil might attach by concomitance to this particular feature of the best. To wit: If, in the best, God answers wise and good prayers and refrains from acting where prayers are foolish or have been withheld, then this good (i.e., prayer) opens the door to the evil that some may fail to pray and certain good divine actions may be withheld as a result.

This last point brings to the fore personal responsibility more generally. Leibniz's insistence on personal responsibility amid divine decree echoes what we find in reference to predetermination. That is, God's knowledge of the subject in the realm of the possibles includes those predicates that are in him freely and contingently, and God's predetermination moves the subject accordingly, upholding free choice. In short, Leibniz espouses the traditional Augustinian view that providence is not fatalistic but

synergistic.[25] Personal responsibility is preserved on this view precisely because what God decrees takes into account and upholds what he infallibly knows to be freely in the subject. Therefore, as Augustine counsels, if one fears what God has decreed for him, he should choose rightly and pray for perseverance in the good, since such contingent choices are the object of God's infallible knowledge in eternity.[26]

Pre-established harmony is the last of the topics to which we turn in this treatment of providence. The foregoing discussions of predetermination, possible worlds, and providence generally help show how Leibniz can preserve free choice amid these doctrines and the long precedent these views have in Christian orthodoxy. Yet, Leibniz's doctrine of pre-established harmony (henceforth PEH) beckons the question of whether free choice is possible in Leibniz's metaphysic. I contend it is, and the reason I have chosen to treat PEH in this subsection is because an careful reading of Leibniz on this topic shows PEH to be a subset of Leibniz's view of providence generally and of his understanding of divine decree in specific. I further submit that when this is recognized, the problems for freedom (and the solutions thereto) are plainly identical with the problems (and solutions) emerging out of the Augustinian tradition on divine decree.

Before moving into PEH, Leibniz offers some preliminary notes that merit attention. First, he suggests that the cause/effect relation in PEH is entirely contrary to Islamic fate (*Fatum Mahometanum*). Such fatalism, according to Leibniz, assumes an arbitrary act of divine power, not foresight or good counsel (G 6:135). The concern here

---

[25] See, e.g., Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10 (PL 41:152-153); Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* pt. II, thesis IV; Anselm *De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis* in *Opera Omnia*, 2 vols.ed. Franciscus Salesius Schmitt (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag [Günther Holzboog] 1968), 2.3; Turretin, *Institutio* VI, v, 11. See also §1.1 in chapter 2 above.

[26] Cf. Augustine, *De Dono Perseverantiae* 2.3; 6.10; 6.12; 13.33; 14.35; 16.39; 16.41; 17.46; 24.66 (PL 45:996; 999; 1000-1; 1012-3; 1014-5; 1017, 1018; 1021-2; 1033).

is the very same that Leibniz later expresses in reference to some supralapsarians, namely, that divine justice "is an arbitrary thing" and God operates by "a despotic power which can go so far as being able to condemn innocents" (G 6:209). Suffice it to say, Leibniz does not understand divine justice to be arbitrary or capable of condemning innocents. Rather, he takes the realist stand that the good is part of the eternal verities and plays an integral role in God's choosing of the best (see, e.g., G 6:208-10). Second, Leibniz makes a promise regarding what he will show in reference to freedom: "It is well to show, notwithstanding, how this dependence of voluntary actions does not fundamentally preclude the existence within us of a wonderful *spontaneity,* which in a certain sense makes the soul in its resolves independent of the physical influence of all other creatures" (G 6:135). Leibniz, surprisingly, identifies spontaneity as "a consequence of the System of Pre-established Harmony" (G 6:135). These opening remarks are of particular interest because both points are contrary to what is often thought to result from PEH, namely, a strong necessitarianism that free choice cannot possibly survive.[27] Yet, Leibniz promises to show the opposite.

Leibniz's treatment of PEH begins with the mind/body problem of his day, following from Descartes.[28] That is, "since it has been recognized that thought and dimensional mass have no mutual connexion, and that they are creatures differing *toto genere,* many moderns have acknowledged that there is no *physical communication*

---

[27] See, e.g., Sir Isaac Newton, "An Account of the Book Entitled *Commercium Epistolicum Collinii Aliorum, De Analysipromota,*" *Royal Society of London, Philosophical Transactions (1683–1775)* 29, no. 342 (1714): 224; Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* (Edinburgh: printed for John Bell, and G., G., J. & J. Robinson, London, 1788), 338–39; Julien Offray de La Mettrie, *Oeuvres philosophiques* (Berlin: Jean Nourse, 1751), 222–26.

[28] Cf., e.g., René Descartes, *Œuvres de Descartes,* 12 vols., eds. C. Adam and P. Tannery (Paris: Vrin/CNRS, 1964-76), vol. 7, 45, 63f., 73ff.

between soul and body, despite the *metaphysical communication* always subsisting, which causes soul and body to compose one and the same *suppositum,* or what is called a person" (G 6:135). The difficulty is that soul and body are commonly presumed to engage in physical communication. Descartes, for example, thinks of the soul as able to stir the body the way a rider does a horse. Yet, as Leibniz points out, this solution presumes a mechanical interaction, which is impossible if soul and body are not mechanically connected (G 6:135-6). From what Leibniz can tell, "this effect cannot be inferred from any notion conceived in the body and in the soul" (G 6:135).

Leibniz's strategy in *Theodicée* reflects his strategy elsewhere regarding PEH. He sets up three explanations of causality—mechanical, occasional, and harmony—and argues the superiority of the third. We see this strategy in Leibniz's infamous clock analogy. Two clocks are in perfect synch, which can be explained in one of three ways: (a) they are mechanically connected; (b) something moves the one at the same time it moves the other; and (c) the wisdom of the clockmaker suffices to explain their harmony. Leibniz suggests that (c) is most worthy of God (G 4:498-500). In the same manner, Leibniz sets up PEH in *Theodicée* in juxtaposition to both a mechanical and an occasional mind/body explanation. The former, he suggests, demands "a complete derangement of the laws of Nature" for the non-physical soul to act physically on the body (G 6:136), and the latter "produce[s] a God, as it were, *ex machina,* to bring about the final solution of the piece, maintaining that God exerts himself deliberately to move bodies as the soul pleases, and to give perceptions to the soul as the body requires" (G 6:136). PEH, by contrast, is best in keeping with respective concepts of body and soul (contra mechanicalism) and is most worthy of God (contra occasionalism).

Were these considerations insufficient, Leibniz adds to his case two key insights in his day: (1) that the quantity of force is conserved and is different from the quantity of movement; (2) "the same direction is still conserved in all bodies together that are assumed as interacting, in whatever way they come into collision" (G 6:136). Such insights Leibniz credits with his conviction that the direction of the body is as independent of the soul as its force, and thus his conclusion that the synchronicity of soul and body is a harmony of independent entities.

None of the foregoing is surprising, but the same cannot be said for the next step of Leibniz's argument. Leibniz goes on to make a distinction between his rationale for *harmony* and his rationale for the *pre-established* predicate. He suggests that he came to believe in harmony due to the above considerations, but then adds that it is his belief in divine decree that prompts his conviction that this harmony is pre-established: "Thus I could not fail to arrive at the system which declares that God created the soul in the beginning in such a fashion that it must produce and represent to itself successively that which takes place within the body, and the body also in such a fashion that it must do of itself that which the soul ordains" (G 6:137). In other words, the theory of harmony merely asserts that force is within the monad, and monadic "interaction" is actually harmonious, independent movements of monads. PEH is built on the conviction that God knows *a priori* those contingencies that will obtain in our world, and in decreeing the existence of our world, God also predetermines each monad to move in harmony with these contingencies (cf. C 22; 26). Much like the way Leibniz's view of divine knowledge informed his claim in "Vérités" that all truths are analytic, so in *Theodicée* we

see that Leibniz's convictions concerning divine decree fuel the *pre-established* aspect of PEH.

As for the question of whether PEH yields determinism, Leibniz offers two lines of reply. The first emphasizes the independence of the soul. As Leibniz points out, PEH provides the soul far more independence from surrounding influences that might determine it than any other theory of causation: "all that passes in the soul depends … only upon the soul.… [H]ow can one give it a greater *independence*?" (G 6:137) In other words, the dangers of physical determinism should disappear entirely under PEH, since there is no mechanical connection between the soul and the world around it.

Yet, does this mean that the soul is entirely free from all influence of the physical world? Certainly not. Leibniz admits that while all that happens in the soul depends on it, not all that happens is a product of choice. He notes its peculiar imperfections that it has distinct perceptions (its dominion) and confused perceptions (its passions). No doubt these perceptions influence the ultimate choice of the soul, and this is what raises the question of psychological determinism. Leibniz's response is noteworthy. He suggests that the soul has some control over the passions; that it can form new habits; that it can slow inclinations and redirect its thoughts: "[The soul] even has a like power over the more distinct perceptions, being able to endue itself indirectly with opinions and intentions, and to hinder itself from having this one or that, and stay or hasten its judgment" (G 6:137-8). In reference to beliefs, Leibniz claims that "one sometimes, takes measures nevertheless, to will and even to believe in due time, that which one does not will, or believe, now" (G 6:138). We will discuss such claims at length in §1.3. For now, suffice it to say that Leibniz's claim echoes what we find in "Vérités," namely, he resists

psychological determinism by suggesting that the mind is not passive but is able to take hold of those inclining reasons and redirect its thoughts.

All this raises yet another question, however: How can Leibniz's apparent resistance to both physical and psychological determinism be reconciled with PEH? If the movements of monads are set in eternity by divine decree, does this not imply that no interruption or redirection is possible? Note that this line of questioning is identical to that which is found in the problem of prayer. The error in both cases is that the objection presumes that *interruption* and *redirection* require that the world be one way first and then altered. Yet, just as in the problem of prayer, Leibniz does not need God to first decree the world void of free interruptions and then permit free agents to interrupt this course; he merely needs God to know in advance those free choices that will be made, so that God may put into each monad what is required of it to reflect these interruptions and redirections.

Leibniz proposes a thought experiment to illustrate this very point. He draws on the work of Isaac Jacquelot who forwards a hypothetical: Individual A knows in advance all that individual B will ask of his servant. So, individual A designs a servant robot that will perform every request exactly as requested, when requested. The thought experiment is meant to show two things: (1) the freedom of individual B is in no way negated by the actions of individual A; (2) it would appear that the robot spontaneously replies to individual B, even though it does not (G 6:137). So it is in the monadology. Intelligent substances are able to freely and spontaneously choose and even interrupt or redirect the natural course of events that act upon them, but the effect on surrounding monads is only an *apparent* interruption or redirection, since the surrounding monads that are not free

have already been "programmed" by God to redirect themselves in harmony with these free choices. Such programming does not indicate a lack of freedom in rational subjects, but reflects only the infallible certainty of God who decrees the course of monads.

In this light, Leibniz notes that our talk of the soul depending on the body is perspectival, the way we speak of the sun rising on the one hand (Ptolemy) and then it being stable on the other (Copernicus) (G 6:138). Despite appearances to the contrary, there is no mechanical dependence of the body on the mind; there is only *ideal* dependence. Given that my body is ordered to harmonize with foreseen free choices, God has ordered it thusly because he has foreseen that my choices are thus. Were my choices otherwise, my body would be ordered otherwise. Likewise, the passions of the soul are ordered thusly to coincide with the appearance of the body. As Leibniz puts it,

> This had already happened when God ordered beforehand the harmony that there would be between them. Even so would that automaton, that should fulfill the servant's function, depend upon me *ideally,* in virtue of the knowledge of him who, forseeing my future orders, would have rendered it capable of serving me at the right moment all through the morrow. The knowledge of my future intentions would have actuated this great craftsman, who would accordingly have fashioned the automaton: my influence would be objective and his physical. For insofar as the soul has perfection and distinct thoughts, God has accommodated the body to the soul, and has arranged beforehand that the body is impelled to execute its orders. And in so far as the soul is imperfect and as its perceptions are confused, God has accommodated the soul to the body, in such sort that the soul is swayed by the passions arising out of corporeal representation. (G 6:138-9)

In short, what we find is that the very line of response to the potential determinism of PEH is the same line of response to its antecedent theological doctrines of predetermination and divine decree. God has established this harmony thusly because he has foreknown thusly, and were our choice otherwise, so would be his knowledge and thus his permissive decrees.

1.3. Leibniz on Free Choice

Each of the above facets of providence touches on a distinct quandary surrounding Leibniz's view of free choice, and the above treatment of these quandaries presumes a libertarian understanding of Leibniz. In this subsection, we will examine directly the issue of freedom in *Theodicée*. In particular, we will consider whether the libertarian reading of Leibniz, defended in the previous chapter, remains defensible after 1700 or whether Leibniz moves away from his earlier incompatibilism to a form of compatibilism or even hard determinism. I will argue that Leibniz remains consistent in his incompatibilism.

Leibniz affirms classical faculty psychological, stretching from Aristotle through the patristics and into medieval and post-Reformation scholasticism. On this view, what the will desires is good, and the good that creatures seek is happiness. Only the Highest Good, God, can bring creatures felicity. But because creatures are fallible and corruptible, they may attempt to find satisfaction in lower goods (e.g., sensuality) or in misguided means to the good (e.g., revenge) or in disproportionate amounts of otherwise appropriate goods (e.g., gluttony). Moral evil emerges out of such pursuits (G 6:122). In addition, Leibniz, in keeping with this tradition, maintains "that our will is exempt not only from constraint but also from necessity" (G 6:122). The former condition affirms that in free acts "we are not being forced" (G 6:122). As for the latter condition, this is an affirmation of the modal contingency of the act. At the very least, the subject-predicate relationship in a free act is not absolute, but could be negated without contradiction. Hence, the relationship between *Judas* and *betrays Christ,* for example, is not the same as the relationship between *circle* and *flowing circumference* (see also G 6:123-4). To these

conditions, Leibniz adds the conditions of reason, choice, and spontaneity. This trio

reflects the traditional faculty psychology view that choice in rational agents involves an

intellective assessment of the good, which is followed by a choosing of the desired good,

and this results in voluntary self-movement or *spontaneité* (G 6:122-3).

While the foregoing displays a traditional view of free choice, the question we

face in *Theodicée* is whether the choices of the will, though not logically necessary, are

inevitable in a compatibilist sense. For Leibniz denies equipoise, suggesting that we

never incline toward multiple paths equally (e.g., G 6:122-3), and for this reason, can

easily be read as a psychological determinist who maintains that we choose as we do

because we desire *p* over *q,* but whatever inclines us toward *p* in the first place is not in

our control. Is this Leibniz's position? We will begin by looking at some of the more

problematic passages for a libertarian reading.

One of the most challenging passages for this reading appears in G 6:126-7. The

passage reads:

> [1] In a word, I am of the opinion that the will is always more inclined towards
> the course it adopts, but that it is never bound by the necessity to adopt it. [2] That
> it will adopt this course is certain, but it is not necessary. [3] The case corresponds
> to that of the famous saying, *Astra inclinant, non necessitant,* although here the
> similarity is not complete. [4] For the event towards which the stars tend (to speak
> with the common herd, as if there were some foundation for astrology) does not
> always come to pass, whereas the course towards which the will is more inclined
> never fails to be adopted. [5] Moreover the stars would form only a part of the
> inclinations that co-operate in the event, but when one speaks of the greater
> inclination of the will, one speaks of the result of all the inclinations. [6] It is
> almost as we have spoken above of the consequent will in God, which results
> from all the antecedent wills.

Allow me to first lay out the pessimistic reading. (I have numbered the sentences

for ease of reference.) The first sentence is not necessarily troubling, since Leibniz has

just finished a discussion of the Molinist dispute. His treatment of that discussion begins

with his rejection of equipoise; thus, the first statement merely affirms the reality of intellective preference. The second sentence, however, is more troubling. It could be read as stating that, although the cumulative inclinations that act on the will do not determine it (the will must determine itself), we can nonetheless be certain that the will always chooses in keeping with whatever is dominant out of all inclinations that press in on it, as per psychological determinism. Hence, while the choice that follows is not logically necessary, it is inevitable.

This determinist reading seems to be reinforced by the saying concerning the stars in sentence 3. For Leibniz states in sentences 4 and 5 that the difference between stars inclining but not necessitating and the will inclining but not necessitating is that what the stars incline toward sometimes does not come to pass. Yet, what the will inclines toward certainly comes to pass. Leibniz then goes on to talk about the dominant inclination of the will as the cumulative result of all competing inclinations—external and internal. The reference in sentence 6 to the antecedent/consequent will of God refers back to Leibniz's discussion in G 6:115-7 in which he talks of God willing antecedently the good but consequently willing the best, which ultimately excludes certain goods to which God antecedently inclines. We will discuss the antecedent/consequent will distinction in §2.2 below. For now, let it suffice that, on first blush, the analogy indicates that the choice of the will is merely the result of cumulative pulls toward various goods, in which one combination is strongest. Thus, in keeping with the claim in sentence 5 that choice is the result of all competing inclinations, so it is here: passions, reason, and other factors unknown to us press in on the will and the strongest combination wins. Needless to say,

this string of claims can quite easily be read as an overt affirmation of compatibilist determinism.

Despite this rather bleak assessment of the passage, there are a number of counter considerations that are worthy of examination. Regarding sentence 1, as mentioned, it is aimed at equipoise and merely reaffirms Leibniz's rejection thereof. As shown in chapter 2, there are clear instances in post-Reformation scholasticism of those who both oppose compatibilism and reject equipoise as chimerical, affirming instead the reality of intellective preference alongside libertarian freedom.[29] Hence, this affirmation of intellective preference is no threat to a libertarian reading. As for sentence 2, the focus is once again the distinction between certainty and necessity—a reading reinforced by the fact that Leibniz begins his entire discussion of Molinism (which precedes this passage) with the very same distinction as key to understanding the compatibility of free choice and providence (G 6:123-4). As we have seen in reference to Augustine and those after him, this is historically in keeping with an incompatibilist commitment. Now, if we take the incompatibilist reading of sentence 2, the meaning of Leibniz's reference to the stars inclining and so on (sentences 3-4) has nothing to do with outward or inward causes; it is merely stating that astrology does not provide certainty of future contingents, whereas divine foreknowledge is rooted in an *a priori* infallible understanding of determinate truth. The contrast, then, is not between indeterminism and determinism, but between certainty and uncertainty.

---

[29] Dugald Stewart, *The Collected Works*, ed. Sir William Hamilton, 10 vols. (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1854-1860), vol. 6, 402; "Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* 28:1 (Jan-April, 1853): 83; and Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* pt. II, thesis iii.

The most serious difficulties appear in sentences 5-6. There, Leibniz suggests that, even if the herd was right and stars play a role in our fate, the stars would only be one of many inclining factors. Yet, when one speaks of the "greater inclination of the will, one speaks of the result of all the inclinations" (G 6:127). As noted above, it sounds as if Leibniz is saying that the inclination of the will that determines choice is merely the product of cumulative incentives and inclinations that combine until one emerges as dominant. This certainly sounds deterministic, since the choice of the will is nothing more than a product of colliding goods.

The subsequent reference to God in sentence 6 both helps and hurts. It helps insofar as the antecedent/consequent discussion centers on the will inclining toward all goods but not being able to choose all goods. In this sense, one could read Leibniz's point as again echoing the rejection of equipoise: What the will desires is good, but the will cannot have all goods and thus incline equally toward all goods, lest choice become impossible. This could soften the point a bit. However, the more problematic feature of the antecedent/consequent reference is that Leibniz denies that God has deliberative choice, since God always chooses the best. For God sees a given end tied to its best means (not an unusual claim in the history of Christian theology).[30] While creatures do not always choose the best, Leibniz could be read as asserting that, in the case of creatures, there is still a dominant inclination that inevitably wins out, just as in the case of God the best inevitably wins out. Can the conclusion of determinism be avoided in this light?

---

[30] Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate* 15 (PL 42:1057-1098).; John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa,* 2.29 (PG 94:963a-970b); and Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia. q14 a7.

One interpretive possibility is that Leibniz is not as plainly an intellectualist as he is often thought. The features of Leibniz's thought on choice that typically point in the intellectualist direction are (a) his rejection of equipoise (or affirmation of intellective preference); (b) his principle of sufficient reason, which affirms that there must be a reason for the choice made; and (c) his talk of reasons inclining but not necessitating, which is most often read as indicating that the will never chooses contrary to the final judgment of the practical intellect—even if the choice does not rise to the level of metaphysical necessity. However, there are a number of considerations that argue against this conclusion.

First, a libertarian may rightly ask whether there is a sleight of hand in play in the claim that reasons incline but do not necessitate if this claim regarding inclination is read in a compatibilist sense. That is, if the very concept of the will includes (i) that it moves toward the perceived good, (ii) that the final judgment of the practical intellect is the source of this perceived good, and (iii) that it always acts on that toward which it is inclined (i.e., it cannot reject the final judgment of the practical intellect), in what sense is the will not necessitated to act on this inclination? For to negate the predicate that obtains in the subject (i.e., the act) would be to negate one of the above conditions, which is part of the very concept of *will;* and this would result in a contradiction akin to negating *spherical* in reference to *circle*. However, if (iii) is denied, then one can see how reason inclines but does not necessitate. To wit: though what the will desires is good, and in finite creatures the good is a matter of perception as presented by the practical intellect, so long as the will retains the power to choose (*volo*) or withhold choice (*non volo*), such a judgment would incline but not necessitate action.

Second, Leibniz's comments concerning God's choosing of the best are in keeping with the denial of (iii). That is, Leibniz grants that it may well follow from the very idea of God that he choose the best. However, after granting both the modal necessity of God and the moral necessity of this choice, Leibniz does not thereby grant modal necessity to the best. One may readily ask *why,* given that the distribution axiom in modal logic would dictate that the modal necessity of God is transferred to anything that exists as an extension of the idea of God.[31] We might add that this point would up the stakes of the previous libertarian objection. For if the best follows from the very idea God, and the acts of the creatures in this world are part of the idea of the best, it would seem that the modal necessity is distributed not only to the best but to all the subject-predicate relations contained therein. Yet, Leibniz denies this conclusion. Why? Leibniz writes,

> And therefore, one may concede that it is necessary to God to choose the best [*optimum*], or the best is necessary; yet, it does not follow that to choose is necessary, because no demonstration is given that the best is. And here in this place we have the recent distinction of some between the necessity of the consequence and consequent…. [I]n the end the necessity is a necessity of the consequence, not consequent, that … because the best is supposed from that granted hypothesis of the infallible election of the best is necessary. (A 6.4:1652)

Leibniz's remarks here are significant. For if Leibniz maintained that action always follows from inclination combined with practical judgment, then it could be conceded that a demonstration that God exists would yield a demonstration that the best obtains. Yet, Leibniz does not grant this conclusion. The moral demonstration that the best follows from God only yields the hypothetical necessity that *if* God chooses to create a world, *then* it must be the best. But this is a hypothetical necessity, not an absolute

---

[31] The distribution axiom in modal logic runs as follows: $\Box(A \supset B) \supset (\Box A \supset \Box B)$. The symbol "$\Box$" means *necessary* and "$\supset$" means *if-then.*

necessity. I, for one, do not know how to read this claim unless Leibniz here upholds that the will is never necessitated to act by any inclination. For the power to choose (*volo*) or withhold choice (*non volo*) is always in the will—which explains why Leibniz distinguishes a soul with understanding but no will from a soul that has both understanding and will (G 6:122). Given that Leibniz appeals analogically to the antecedent/consequent will of God in his discussion of creaturely inclination (G 6:127), we have reason to believe that the power to choose or not choose holds true for both God and creatures.

Third, a careful consideration of Leibniz's comments on inclining reasons and the ability of the mind to redirect its thoughts not only confirms the above two points but opens the door to a reading of Leibniz that is more nuanced than the intellectualist portrait. We saw in the previous chapter that in "Vérités" Leibniz affirms the ability of the mind to redirect its thoughts (C 20), and the above subsection highlighted a very similar claim in reference to PEH (G 6:137-8). On this point, Leibniz's *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain* (1703) is helpful. Therein, Leibniz defines free choice (Latin: *liberum arbitrium* = French: *franc arbitre*) as following: "But the freedom of spirit, opposed to necessity, concerns the naked will, and in so far as it is distinguished from the understanding. This is what is called *free choice* [*franc arbitre*] and it consists in this, that we will that the strongest reasons or impressions which the understanding presents to the will do not prevent the act of the will from being contingent, and do not give it an absolute, and, so to speak, metaphysical necessity" (E 252). This denial of both absolute and metaphysical necessity in reference to choice is often read as a mere affirmation that the subject/predicate to follow can be negated without formal contradiction. However, the

more cogent reading is that the will retains its power of choice in the face of the strongest inclinations. When combined with later statements in *Nouveaux essais,* a finely nuanced balance of intellectualism and voluntarism begins to emerge.

Leibniz remarks later in *Nouveaux essays* that the mind has the ability to slow or redirect the dominant train of reason and stir counter inclinations. Now, he does affirm that "The execution of our desire is suspended or stopped when this desire is not strong enough to move us and to overcome the trouble or inconvenience there is in satisfying it" (E 261-2), and such a claim appears to suggest that action inevitably follows where the inclination is strong enough and the resistance weak enough. But Leibniz recognizes that one could very easily slide from this claim to the conclusion that sins are inevitable, given that they follow from inclinations that are too strong to be resisted (à la determinism). In reply, Leibniz suggests that the mind has the ability to take preventative measures against such tendencies. The mind, he says, has the ability to slow the train of reasoning; it can fixate on reason and not "insensible and casual impressions"; it may consider why it is where it is and where this train ends up; it may call to mind duty, and so on (E 262). All of this Leibniz identifies as conditioning oneself "to stop the effect of our desires and passions, *i.e.* to suspend (their) action" (E 262), and he suggests that in so doing we discover means of combating these inclinations.

The determinist safe haven in the passage is Leibniz's remark to follow that this combating is always through determined paths and not equilibrium. However, given Leibniz's concern to avoid the inevitability of sin, the better reading of this reference to determined paths is that Leibniz is suggesting (contra equipoise) that we always act for reasons; hence, if we choose contrary to *p* we must have a reason for doing so. Yet, a

rational agent has the miraculous power of interrupting the natural course of efficient causes that act upon hi will and of redirecting hi thought world (contra determinism). He can therefore recognize the path toward which he is inclined and redirect his thought world away from this path (contra determinism), but to do so effectively—that is, in a way that might result in a choice contrary to the one his current path inclines him—he must redirect it toward other reasons (contra equipoise). He can do this by slowing the path of a certain not-yet-too-strong inclination and redirecting his mind toward another set of inclinations in an effort to nurture it, so that they might become dominant (E 262).

By way of analogy, let us think of a flat table that has atop it a maze, or labyrinth, such as the ones that scientists sometimes use for rat experiments. If instead we place a metal ball in the maze and the maze is kept level, the ball does not move. But if we lift or tilt the table, the ball begins to roll. We may control the speed with which the ball rolls by controlling the angle of the table; we may also control which direction the ball rolls by adjusting the tilt of the table. If the ball begins to roll in a direction we would rather it not go, we may slow its pace and seek to redirect the ball down a different route. But despite these controls, the movements of the ball are still bound to the determined pathways of the labyrinth. So in the above reading of Leibniz, the mind may identify and slow a certain train of thought or inclination, and it may even identify an alternative set of inclinations and seek to stir these so that they become dominant. But because choice always operates according to dominant inclination, this power of the mind is limited by the determined pathways within which it must work.

If we take this reading of *Nouveaux essais,* then what we find is precisely what Leibniz argues in "Vérités." To wit:

> [F]ree or intelligent substances … are not bound by any certain subordinate laws of the universe, but act as it were by a private miracle, on the sole initiative of their own power, and by looking towards a final cause they interrupt the connection and the course of the efficient causes that act on their will… . For just as the course of the universe is changed by the free will of God, so the course of the mind's thoughts is changed by its free will (C 20).

In other words, the natural course of events identified in *Nouveaux essais* is the course of inclinations that bombard the soul, but the mind has the ability to stay choice, slow this or that inclination, and even redirect the inclination by looking towards a final cause. Such actions, if taken, constitute a miraculous redirecting of the mind's thoughts and a miraculous interruption of the subordinate laws of the universe. The end result of this reading is a nuanced balance of intellectualism and voluntarism. On the one hand, Leibniz affirms that the will must act on the dominant inclination (or final judgment) if it acts, but he insists that the will is never necessitated to action, and has the ability to slow and indeed redirect the natural trajectory of inclinations. Thus, while the dominant inclination always wins out in choice, what inclination will be dominant is not outside the control of free and rational agents (cf., e.g., G 6:137-8).

It is noteworthy that such a picture of choice is not without precedence in the Augustinian tradition. Bishop Lancelot Andrewes, for example, includes amongst the free capacities of the soul the power to redirect thought, and for this reason, chastises Eve for not redirecting her thoughts in the hour of temptation from what she could not have toward what she had been given, so as to stir gratitude rather than covetous.[32]

Returning, then, to the above passage in *Theodicée* (G 6:126-7), we see how the claims of the passage are compatible with libertarian freedom. Leibniz can affirm that the

---

[32] Lancelot Andrewes, *Apospasmatia sacra, or A Collection of Posthumous and Orphan Lectures: Delivered at St. Pauls and St. Giles his Church, by the Right Honourable and Reverend Father in God Lancelot Andrews, Lord Bishop of Winchester* (London: Printed by R. Hodgkinsonne, for Moseley, [et al.], 1657), 95-6; and 259.

choice of the will never fails to accord with the dominant inclination, which is the result of all inclinations that assail the soul, and yet deny that either the inclination or the choice is necessary. Let us say, for example, that Margot faces a choice at T_1. At T_1 the dominant inclination, which is the result of all inclinations, is to have an affair with Eli. It can be certain that if Margot chooses at T_1, she will choose to have an affair. Yet, Margot may passively refrain from choice (*non volo*), and this inclination may change at T_2 due to either internal or external changes in those things that assail Margot and incline her toward an affiar. At T_2 it once again falls to Margot whether to choose or refrain from choosing. Moreover, Margot need not remain passive, since she may recognize where this train of thought leads and thus actively slow or even redirect this train by looking to other final causes, such as duty or other competing inclinations. By T_3, it may be that, due to her active redirection of thought, the dominant inclination in Margot is distinct from both her dominant inclination at T_1 and her dominant inclination at T_2. In the end, three different hypotheticals emerge: *If Margot wills at T_1, she wills* p; *If Margot wills at T_2, she wills* q; and *If Margot wills at T_3, she wills* r. Which hypothetical obtains falls to Margot's free spontaneity, and is infallibly certain to God who knows the determinate truth-value of future contingents *a priori*. However, the contingency of this hypothetical necessity falls to (a) the very nature of Margot's free choice, which makes it so that neither her choice nor her inclination are necessary, and (b) the fact that God's free choice with regard to the best makes it so that neither Margot nor her world necessarily exist. In other words, the contingency is more than a mere semantic alternative, but one rooted in the libertarian capacities of Margot of and God, each of which satisfy PAP.[33]

---

[33] PAP = Principle of Alternative Possibilities. For a complete definition, see Introduction, §2 above.

Note that in this reading, there is no violation of PSR—the very topic Leibniz raises immediately after the passage in question. As Leibniz defines it, PSR states that "nothing ever comes to pass without there being a cause or at least a reason determining it, that is, something to give an *a priori* reason why it is existent rather than non-existent, and in this wise rather than in any other" (G 6:127). As R. Cranston Paull has argued, Leibniz's PSR does not prevent free decisions from constituting sufficient reasons: "the fact that the chooser has the specific [nature] that he does provides a sufficient reason for the miraculous choice."[34] The existence of the world is explained by the existence of God and his free choice in accord with the moral necessity that inclines him toward the best. Margot's existence and possession of freedom is explained by their harmony with the best. And Margot's free action is explained by both her free spontaneity and her dominant inclination at the moment of choice. In all explanations, the chimera of equipoise is avoided, but free spontaneity is preserved, as is both PSR and PAP.

The above insight provides an avenue for addressing most all of problem passages on free choice in *Theodicée*. For example, Leibniz makes various remarks in G 6:127-31 (§§45-52) that on initial inspection may imply a compatibilist interpretation. However, keeping in mind (a) that a denial of equipoise is not, historically speaking, constitutive of a denial of libertarian free choice, and (b) the above comments on inclining reason and the power of choice, these difficulties are easily resolved. In G 6:127-8 (§45), Leibniz discusses the determination of the will by the perceived good and suggests that this holds true for not only fallen creatures, but also God and the blessed, since to act without "inclining reason" is a defect—they would be irrational. Though this could be read

---

[34] R. Cranston Paull, "Leibniz and the Miracle of Freedom," *Noûs* 26:2 (June, 1992): 228.

through a compatibilist lens, we have seen how the rejection of equipoise in favor intellective preference (which is the context of this remark) does not constitute a rejection of libertarian freedom; and we have also seen how Leibniz can affirm the role of inclining reasons without falling into psychological determinism. Leibniz's subsequent remarks, moreover, align with this reading: "they are none the less free in consequence of that. God fails not to choose the best, but he is not constrained so to do: nay, more, there is no necessity in the object of God's choice, for another sequence of things is equally possible" (G 6:128). Leibniz continues, "There is therefore a freedom of contingency or, in a way, of indifference, provided that by 'indifference' is understood that nothing necessitates us to one course or the other" (G 6:128). Such a comment makes sense in light of the above nuances concerning the power of choice, and it is noteworthy that the Reformed scholastics who deny equipoise but affirm incomaptibilism likewise affirm a root indifference in the will if by this one means that nothing necessitates the connection between the will and its chosen course of action.[35]

Other potential problem passages could be mentioned, such as G 6:128-30 (§§46-51), wherein Leibniz invokes Buridan's ass—the story of an ass that, when faced with two piles of hay of equal size and luster, could not choose and thus starved.[36] The claim in each instance, however, is that equipoise is chimerical and inclining reasons always play a role in choice (e.g., G 6:183-4; or 218-20). Thus, the above line of reply can be utilized effectively throughout *Theodicée*.

---

[35] Cf., e.g., Maccovius, *Collegia Theologica* ix, 120; Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* pt. II, thesis IV; and Turretin, *Institutio* VI, v, 11.

[36] As an aside, it is also noteworthy that the story of Buridan's ass is thought by some to be traceable to John Duns Scotus, who unquestionably opposes determinism, but also opposes absolute indifference. See Vernon J. Bourke, *Will in Western Thought: An Historico-Critical Survey* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964), 85-86.

Before closing this section, it is worth turning from those passages that challenge the libertarian reading of Leibniz to those that give affirmation of this reading. I will briefly highlight four such points in Leibniz's argument. The first is his treatment of reward and punishment in G 6:139-43. In this passage, Leibniz refutes the idea that absolute necessity would undermine reward and punishment entirely, providing examples of practical uses amid a necessitarian framework (e.g., putting down a rabid animal, inflicting pain to train someone, or using capital punishment to instill fear and restrain observers) (G 6:139-41). Despite the utility of certain rewards and punishments amid necessitarianism, Leibniz suggests that "a kind of justice and a certain sort of rewards and punishments appear not so applicable to those who should act by an absolute necessity, supposing such necessity existed" (G 6:141). The kind of justice Leibniz has in mind here is punitive justice. The contrast is between a form of reward and punishment that can be justified by its utility and that which merely exacts reward. According to Leibniz, only corrective justice, not punitive justice, can be maintained in a system of absolute necessity (G 6:142-3). The argument presumes the libertarian condition of culpability, namely, PAP. For the elements of punitive justice (praise and blame) are built on the assumption of contrary choice, which makes the agent praiseworthy or blameworthy for what he chooses—a point consistently affirmed throughout the patristic period.[37] Though Leibniz's main point is that reward and punishment of a certain kind can survive necessitarianism, it should not be missed that Leibniz grants that punitive justice requires PAP, and he is clear that punitive justice exists in our world (e.g., G 6:142; or 153-61).

---

[37] See, e.g., Origen, *De Oratione,* 6 (PG 11:433c-439b); Origen, *De Principiis.* 3.1 (PG 11: 249a-303a); Gregory of Nyssa, *De Virginitate*, 12 (PG 46:369b-376d); John Chrysostom, "Homily II," in *Homiliae XXIV in Epistolam ad Ephesios* (PG 62:17-22); John of Damascus, *De Fide* Orthodoxa2.24-2.27 (PG 94:951b-962b).

Leibniz's comments in G 6:148-53 on original sin point to the same conclusion. We will consider Leibniz's take on original sin at length in §3.1. For the purposes of this section, I merely want to highlight how Leibniz frames his inquiry. The problem of original sin, as set up by Leibniz, is a question of how God can permit original sin, which is the apparent root of actual sin. As the question unfolds, it has two dimensions: (1) whether divine goodness is tainted by original sin, and (2) whether individuals can justly be held culpable for actual sin, given the presence of this root. The first dimension of the problem (divine justice) is peculiar on a compatibilist read, for it asks whether God is the cause of evil, given that he supplies the dispositional root of what gives way to actual sin. However, on the compatibilist reading of Leibniz, this is precisely what God has done since before the Fall in Eden: God supplied both the internal and external causes that determined Adam toward sin. Were Leibniz a compatibilist, he could simply reply that original sin poses no difficulty, since those infected still act without constraint and according to their desires.[38] The fact that Leibniz resists the idea that God supplies the root of sin points away from the compatibilist reading toward an incompatibilist one.

The second dimension of the problem of original sin (i.e., culpability) emerges in Leibniz's subsequent discussion of hell in G 6:153-61. After dealing with God's role, or lack thereof, in the origin of original sin, Leibniz turns to an inquiry concerning infant damnation. Again, we will treat the details of G 6:153-61 in §3.3 below. Here, I merely want to highlight that Leibniz's inquiry presumes the libertarian conditions of culpability, namely, knowledge of what one ought to do and the power of contrary choice.[39] Leibniz's

---

[38] Cf. Lord Henry Home Kames, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* (London: J. Bell and J. Murray, 1779), 171-2; and 192ff.

[39] See note 37 above.

discussion of infant death yields a subsequent discussion of those who die without

hearing the gospel of Christ. The concern in both cases is that both groups do not satisfy

the culpability requirement of knowledge (G 6:153-6). And as Leibniz develops possible

solutions to this first difficulty, he raises concern over the second condition as well—that

is, even with this knowledge, can they respond apart from prevenient grace (G 6:157)? In

this context, Leibniz makes clear his Arminian leanings with regard to the culpability

question: "I would be rather on the side of those who grant to all men a grace sufficient to

draw them away from evil, provided they have a sufficient tendency to profit by this

succor, and not to reject it voluntarily" (G 6:155). His sympathies for this position are of

particular interest because it seems unnecessary under compatibilist constraints. So long

as an individual sins without constraint and in accord with his desires, he is responsible.[40]

Yet, Leibniz consistently desires the additional layer that the reprobate has the requisite

grace available to him; he need only grab hold of it. Thus, responsibility for his failure to

do so falls to his use of contrary choice.

The fourth and final feature of Leibniz's argument we will consider here concerns

the possibility of a world without sin. Again, we will look at Leibniz's claims on this

topic in §2.3. For now, suffice it to say that Leibniz suggests that such a world would

require (among other things) that God regularly interrupt the free choices of rational

agents by a perpetual miracle (see G 6:166; 172-4; 178-9; and 202). Such a claim makes

little sense if God can "program," as it were, the psychological events that determine the

choice of an individual. For the compatibilist, no miracle is required to make free agents

choose the good perpetually; agents need only be created with an inclining desire to do

---

[40] Cf. Kames, *Essays*, 207-21.

so. The fact that Leibniz suggests that such miraculous intervention would be required indicates that he does not think free choice is so easily controlled or manipulated.

What we find, then, is that Leibniz's comments in *Theodicée* can be read in keeping with the libertarian remarks in "Vérités" and *De praedestinatione.* Though problem passages emerge that lend themselves to a compatibilist reading, a careful treatment of these claims opens the door to a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between inclining reasons and the power of choice. Moreover, far from simply permitting an incompatibilist reading, we find that a number of Leibniz's questions and answers presume and indeed require a commitment to the libertarian conditions of culpability. Thus, we have reason to believe that the incompatibilist commitment Leibniz harbored in his earlier writings continues in *Theodicée.*

2. God and Evil

Before moving into Leibniz's answer to how it is that God can permit evil to "exist" in our world, we must first flesh out Leibniz's definition of three types of evil, their respective modal statuses, and God's role therein.

2.1. Three Types of Evil

Leibniz identifies three different types of evil: metaphysical, physical, and moral. His basic definitions run as follows: "*Metaphysical evil* consists in mere imperfection, *physical evil* in suffering, and *moral evil* in sin" (G 6:115). In existential terms, no manner of evil is necessary, since God is the only existentially necessary being, and the

idea of God excludes all three kinds of evil. However, if we include the eternal verities in the discussion of evil, as Leibniz does, then what we find is quite different.

Metaphysical evil Leibniz identifies with finitude, or limitation in essence and understanding. Defined in this way, metaphysical evil is part of the very concept of creatures *per se*, being "an *original imperfection"* that precedes all sin (G 6:115). Leibniz points out that many of "the ancients" located the source of evil in matter, which was thought to be uncreated and independent of God. Yet, he points out that for those who "derive all being from God" (as Leibniz and orthodox Christianity generally do) the answer must be "sought in the ideal nature of the creature" (G 6:114). In other words, as we saw in §1.1 above, Leibniz is a realist who understands the myriad of essences in the Great Chain of Being to be among the necessary truths housed in the eternal verities. Because this chain of creaturely essences necessarily includes metaphysical finitude, Leibniz concludes that metaphysical evil must be located in the eternal verities themselves, "which are in the understanding of God, independently of his will" (G 6:114-5). Moreover, insofar as every possible world that God might create is a world system of creatures, Leibniz concludes that metaphysical evil is present in every possible world: "[I]t is necessary that there be an infinitude of possible worlds, that evil enter into divers of them, and that even the best of all contain measure thereof" (G 6:115). It is worth noting that Leibniz is in perfect harmony with historical Christian orthodoxy on this point, since creedal Christianity has been quite clear from the time of the Arian dispute onward that one of the central differences between God and creatures is that God is

uncircumscribed (*aperigraptos*), while creatures—all creatures—are circumscribed (*perigraptos*).[41]

Physical evil refers to pain or suffering. Leibniz distinguishes the role of God in physical evil from the role of creatures. Regarding God's direct role, Leibniz suggests that physical evil may be willed by God as a form of punishment; it may also be used as a catalytic means to a specific end, such as the amendment of one's life; or it may serve to prevent greater evils, such as the pain that leads to repentance and faith and thus prevents the greatest physical evil, namely, damnation (G 6:116-7; 146). In other words, Leibniz ascribes to God only upright motives in his promotion of physical evil. As for God's less direct role, two themes emerge. The first is that God acts "according to the rules, as well as physical as moral, that wisdom has made him choose" (G 6:119). The implication is that God's goodness and wisdom do not require him to perform a miracle every time a physical law might result in pain. The second more problematic created cause is the rational creatures God has made. In contrast with divine benevolence, rational creatures have a tremendous ability to inflict physical evil, and their reasons for doing so are rarely virtuous. As Leibniz puts it, one Nero or Caligula produces more harm than any earthquake (G 6:118). Such an abuse of free choice, however, moves us from physical evil into the realm of moral evil.

Moral evil find its footing, as it were, in metaphysical evil—specifically in creaturely limitations that allow for fallibility and corruptibility. However, unlike metaphysical evil, moral evil is rooted in the free choice of rational agents and is not

---

[41] E.g., Basil of Caesarea, *Epistolae,* 8.2 (PG 32:249); Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium,* 1; 8; 9 (PG 45:368a; 793c; 812d); John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa,* 2.3; 1.13 (PG 94:868b; 852c-53b). See also Nathan A. Jacobs, "Are Created Spirits Composed of Matter and Form? A Defense of Pneumatic Hylomorphism," *Philosophia Christi* 14, no.1 (2012): 81-90.

necessarily present in every possible world simply because creatures are in those worlds. Here we find the antithesis of Leibniz's application of faculty psychology to God. Because God's infallible intellect cannot fail to know the good and his incorruptible will cannot fail to incline toward every good proportionate to its goodness, it follows that God, of moral necessity, always wills the best. Yet, the same cannot be said of creatures. On this point, Leibniz follows a very traditional path from Plato and Aristotle through the medieval scholastics: The intellect judges the good; the will desires the good; and the good at which rational creatures aim is happiness. Only the highest good (God) can bring felicity, but due to creaturely finitude, the intellect can misjudge the good, esteeming lower goods more than it ought and disregarding higher goods it ought to esteem. Likewise the will, being corruptible, may incline toward lower goods more than it ought and decline from higher goods toward which it ought to incline (G 6:122). Thus, the fundamental metaphysical difference between God and creatures yields an equally fundamental moral difference.[42]

As for the nature of moral evil itself, Leibniz again invokes the Augustinian staple that being is good, and thus evil must always be a defect in, corruption of, or privation of good (*bonum ex causa integra, malum ex quolibet defectu*). For this reason, we must clarify our talk of the "existence" of evil. Evil, as nonbeing, cannot be said to have an efficient cause, as if it were something that had being, like a tree or dog. Rather, evil, as corruption or privation, can have only a deficient cause (*malum causam habet non efficientem, sed deficientem*). In the case of moral evil, the willing of evil is always a regressive or retrograde resistance by the will to being (see also G 6:115; and 122).

---

[42] On this point in patristic literature, see Jacobs, "Are Created Spirits Composed of Matter and Form?" 84-87; and 100-01.

Both the corruptibility of creaturely faculties and the meontic nature of evil are aimed at explaining metaphysically how evil can "exist" without being caused by God. This metaphysical groundwork is crucial because even if we speak of God permitting evil acts, there is still the difficulty that all things have their existence, capacity, and motion from God. The problem this modal link between God and creatures raises is that it seems to require that God is directly, and indeed physically, involved in every instance of moral evil. For if God perpetually supplies creatures with existence, capacity, and movement, then it seems inevitable that God is involved in every evil action from conception to completion. Or to use Leibniz's words, God "effects all that is real in the sin of the creature" (G 6:118).

One possible way to distance God from evil, which Leibniz notes but rejects, is forwarded by certain medieval nominalists, such as Durand de Saint-Pourçain and Cardinal Aureolus. To wit, God creates beings, gives them the force they need, and then leaves them to themselves.[43] In other words, divine concourse is only "general and mediate" (G 6:118). Leibniz, however, sides with the more traditional understanding of concourse, according to which "the action of God in conserving should have some reference to that which is conserved" (G 6:118). Hence, he speaks of God continually

---

[43] Durandus of Saint-Pourçain (c. 1275-1332) was a Dominican scholastic philosopher/theologian. He was known as *Doctor resolutissimus* due to his advocacy of certain novel opinions of his day. He advocated nominalism and faced heavy opposition as a result. John XXII, who had originally called Durandus to as Master of the Sacred Palace, later ordered that Durandus' treatise *De statu animarum* be examined, and it was found to contain eleven errors. He is considered a precursor to Occam and the beginning of the third period of scholasticis. Thomas Schwertner, "Durandus of Saint-Pourçain," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909), vol. 5. As for Cardinal Aureolus, I presume Leibniz has in mind Petrus Aureolus (ca. 1280-1322). Aureolus was a Franciscan philosopher/theologian. He entered the Orator of Friars Minor and eventually became provincial of his order (Province of Aquitaine) (1319). John XXII appointed him Archbishop of Aix (1321). He criticizes Thomas but does not always defend Scotus either. Like Durandus, Aureolus is thought to be (philosophically speaking) a forerunner of Occam. Edward Pace, "Petrus Aureoli," *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* vol. 2.

creating and providing "perpetual immediate influence which the dependence of the creature demands" (G 6:119).[44] But such particular concourse is the very thing that beckons the question: Is God the author of evil?

Leibniz, in keeping with the *consensus patrum* of Christian tradition, rejects the idea that God causes evil.[45] But how can he do this while affirming particular concourse? His solution is twofold. First, Leibniz builds on his discussion of metaphysical evil. As noted above, metaphysical evil is what makes possible fallibility and corruption, which is the basis for moral evil. Yet, Leibniz insists that ontological finitude in creatures is not the result of weakness in God, but an inevitable result of being a creature. For God cannot communicate his full perfection to another being without making another God. Therefore, ontic limitations are rooted in the "ideal reasons which restrict it" (G 6:121)—that is, in the essential properties of its nature that make it a circumscribed entity. In this light, should moral evil result from metaphysical evil, God remains guiltless for several reasons: (1) because the metaphysical limitations are part of the very concept of the thing, and is thus an absolute necessity that not even God can overturn; (2) because the limitation, while making moral evil possible in rational creatures, does not make evil necessary, given the powers of free choice; and (3) because God provides perfection to each creature as far as each is able to receive it (G 6:121).

---

[44] Cf., e.g., Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q104 a1 ad 4.

[45] See Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses* 4.37.1-2; 4.41.1 (PG 7:1099b-1101a; 1115a); Justin Martyr, *Apologia Prima* 43-4 (PG 6:391c-396c); Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 2.4-8 (PL 2:288a-294c); Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*11.17-11.22 (PL 41:331-35); Augustine, *Confessiones* 7.3.4-5; 7.5.7 (PL 32:735; 736-7); John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa,* 4.19-4.20 (PG 94:1191a-1198a); Anselm, *De Casu Diaboli,* 20;; Anselm, *De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis* 1.7; *De Conceptu Virginali et de Originali Peccato,* 4-5, Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia q49 aa1-2; Ia q79 aa1-2.

The second part of Leibniz's reply invokes Augustine's insights concerning the privative nature of evil, discussed above (G 6:119). As noted, evil has no being of its own, since existence itself is a perfection and thus ontologically positive. Thus, evil can only be a privation of the good (*privatio boni*).[46] For this reason, Leibniz insists that God cannot be the cause of evil, for evil has no efficient cause. As nonbeing, it can have only a deficient cause, since it adds nothing (ontologically speaking) to the subject. In this light, he concludes that God supplies all that is ontologically positive in the agent and in the act; the creature is the deficient cause of the privation in malformed movements (G 6:114-5).

To illustrate the point, Leibniz invokes an analogy of inertia in which a boat is weighed down and resistant to the movement of the river beneath it. The analogy depicts God's impartation of being and the resistance thereof in evil acts. Leibniz writes:

> The current is the cause of the boat's movement, but not of its retardation; God is the cause of perfection in the nature and the actions of the creature, but the limitation of the receptivity of the creature is the cause of the defects there're are in its actions…. [O]ne may say that the current is the cause of the material element of the retardation, but not the formal: that is, it is the cause of the boat's speed without being the cause of the limits to this speed. And God is no more the cause of sin than the river's current is the cause of the retardation of the boat. (G 6:120-1)

As pointed out in the previous chapter, this very same type of analogy is found among a number of Reformed scholastics and is used to explain the relationship between divine premotion and evil. We saw that Johannes Maccovius uses the illustration of a limping horse:

---

[46] E.g., Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 11.10, 11.22-23 (PL 41:325- 327, 335-337). See also C*onfessiones.*, 3.11-12 (PL 32:691-694); and *Enchiridion ad Laurentium de Fide et Spe et Caritate*, 11-14 (PL 40:236-238).

> The following objection is forwarded: If someone is knowingly and willingly the cause of an action to which deformity is attached, he truly and properly sins: God is knowingly and willingly the cause of actions to which deformity is attached: therefore God is truly and properly the cause of sin. I respond: This is false and this can be shown by an example: for if someone moves a limping horse, the horse limps, but that person is not the cause of its limping.[47]

The basic analogy is the same: motion is provided by an external source, while the object being moved has some defect or trait that determines the character of the resulting movement. The point is straightforward: though God is the cause of the agent's movement, the agent himself is the deficient cause of the defective character of the movement. Yet, this defect is not an ontological addition to the act anymore than brokenness is an addition to a previously healthy limb. Thus, it is in the deficient cause, namely, the corrupt will, where we find the locus of evil.[48] As for why God would permit the existence of evil, Leibniz's answer is found in the distinction between God's antecedent and consequent wills.

2.2. God's Antecedent and Consequent Will

In section 1, we saw how Leibniz moves from perfect being theology and faculty psychology to the hypothetical necessity *If God chooses to create a world, then the world he creates will be the best possible world.* We also saw how this only heightens the question: *Whence cometh evil?* For, if God's infallible intellect cannot misjudge evil as good and God's incorruptible will cannot decline from the good into evil, then on Leibniz's own assumptions, God cannot will evil as such. Yet evil is present in our world. How do we explain this? Leibniz's answer appeals to a distinction between the

---

[47] Maccovius, *Collegia Theologica*, ix, 120.

[48] Cf. Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica* pt. II, thesis IV; and Turretin, *Institutio* VI, v, 11.

antecedent will of God and the consequent will of God. This distinction, to my mind, is the crux of Leibniz's theodicy. For it explains how God, who cannot will evil *per se,* permissively decrees a great many evils, and it is this distinction to which Leibniz consistently turns when professing confidence that God has chosen the best and when answering objections leveled by Bayle.

The antecedent/consequent will distinction is not Leibniz's own but, as he notes in *De praedestinatione et gratia dissertatio,* comes from John of Damascus and is conceptually (though not terminologically) present in the writings of John Chrysostom (PGD 3a).[49] Leibniz explains the distinction as follows. The antecedent will reflects the fact that "*will* consists in the inclination to do something in proportion to the good it contains" (G 6:115). This is an entailment of the faculty psychology as applied to God: If God infallibly knows the good of each object and his incorruptible will inclines toward every good proportionate to its goodness, then we must affirm that God inclines toward every particular good to whatever extent it is good (G 6:122). Each good considered in itself is thus tended toward proportionate to its goodness. In this sense, every good (trees, dogs, Pegasī, virtue, the prevention of evil, the salvation of every man, etc.) is antecedently willed by God. Hence, we may rightly say that God is earnestly disposed "to sanctity and to save all men, to exclude sin, and to prevent damnation" (G 6:116). This will, or inclination toward particular goods, would be effective in determining God's choice were there not "some stronger reason to prevent it" (G 6:116). This "stronger reason" brings us to the consequent will of God.

---

[49] See John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa,* 2.29 (PG 94:963a-970b); and John Chrysostom "Homily 1" in *Homiliae XXIV in Epistolam ad Ephesios,* (PL 62:1016).

Because not all possibles are compossible, God must make hard decisions, as it were, regarding which goods to will and which to exclude as a result, since not all that are antecedently willed can be consequently willed. For example, it is a good that men are free and it is a good that all men pray, but it may not be possible for God to will the former and the latter simultaneously, since the former places in the hands of men the choice of whether to bring about or shun the latter good. The conclusion, then, is this. There are goods that God antecedently wills but may not consequently will because they are incompossible with the good of the whole, and thus with his providential duties to creation; and there are evils that God antecedently does not will but consequently permits because they attach by concomitance to the good of the whole, and thus to his providential duties to creation (G 6:117).

In both ancient and medieval Christianity, the antecedent/consequent will distinction is meant to explain how God, who does not and cannot will evil *per se,* may guiltlessly permit evil. The medieval scholastics are clear that there are only certain conditions under which evil may be so permitted. One cannot, for example, justify the performing of evil (the direct object of one's actions) because one has a good end in mind—good ends do not justify evil means. Evil is permissible only when it is the best and only means available for preventing a greater evil from occurring. For, to permit a lesser evil in order to avoid a greater evil is to actually have a good end and a good object, despite the fact that a lesser evil is permitted in the process.[50]

---

[50] For an exposition of Thomas Aquinas on this matter, see Eleonore Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," in *Christian Philosophy*, ed. Thomas P. Flint (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 63-7.

Leibniz follows not only the Christian terminology on this point, but its substance as well. with other medieval scholastics, argues that one may guiltlessly permit evil if and only if (a) the prevention of evil would result in a still greater evil or (weak disjunctive)[51] (b) one must commit evil to prevent evil. Since God has permitted evil in our world, and God cannot sin (propositions 3 and 6 of Leibniz's argument that God wills the best), we must conclude that one or both conditions are met in God's permissive willing of evil. In this light, God cannot be said to will evil qua evil. On the contrary, Leibniz maintains that God permits evil if and only if it is found to be inextricably connected with other goods to which God is duty bound and the shunning of which to prevent said evil would result in a greater evil still (G 6:117). Thus, when God permits evil, both his end and his object are good: God wills the good of the whole (end), along with every particular good that attaches thereto, and he permits evil only because the prevention of said evil would result in still greater evils (object).

Speaking by analogy, Leibniz compares God's consequent willing of evil to a guard who occupies an important post in a time of danger and does not abandon his post out of obligation to the town, even though he knows there are two men in the town (toward whom he harbors no malice) who want to kill one another and may succeed in doing so if he remains in his post. In willing his duty, therefore, the guard must also permissively will the death of one of these two men, since to prevent this evil would require not only that he sin by failing in his own duty but open the door to a still greater evil, namely, the sacking of the entire town (G 6:117). So, in the case of God, his primary

---

[51] A weak disjunctive indicates that the "or" (e.g., $p \lor q$) is non-exclusive; that is, either p or q is the case, and perhaps both p and q. A strong disjunctive (e.g., $r \veebar s$) is exclusive—either r or s is so, but not both.

duty of doing the best cannot be done without permitting evil, though God does not cause this evil himself:

> But in relation to God … nothing can be opposed to *the rule of the best,* which suffers neither exception nor dispensation. It is in this sense that God permits sin: for he would fail in what he owes to himself, in what he owes to his wisdom, his goodness, his perfection, if he followed not the grand result of all his tendencies to good, and if he chose not that which is absolutely the best, notwithstanding the evil of guilt, which is involved therein by the supreme necessity of the eternal verities. (G 6:117)

In this sense God permits evil "as the *sine quo non* or as a hypothetical necessity which connects it with the best" (G 6:117).

In short, Leibniz maintains that God permits evil when the prevention of evil requires that he fail in his own duty to the whole and bring about still greater evils (G 6:117; cf. 118-9). This is precisely why Leibniz affirms Bayle's claim that permitting evil is excusable only when the prevention of an evil introduces greater evils. Leibniz agrees. For he thinks this is precisely what is affirmed in the antecedent/consequent will distinction: If God were to allow the antecedent will to prevail and stop every evil that repelled him, then he would do so at the expense of the best, and the destruction of the best—whatever this would look like—would bring greater evil than those particular evils prevented. Moreover, to commit this evil would bring about the greatest evil of all, namely, the destruction of God's very wisdom and goodness (G 6:182).

Now, three misconceptions could quite easily emerge out of Leibniz's antecedent/consequent will distinction, despite its rather straightforward nature. The first is that God, in his consequent will, inclines toward evil, preferring a world with corruption, horrors, and damnation to a world free from these evils. Second, and certainly related to the first, is that God is the cause of evil, since he apparently could prevent the ills of this world but chooses not to because he finds the mixture of good and evil to be

preferable. The third, is that God permits evil for the greater good in a utilitarian sense—that is, the cumulative happiness justifies the miseries of some—and thus God treats people as mere means that may be disposed of in the trash heap of hell or Auschwitz or elsewhere. Each of these represents a rather serious distortion of Leibniz's position.

I. *God, in his consequent will, inclines toward evil, preferring a world with corruption, horrors, and damnation to a world free of these evils.*

Leibniz is painfully clear that this first misconception has no place in his theodicy. Three points should be kept in mind here. The first is that the antecedent/consequent will distinction is meant to make plain that God in no way inclines toward evil. Or, put more forcefully, God is repelled by evil (e.g., G 6:116-7). This distinction is meant to show instead how God can be repelled by evil, but still deem the goods to which evils attach by concomitance and the prevention of still greater evils that would result otherwise desirable enough to overcome his hatred for evils permitted. Leibniz is quite clear that God hates evil and vice proportionately to the contempt they are due, but he also loves the good proportionately to its due, and his love for the good represented in the best is greater than his hatred for the evils that attach to it by concomitance (G 6:167-8).

The second point that should be kept in mind is that even in consequently inclining toward the best, Leibniz does not conceive of God as doing so without (anthropomorphically speaking) regret or anxiety over the evil that attaches to the best. We find a number of analogies throughout *Theodicée* that illustrate this point. One of these has already been considered above, namely, the analogy of a guard keeping watch over a town (G 6:117). In reply to Bayle's accusation that *to permit a preventable evil is to not care whether it be committed,* Leibniz forwards the analogy of a government that

leaves irregularities in coinage during war. He suggests that the fact that the government does so does not indicate a lack of anxiety over it or even approval thereof. How much more must it be with God in regard to those evils that attach by concomitance to the best? But Leibniz again insists that there is no fault to be found here, for "Not only does he derive from them greater goods, but he finds them connected with the greatest goods of all those that are possible: so that it would be a fault not to permit them." (G 6:181).

We find this same theme in reference to Bayle's objection that God is like one who gives a suicidal individual the instrument of his suicide while knowing its intended use. Leibniz replies with two hypotheticals. In the first, a man holds several mythical objects that he knows will be used for evil, for he has been given the gift of prophecy by Apollo on the condition that his prophesies shall never be believed. Were the man pressed to return these items to their proper owners and he could show no proof of future misuse, a just judge would compel the man to return the items. In the second hypothetical, "Jupiter promises Semele, the Sun Phaeton, Cupid Psyche to grant whatever favor the other shall ask. They swear by the Styx, *Di cujus jurare timent et fallere Numen.* One would gladly stop, but too late, the request half heard, *Voluit Deus ora loquentis Opprimere; exierat jam vox properata sub auras*" (G 6:175). One would draw back, except that, being compelled by oath and the unbreakable law of the Styx, it must be fulfilled, no matter how harmful. Leibniz's point is this: "the moral of these fables implies that a supreme necessity may constrain one to comply with evil" (G 6:175). Thus, wisdom and goodness constrain God to the good of the whole and thus to the best, but because evil attaches thereto, God is bound by his providential duty to the whole to

permit these evils, since to prevent these would be to fail in his own duties and bring about still greater evils.

The third point that should be kept in mind against the idea that God inclines toward evil is that Leibniz not only thinks God desires good for all men but does all that can be done to produce good without violating his obligations to the whole. Leibniz insists that "To make men better, God does all that is due, and even all that can be done on his side without detriment to what is due" (G 6:180-1). As we will discuss more in §3.2, Leibniz understands God to give to all men grace necessary for salvation, so that none may charge that they are found reprobate due to a lack of grace on God's part. Thus, the evil of damnation, for example, is permitted because God cannot save every man while fulfilling his obligation to the whole. Yet, Leibniz believes that God still gives enough grace that, hypothetically speaking, every man could be saved were he to make a right use of what God gives (G 6:180-1; 187-8).

As an aside and in reference to the claim that *God does all that can be done*, it is noteworthy that Leibniz balks at the idea that there is more evil in our world than good, an objection he recognizes but thinks to be a gross exaggeration (G 6:109; 198-108). Leibniz rebuts the claim as erroneous, pointing out that we recognize sickness as an evil precisely because health is the norm (G 6:109); and similarly, "there are incomparably more houses than prisons" (G 6:198). Leibniz admits that mediocrity is quite common among men, but it is the fault of historians that we focus on the evils of our world in a disproportionate degree (G 6:198). In addition, Leibniz suggests that we do not in fact know how vast the world truly is. We do not know how many intelligent species God has made, how many planets are inhabited, and it may be that our world is a tiny blip in the

whole of creation (G 6:113-4). Leibniz's point here is very much like what we find in C. S. Lewis' science-fiction series in which the philologist, Ransom, discovers that our world is only one among many populated with intelligent life, but what makes earth unique is that its angelic caretakers and human inhabitants have been corrupted, whereas all other planets are free from moral blemish.[52] In short, Leibniz is convinced that the good God has brought into existence and even brought out of the evils of our world is incomparably vaster than the evil we encounter, and this is unquestionably the case if we consider not only history, but the future life and eternity as well.

II. *God is the cause of evil, since he apparently could prevent the ills of this world but chooses not to since he thinks the mix is preferable.*

To this second misconception Leibniz is again quite clear that this is not his position. As we saw in reference to predetermination and Leibniz's boat analogy, God supplies all that is ontologically positive, but it is the will of the creature that retreats from the good toward nonbeing (G 6:120-1). God's predetermination is permissive, moving the creature in accord with what is known to be freely and contingently in him, but God neither approves nor causes the movement toward evil. To use Leibniz's words, "God co-operates morally in moral evil, that is, in sin, without being the originator of the sin, and even without being accessory thereto. He does this by *permitting* it justly, and by *directing* it wisely towards the good" (G 6:162-3). The former refers to God's permissive will, just described, while the latter refers to God's providential use of evil for the good— the good (not the permitted evil) being the object of God's consequent will.

---

[52] See C. S. Lewis, *Out of the Silent Planet* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943); C. S. Lewis, *Parelandra* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944); and C. S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946).

Here, it is worth returning to Leibniz's understanding of free contingencies and possible worlds, discussed above. As argued in §1.2 above, Leibniz does not conceive of possible worlds in a mere semantic sense in which *Adam sins* and *Adam does not sin* are both semantically possible and thus constitute two distinct and equally possible worlds. On the contrary, though both are possible, this does not mean that both obtain in a possible world. For the enduring subject, *Adam,* must either sin or not sin in the realm of the possibles, just as he must sin or not sin in the actual world. Though the subject, Adam, may be coupled with either predicate, and both predicates find grounding in Adam's contrary choice, one predicate is contingently in Adam based on his free choice, and this predicate is known infallibly by God. I would submit that such an understanding of hypothetical necessities is the only one that makes sense of Leibniz's claim that a miracle would be required to prevent sin (e.g., G 6:202). For if every semantic combination void of repugnance constitutes a possible world, there should be a world available to God in which *Adam* (and every other rational agent) is never combined with *sins*; no miracle would be required. But if in the realm of the possible, as in the realm of the actual, *Adam* is a single subject who, though possessing contrary choice, must in fact choose in his various circumstances and only that which is chosen obtains in his possible world, then to create Adam is to grant him existence in full knowledge of his future choices.

This point is crucial because it distinguishes two different ways of thinking about God's choice to give existence to our world. In one rendition, every semantic possibility is a possible world to which God may grant existence. In this conception, it is difficult to avoid the idea that God does not prefer a world with evil and is in fact the cause of evil.

For on this rendition, numerous Adams are present in numerous possible worlds, and in some worlds Adam sins and in other worlds Adam does not sin. On such a rendition, not only does God forego a world without sin, but with regard to those sins permitted, it is God, not Adam, who determines which Adam comes into existence and whether Adam sins. In the other rendition, however, while we may speak of the possibility of Adam not sinning, Adam's presence in the realm of the possibles is just as singular as in the realm of the actual. His choices are contingent, and these predicates are in him in such a way that they could be negated without contradiction, but only one set of predicates is within him, just as in the realm of the actual only one set of predicates obtains. On this second rendition—which I have defended above and will defend extensively in the next chapter—God's choice is not whether to create the Adam that sins (and thus the world in which he sins) or the Adam that does not sin (and thus the world in which he does not sin), but whether or not to grant existence to Adam and in so doing permissively decree the sin that God infallibly knows Adam will commit. In short, in the second rendition, Adam is truly the author of his own sin, and God's decree is truly permissive.

The above point brings us face-to-face with the permissive will of God. Leibniz's comments on the matter in response to Bayle are illuminating. Bayle takes to task the notion of God's permissive will, appealing to Calvin (et al.) in an effort to show that God wills evil in an affirmative rather than permissive manner (G 6:203-4). To illustrate his point, Bayle forwards an analogy: *A prince sends out a number of men on a journey with a set amount of money and threat of imprisonment should they fail the journey. He is certain that some shall incur expenses along the way and will fail, and will be imprisoned upon return. Surely this prince could not be said to have any kindness toward them. Yet,*

this seems to be precisely how God treats a great many men. Leibniz replies (a) that the knowledge that some will fail makes these men no less deserving of imprisonment; (b) there are a great many other things the prince may do to earn the label *kind,* even if this single act is not rightly labeled *kind;* and (c) even if the prince knew this outcome, might he not justly put them to the test that their disposition may be revealed and made known to others? In short, such action may well seem absurd detached from surrounding circumstances but reasonable in a larger context. Thus, Leibniz concludes, "All the more must one deem that God has acted well, and that we should see this if we fully knew of all that he has done" (G 6:205-6).

To press the point further, Bayle draws on a letter from Descartes to Princess Elizabeth, explaining God's absolute and independent wills.[53] Therein, Descartes describes a king who forbade duels, knowing full well that a certain two men will engage in a duel nonetheless. Following his prohibition on duels, the king takes steps to ensure that these two men meet, so that the duel may proceed. Descartes suggests that we may distinguish two wills in the king: the one whereby he wills that men not duel, as per his decree, and the other whereby he wills that these men duel, as per his efforts to ensure it. So theologians distinguish between God's absolute and independent will, according to which God wills that things be done as they are in fact done and the other whereby he wills that they obey his laws (G 6:206-7). Bayle replies that the king simply desires that the men duel; there are no two wills to be found. To illustrate the point, Bayle forwards the counter analogy of two princes, each of whom have a son, and each of whom desires that his respective son poison himself. One prince knows his son is inclined to poison

---

[53] René Descartes, *Epistolae,* 3 vols. (Amsterdam: Elzevirius, 1668), vol. 1, ep. 10.

himself, so he merely employs constraint in stopping his son from doing so. The other prince actively induces grief in his son sufficient to bring about the poisoning. In the end, however, both princes are equally bent on the death of their respective sons, whether they bring this about by permitting the circumstances that lead to this result or by actively engage in brining it about. Hence, Descartes is "assuming an unreal fact" that does not resolve the difficulty (G 6:207).

Leibniz replies that Descartes speaks "crudely" of God's will when he says that God, knowing our free determination toward evil, wished it in not willing to constrain us (G 6:207). "He speaks no less harshly … saying that not the slightest thought enters into the mind of a man which God does not *will,* and has not willed from all eternity, to enter there. Calvin never said anything harsher; and all that can only be excused if it is to be understood of a permissive will" (G 6:207). Leibniz suggests that Descartes' references to God's "good pleasure" (*inter voluntatem signi et beneplaciti*) is entirely foreign to the ancients. While God may command certain things but not will the action (e.g., for Abraham to kill Isaac), when commanding virtue and forbidding sin, "he wills indeed that which he ordains, but it is only by an antecedent will" (G 6:208). The point here is that God does in fact repel evil and antecedently will that men not sin. But insofar as evils have contingently attached to the best, and this is what God has decreed into existence, he has consequently and permissively allowed this evil to come to pass, but only due to its concomitance with the best, not because he inclines toward the evil itself.

One final exchange between Bayle and Leibniz on this matter is worth highlighting. Bayle points out that God chose to create a world in which Adam and Eve sin rather than any number of other possible worlds, and we can never be made to

understand why (G 6:204). His point is quite plainly the very misconception in view here: that God is the author of evil and somehow prefers its presence to its absence. One feature of Leibniz's response is expected, namely, God cannot incline toward evil; thus, his willing is necessarily permissive and only consequently so, given the greater good found in the best (G 6:203-4). This we can understand, even if we do not know all that facets of what makes this world best (G 6:204). The second feature of his response is more surprising, however. Leibniz speaks approvingly of Jacquelot's speculation that perhaps God cannot simultaneously uphold the good of freedom and hinder the evil that proceeds from creaturely freedom: "Supposing the impossible, that God could not prevent the wrong use of free will without destroying it, it will be agreed that since his wisdom and his glory determined him to form free creatures this powerful reason must have prevailed over the grievous consequences which their freedom might have" (G 6:204).[54] This is telling because a tacit feature of Bayle's objection that God could have made any number of different worlds is the assumption that some of those worlds include free agents who do not sin. Yet, Leibniz is open to the possibility that this may not be so. That is, it may be that the good of freedom cannot be had without evil attaching by concomitance. We will explore Leibniz's thoughts on this more in §2.3 below, but for the purposes of the antecedent/consequent will distinction, this highlights an important feature of the distinction as expounded by John of Damascus.

John, in granting the very same divine attributes affirmed by Leibniz, suggests that we may conclude the following about God's will:

---

[54] Isaac Jacquelot, *Conformité De La Foi Avec La Raison; Ou Défense De La Religion, Contre les principales Difficultez répandues dans le Dictionaire Historique et Critique De Mr. Bayle* (Amsterdam: Henry Desbordes & Daniel Pain, 1705), 232.

[P]rovidence is that will of God by which all existing things receive suitable guidance through to their end. But, if providence is God's will, then, according to right reason, *everything that has come about through providence has quite necessarily come about in the best manner and that most befitting God, so that it could not have happened in a better way....* God alone is by nature good and wise. Consequently, in so far as He is good He provides, because one who does not provide is not good. Even men and brute beasts naturally provide for their own offspring, and the one that does not will incur blame. Then, in so far as He is wise He provides for existing things in the very best way.[55]

The parallels with Leibniz on this point are striking, as is the fact that Leibniz credits John of Damascus with the antecedent/consequent will distinction, citing this very passage (PGD 3a). John's comments on the matter help illuminate Leibniz's own position. For, the qualifications John adds are of note. John indicates quite plainly that what falls to *God alone* is done in the best possible way. However, "I am referring to those things which do not depend upon us, because those which do depend upon us do not belong to providence, but to our own free will."[56] His view of providence entails that our world system reflects God's wisdom and goodness, and God's own activities in history are done in the very best way. But this does not mean that everything done in our world is done in the best way, since providence has chosen to create free creatures and permit them to act freely, even when their choices are not the best. Such is part of the best, and reflective of divine wisdom. This, it seems to me, is precisely what we find in Leibniz:

> This mixture, therefore, or this compound [of good and evil], is not to be conceived as a grace or as a gift from God to us; but the good that is found mingled therein will nevertheless be good. Such is God's gift of reason to those who make ill use thereof. It is always a good in itself; but the combination of this good with the evils that proceed from its abuse is not a good with regard to those who in consequence thereof become unhappy. Yet it comes to be by

---

[55] John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa,* 2.29 (PG 94:963a-970b) (emphasis mine).

[56] John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa,* 2.29 (PG 94:963a-970b).

concomitance, because it serves a greater good in relation to the universe. And it is doubtless that which prompted God to give reason to those who have made it an instrument of their unhappiness. Thus nothing prevents us from admitting that God grants goods which turn into evil by the fault of men, this often happening to men in just punishment of the misuse they had made of God's grace. (G 6:171; see also 197-8)

For Leibniz, therefore, it is a very real possibility that the good that God cannot bring about without evil attaching as a consequence is the existence of rational agents who possess free choice. From this we may infer that God values the good of freedom more than he hates the evil that results. What does not follow from the misuse of free choice is that God should withhold freedom to avoid its misuse. For this would be an evil toward the whole, which itself would be a greater evil than the ones brought about by free creatures and one for which God would be blameworthy.

III. *God permits evil for the greater good in a utilitarian sense, that is, the cumulative level of happiness justifies the damnation of some, and thus God treats people as mere means that may be disposed of in the trash heap of hell or Auschwitz or elsewhere.*

This third misconception appears to sit behind a number of Bayle's theological detractors, but Leibniz is repeatedly clear that this is not his position. For, the antecedent/consequent will distinction, as noted above, rejects the idea that God has an evil object (willing evil *per se*) that he justifies by a good end. Nonetheless, such a misconstrual of God's permissive will plays out in Bayle's anthropomorphic renditions of God as one who desires a specific good consequently at the expense of individuals who would otherwise be of value antecedently. Bayle offers the portrait of God as one who permits sin in order to have someone to punish (i.e., the reprobate) and someone on which to show mercy (i.e., the elect). Leibniz catalogs various analogies utilized to

illustrate the point, such as the portrait of God as a Caligula "who has his edicts written in so small a hand and has them placarded in so high a place that it is not possible to read them" (G 6:209). Elsewhere Bayle suggests that only a malicious person offers goods that he knows will bring pleasure for a time but will eventually be lost and bring greater unhappiness to the person than had they never experienced these goods; yet, this is precisely what God does (G 6:175-6).

Leibniz reacts harshly to such characterizations, identifying them as blasphemous ways of speaking about God; for "God has care for men, he loves the human race, he wishes it well, nothing so true" (G 6:176). Leibniz's own position is quite unlike that of the Caligula portrait, since Leibniz maintains, as already noted, that God offers to every man at least the minimal grace due to remain culpable, and even goes beyond this wherever it can be accomplished without doing violence to the whole (e.g., G 6:187-8). What Leibniz identifies as the consistent problem with Bayle's analogies is that they are highly anthropomorphic, typically using examples of a single individual with a basic moral obligation to another individual that can easily be fulfilled without doing violence to any competing duty. Yet, according to Leibniz, God is unlike a mother, guardian, or tutor precisely because his duty is not to one individual but to the whole of creation.

The great irony that emerges here is that those who oppose Leibniz along these lines often find in his theodicy generally and his antecedent/consequent distinction in specific a callused indifference to the plight of individuals in favor of a cold, calculated assessment of which world maximizes the good. Yet, Leibniz's response argues exactly the opposite. Rather than suggesting that God shuns his duty to the individual as a matter of indifference, Leibniz suggests that it is God's duty to every individual aspect of his

creation that demands that he consider the whole and not just one individual's plight. In other words, we should not read Leibniz as a utilitarian who is suggesting that God is willing to damn an individual to bring greater happiness to the whole. For his claim is far more deontological: divine justice and goodness demand that God carry out his obligations to all things, and not just one specific individual. Hence, if God's justice and goodness toward the whole cannot be fulfilled without permitting the unhappiness of some, he must permit that result, even though he desires for that individual, considered in himself (i.e., antecedently), nothing but goodness and happiness.

As we will see plainly in the next section, Leibniz is unconvinced that God, like the average tutor or mother or even king, can prevent every evil while fulfilling this larger and infinitely complex obligation (G 6:175-7). Leibniz's emphasis is therefore always on the vast complexity of that to which divine wisdom and goodness must attend:

> We cannot wonder enough at the beauty and the contrivance of its structure. But when we see some broken bone, some piece of animal's flesh, some sprig of a plant, there appears to be nothing but confusion, unless an excellent anatomist observe it: and even he would recognize nothing therein if he had not before seen like pieces attached to their whole. It is the same with the government of God: that which we have been able to see hitherto is not a large enough piece for recognition of the beauty and the order of the whole. (G 6:188)

Though we cannot grasp the whole, Leibniz is convinced that if we could see "the city of God" from his perspective, we would recognize it is indeed the best, and "sin and unhappiness (whose entire exclusion from the nature of things reasons of the supreme order did not permit), are well-nigh nothing there in comparison with the good, and even are of service for greater good" (G 6:177-8). For reason of our epistemic limitations, Leibniz refuses to offer specific explanations for specific evils. But he does believe we can be assured of certain things: (1) that evil repels God; (2) that God does not operate by an arbitrary or despotic power that condemns innocence (G 6:208-9); (3) that God desires

nothing but good for every individual creature; (4) that God actively provides as much good as can be provided without violating his obligation to the whole; and (5) that evil, when permitted, is permitted only because it is found to be inextricably linked with God's duty to the much larger and more complex whole.

2.3. Concerning a World without Evil

At several points in *Theodicée,* Leibniz considers whether a world without evil would be superior to our own. This is one of the most obvious objections against Leibniz's central claim that our world is the best of all possible worlds, namely, that it seems *prime facie* that a world without evil is better than a world with evil. But Leibniz challenges this claim from three fronts.

The first front is the most natural, given Leibniz's response to the problem of evil. The inference is straightforward enough:

1. The world God creates is the best possible world.

2. Our world is the world God creates.

3. Therefore, our world is the best possible world. (1-2)

4. Some evil is that which exists in our world.

5. That which exists in our world is that which exists in the best possible world.

6. Therefore, some evil is that which exists in the best possible world. (4-5)

Once again, the entire claim builds on the assumption that the very idea of God provides *a priori* certainty of God's existence and the moral necessity that if he creates, he creates the best. The *a posteriori* fact of evil cannot negate the *a priori* certainty of the inference; hence, the supposed *prime facie* conclusion that a world without evil is better must be

rejected. In fact, Leibniz denies that we are able to judge the infinitude of possible

worlds, so as to make a judgment of either what is in fact available to God or what is in

fact better. The more wise judgment is to judge this world best from the effect (*ab*

effectu), which tells us in light of what we know of its cause that it is best (G 6:108).

Leibniz's second and third replies to the claim that a world without sin is best aim

at providing some rationale for why the *prime facie* claim is false. The first is rather

simple, but is certainly worthy of consideration. Leibniz notes several instances in which

the negative enhances the positive. Men relish health more after having experienced

sickness. Shadows enhance color. A little bitterness is something more pleasurable than

pure sugar, and so on (G 6:109). The question this raises is whether it is in fact obvious

that a world with no evil is better than a world with some evil. If goods can be enhanced

by evils, and certain goods cannot obtain at all apart from adjacent evils, then is it so

obvious that the goodness of a world is greater when only good is present? Here Leibniz

adds to the inquiry the theological backdrop, which goes back to Augustine (et al.),

namely, that the evils that attach to our world amplify the good and even enhance the

happiness of those who better understand and appreciate their own happiness as a result.[57]

Leibniz appeals to the Roman rite sung at Easter: *O certe necessarium Adae peccatum,*

quod Christi morte deletum est! O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere

Redemptorem![58]

---

[57] See, e.g., Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 22.30.4 (PL 41:803). See also Tertullian, *De Spectaculis,* 30 (PL 1:735b-738a); Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*, two volumes, third edition, ed. Ignatius Brady (Grottaferrata Romae: Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1971-1981), l4, d50, c7; Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* III q94 a1.

[58] "O truly necessary sin of Adam, which the death of Christ has blotted out! O happy fault, which merited such and so great a redemption!"

To be sure, Leibniz does not endorse that we praise evil, or that we commit evil so that God might bring good out of it. Quite the contrary, Leibniz reminds his readers that St. Paul condemns this very way of thinking (Rom 3:8) (G 6:108-9).God does not incline toward our world because of the evils that attach to it, but because of its goods. He recoils from its evils. God, says Leibniz, does not treat individual men as mere means, sending miseries on some to enhance the happiness of others; rather, God antecedently inclines toward their good and their salvation, but he must consider his obligations to the whole, and it is in reference to the whole that God, in his wisdom, is able to work evil for good. We must, therefore, disapprove of the evils that men bring to our world, but we rightly approve and praise God who, in the face of evil, causes grace to abound even more (Rom 5:20) (G 6:109).

In short, Leibniz's first two replies aim at (a) demonstrating that we have reason to think that a sinless world is not better than our own, given our certainty that God creates the best, and (b) providing some initial consideration of why this claim might be false, given that goods can be enhanced by evil and some tremendous goods—the greatest being the redemption of man by Christ—are not possible without evil. In Leibniz's third reply, he continues down the road of providing rationale for why this *prime facie* claim may be false. His third reply is much more nuanced than his second and concerns the question of whether a world without evil, which we so easily imagine, is in fact as possible as we may think.

In Leibniz's 1686 *Examen religionis,* he states quite plainly that it is within God's power to create a world without sin. Citing Augustine, Leibniz grants that all creatures bear a finitude that makes them liable to corruption, but Leibniz suggests God could have

created a world in which creatures are capable of falling but never do fall. He does not

develop this claim, except to point out that God apparently chose to permit evil because

he saw how to convert evil into good, and how this would result in even greater goods, as

per the above line of argument (A 6.4:2358-9). Echoing what we find in "Vérités,"

Leibniz uses the example of Judas' betrayal, which God utilized for the redemption of

humanity (cf. C 24). In these cursory treatments, Leibniz's dealing with this objection

could be perceived as pithy. However, he spends much more time on the objection in

Theodicée and qualifies quite heavily his claim that it is within God's power to create a

world without sin. Though he continues to entertain the possibility, he does so with great

suspicion.

When raising the question in *Theodicée* of whether God could produce a world

with souls that have thoughts that only please him, Leibniz grants the possibility, but he

offers two caveats. The first is that while God might be able to create a certain type of

creature that always inclines toward the good, Leibniz doubts whether this could be done

for every rational creature. It is evident that our world varies greatly, and Leibniz thinks

"it was not feasible for all rational creatures to have so great a perfection, and such as

would bring them so close to the Divinity" (G 6:173). The second caveat is that a sinless

world "would be to act by miracles, more than his most perfectly conceived plan admits"

(G 6:166). When considered in the whole of his argument, such a conclusion boils down

to this: Our world system is indeed the best possible world system, and to that system evil

attaches by the free choice of creatures. Thus, if God were to make the best system (i.e.,

our own), but also prevent it from falling, he would need to intervene miraculously to

prevent the fall of angels and of men. Leibniz is unconvinced that such intervention

would be a one-time affair but may require perpetual intervention, which may be neither wise nor rational (see G 6:172-4, 178-9, and 202).

As Leibniz develops the point, his rationale becomes apparent. He denies that the felicity of rational creatures, or more specifically man, is God's sole aim in creation. Yet, the assumption that this is God's sole aim is an error present in a number of Bayle's objections to evil (G 6:168-9). Leibniz admits that the felicity of intelligent creatures is no doubt central, since we are most like God, but Leibniz denies that one can prove that this end is God's sole aim in creation. Utilizing the nature/grace distinction, Leibniz suggests that while nature serves grace, grace "is also in some way adapted to that of nature, so that nature preserves the utmost order and beauty. And there is no reason to suppose that God, for the sake of some lessening of moral evil, would reverse the whole order of nature" (G 6:168).

Leibniz's argument is essentially one of divine justice. God, who renders to each what is due (*justitiae*), has obligations to all things. As Leibniz argues, divine love (or hatred) for any given thing is proportionate to its good (or evil) (G 6:178-9). Since no created thing is absolutely good or absolutely evil, God has regard for all of creation, not just for man, and his regard is proportionate to its ontic due. Leibniz appeals to the story of Jonah as an excellent example. God's desire to see the people of Nineveh repent was indeed related to his love for them, but he expresses concern for the animals who would be destroyed as well (G 6:168-9; cf. Jonah 4:11). Man may well be ontologically superior to the beasts of the field and more worthy of consideration than they, but this does not mean, argues Leibniz, that "God prefers a single man in all respects to the whole of lion-kind" (G 6:169). And even if God would choose to destroy all of lion-kind for the sake of

one man, this does not mean that for the sake of a certain number of men that God would diffuse disorder through an infinite number of other creatures. In short, having created an elaborate world system that includes an infinite number of things beyond man, God, in his goodness and justice, must carry out his obligations to the whole of the system and everything in it, not just man.

Leibniz adds yet another layer to God's obligations. For Leibniz denies that all things that contribute to the happiness of a given creature thereby exist solely for the sake of that creature's happiness. On the contrary, Leibniz suggests that part of divine wisdom is the very fact that all things are connected. Therefore, though a certain thing may well contribute to the happiness of a particular creature, that same thing may well exist for a number of other ends as well—presumably as many as possible. "Thus God has more than one purpose in his projects. The felicity of all rational creatures is one of the aims he has in view; but it is not his whole aim, nor even his final aim" (G 6:169-70).

The above points regarding divine justice and wisdom are key to understanding Leibniz's thought experiment regarding a world aimed solely at the felicity of rational creatures. Such a world, argues Leibniz, must include either only those rational creatures with whom God is concerned (that God may justly show concern for them alone) or only those rational creatures and those things that exist solely for their sake. It is worth noting that Leibniz puts the possibility of sinlessness in the conditional even in this scenario: If man's felicity were God's sole aim, "perhaps [*peutêtre*] neither sin nor unhappiness would ever occur, even by concomitance" (G 6:172). This opens the door once again to the possibility that evil may not be preventable simply because freedom does not admit

prevention, which Leibniz entertains elsewhere (cf. G., vi, 204).[59] But granting that God could wisely and justly prevent evil in a world consisting of only rational spirits, Leibniz raises the question of whether such a world is in fact possible. According to Leibniz, creaturely spirits require the order of time and place, and Leibniz believes that time and place requires matter, movement, and physical laws (G 6:172-3). Leibniz fleshes out this point as follows:

> What would an intelligent creature do if there were no unintelligent things? What would it think of, if there were neither movement, nor matter, nor sense? If it had only distinct thoughts it would be a God, its wisdom would be without bounds…. As soon as there is a mixture of confused thoughts, there is sense, there is matter. For these confused thoughts come from the relation of all things one to the other by way of duration and extent. Thus it is that in my philosophy there is no rational creature without some organic body, and there is no created spirit entirely detached from matter. (G 6:179)

Leibniz's claim here comes very close to that of the objective idealists (and later process philosophers) that consciousness is not possible without differentiation and succession, and neither differentiation nor succession are possible without matter.[60] Of course, Leibniz stops short of this claim, since God is conscious. The difference is that Leibniz understands God alone to have the divine manner of consciousness—hence his claim that without a material world, spirits would be Gods. Leibniz thus finds it questionable that a

---

[59] Cf. Isaac Jacquelot, *Conformité De La Foi Avec La Raison; Ou Défense De La Religion, Contre les principales Difficultez répandues dans le Dictionaire Historique et Critique De Mr. Bayle* (Amsterdam: Henry Desbordes & Daniel Pain, 1705), 232.

[60] Cf. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion,* ed. Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg, 1983-85), vols. 3-5, part I, p. 85f; *Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schellings Sämmtliche Werke. VII Band, I Abteilung,* 1805-10, ed. K. F. A. Schelling (Stuttgart & Augsburg, J. G. Cotta, 1860), 352, vol. 8; *Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling Schriften von 1813-30,* ed. Karl Friedrich August Schelling (Darmstadt: Wisenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), 81ff.; and Charles Hartshorne, *Aquinas to Whitehead: Seven Centuries of Metaphysics of Religion* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Publications, 1976), 15ff.

world of only spirits is possible. In short, "God's wisdom must have a world of bodies, a world of substances capable of perception and incapable of reason" (G 6:179).[61]

Here and in Leibniz's earlier remarks, he submits that to consider which world system is most conducive to rational spirits is to arrive at our own system of matter, time, and space, along with its governing laws. If we are pressed back to our own world system, then we once again face God's obligations to the whole and everything in it. Hence, Leibniz forces a dichotomy: We could wish that God part ways with the good of freedom because of the evil it occasions, or we could wish that God grant free choice but prevent every misuse of it. The latter requires that only rational spirits exist, which may not be possible. The former requires that God create a world void of the greatest and most God-like entities in the Great Chain of Being—that is, a world that is less than the best.

In light of this line of argument, we can better understand Leibniz's claim that a sinless world would require a perpetual miracle on God's part, but such action would be unwise and irrational. It would be so because such a perpetual miracle is possible (a) if God makes a world inferior to our own (ontologically speaking) that consists of only rational souls or (should a world of rational souls alone be deemed impossible) (b) if God show disproportionate concern for a single species within the world system, which would be unjust and thus impossible for God to do, given his nature. This is why Leibniz insists that the gift of reason itself is meant to provide its own guidance to man (and angels), such that a perpetual miracle on the part of God is unnecessary if rational creatures make right use of what they have been given:

---

[61] Leibniz is not unique in his claim that all creatures must a bodies. The claim is standard in Eastern patristic literature throughout the first millennium. See Nathan A. Jacobs, "Are Created Spirits Composed of Matter and Form? A Defense of Pneumatic Hylomorphism," in *Philosophia Christi* 14:1 (2012): 81-90.

> God, in giving him intelligence, has presented him with an image of the Divinity. He leaves him to himself, in a sense, in his small department…. He enters there only in a secret way, for he supplies being, force, life, reason, without showing himself. It is there that free will plays its game: …. Thus man is there like a little god in his own world or *Microcosm,* which he governs after his own fashion…. But he also commits great errors, because he abandons himself to the passions, and because God abandons him to his own way. God punishes him also for such errors, … and evil comes to pass most frequently when these intelligences or their small worlds come into collision. (G 6:197)

With this, Leibniz returns to his point regarding God's obligation to the whole and the antecedent/consequent will distinction. Though with reference to the antecedent will of God Leibniz grants that God desires nothing but good for every particular creature, and indeed can be said to desire the happiness of every individual creature, his divine obligation is to the whole and everything in it. Even if it could be said that reason brings to man more evil than good—a claim Leibniz denies—this does not address the question of whether the whole is better for containing free agents and thus whether it would be a greater evil to shun such beings to prevent the evils they choose. Leibniz writes:

> [Reason] is always a good in itself; but the combination of this good with the evils that proceed from its abuse is not a good with regard to those who in consequence thereof become unhappy. Yet it comes to be by concomitance, because it serves a greater good in relation to the universe. And it is doubtless that which prompted God to give reason to those who have made it an instrument of their unhappiness. Thus nothing prevents us from admitting that God grants goods which turn into evil by the fault of men …. (G 6:170-1)

In short, reason is the prime example of a good given to man as an instrument of felicity to which evil attaches by concomitance. Yet, for God to thereby withhold this good from the world because of his hatred for evil runs the risk of him failing in his obligation to the whole and to his very wisdom and goodness. In other words, "a still greater evil would have been altogether inevitable" (G 6:183).

3. Theological Difficulties

Leibniz's treatment of the problem of evil admits a shift from problems (and solutions) raised by natural revelation to problems that emerge in the course of special revelation (G 6:143). For Leibniz's part, he believes that the majority of the above points concerning modality, providence, and so on, could be discerned merely from natural revelation. Yet, there are specific doctrines, such as election and reprobation, which raise their own peculiar difficulties. In this section, we will look specifically at the four theological problem areas Leibniz identifies, namely, the Fall of man (and other rational agents), election and reprobation, hell, and original sin.

3.1. The Fall of Man (and Other Rational Agents)

The fall of man (and of angels) raises its own difficulties, as it begs the question of God's role in this first act of rebellion and his role in the perpetuation of evil through original sin which follows (G 6:104). We will here deal with the first part of this difficulty, namely, God's role (or lack thereof) in these first instances of evil. The second part of the question concerning original sin we will look at below in §3.4.

Leibniz's understanding of the fall is a traditional one. He affirms the Christian tradition that the Devil was an angel who rebelled and led angelic revolt (G 6:202-3), and Leibniz's explanation of this rebellion is an equally traditional free choice defense. He points out that Scripture says the Devil was a murderer from the beginning (Jn 8:44), and suggests that such rebellion sprung from his will (G 6:280). Here, Leibniz appeals to the eternal verities, reiterating the idea that God, knowing the subject with its predicates, knew beforehand that were he to create the Devil, this angel would rebel—a line of

argument he also uses in reference to Adam and Eve (G 6:280-1). Yet, in both instances, Leibniz insists that both the Devil and man rebelled freely and without any necessity. And it was only because of this free act of rebellion that God handed these over to hardness (G 6:281).

Despite having placed in the hands of rational agents the act of sin, Leibniz recognizes that there are at least two objections that contest whether these creaturely rebellions can rightly be laid wholly at the feet of these creatures. The first line of objection is a biblical one. There are numerous biblical passages that appear to identify God as the instigator of evil. For example, God is said to be the one who hardens Pharaoh's heart (Ex 4:21; 7:3; Isa 63:17); God is said to send lying spirits (1 Kgs 22:23); he is said to deceive the prophet (Ezek 14:9); he is said to make men vessels of dishonor (Rom 9:21); he is said to speak cryptically, so that some will not understand nor repent nor be forgiven (Mk 4:12; Lk 8:10); and these are just a few of the examples that could be offered (see G., vi, 281-2). Do not these passages indicate that God does in fact author evil, and that the free choice defense is misguided?

In response, Leibniz rejects this reading of Scripture, and on this point, he is very much in line with the ancient and medieval Christian writers.[62] He notes that God made man sinless, so there is nothing in his original nature to which the origin of evil may be traced. But in this spotless nature was also the power of choice that could remain in the good or turn from it. The fact that neither man nor angel was created with blemish and

---

[62] See, e.g., Irenaeus of Lyons, *Contra Haereses* 4.37.1-2; 4.41.1 (PG 7:1099b-1101a; 1115a); Justin Martyr, *Apologia Prima* 43-4 (PG 6:391c-396c); Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 2.4-8 (PL 2:288a-294c); Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 11.17-11.22 (PL 41:331-5); Augustine, *Confessiones.* 7.3.4-5; 7.5.7 (PL 32:735; 736-7); John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa ,* 4.19-4.20 (PG 94:1191a-1198a); Anselm, *De Casu Diaboli,* 20 264-266; Anselm, *De Concordia,* 1.7,pp. 264-66; *De Conceptu Virginali et de Originali Peccato,* 4-5 pp. 143-7; Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia q49 aa1-2; Ia q79 aa1-2.

were given freedom that in no way necessitated evil but made possible persistence in the good indicates that God is not the author of these original acts of rebellion. Rather, these creatures fell by their own power of contrary choice (G 6:282). In addition, Leibniz insists that even after the fall some semblance of freedom remains. Even though corrupt agents incline toward sin, no single act of rebellion is ever necessitated. If chosen, it is chosen in such a way that it could have been rejected, and thus culpability remains. The free choice (be it for or against God) may be certain, but it is not necessary (G 6:282-3).

In addition to this lack of necessity, Leibniz points out that God places before men life and death and beckons man to choose life. He places before man commandments and not only beckons the good and the rejection of evil, but promises blessing for the former and curses for the latter (Deut 30:19; Jer 21:8), and his call to the good, Leibniz insists, is genuine (see G., vi, 207-8). If men choose sin, they do so because they desire it. It is *his own* lust that leads him astray, not God (James 1:13-4), which is why St. James insists that we must never say that it is God who tempts us. For we are tempted by sin because we find sin tempting (G 6:282).

Taking these two points together, Leibniz's answer becomes apparent. God is not the author of sin, for God provided man (and angels) with a sinless nature and capacity to persist in the good. Thus, sin springs from the creature, not the Creator. God infallibly knows what sins man (and angels) will do and utilizes these evils for his own ends. But God does not tempt nor does he incline toward evil. Rather, he earnestly beckons good and forbids evil. Should a future evil be certain, however, God will bring as much good out of it as possible. Yet, he uses it as an evil permitted, not as an evil that is necessary or desirable. Hence, culpability always remains with the agent who chooses to sin.

Now, the second line of objection concerns circumstance. To wit: conversion or perversion often comes down to the circumstances in which we find ourselves (see G., vi, 158-60).[63] As Christ himself states, Tyre and Sidon would have profited from his preaching and remained rather than been destroyed (G 6:159). Surely the same might be said for the Devil or Adam and Eve or any number of other figures. In this light, is not God culpable for placing these figures in such circumstances?

Leibniz anticipates one line of reply, namely, that God is not obligated to offer such circumstantial resources to anyone. This answer Leibniz finds insufficient, for it risks portraying God as malicious and perhaps as inclining toward evil. Hence, Leibniz suggests that there must be greater reasons that "prevent him from making all his goodness felt by all" (G 6:159). He considers the solution posited by some that God knew by a form of mediate knowledge that were this or that reprobate to receive grace by means of other circumstances, they would later reject it and arrive in a worse state than before.[64] This solution Leibniz thinks risky because it places God's reasons in the merit and demerit of man, which, according to Leibniz, runs contrary to the doctrine of grace as taught by St. Paul. He recognizes the more moderate version of this theory that God gives more grace to those whose resistance he sees is less and thinks this could be affirmed without falling into Pelagianism, but Leibniz does not think it could be affirmed as a normative rule (G 6:160).

Leibniz's preferred solution is again the antecedent/consequent will distinction. That is, we may affirm that God inclines only toward the good, and antecedently desires

---

[63] Here Leibniz references Augustine's hearing of *Tolle, lege* as a prime example. See *Confessiones.* 8.12 (PL 32:761-4).

[64] Cf. Augustine, *De Dono Perseverantiae* 9.23 (PL 45:1005-6).

nothing but the good and indeed the best for every particular man (e.g., G., vi, 175-7; 180-1). Yet, in his consequent will, he must consider his obligation to the whole. In this light, we may rightly draw a number of conclusions: (1) God does not incline toward the damnation of any, but permits this evil only when it attaches by concomitance to the best (G 6:165-6; 208); (2) God's permission of damnation is not arbitrary, but grounded in his wisdom and goodness, and thus there are good reasons for orchestrating things the way he has, even if we are ignorant of these reasons (G 6:160); (3) God's reasons are multifaceted, taking into account both considerations regarding the particular man as well as considerations of every aspect of the world he has created (G 6:175-7); (4) God apparently cannot fulfill his obligation to the whole while orchestrating the salvation of every man (G 6:172-4; 178-9; 180-1); (5) to save every man at the expense of the whole would be a greater evil than the damnation of some, and for this greater evil God would be culpable (G 6:169-72); and (6) God apparently deems a world with free creatures who are permitted to rebel better than whatever would be required to prevent this rebellion (G 6:204-5; see §2.3 above).

In the end, Leibniz's resistance to particular rules of divine action, such as foreknowledge of apostasy, is not because these explanations are without merit, but because Leibniz thinks we must admit that God's reasons are far more complex than any single rule admits, and it is better to affirm what we can be sure of in reference to divine providence. And what we can be sure of is this:

> [S]ince the general plan of the universe, chosen by God for superior reasons, causes men to be in different circumstances, those who meet with such as are more favorable to their nature will become more readily the least wicked, the most virtuous, the most happy; yet it will always by aid of the influence of that inward grace which God unites with the circumstances…. One may say that men

> are chosen and ranged not so much according to their excellence as according to their conformity with God's plan. (G 6:160-1)

In other words, Leibniz sees the various explanations tried as having a modicum of plausibility. Their shortcoming is that they are too acute, since "all these attempts to find reasons, where there is no need to adhere altogether to certain hypotheses, serve only to make clear to us that there are a thousand ways of justifying the conduct of God." (G 6:161)

Two points are noteworthy before closing out this line of reply. First, in reference to God's obligations to the whole (i.e., his consequent will), we have seen that Leibniz is open to the conclusion that one obligation to the whole and indeed the best is to make free agents, and it may not be possible for God to prevent the misuse of free choice by creatures without simultaneously destroying free choice (e.g., G 6:204). Once again, however, Leibniz's preferred strategy is to grant that this is a very real possibility that may be a factor in God's consequent will, but ultimately admit ignorance regarding all that factors into God's decision to create as he does.

A second point, which will be explored more fully in the next section, is that Leibniz believes that God gives grace necessary for salvation to all. This is crucial to Leibniz insistence that the rebellion is certain but not necessary. For Leibniz consistently seeks to protect the libertarian conditions of culpability: (a) knowledge of what one ought to do or not do, and (b) the ability to do it or not do it. Hence, in reference to the original rebels, Leibniz insists that their rebellion was certain but not necessary; and in reference to man post-lapsum, he suggests that the grace necessary for salvation is also given to all. Leibniz's reasons are precisely that God must not be considered blameworthy for withholding these necessary conditions, even if they are foreknown to be rejected and the

individual becomes worse as a result (e.g., G 6:166-7). Therefore, in the end, whether speaking of the original rebellion or ongoing rebellion, Leibniz insists that the evil itself is never necessitated, and God provides sufficient means for it to be avoided.

3.2. Election and Reprobation

An additional theological difficulty to which Leibniz devotes attention is the issue of election and reprobation according to which God predetermines the ultimate destiny of every man, ordaining him to either eternal bliss or eternal torment. Concerning this doctrine, Leibniz admits vast disagreement across theological lines. He breaks down the dispute into three sub-dispute: *metaphysical versus moral*, *universal versus particular*, and *absolute versus respective*. The first of these (*metaphysical versus moral*) is Leibniz's peculiar way of identifying the respective theological emphases of the Remonstrant and counter-Remonstrant positions. Leibniz suggests that the former treat God and his election along metaphysical lines, emphasizing God's ontological independence in juxtaposition with creaturely dependence, while the latter treat God's election from the moral perspective, emphasizing divine justice and goodness. The second division (*universal versus particular*) concerns the question of whether God desires to save all men and has indeed elected to redeem all of mankind or whether his election is of only a select segment of the *massa damnata.* And the third sub-dispute (*absolute versus respective*) regards the question of whether this destination is absolute or whether there is a consideration of the good and evil actions of those whom the decree concerns.

To the *metaphysical versus moral* dispute, Leibniz's position is in keeping with his irenic approach in *De praedestinatione et gratia dissertatio*. He suggests that there is something true about both the emphasis on God's ontological independence and the emphasis on God's goodness and justice. As Leibniz puts it, "But to act rightly we must affirm alike on one side the independence of God and the dependence of creatures, and on the other side the justice and goodness of God, which make him dependent upon himself, his will upon his understanding or his wisdom" (G 6:144). The dispute, says Leibniz, boils down to a disagreement over God's aim in his decrees: Is his aim to show his glory and manifest his attributes (counter-Remonstrant) or to have regard for free and intelligent substances, "considering what they would will and do in the different circumstances and situations wherein he might place them, so as to form a fitting resolve thereupon" (Remonstrant) (G 6:144; cf. PGD 2)? Framed in this way, Leibniz suggests that the opposing positions are easily reconciled. One can plainly affirm that God created the world in order to "manifest and communicate his perfections" in a way worthy of his greatness, wisdom, and goodness, but in this affirmation maintain that "that very purpose pledged him to consider all the actions of creatures while still in the state of pure possibility, that he might form the most fitting plan" (G 6:144).

To illustrate his point, Leibniz invokes an architect analogy: "For a wise person in laying his plans cannot separate the end from the means; he does not contemplate any end without knowing if there are means of attaining thereto" (G 6:144). His point is this. Some presume that God's metaphysical independence means that all outside of him (i.e., creation) is a matter of indifference, but Leibniz replies that this deprives God of both wisdom and goodness. Even if God's ultimate end is the display of his goodness, this

does not mean that the means are a matter of indifference. The underlying assumption

here is one Leibniz uses throughout *Theodicée.* We saw it at play in the above

subsections on God's antecedent/consequent will and the question of a world without

evil, and we will see it emerge again in Leibniz's treatment of hell. The assumption is one

concerning divine justice: God renders to each what it is due; hence, divine love (or

hatred) for any given thing is proportionate to its good (or evil) (G 6:178-9). Since no

created thing is absolutely good (as it would then be God) or absolutely evil (as per the

understanding that evil is a privation of good and thus has no being of its own), God has

regard for every possible, particular being according to its due. In the context of election

and reprobation, Leibniz insists that nothing is a matter of indifference to God; he

inclines toward all things proportionate to their goodness (e.g., G 6:115-6). Hence,

though God's ultimate decree concerns the whole, and the ultimate aim of this decree

may well be the display of his own glory, wisdom, and goodness, this ultimate aim is not

indifferent to the means employed or to antecedent inclination toward all particular lower

goods. Leibniz writes,

> We need only observe that he considers himself and neglects nothing of what he
> owes to himself, to conclude that he considers his creatures also, and that he uses
> them in the manner most consistent with order. For the more a great and good
> prince is mindful of his glory, the more he will think of making his subjects
> happy, even though he were the most absolute of all monarchs, and though his
> subjects were slaves from birth, bondsmen …, people entirely in subjection to
> arbitrary power. (G 6:145; cf. PGD 2.a)

Rather than suggesting that this somehow demonstrates the truth of the

Remonstrant position, Leibniz maintains his irenic posture, suggesting that this

conclusion should be considered perfectly compatible with the counter-Remonstrant

position. For he notes that key defenders of absolute decree, such as John Calvin, hold

that God has great and just reasons for his decrees; their insistence is that these reasons

are unknown to us, not that they do not exist (G 6:145). Hence, both parties should readily admit the truth of both the *metaphysical* and *moral* perspective on God's decrees. Having said this, Leibniz does believe that some advocates of absolute decree—namely, certain supralapsarians—come dangerously close to suggesting that God's justice "is an arbitrary thing," that God has "a despotic power which can go so far as being able to condemn innocents," and that "good is not the motive of his actions" (G 6:209). Leibniz is clear that this type of conclusion must be avoided. For it either places God beyond good and evil or posits the impossibility that God inclines toward evil, a claim utterly incompatible with the idea of God, as per his infallible knowledge of the good and incorruptible inclination toward the good. Yet, as Leibniz also points out, the infralapsarian position is the more common view and is the position favored by the Synod of Dort (G 6:146). (We will return to Leibniz's stance on the infra/supralapsarian dispute in the context of the *absolute versus respective* sub-dispute below.)

Concerning the *universal versus particular* debate, Leibniz suggests that this sub-dispute is really a conflict over semantics, provided that one keeps separate God's will to save all men from the particular decrees concerning the existence of our world. Here, Leibniz invokes again the antecedent/consequent will distinction. In keeping with Leibniz's insistence that God antecedently inclines toward every particular good according to its due, Leibniz suggests that God antecedently inclines toward the good and thus the salvation of every human person (universal); yet, his consequent will concerning the actual regards the whole, and this decree involves far more considerations than just his inclination toward the good of any one person. For this reason, God, in his consequent will, decrees the salvation of only particular individuals (G 6:145-6). Leibniz's position,

as becomes apparent in his later dealings with Bayle, is that God antecedently desires to give every particular man grace that is not only required for salvation but that he knows every man will accept, but this cannot be carried out "in the general plan of things"—that is, when executing the best (G 6:166-7). Since God is bound by moral necessity to the best, God cannot bring about the salvation of every human person if doing so would require that he shirk his duty to the whole and everything therein (e.g., G 6:182-3). In short, "God is not lacking therein [i.e., in benevolence toward all mankind], he could do the good that we would desire; he even wishes it, taking it separately, but he must not do it in preference to other greater goods which are opposed to it" (G 6:177).

Leibniz's treatment of the third sub-disputes, *absolute versus respective,* is the most telling with regard to his own position on predestination. In addressing "whether this destination is absolute or respective," Leibniz begins by distinguishing moral evil from physical evil. He suggests that all parties agree that God does not decree moral evil, "that is to say, that none is destined to sin" (G 6:146). But the same cannot be said for the greatest of physical evils, namely, damnation. For clearly some theological parties maintain that a great many individuals are absolutely destined to this fate. Where does Leibniz stand on this matter?

The first stage of Leibniz's reply distinguishes *destination* from *predestination*. As Leibniz understands this distinction, "predestination appears to contain within itself an absolute destination, which is anterior to the consideration of the good or evil actions of those whom it concerns" (G 6:146). Leibniz suggests that with regard to reprobation, this is not absolute but is based on foreseen impenitence. Hence, one may speak of being destined to damnation but not predestined to damnation. The reasons should be evident

from the foregoing: If damnation is an evil from which God recoils and salvation is a good toward which he inclines, then God cannot affirmatively will the damnation of any, but can only permit it in his consequent will if this evil attaches by concomitance to the best.

Leibniz recognizes that not all within the discussion would concede this distinction and its application. In particular, he focuses on the infralapsarian-supralapsarian dispute over whether God's decree of election logically subsequent (*infra*) or prior to (*supra*) the decree of the fall of man (*lapsum*). Given that the supralapsarian position is named for its stance that God, wishing to show mercy and wrath, chose to bestow grace on the elect through Christ and rejected the damned "prior to all thought to sin, even of Adam" (G 6:146), Leibniz identifies this camp as the point of resistance. Leibniz makes three appeals on his behalf. First, he reiterates the dominance of the infralapsarian position, and thus thinks his own stance to be quite safe. Second, he appeals to Augustine who held that God permitted Adam to sin, but his mercy beckoned that, for reasons just but hidden, he choose some to be freely saved while allowing others to suffer damnation—a position Leibniz takes to be similar to his own. Third, Leibniz invokes on his behalf the Schoolmen, who dub the saved *Praedestinati* (predestined) but the damned *Praesciti* (foreknown) for precisely the reasons Leibniz names.[65]

---

[65] Leibniz recognizes that some infralapsarians, following Augustine and Fulgentius, speak of predestination to damnation, Leibniz takes this to be mere semantics, since "that [predestination] signifies the same as destination to them" (G 6:147). Leibniz recognizes that some may connect the Fulgentius with Godescalc and thus conclude that the semantic precedence for *predestination to damnation* is an absolute destination.—Godescalc (Gottschalk, Gotteschalk) of Orbais was a ninth century Benedictine monk who taught the doctrine of predestination and suffered torture and imprisonment as a result. He also debated the extent of the atonement. See Francis Gumerlock, "Gottschalk of Orbais: A Medieval Predestinarian" *Kerux* 22, no. 3 (Dec, 2007); and "Predestination in the century before Gottschalk" *Evangelical Quarterly* 81, no. 3.—However, Leibniz suggests that Godescalc wrongly associated his position with Fulgentius (G 6:147).

Concerning the destination of the elect, however, Leibniz identifies the dispute as one regarding whether election is absolute or founded on the prevision of final faith. According to Leibniz, Evangelicals (i.e., those of the Augsburg Confession) hold the latter. For there is no need for a hidden cause of election when Scripture offers a cause, namely, faith in Jesus Christ: "and it appears to them that the prevision of the cause is also the cause of the prevision of the effect" (G 6:147). The Reformed, however, dispute this conclusion, observing "that often the cause anterior to the effect in execution is posterior in intention, as when the cause is the means and the effect is the end" (G 6:147). Hence, the question is whether faith or salvation is anterior in God's intention.

Leibniz's own position seeks to bypass the order of decrees entirely. For he suggests that all decrees are simultaneous, not only with respect to their temporal order, but also with respect to how they are represented in divine reason (*in signo rationis*) (G 6:147). Leibniz has in mind here his theory of possible worlds. What is present to the divine mind in eternity are entire sequences, including "how the first parents sin and corrupt their posterity; how Jesus Christ redeems the human race; how some, aided by such and such graces, attain to final faith and to salvation; and how others, with or without such or other graces, do not attain thereto, continue in sin, and are damned" (G 6:148). Leibniz understands divine judgment to regard the comparison of each possible world with competing possible worlds in order to determine the best of all possible worlds—that is, which sequence in total is best relative to other sequences. God does not "tweak" the sequence, since to do so is to yield an entirely new sequence that, if truly possible, is already represented in the divine intellect. Hence, should God decree that one of these sequences come into being, there is no sequence, logical or temporal, to the

decree; God "simply decrees its existence" (G 6:148). As Leibniz puts it, "God grants his sanction to this sequence only after having entered into all its detail, and thus pronounces nothing final as to those who shall be saved or damned without having pondered upon everything and compared it with other possible sequences" (G 6:148). Leibniz understands his position to undermine the infra/supra problem of election, and he believes that the Formula of Concord (drawing on some passages of Augustine) concludes the very same thing in reference to election, namely, God decrees both salvation and its means (G 6:147).

In light of the foregoing, Leibniz's stance on several disputes becomes apparent. Over against a strictly moral or strictly metaphysical view of God, Leibniz suggests that one may rightly hold both that God aims to display his glory in creation, and does so in a way that does not treat the means to this display as matters of indifference. Moreover, so long as one distinguishes God's antecedent will, which inclines toward all goods, and his consequent will, which concerns the whole, one can rightly say that God wills the good and indeed the salvation of every man, though consequently God has chosen the best in which, presumably, only some are saved. As for the order of decrees, there is no need for such a dispute, since God's decree concern the existence of the whole and all that it entails. All of these points carry a certain irenic tone, showing the legitimacy of both Remonstrant and counter-Remonstrant concerns; seeking to show the particular/universal dispute to be semantic; and aiming at undercutting the supralapsarian/infralapsarian divide. Yet, with regard to the more fundamental divide between Remonstrant and counter-Remonstrant on whether grace is cooperative, these points leave Leibniz's position ambiguous.

Leibniz's aim in *De praedestinatione* is to reconcile disparate theological parties, and thus the Remonstrant dispute is treated accordingly. To wit: the dispute concerns whether the effects of grace are *per se* effective or *per accidens* effective, a point about which we could admit ignorance, granting that in our world grace is effective for those who persevere to the end, and insofar as God has decreed this world in total, he has effectively elected those in it. Yet, in *Theodicée,* Leibniz's own position becomes apparent: "I would be rather on the side of those who grant to all men a grace sufficient to draw them away from evil, provided they have a sufficient tendency to profit by this succor, and not to reject it voluntarily" (G 6:155). Leibniz maintains that God does indeed grant grace to all men. His concern, as elsewhere in *Theodicée*, appears to be the libertarian conditions of culpability, namely, knowledge of what one ought to do and the power of contrary choice. In keeping with the latter condition, Leibniz suggests that God gives grace necessary for salvation to all men, but men must make a right use of it. In short, Leibniz prefers to be counted among the Remonstrants on this point.

Leibniz's Remonstrant leanings play an important role in how Leibniz fleshes out God's antecedent/consequent will in reference to salvation. According to Leibniz, God cannot be charged with disingenuously offering salvation to any. For God antecedently inclines toward the salvation of every particular human person, and only destines individuals to damnation in light of their free rejection of grace (G 6:146). In fact, Leibniz goes so far as to suggest that God not only extends the grace necessary for salvation to every man, but "To make men better, God does all that is due, and even all that can be done on his side without detriment to what is due" (G 6:180). In this statement (and others like it), Leibniz makes clear that God does not offer the bare minimum

required for salvation, so that culpability is preserved; God goes beyond what is due, doing all that can be done on every person's behalf—all that can be done, that is, without violating God's duty to the whole. The qualification (*without violating his duty,* etc.) is essential to Leibniz's case. For if God inclines toward the salvation of every particular man and does all that can be done for every man's salvation but all are not saved, one might conclude that *damnation* is a necessary predicate in some subjects. But Leibniz denies this (G 6:215-6). Instead, Leibniz reiterates that God has obligations to more than just men; and though the "felicity of all rational creatures is one of the aims [God] has in view; … it is not his whole aim, nor even his final aim" (G 6:169-70). The implication is that God provides grace to all and works for the salvation of all, but the evil of damnation, like all evil, is permitted only when found to be an inextricable consequence of God's duty to the whole (G 6:116-7; and 182).

This understanding of grace and divine decree plays an integral role in how Leibniz responds to a number of Bayle's theological detractors in part 2 of *Theodicée*. Three in particular build on this foundation. And Leibniz's responses help make clear precisely what he is and is not claiming in his response to the problem of evil.

(1) The first objection to which the above view of grace is key builds on the ontological argument. The claim is that the apparent way in which God grants his benefits is inferior to other possible concepts of a benefactor, and thus is not true to the greatest possible being. Bayle suggests that a true benefactor imparts benefits that aid only in happiness, and does not permit that they should aid in unhappiness. Moreover, if a wrong use of his benefits could destroy the recipient, he would give only sure means of

using them rightly. Otherwise these would be no benefits at all, and the concept of the

benefactor would be less than one we could conceive (G 6:169).

We need not consider the whole of Leibniz's reply in this section, as we have

already touched on much of it under other topics. The bulk of the reply is familiar:

Leibniz denies that the happiness of rational agents is God's sole aim, and thus the

benefits he gives to rational creatures serve the whole, not just these creatures;

unhappiness may occur by concomitance in view of a greater good to which God is

obliged (G 6:168-9); but "God will produce as much reason and knowledge in the

universe as his plan can admit" (G 6:170). The more important point for our purposes

here is the extent to which Leibniz invokes a free choice defense. Leibniz insists that we

must keep separate the question of whether reason is good in itself from the question of

whether its misuse and the subsequent mixture of good and evil is good. Leibniz writes,

> This mixture [of good and evil] … is not to be conceived as a grace or as a gift
> from God to us; but the good that is found mingled therein will nevertheless be
> good. Such is God's gift of reason to those who make ill use thereof. It is always a
> good in itself; but the combination of this good with the evils that proceed from
> its abuse is not a good with regard to those who in consequence thereof become
> unhappy. Yet it comes to be by concomitance, because it serves a greater good in
> relation to the universe. And it is doubtless that which prompted God to give
> reason to those who have made it an instrument of their unhappiness. Thus
> nothing prevents us from admitting that God grants goods which turn into evil by
> the fault of men, this often happening to men in just punishment of the misuse
> they had made of God's grace. (G 6:171)

In other words, Bayle assumes that the only consideration God faces is whether

any individuals will misuse reason and find themselves unhappy. Yet, Leibniz suggests

that God's obligation to the whole beckons the question of whether the world is better

with rational agents who misuse reason or better without evil and without rational agents.

The dichotomy is the same as in reference to the prospect of a world without evil.

Granting the good of reason may well lead to moral evils and even to the greatest of

physical evils, damnation, but to deprive the world of rational agents for the sake of those who will misuse reason is to do violence to the whole. To be sure, Leibniz insists that there is no malice in God. For he does not incline toward evil, nor orchestrates damnation, nor finds the evil of damnation *per se* to enhance the whole, but he permits it only because of its inextricable tie to the best (G 6:169-72). This permission, however, should not be taken to indicate approval of this evil or a lack of anxiety over its presence (G 6:181).

(2) Bayle suggests that a true benefactor does not make those he loves suffer long before receiving his benefits. If he cannot impart these benefits without pain, he may acquiesce, but he avoids this road wherever possible, imparting the good without mingling it with evil. Moreover, Bayle suggests that only a malicious person offers goods that he knows will bring pleasure for a time but will be lost, and upon loss will bring greater unhappiness to the person than had they never experienced these goods. Yet, this is precisely what God does (G 6:175-6).

Leibniz replies that this way of speaking about God is blasphemous and empty. As per the above description of God's will toward men, Leibniz states, "God has care for men, he loves the human race, he wishes it well, nothing so true" (G 6:176). The problem with Bayle's objection is one that consistently emerges throughout his theological detractors, namely, that it is highly anthropomorphic. Unlike a mother, a guardian, or a tutor who is responsible for the good of only one child and his or her sole obligation in that role is the good of that one person, God must care for the whole and every particular thing in it from golgi bodies to archangels. Leibniz hints at his own doubt that God can grant happiness to all rational agents—evident in his qualifier about this possibility, "so

they say" (*dit on*)—but granting God's ability to do this, should he? Leibniz cautions

against the inference that if God is able to make all men happy, the only reason he would

not is because he is malicious. If we make such an inference, "then we are comparing our

true God with the God of Herodotus, full of envy, or with the demon of the poet whose

iambics Aristotle quotes … who gives good things in order that he may cause more

affliction by taking them away" (G 6:177).[66] Such errors anthropomorphize God into one

who deals with objects individually, "and who lacks either aptitude or good will" (G

6:177). Leibniz's response here, as elsewhere, is that God antecedently does care for each

individual, desiring nothing but good for him. But God's consequent will aims at his

obligation to the whole, and Leibniz's maintains that not every particular good can be

preserved amid this greater obligation (G 6:177).

(3) The third and final objection from Bayle that we will here look at aims

specifically at the supralapsarian position. Bayle suggests that God permits sin in order to

have someone to punish (i.e., the reprobate) and someone on whom to show mercy (i.e.,

the elect). Leibniz catalogs various analogies utilized to illustrate the point. But one will

suffice, namely, that of Caligula "who has his edicts written in so small a hand and has

them placarded in so high a place that it is not possible to read them" (G 6:209).

Leibniz's reply shows little sympathy for the supralapsarians and highlights once

again his Remonstrant sympathies. According to Leibniz, this objection holds only for

those who think justice is arbitrary and God operates by a despotic power that may

condemn innocence (G 6:209). But Leibniz is clear that this is not his position. To the

contrary, his entire understanding of the antecedent/consequent will presumes that justice

---

[66] See Aristotle, *De Rhetorica Libri III,* II.23.19 (1399b18-24).

is not arbitrary, that there is a good toward which the will inclines, and that there is a best for wisdom to discern and commend. Now, to be sure, Leibniz is equally clear that the counter-Remonstrants do not make God the author of evil (G 6:210). However, Leibniz does fear that some supralapsarians are in danger of this conclusion, given their fear that if God takes into account man's actions when determining his decrees this may lead down the slippery slope toward election based on merit and demerit. For Leibniz's part, however, we can be sure that justice is not arbitrary and God does not operate by despotic power and may not condemn innocence. In fact, he goes so far as to suggest that because God antecedently inclines only toward good and recoils from evil, we must maintain that God hinders evil so far as possible without undoing his justice for all and his obligation to the whole and everything therein: "God prevents the sin and the misery in so far as the perfection of the universe … may permit it" (G 6:210).

In the end, what we find is that Leibniz's own position is irenic on several fronts, from his dealings with the order of decrees to his assessment of the Remonstrant/counter-Remonstrant dispute. Yet, in the end, he does not hide what he takes to be the best position. He believes that God antecedently inclines toward the salvation of all mankind, and that the evil of damnation can have no pull in God's antecedent will but is permitted only if attaching by concomitance with God's duty to the whole—a duty that, if shunned, would constitute a still greater evil. Moreover, Leibniz maintains that God gives the grace necessary for salvation to all men, though they must make a right use of it; and God does all that he can to prevent evil and bring men salvation without, so long as those things done do not violate his obligation to the whole.

3.3. The Problem of Hell

The problem of hell emerges in *Theodicée* in the context of future judgment. Much like the Psalmists, Leibniz appeals to future judgment in the face of the objection that in this world the wicked prosper, while the righteous do not (G 6:110-11; cf., e.g., Ps 73:1-20). Leibniz suggests that "the remedy is all prepared in the other life: religion and reason itself teach us that" (G 6:111). Yet, this remedy raises a concern, namely, it seems strange that evil should have the advantage, since the many are damned and the few are saved. Leibniz explores various solutions offered throughout Christian history.

He begins by considering purgatory and universalism, two positions that have precedent in the Christian tradition and offer recourse against the very claim that the many perish. Leibniz notes figures, such as Prudentius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Jerome, who appear to believe in a "sphere between Hell and Paradise" (G 6:111). In *Theodicée*, Leibniz spends little time on this subject, which may or may not indicate his sympathies (or lack thereof) for the position after 1700. However, in Leibniz's pre-1700 writings, he appears to be positively disposed toward the doctrine.

Though Leibniz suggests that purgatory was not an article of faith in the early Church, since Augustine discusses it with some question (A 1.10:89-90), and thus no Christian is obligated to affirm the doctrine, Leibniz himself appears to endorse the view. In his 1677 *De purgatorio* (Grua 1:150-55), he explores two forms of purgatory—one in which individuals undergo some type of purging post-mortem and the other in which the resurrection itself constitutes a type of purging that all undergo. Following a rather elaborate treatment of both biblical and patristic texts, Leibniz concludes favorably toward the first understanding, going so far as to suggest, "the Ancients would

unanimously protest anyone who claimed that the prayers for the dead are useless and that all souls are immediately saved or immediately damned" (Grua 1:155).[67] Leibniz echoes this opinion in his 1686 *Examen religionis.* There he acknowledges that there is no uniformity among the Church fathers as to the mode of this purgation—some held that it was a certain place of temporary purification; others held that the purification was by means of fire; still others by means of the fires of chastisement; some that the fire was the same as hell fire; others that it was different than hell fire, and so on.[68] But Leibniz insists:

> [I]t is a most ancient belief of the Church, that prayers are to be offered for the dead; that the dead are assisted thereby; and that, although those who have departed from this life may, through the merits of Christ, have been received into favor by God, and, by the remission of the eternal punishment, have been made heirs of eternal life, they continue, notwithstanding, to suffer a certain paternal chastisement or purgation, especially if they have not sufficiently washed out the stain during life (A 6.4:2454-55).

Hence, whatever the disagreement regarding the precise mode of purgation, Leibniz concludes in these early works that "almost all agreed as to the existence … of a paternal chastisement or purgation after this life, to which the soul, enlightened at its parting from the body, and touched with extreme sorrow for the imperfection of its past life, and for the hideousness of sin … voluntarily subjects itself, insomuch that it would not desire to attain to supreme happiness on any other condition" (A 6.4:2455).

---

[67] For an excellent treatment of *De Purgatorio*, see Marcelo Dasal, "*Ex pluribus unum? –* Patterns in 522+ Texts of Leibniz's *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe* VI, 4," *The Leibnizian Review* 13 (Dec, 2003); §5.2.

[68] See, e.g., Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata,* 6.14; Tertullian, *Treatise on the Soul,* 35; and 58; Origen, *Homilies on Jeremias,* PG 13.225; and 448; Cyprian, *To Antonianus, Epistle* 51 (55):20; Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* 7:21; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 23.9, 10; Basil of Caesarea, *Homilies on the Psalms,* 7.2; Gregory of Nyssa, *Sermon on the Dead,* PG 13.445; and 448; Ambrose, *De obitu Theodosii,* PL 16.1397; John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Philippians,* 3; Augustine, *Faith and Works,* 1.1; Augustine, *Exposition of the Psalms,* 38(37).3; Augustine, *Enchiridion,* 69; and Gregory the Great, *Dialogues,* 4.39.

Leibniz also places on the table, as it were, the fact that some within the Christian tradition speculate regarding universalism. He appeals to St. Paul's peculiar claim that all Israel will be saved (Rom 11:26), and discusses Origen's notion of *apokatastasis,* along with then-contemporary recapitulations of the Origenist view (G 6:60-1). Though Leibniz entertains both of these notions—purgatory and universalism—and shows sympathies for the former in his early writings, he thinks neither is necessary when addressing the problem of hell: "it is enough to keep to the ideas accepted in the Church" (G 6:165).[69]

The basic difficulty facing the doctrine of hell is one of justice: If individuals must hear and respond to the gospel to avoid this fate, but they cannot do the former for themselves (others must preach it) nor can they do the latter for themselves (God must provide prevenient grace), how can they be held culpable for their unbelief? Here Leibniz echoes the basic sentiment—affirmed by a great many of the Greek fathers of the Church—that culpability presumes (a) knowledge of what one ought to do or not do, and (b) the power of contrary choice. If either condition is lacking, the individual is not culpable for his actions.[70] Yet, it would seem that either one or both conditions are lacking for a great many who are damned: either they have not heard, or they have heard but have not received grace sufficient for repentance.

Leibniz's response echoes what we found in the above section on election and reprobation, namely, that he has Remonstrant sympathies with regard to God's universal

---

[69] Origenistic *apokatastasis* was condemned Second Council of Constantinople (451 A.D.). See esp. anathemas 1, 14, and 15 in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* ed. Norman P. Tanner (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), vol. 1. Regarding purgatory, see Leibniz's Dec. 6, 1694 letter to Madam the Electress of Brunswick in which he makes clear that he does not believe purgatory was an article of faith for the Church, as per the aforementioned position of Augustine (A 1.10:89-90).

[70] See Origen, *De Oratione,* 6 (PG 11:433c-439b); Origen, *De Principiis.* 3.1 (PG 11:249a-303a); Gregory of Nyssa, *De Virginitate*, 12 (PG 46:369b-376d); John Chrysostom, "Homily II," in *Homiliae XXIV in Epistolam ad Ephesios* (PG 62:17-22); John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa* 2.24-2.27 (PG 94:951b-962b).

offering of prevenient grace (G 6:155). Leibniz rejects the idea that only those who are

saved have received the grace necessary for salvation. On the contrary, he maintains that

God grants the grace required for salvation to all, and men have free choice by which to

voluntarily make right use of this grace or to reject it. Hence, according to Leibniz,

condition (b) is satisfied in all men. The immediate question that emerges, then, is

whether the same can be said for condition (a). For it certainly seems that a great many

men pass out of this world without hearing the gospel of Christ.

With regard to the condition of knowledge, Leibniz raises several possible

solutions. The first is to suggest that individuals are culpable for their response to the

light of the gospel to whatever extent they have been exposed to this light. Hence, if the

only light received is that of general revelation and conscience, then an individual is

judged relative to his response to this general revelation. On this point, Leibniz appeals to

Francis Xavier, Roman Catholic missionary and co-founder of the Society of Jesus, who

told the Japanese that if their ancestors did in fact respond to the light given them, they

are indeed saved;[71] and Leibniz notes that Francis of Sales, Bishop of Geneva, approves

of Xavier's assessment (G 6:156).[72] Leibniz's point is that the Roman Catholic Church

does not condemn all outside its communion or even outside of Christianity simply by

virtue of this alien status.

A second approach that Leibniz entertains echoes the intent of a post-mortem

repentance (viz., Purgatory), but does not require a middle place. This approach merely

raises the question of whether God might provide special illumination to the soul, not

---

[71] See Francis Xavier, *Lettres de S. Francois Xavier: apôtre des Indes et du Japon,* 2 vols. (Perisse frères, 1828), vol. 2, Lettre xciv.23-24.

[72] See Francisco de Sales, *Practica del amor de Dios* (Imp. Ramón Ruiz, 1793), 155-6.

post-mortem, but in the process of death itself. Leibniz's point is this: We do not know

what passes through the soul at the point of death (G 6:157). Is it possible that God might

provide an extraordinary illumination to the soul as it departs this life, so that it has

knowledge sufficient to make a decision regarding the gospel of Christ? If so, and

Leibniz sees no reason to deny this as impossible, then it is possible that all pass into the

next life having received not only grace for repentance but knowledge necessary to

decide for or against the gospel of Christ.

In short, Leibniz believes that both conditions of culpability can be quite easily

met. His Remonstrant leanings answer how all can be said to have the ability to respond

to the gospel of Christ. As for knowledge of the gospel, whether one turns to Purgatory,

universalism, mortem illumination, or merely appeals to individuals being judged relative

to their level of knowledge, the difficulty is resolved. In the end, Leibniz's point is not to

answer how God does in fact judge individuals or what resources he may use. He admits

ignorance. But he also notes that ignorance of which solution is true is far from an

admission that no solution is forthcoming (G 6:157).

Having provided various ways of addressing the fate of adults, Leibniz gives

special attention to the fate of infants. He notes the opposing positions of Gregory of

Nyssa and Augustine of Hippo on the matter. Gregory denies that infants are damned,

while Augustine suggests that, apart from baptism, infants are subject to damnation.[73]

Leibniz also notes the middle position of some schoolmen, namely, that infants arrive in

Limbo, deprived of the beatific vision.[74] And there are any number of gradations between

---

[73] See, e.g., Gregory of Nyssa, *De Infantibus qui Praemature Abripiuntur* (PG 46:161a-92c, esp. 177a-83c); Augustine, *De Dono Perseverantiae,*19.21-23 (PL 45:1004-6).

this middle way and a positive outlook. Molina and Salmeron, for example, suggest

infants experience natural bliss, while Cardinal Sfondrati goes so far as to suggest that the

state of infants in the afterlife is preferable to that of the elect in heaven (G 6:153-4).

For Leibniz's part, he takes Sfondrati to go too far, but he does not thereby side

with Augustine. Leibniz recognizes Bayle's point that there are many things in

Christianity that seem harsh, so why should the fate of infants be any different? But

Leibniz replies, "that does not lead to the conclusion that these instances of harshness

may be multiplied without proof" (G 6:154). Leibniz thinks it is noteworthy that the

Roman Catholic Church has historically shown resistance to adopting Augustine's view

that infants are damned outright. Moreover, Evangelical theologians have typically

withheld judgment on the fate of infants, commending trust in the clemency of the

Creator and admitting that we do not know all the means God may use to illuminate a

person (G 6:154-5). In addition, Leibniz identifies what he sees as an inconsistency

among strong predestinarians who take a negative stance on the issue. To wit: The logic

of the case against infants insists that they must be damned because original sin requires

that God foresee sin or rebellion at the first use of freedom, and these infant souls should

thus be justly damned. But the same theologians who make this case resist efforts to

make foreknown sin being the basis for damnation in adults (G 6:155).

As in his treatment of election and reprobation more generally, Leibniz "would be

rather on the side of those who grant to all men a grace sufficient to draw them away

---

[74] E.g., Peter Lombard, l2 d33 c2; Albertus Magnus, *De Resurrectione,* , in *Sancti doctoris Ecclesiae Alberti Magni [...] Opera omnia,* 37 vols., ed. Wilhem Kübel (Aschendorff: Monasterii Westfalorum, 1958), t3 q7 vol. 26; Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi* in *Doctoris seraphici S. Bonaventurae opera omnia,* 10 vols. (Ad Claras Aqua (Quaracchi): Colegii S. Bonaventurae, 1882-), l.2 d33 a3 q2 vol. 2; Aquinas, *De malo,* Latin and English in *The De malo of Thomas* Aquinas, trans. Richard J. Regan (Oxford University Press, 2001) q5 a3; and *Summa Theologiae* Suppl.III q.69 aa.4-6; Suppl. III q.71 a.7.

from evil" (G 6:155), and taken in context, the reference to *all men* includes infants. For Leibniz takes the problem raised by infant death to be essentially the same problem raised with reference to those who die without cognizance of the gospel or prevenient grace. He thus echoes the reply he identifies as that of the Evangelicals: Without excusing sin or appealing to a middle place, we may still ask: How do we know these do not receive some "ordinary or extraordinary succor of kinds unknown to us?" (G 6:155).[75] Not only do we not know what passes through the soul at death, but if Lutheran theologians can justify infant baptism by appeal to infant faith that is later forgotten as adults,[76] why is not this very same faith, or even a more definite faith, possible at the point of death (G 6:157)? Leibniz's point, as in other areas of *Theodicée,* is not that one particular solution is certain, but that there are many possible solutions to the problem that are available within historical Christian thought, and each has its own plausibility. Hence, there are countless paths open to God by which he may save men; though we do not know with certainty which he will employ (G 6:157). In the end, Leibniz is transparently resistant to the notion of infant damnation, but he remains agnostic regarding precisely how such damnation is prevented.

Even if the foregoing gives reason to believe (i) that none are unjustly damned (i.e., the conditions of culpability are preserved in future judgment) and (ii) it is not the many who are damned while the few are saved, hell still leaves us with one of the greatest examples of physical evil in the whole of the cosmos, since the traditional

---

[75] Leibniz appeals on this point to Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputate De Veritate vol. 1*, ed. Petri Marietti (Rome: 1949), q14 a11; and Thomas Bradwardine, *De causa Dei, contra Pelagium, et De Virtute Causarum* (Londini: Ioannem Billium, 1618), non procul ab initio.

[76] See, e.g., Martin Luther, "Der Groβe Katechismus," in *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 121 vols. (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1883-2009), "Von der Taufe," 212-222, vol. 30-1.

concept of hell is one of eternal suffering—a fact Leibniz admits (G 6:275). The problem

this raises is one of proportion. Leibniz notes the work of Ernst Sonner (later discovered

to be a Socinian)[77], who opposed the notion of eternal punishment on the grounds that

"there is no proportion between an infinite punishment and a finite guilt" (G 6:275).[78]

Can this disproportionate punishment be justified? This is the last of the issues

surrounding damnation that we will address in this sub-section.

The explanation Sonner considers and rejects is that "sin has become of infinite

weight through the infinite nature of the object offended, who is God" (G 6:275).[79]

Leibniz, however, prefers a different explanation for the eternity of hell, one that Sonner

does not consider, namely, that the duration of penalties suffered lasts precisely as long as

the duration of offenses committed. Such a form of justice is undoubtedly proportionate.

How this can be so is readily seen if we recognize that the damned do not cease to be

active agents after death, and thus continue in their offenses eternally: "Since the damned

remained wicked they could not be withdrawn from their misery; and thus one need not,

in order to justify the continuation of their sufferings, assume that sin has become of

---

[77] Leibniz notes Sonner's Socinianism in G 6:275, and the point is corroborated by Jacob Bayer, "Biographiae Professorum Medicinae qui in Academiâ Altorfinâ unquam vixerunt," *Le Journal des Sçavans* 90 (January, 1730): 189; and Jean Henri Samuel Formey, *Histoire Abrégée de la Philosophie* (Chez J.H. Schneider, 1760): 229.

[78] The work to which Leibniz here refers is Ernst Sonner, *Demonstratio Theologica, et Philosophica, quod aeterna impiorum supplicia non arguant Dei justitiam, sed injustitiam,* in "Fausti et Laelii Socini, item Ernesti Sonneri Tractatus aliquot theologici" (Amsterdam: Typis Godfridi Philadelphi, 1654).

[79] This line of explanation for eternal punishment is not an invention of Sonner. Leibniz identifies it as common (*vulgaire*) (G 6:276), citing Zacharias Ursinus as one who invokes this explanation. Leibniz cites a treatise entitled *De fide*. I suspect he has in mind Zacharias Ursinus, "Die Vorarbeiten des Ursinus: Summa Theologiae und Catechesis minor," q.29, which can be found in *Der Heidelberger Katechismus: und vier verwandte Katechismen*, ed. August Lang (A. Deichert, 1907). The argument continues to be used, as we find that Jonathan Ewdards in the early 18th century develops and defends this very same line of argumentation in "The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners," found in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards,* ed. Harry S. Stout (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), vol. 19.

infinite weight through the infinite nature of the object offended, who is God" (G 6:175). Leibniz anticipates that some may question the orthodoxy of such a solution, given that Lombard, in his sentence commentary, denies that there is either merit or demerit after death. But Leibniz does not think that Lombard's claim "can pass for an article of faith" (G 6:275).

Leibniz appeals to a number of theological voices throughout the history of Christian thought that he believes either endorse his position or counter Lombard's position. His first appeal is to Johann Fechte who argues in his *Consideratio status damnatorum* that "God cannot change his nature; justice is essential to him; death has closed the door of grace, but not that of justice" (G 6:275).[80] Leibniz also notes Lutheran theologian, Johann Gerhard, who also takes this position (G 6:276);[81] Zacharius Ursinus who, after forwarding the explanation attacked by Sonner, goes on to say that it is because none of the damned cease to sin that the punishment never ceases;[82] Lutheran-turned-Jesuit, Jeremias Drexel, who suggests that the damned are perpetually punished because their sins and blasphemous always persist;[83] and Reformed theologians, Pierre Jurieu and Isaac Jacquelot, who Bayle himself admits holds a similar view (G 6:276-77).[84]

---

[80] See Johann Fechte, *Consideratio Status Damnatorum, Quod Actiones Ipsorum, Inprimis Malas Concernit* (Spirae: C. Olffen, 1683), 40.

[81] See Johann Gerhard, *Loci theologici,* 9 vols. (Gust. Schlawitz, 1863-75, original published in 1657)*,* vol. 9, 258-9, De inferno seu morte aeterna: §60.

[82] See Ursinus, *Catechesis, Summa Theologiae,* q29.

[83] Jeremias Drexel, *Nicetas seu Triumphata Incontinentia* (Sebastianum Cramoisy, 1624), l.2 c11 §9. p. 420 (pp. 326-32).

[84] See Isaac Jacquelot, *Conformité de la foi avec la raison, ou défense de la religion, contre les principales difficultez répandues dans le Dictionnaire historique et critique de Mr. Bayle* (Amsterdam: Henry Desbordes & Daniel Pain, 1705), 220.

Now, Leibniz recognizes that Jean Le Clerc, an Origenist, holds to a position that bears similarities with Leibniz's own;[85] hence Leibniz feels bound to reply to the objection of Bayle "that this dogma of the Origenist is heretical, in that it teaches that damnation is not founded simply on sin, but on voluntary impenitence."[86] In response, Leibniz, first, takes it as given that the damned do not cease to rebel if they indeed remain rational agents, and he is unsure what to label voluntary impenitence if not a continuation of sin (G 6:277). Second, Leibniz beckons a corrective to Bayle's characterization, which brings to the fore an important nuance regarding man's pre- and post-mortem position. According to Leibniz, damnation occurs at the close of this life "because man does not take advantage of the succor of grace to aid him to recover himself" (G 6:277). However, after this life, Leibniz suggests that even if the succor of grace is no longer available, "there is always in the man who sins, even when he is damned, a freedom which renders him culpable, and a power, albeit remote, of recovering himself, even though it should never pass into action" (G 6:277). In other words, though the damned may no longer have available the grace necessary for salvation, this does not mean that every act of rebellion is a matter of necessity. Leibniz's point is one of culpability. To wit: Moral necessity does not eliminate contrary choice. In this light, while the damned necessarily operate outside the sphere of salvific acts, this does not mean that their non-salvific conduct is maximally rebellious. Enough freedom remains that the damned are rightly held culpable for every act of rebellion. This is why Leibniz employs, once again, the distinction between *necessity* and *certainty*. The damned retain freedom from the former but not the

---

[85] See Jean Le Clerc, "Article VII," in *Bibliothèque Choisie vol. 7* (Amsterdam: 1705), 341.

[86] Pierre Bayle, "Chapitre 3," in *Réponse aux Questions d'un Provincial vol. 3* (Rotterdam: Chez Reinier Leers, 1706), 1186-1190, as quoted by Leibniz in G, 6:277.

latter. Though every particular act of rebellion is free from necessity (freedom from the former), the eternality of that rebellion and thus of the requisite punishment due for this perpetuation of sin is still certain (G 6:277).

This point brings out an interesting nuance in Leibniz's treatment of hell, namely, that there may in fact be degrees of punishment that vary proportionate to the free rebellion of the damned. Leibniz notes that the Mass for the dead "asks for the abatement of the torments of the damned" (G 6:279), and along similar lines, Augustine suggests that while the damned may not be delivered, their pains may be mitigated.[87] Leibniz's comments on Augustine's claim are of particular interest. He states, "If the text implied that, the abatement would, as regards its duration, go on to infinity; and yet that abatement would, as regards its extent, have a *non plus ultra.* Even so there are asymptote figures in geometry where an infinite length makes only a finite progress in breath" (G 6:279). Combining this remark with Leibniz's previous points concerning the perpetual but proportionate nature of punishment, what emerges is a postulation that the pains of the damned may be alleviated perpetually—assuming an increasing restraint of rebellion—while never being alleviated so far as to bring blessedness. On this point, Leibniz calls to mind the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus and notes that, contrary to the picture of supreme madness and wickedness, the Rich Man displays charity towards his brothers (G 6:279). Hence, we need not conclude that eternal damnation and even punishment is always infinite, but that the damned may exercise restraint and decrease their torments.

---

[87] See Augustine, *Enchiridion ad Laurentium de Fide et Spe et Caritate.* 29.112 (PL 40:246).

In the end, Leibniz's reply to the problem of hell aims at showing several things: that the all men are rightly held culpable for their response to grace; that we may not conclude with confidence that the many are damned and the few are saved; and even if we do find that the many are damned, the eternal punishment of the damned can be explained in a way that does not violate our moral intuitions. His conclusion is well summarized in his statement, "one must admit that all this detail is problematical, God having revealed to us all that is needed to put us in fear of the greatest misfortunes, and not what is needed for our understanding thereof" (G 6:279-80). As throughout his theodicy, Leibniz does not aim at prescribing a particular answer to every problem raised, but simply at showing that there are many answers that could be given from the Christian tradition.

3.4. The Problem of Original Sin

The last of the difficulties we will consider in this chapter is the problem of original sin. The issue Leibniz identifies is twofold. The first is that this corruption, which is inherited apart from the volition of the creature, is the apparent root of actual sin. This raises the question: How can God justly permit this transmission which only perpetuates evil? The second difficulty concerns the metaphysical question of the origin of *form,* in the Aristotelian sense,[88] and this origination relates to original sin (G 6:149-50). Although Leibniz sets these difficulties up as two distinct problems, they are linked in Leibniz's thinking. For the latter difficulty leads back to Leibniz's monadology and provides his peculiar solution to the former difficulty.

---

[88] See Aristotle, *On the Soul,* 412a1-414a28; *Physics* 192b8-193b21; 194b26-29; *Metaphysics,* 1013a26-1013a28; 1017b14-1017b16; 1017b21-1017b23; 1028b33-1029a33.

Leibniz sets up the first difficulty relative to three Christian positions on the
generation of man and the transmission of corruption. The first is the Origenist theory of
the pre-existent soul; the second is traducianism; and the third is creationism. The first
two of these theories provide clear avenues for distancing God from original sin. The
theory of the pre-existent soul attributes original corruption and the ultimate fate of the
soul to its own free choices made prior to its union with the body.[89] As for traducianism,
this theory distances God from original sin by making the transmission of the soul part of
the natural biological procreative process in which the soul is transmitted in the seed
(*tradux*) of the father; hence, the corruption of original is traceable to Adam's free choice
that corrupted him and his seed.[90] Creationism Leibniz identifies as the most problematic
of three theories, insofar as it requires that God create *ex nihilo* a soul that is corrupt and
thus prone to actual sin (G 6:149).[91]

Leibniz's own solution is a combination of the pre-existent theory of souls and
traducianism. He introduces his view by raising the second difficulty, identified above,
concerning the origin of *form.* Leibniz begins by highlighting rather standard Aristotelian
scholastic theology concerning *soul.* He notes the identification of *soul* by the name

---

[89] See Origen, *De Principiis.* 1.7.4-5 (PG 11:173b-176a). This position was condemned at Second
Council of Constantinople (451 A.D.). See anathemas i, ii, iv-vi. John Behr challenges this reading of
Origen in *The Way to Nicaea* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 2001), 195-97.

[90] Traducianism is often traced in Western theology to Tertullian, a position for which Augustine
had sympathies but also harbored reservations. Perhaps the most thorough post-Augustine treatment of
original sin and traducianism (which defends the latter) is Odo of Tournai's *De Peccato Originali* (PL
160:1071a-1102d). For an excellent treatment of the subject generally and this work in particular, see A. J.
Ashworth, "Odo of Tournai's *De peccato originali* and the Problem of Original Sin," in *Medieval
Philosophy & Theology,* eds. Stephen F. Brown, David B. Burrell, Kent Emery, Jr., Mark D. Jordan,
Norman Kretzmann, Eleonore Stump (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), vol. 1.

[91] This position was adopted by the Fifth Lateran Council under Pope Leo X (1512-17 A.D.),
following the opinions of Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, and Robert Pullen. See Aquinas, *Summa
Contra Gentiles* l2.86-87; Peter Lombard, *Sentences* l2 d17 c1-2; and Robert Pulleyn, *Cramer* 6 p. 474.

entelechy or *act.* He then notes, "This word 'Entelechy' apparently takes its origin from the Greek word signifying 'perfect,' and hence the celebrated Ermolao Barbaro expressed it literally in Latin by *perfectihabia:* for Act is a realization of potency" (G 6:150).[92] His point has to do with the basic distinction between the essential properties of a nature and transient accidental properties. A permanent "act" is the essence or substantial form of the subject, while successive acts constitute accidental form, or properties that last only for a time, such as being a specific color. As we saw in the above treatment of PEH, Leibniz employs the theory of *entelechy* and utilizes it in his theory of force and harmony (cf. G 6:149-50). In the present context, however, Leibniz uses the theory of *entelechy,* along with the accompanying notion of innate force, to argue a specific solution to the generation of *form* and ultimately his answer to the problem of original sin.

Leibniz identifies three theories of the origin of *form.* The first is that form is derived passively from matter (*eduction*). Analogically, this is thought of as akin to the removal of superfluous material from a chunk of marble in the making a statue. Leibniz submits that this theory is ultimately meaningless, as it reduces *form* to *shape,* which is plainly not what the term means in Aristotle. The second is that *form* is sent from heaven by God or created *ex nihilo* at the same moment the body is produced. The third is that there is an active potency in the efficient cause itself: either God or the other forms from which the subsequent form comes in the process of generation (G 6:150-1).

Leibniz identifies the primary difficulty for traducianism (which presumes the third theory of form) that, unlike accidental properties, essential properties are without change by definition. Hence, they can admit only creation (existence in total) or

---

[92] See Themistius, "De Anima," in *Libri paraphraseos Themistii peripatetici acutissimi*, trans. Ermolao Barbaro "The Younger" (Hermolaus Barbarus) (Venice, 1527), lib. 2, cap. 1.

annihilation (non-existence in total). This point will serve an important role in Leibniz's own theory. But before proceeding, Leibniz identifies a significant point of confusion in theological treatments of this subject, namely, the confusion of *indestructibility* with *immortality*. *Immortality,* Leibniz suggests, presumes continued personality and retention of moral qualities and consciousness that experiences either punishment or reward. *Indestructability,* by contrast, merely presumes that the given object is simple, not composite, and thus does not admit decomposition; it can only cease to exist in total (annihiliation) or exist in total (creation). Organic generation must, therefore, be the organization of *entelechy* around a head monad, not the generation of the *soul.*

Leibniz's theory builds on this distinction between *indestructible* and *immortal.* Leibniz suggests that the concept of *soul* or *entelechy* is the concept of a simple substance. Hence, its concept does not admit decomposition (it is not composite), only creation or annihilation. In this light, Leibniz argues for the preexistence of the soul, but not in the sense of the Origenists. The Origenist theory builds on the idea that the soul exists in a conscious, moral state prior to its incarnation. This Leibniz denies. Instead, he suggests that, as per his theory of harmony, that all *entelechies* exist from the point of creation, but the preexistent soul has only feeling and perception (as defined in the monadology), not reason. All human souls are thus present in Adam, transmitted in procreation, and later endowed with consciousness. As Leibniz explains,

> [A]s the formation of organic animate bodies appears explicable in the order of
> nature only when one assumes a *preformation* already organic, I have thence
> inferred that what we call generation of an animal is only a transformation and
> augmentation. Thus, since the same body was already furnished with organs it is
> to be supposed that it was already animate, and that it had the same soul: so I
> assume *vice versa,* from the conservation of the soul when once it is created, that
> the animal is also conserved, and that apparent death is only an envelopment… . It
> is thus my belief that those souls which one day shall be human souls, like those

of other species, have been in the seed, and in theprogrenitors as far back as Adam, and have consequently existed since the beginning of things, always in a kind of organic body. (G 6:152)

As for the emergence of reason after generation, Leibniz suggests that this could be explained either by some natural instruments by which God raises the soul to a sentient entity (akin to contemporary emergentism)[93] or by a supernatural endowment. He takes the latter explanation to be the simpler of the two. And since Holy Scripture includes instances of God operating immediately upon the souls of men, there is no reason to think it is out of character for God to do so (G 6:152-3).

Leibniz's theory thus combines several aspects of all three theories of generation in an effort to address the problem of original sin. In keeping with the sensibility of creationism, Leibniz grants that the soul originates from God by creation, and that it admits only creation or annihilation, not composition. However, rather than identifying this creation at the point of physical generation, Leibniz identifies this creation as part of the creation of the whole of our world. The souls of men are thus part of the original structure of the world that harmoniously organizes according to the eternal decrees of God. Lest this contention fall into the heretical notions of the Origenists, however, Leibniz denies that the soul, in its preexistent state, is conscious. It has only feeling and perception—that is, the basis for its self-movement in accord with PEH; reason, moral agency, and consciousness are later gifted to the soul following its generation. In this last claim, Leibniz brings to his theory what the traducianist desires, namely, that the generation of the soul follows from the parents, and if the soul (to which God grants

---

[93] See, e.g., Philip Clayton, *Mind and Emergence: From Quantum to Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

reason, etc.) is corrupt, then this corruption is a product of sin, not of direct divine agency.

In this way, Leibniz believes he has dissolved the problem of original sin. According to Leibniz, Adam's sin justly brings physical corruption upon himself and his children in the process of generation. What God supplies in the process of generation is not a corrupted soul; rather, a corrupted soul is what is provided in the procreation process by the human parents. God provides only the additional perfection of reason and consciousness—or what is ontologically positive—to the soul. In short, rather than providing a body with a corrupted soul, God provides a corrupted soul with reason (G 6:152-3).

Leibniz's distancing of God from the source of corruption is consistent throughout his treatment of the problem. For example, Leibniz later goes on to deny that we must conclude that God prohibited the eating of the apple arbitrarily, or that the corruption to follow was supernaturally endowed in mankind as a result of sin. On the contrary, he suggests that the prohibition may be in keeping with the natural consequence of the act, such as why parents prohibit children from playing with knives; and the resulting punishment may likewise be a very natural consequence, akin to the way that drunkards often give birth to children with a propensity to drink.[94] In other words, the corruption that followed from sin, and is thus present in the souls that are transmitted in procreation, may be the natural result of the laws of this world (G 6:164-5; 180-1).

---

[94] Here Leibniz notes the theory of Robert Fludde or de Fluctibus [pseudonym: R. Otrb] in *Tractatus Theologo-Philosophicus in Libros Tres Distributus* (Oppenheimii: Joh. Theod. de Bry, 1617), which suggests that the fruit may have been poisonous.

***

In the foregoing, we have seen that Leibniz's commitment to the faculty psychology and perfect being theology of the Augustinian tradition provides the foundation for his claim that God of moral necessity wills the best. Moreover, we have seen that the foundations of these claims not only have precedent the Christian tradition, but the conclusion is stated explicitly by figures, such as John of Damascus. Moreover, we have seen that Leibniz follows John and the medieval scholastics after him in his employment of the antecedent/consequent will distinction, and that in Leibniz, just as in his theological antecedents, this distinction is employed to explain how God can guiltlessly permit evil in our world. In this light, the insights of Leibniz's theodicy are anything but innovative, but are merely the recapitulation of insights that precede Leibniz in the creedal Christianity to which Leibniz ascribes.

As for how these insights play out in the theological arena, we found that Leibniz places his own views in conversation with the mainstream positions of historical Christianity. His reply to the problem of miracles echoes responses going back to Origen and Augustine, and his treatment of predestination, hell, and original sin are framed by the mainstream positions in historical Christianity, and placed amid then-current discussions amongst protestants and between protestants and Catholics. Leibniz's own positions often display an irenic tone and seek to mediate opposing views, but in the end, his own position is consistently stated in reference to these discussions and with a view to taking a stance within the bounds of Christian orthodoxy.

In the end, we have reason to believe that Leibniz's views on free choice, providence, and evil are not only consistent with his earlier philosophical theology, but are an undefiled extension of historical Christian orthodoxy.

PART 3

REMAINING DIFFICULTIES AND THEODICY TODAY

CHAPTER 5

Leibnizian Possible Worlds and the Problem of Superessentialism

With the exegesis of Part 2 before us, we have ample reason to think that
Leibniz's thought is an extension of the Augustinian tradition, and reflects the
incompatibilist commitments of this tradition, along with its synergistic understanding of
providence. However, there are a number of objections in the contemporary literature that
are unaddressed by the above chapters. In Part 3, we will address these objections and
assess Leibniz's relevance, under the above understanding, to theodicy today.

In this chapter, we devote our attention to one particular problem facing Leibniz,
namely, the problem of superessentialism, or the view that every property of an entity is
an essential property. Some interpreters argue that Leibniz's denial of haecceitas
combined with his notion of identity (discussed in the previous chapter) lead to a form of
superessentialism that is necessitarian to its core. This concern is only exacerbated by
Leibniz's claim that God chooses the best out of moral necessity, since this claim raises
serious concern over whether God has free choice and, by extension, whether our world
is in fact the only possible world. When these two issues are combined, it seems that,
regardless of what we might find in Leibniz's texts about human choice, his stance on
these matters undermines all hope of genuine contingency and libertarian freedom. For if
the very concept of a particular individual entails it doing what it in fact does, and if God
is not free to actualize a world other than our own, then Leibniz has once again placed us
on the fast track to a necessitarianism hardly different from that of Spinoza.

In this chapter, I will scrutinize these lingering hurdles. This chapter consists of three sections. In section one I lay bare the problem facing Leibniz's denial of haecceitas and the corresponding notion of superessentialism. In particular, I will draw on the work of David Blumenfeld and his exploration (and refutation) of possible solutions to Leibnizian superessentialism.

In section two, I will expound on the metaphysical underpinnings of Leibniz's possible worlds by drawing once again on the Medieval and post-Reformation backdrop of his discussion. Building on both the Scotist understanding of divine knowledge and the view of possible worlds argued in Part 2, we will identify fundamental differences between Leibniz's view of counterfactuals and the views of contemporary interpreters. With these differences in view, we will see how Leibniz is able to deny haecceitas without falling into the type of necessitarianism described by the superessntialist reading.

Section three of this chapter addresses the question of divine freedom in reference to possible worlds. Even if Leibniz can manage to avoid the charge of superessentialism in the creaturely realm, we still face the question of whether divine choice can survive Leibniz's claims regarding moral necessity. I will navigate this question by contextualizing Leibniz's view of divine choice by looking at the Christian antecedents of his claim. By drawing on this historical background, I will flesh out the resources found therein that help alleviate the problems facing divine freedom.

I will close this chapter with a postscript on the nature of freedom. I will submit that despite the arguments of this chapter, there lingers a first-principles divide between compatibilists and libertarians on the question of choice that none of these resources can resolve. In light of this divide, the results of this chapter will likely prove satisfactory for

libertarians, but compatibilists and determinists will likely be less than satisfied. That said, the dissatisfaction of the latter will prove no greater than the general dissatisfaction with libertarian choice generally. In short, if problems linger for the libertarian reading of Leibniz, these problems will be shown to be in no way unique to Leibniz, but part of a larger dispute on the nature of freedom in general.

1. Leibniz and the Problem of Superessentialism

David Blumenfeld ascribes to Leibniz superessentialism, or the view that, "every property that an individual has (save existence) is an essential part of his nature"[1] (cf. G 2.42; 2.53; 2.56; 4.455; CA 46, 59-60, 63; L 322). Blumenfeld's claim is based on Leibniz's denial of haecceitas—that is, the view of John Duns Scotus that there is an irreducible metaphysical property (haecceitas) that constitutes the this-ness of the thing, as opposed to the Aristotelian/Thomist hylomorphic notion that particularity is the unique combination of essential and accidental properties in the enduring subject.[2] This denial of haecceitas, combined with Leibniz's claim that all truths are analytic, lead Blumenfeld to conclude, "If all properties (other than existence) are part of the concept of an individual ... then anyone with any other properties would be a different individual."[3]

The conclusion here presumes that Chas1 in possible world 1 (PW1) and Chas2 in PW2 have no material connection; they are two distinct enduring subjects in two distinct worlds. Therefore, if identity is rooted in the enduring hylomorphic subject, then Chas1

---

[1] David Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism, Counterparts, and Freedom," in *Leibniz Critical and Interpretive Essays,* ed. Michael Hooker (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 103.

[2] For a synopsis of Scotist haecceitas, see Antoine Vos, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 11.4.1-5.

[3] Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 103.

and Chas2 must constitute two distinct enduring subjects and thus be two distinct particulars according to an Aristotelian/Thomist view of particularity.[4] Only if there is a transferable or common metaphysical property that constitutes the Chasness of Chas (haecceitas), which these two subjects share can Chas1 and Chas2 in some sense constitute two distinct fates of the same person. Apart from haecceitas, then, the deeds of Chas1 belong to Chas1 alone, and the concept of Chas1 doing otherwise does not yield a distinct version of Chas1 but constitutes an entirely different individual (be it Chas2 or Chas3) in an entirely different world (be it PW2 or PW3) who has no connection with Chas1. Hence, the deeds of Chas1 are essential to the very concept of Chas1.

The difficulty this claim raises for free choice is that it implies *de re* falsehood of any claim in which an individual who behaves one way could behave otherwise; such claims must be *de dicto.* While Blumenfeld recognizes Leibniz's commitment to human liberty, Blumenfeld concludes that existence is the only predicate that could be otherwise for Leibniz. Using the example of Adam, Blumenfeld contends that, following Leibniz's premises, if Adam did not sin he would not be Adam; thus, Adam's sinning is only contingent because Adam's existence is contingent. However, Blumenfeld thinks that even the supposed contention that existence is contingent is questionable, given Leibniz's theology. Blumenfeld argues the point as follows:

---

[4] I am here using *individual* and *particular* interchangeably, even though I recognize that there is discussion over whether these terms are in fact interchangeable in Aristotle. Some take Aristotle to distinguish an individual (*tode ti*) from a particular (*kath' hekasta*), arguing that the latter is the individuated universal or form in the particular, while the latter is the hylomorphic whole. On this read, while a particular is non-repeatable and cannot be predicated of another object, a universal can be individual and in this sense is immanent and undivided. The interpretive controversy centers on Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Z 13. See, e.g., G.E.R. Lloyd, *Aristotle: The Growth & Structure of His Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968); Frank A. Lewis, *Substance and Predication in Aristotle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and Joseph Owens, *Cognition: An Epistemological Inquiry* (Houston, TX: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1992). Because this issue is of little consequence for how we read Leibniz, however, I will use the terms *individual* and *particular* interchangeably throughout.

(1) N(God exists).

(2) N(If God exists, God wills what is best).

(3) N(If God wills what is best, God actualizes BPW).

(4) N(If God actualizes BPW, BPW actually exists).

(5) Hence, N(BPW actually exists). (From (1)-(4)).

(6) If (5) is true, then everything that occurs, occurs necessarily.

(7) Thus, everything that occurs, occurs necessarily. (From (5)-(6)).

(8) If everything that occurs, occurs necessarily, then no one ever acts freely.

(9) Therefore, no one ever acts freely. (From (7) and (8)).[5]

Though Blumenfeld acknowledges that Leibniz wants to deny premise (2), he thinks Leibniz's ability to do so is dubious: "[I]t is difficult to see how this stance is consistent with Leibniz's superessentialism: if God *is* good, then his goodness is among his essential properties."[6] Nonetheless, even without (2), Blumenfeld thinks one can still make the case against human freedom. Given that if Adam refrained from sinning he would not be "the same individual as Adam," Adam's sinning is necessary. And, presuming PAP,[7] Adam, whose concept excludes the possibility of not sinning, is not free with regarding to his sinning.

---

[5] Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 104. In the above argument, BPW = *best possible world* and N = *Necessarily*.

[6] Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 104.

[7] See the above Introduction, §2 (Terminological Issues and Clarifications) for a definition of PAP (Principle of Alternative Possibilities). Blumenfeld believes that Leibniz accepts all premises required to establish PAP. See Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 105.

One way of attempting to deliver Leibniz from this problem is to employ David Lewis' counterpart theory.[8] Blumenfeld acknowledges that Lewis' theory is not forwarded in reference to Leibniz, nor has it been applied to Leibniz with a view to solving the problem of superessentialism. Instead, it has merely been acknowledged that Leibniz could be read as espousing something akin to Lewis.[9] Nonetheless, Blumenfeld explores what this theory might offer by way of relief. Lewis summarizes counterpart theory as follows:

> Where some would say that you are in several worlds, in which you have somewhat different properties and somewhat different things happen to you, I prefer to say that you are in the actual world and no other, but you have counterparts in several other worlds. Your counterparts resemble you closely in content and context in important respects. They resemble you more closely than do the other things in their worlds. But they are not really you. For each of them is in his own world.... The counterpart relation is a relation of similarity.[10]

Lewis' conclusion is that while we may speak of my counterpart as "me" in another world, strictly speaking this is not the case. Nonetheless, on Blumenfeld's reading of Lewis, "Lewis allows for the possibility of there being a world in which two individuals, A1 and A2, are both counterparts of, for example, 'our' Sextus."[11]

Fabrizio Mondadori invokes counterpart theory in reference to Leibniz, but modifies Lewis. Contrary to Lewis, who presumes multiple counterparts, Mondadori offers what he calls a "uniqueness requirement." This requirement, briefly stated, is that a

---

[8] David Lewis, "Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic," *The Journal of Philosophy* 65, no. 5 (1968): 113-26.

[9] See Benson Mates, "Individuals and Modality in the Philosophy of Leibniz," *Studia Leibnitiana* 5, no. 2 (1972): 81-118; Fabrizio Mondadori, "Reference, Essentialism, and Modality in Leibniz's Metaphysics," *Studia Leibnitiana* 5, no. 1 (1973): 74-101; and Gregory Fitch, "Analyticity and Necessity in Leibniz," *The Journal of the History of Philosophy* 57, no. 1 (1979): 29-42.

[10] Lewis, "Counterpart Theory," 114.

[11] Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 107.

counterpart belongs to one particular individual who constitutes a complete concept in the actual world.[12] The point of this requirement is that it ensures (or is intended to ensure) the intelligibility of the language of it being *my* counterpart. That is, counterpart A1 is Sextus' counterpart precisely because it is Sextus' and no one else's.

Blumenfeld acknowledges that Mondadori's reading of Leibniz offers one way of reconciling Leibniz's simultaneous use of counterfactuals and *de re* modal predications with his superessentialist premises. On Mondadori's read of Leibniz, it is necessary that Sextus undergo the events that befall him—had he not, he would not be the same individual (as per superessentialism). Therefore, taken literally, counterfactuals about Sextus (e.g., *Had Sextus not raped Lucretia, he would have lived a happy life*) are false because they imply that our Sextus could be otherwise. Yet, if we understand these counterfactuals as referring to our Sextus' counterpart, then we can identify a link between not raping Lucretia and a happy life, and we can accept the counterfactual as meaningful and true.[13] The assertion is what Mondari calls "deferred naming." That is, we begin with the actual individual (*"our" Sextus*), move to an alternate complete concept via a counterfactual (*Sextus does not rape Lucretia*), and end with the counterpart to our individual.[14] The implication of Mondari's reading is that when Leibniz asserts *had so-and-so done otherwise* and it appears that he is saying something about this particular individual, he is not in fact doing so; he is speaking about the individual's counterpart.[15]

---

[12] Mondadori, "Reference, Essentialism, and Modality," 96.

[13] Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 108; cf. Mondadori, "Reference, Essentialism, and Modality," 98.

[14] Mondadori, "Reference, Essentialism, and Modality," 100.

[15] Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 109.

Now, Blumenfeld acknowledges that Mondari is not seeking to address the free choice question in Leibniz.[16] Nonetheless, he suggests that one could build on Mondari in answer to the free choice question by arguing that one essential property of a given individual is "the property of having such-and-such counterparts in such-and-such world."[17] On such a solution, while it remains essential to the concept of *Joe* that he perform *q,* it is just as essential to the concept of *Joe* that he might have performed *~q,* since the concept of *Joe* entails a counterpart who performs *~q.*

Blumenfeld objects to this mode of rescuing Leibniz because he thinks it presumes a view of possible worlds quite unlike the view held by Leibniz. According to Blumenfeld, Leibniz has a different view of "actual" than Lewis. Lewis takes *actual* to mean *present*—be it in this world or another world. Leibniz, by contrast, takes possible worlds to be wholly dependent upon the mind of God; they are ideas in the divine mind and without the divine mind upholding these possibilities, they do not "exist" (see, e.g., G 6.226-7; 7.304-5; L 488). The privileged status of the actual, therefore, has to do with it being elected by God and endowed with the predicate *exists,* as argued in Part 2.[18]

While this may seem like a point of metaphysical minutia, Blumenfeld sees this difference as quite significant when applied to God. Blumenfeld summarizes:

> Leibniz's view that mere possibles have only an objective existence in the mind of God conflicts with the idea that there are a series of God-counterparts, each actual at its own world. On the contrary, it implies that a single divinity exists who is real in an absolute sense, and whose thoughts form the only basis of the existence of unactualized possibilities.... Leibniz treats actuality as a unique status. It is possessed *tout court,* if it is possessed at all; and it is something conferred *by God* on the basis of perfection. But this means that the God who

---

[16] Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 110.

[17] Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 110.

[18] Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 111.

actually exists (and who exists of necessity) would himself have existed *whatever* world had been actual. After all, the one absolutely real God is the world-actualizer. This again conflicts with the counterparts picture, which would express the fact that God necessarily exists in terms of an infinity of different Gods, each real at his own world.[19]

Blumenfeld admits that one could detach counterpart theory from Lewis' theory of actuality and use it in service to Leibniz. Yet, Blumenfeld suggests that the alternative view of actuality (i.e., the view in which actuality is conferred by God) runs into absurdity when applied to counterparts, since this view would require that God could actualize a world that does not contain himself but contains a distinct individual (*his* counterpart) who is like him in crucial respects.[20] Blumenfeld takes this claim to be *prime facie* non-sense, and if such is the result of the counterpart theory, its failure is evident.

Even if one were willing to embrace this absurdity, however, Blumenfeld argues that counterpart theory cannot save Leibniz from determinism. As he points out, Leibniz clearly wants to say that Adam is able to do otherwise, but he cannot mean *our Adam* could do otherwise, since *our Adam* would then be a different Adam. Hence, even with counterpart theory applied, such counterfactuals must be read non-literally. And therefore, despite clearing up inconsistencies in Leibniz's language, Leibniz is no less of a determinist.[21] For insofar as PAP is required for genuine freedom, PAP is not embraced under the non-literal reading of counterpart theory, since any particular individual (e.g., *our Adam*) is not free to do otherwise.[22]

---

[19] Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 111.

[20] See Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 112.

[21] See Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 114.

[22] I am here applying PAP to Blumenfeld. His argument clearly assumes it, but he does not employ the term.

Were this difficulty not enough, Blumenfeld notes two additional problems that emerge for counterpart theory generally and its Leibnizian form in particular. The first rather basic problem is that counterpart theory begs the question: *How can an individual, distinct from myself, acting in a way contrary to myself in a circumstance similar to my own, but occurring in a world other than my own, grant me freedom in my circumstance in my world?*[23] Under counterpart theory, there is no clear connection between particular individuals and their counterparts other than the conceptual link based on common traits and like circumstance.

This lack of connection raises a second, more difficult question, namely, *If counterparts are necessary for freedom, but it is not in my control whether counterparts exist, then in what sense am I free with regard to any given act?* In other words, if freedom refers to the libertarian capacities of *my* will, but those capacities are libertarian only if I have a counterpart, then I do not have libertarian choice unless I have the ability to generate a counterpart in another possible world. For freedom does not reside in my capacities in this particular circumstance or choice (PAP), but in my ability to have or not have counterparts. As far as I can tell, none of my choices have ever entailed the choice of whether to generate a counterpart, and thus, counterparts, if taken as a necessary condition for freedom, undermine rather than uphold freed choice.[24]

This problem of the grounding or source of counterparts Blumenfeld takes to be particular potent with reference to Leibniz. Even if one wanted to defend the idea that creatures could generate counterparts, in Leibniz's view possible worlds are grounded by

---

[23] Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 114.

[24] Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 115-17.

the will of God. Therefore, whether I have a counterpart in any given instance depends on God, not me. In such light, even if Leibniz is read through the lens of counterpart theory, he cannot assert that creatures are free.[25] As for whether counterpart theory may uhpold divine freedom, this could be suggested, given God's apparent ability to generate counterparts, but, as already noted, this suggestion comes at the cost of asserting that divine freedom is rooted in God's ability to actualize a world in which he does not exist. In the end, Blumenfeld concludes that such difficulties demonstrate that Leibnizian superessentialism cannot be overcome by counterpart theory.

One final theory Blumenfeld entertains is that possible individuals are somehow merged initially but split from one another at instances of free choice. Hence, Raleigh1 and Raleigh2 are a single Raleigh until that Raleigh faces a free choice. At that point Raleigh splits into two different individuals (Raleigh1 and Raleigh2) in two different possible worlds (PW1 and PW2). This solution provides an initial material connection between Raleigh1 and Raleigh2, so that their respective decisions somehow belong to the same original source—Raleigh.

The objection Blumenfeld has to this solution is that Leibniz understands identity to be rooted in the entirety of predicates associated with the subject (past, present, *and* future). Whatever will occur in Raleigh's future is already part of Raleigh's identity—as Leibniz would put it, *Raleigh is great with the future*. Hence, there remains an utter incompatibility between Raleigh1 and Raleigh2 insofar as Raleigh1 has an entire set of predicates distinct from Raleigh2. Even if some predicates overlap (viz., those prior to the split between Raleigh1 and Raleigh2), the divergent future predicates make it impossible

---

[25] Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 118.

for Raleigh1 and Raleigh2 to ever have a common identity. Thus, even at the initial point of overlap, there would be contradictory future predicates within Raleigh derived from his divergent futures in Raleigh1 and Raleigh2. The view cannot, therefore, be compatible with Leibniz's view of identity.

Now, it will be recalled that Blumenfeld begins his case for Leibnizian superessentialism by noting Leibniz's denial of haecceitas. An alternative approach to softening Leibnizian superessentialism would be to take issue with the supposed denial of haecceitas. Such is the approach we find in the joint work of O'Leary-Hawthorne and Cover (henceforth OC). OC find a general agreement in Leibniz studies that Leibniz's metaphysic "is a robust substance-accident realism, complete with individual substances underlying the attributes in which they're clothed, and a commitment to some version of essentialism."[26] Despite this consensus, OC find a tension in Leibniz's thinking on transworld identity, and this tension surrounds the question of whether Leibniz is so clearly opposed to haecceitas as typically thought.

OC appeal to David Kaplan who contends that positions on transworld identity are split between pro-haecceitas and anti-haecceitas. According to Kaplan, the pro-haecceitas position has a basis for affirming a this-ness that extends throughout possible worlds, while the anti-haecceitas position has no foundation for affirming transworld identity. Parallel individuals, or counterparts (to employ Lewis' terminology), may be linked by "a common concept," but there is no "metaphysical reality of sameness."[27] OC acknowledge that the anti-haecceitas reading of Leibniz is the majority report in Leibniz

---

[26] John O'Leary-Hawthorne and J. A. Cover, "Haecceitism and Anti-Haecceitism in Leibniz's Philosophy," *Noûs* 30, no. 1 (1996): 1.

[27] David Kaplan, "How to Russell a Frege-Church," *Journal of Philosophy* 72, no. 6 (1975): 722-23.

studies, and this leaves Leibniz susceptible to superessentialism. However, OC submit that Leibniz's frequent talk of transworld identity should be taken as evidence of a pro-haecceitas posture. In saying this, OC are not suggesting that Leibniz is free from determinism. On the contrary, OC contend that Leibniz still displays superessentialist tendencies throughout his writings when discussing identity. But OC suggest Leibniz's superessentialism is best explained by his determinism, while his talk of transworld identity is best explained by a tacit affirmation haecceitas. In other words, "one who can make perfect sense of *de re* modality and questions of transworld identity, who yet happens to believe that all assertions of tranworld identity are strictly speaking false."[28]

OC contend that deterministic haecceitism makes the most sense of the aforementioned tension in Leibniz. Referencing Robert Sleigh, Jr.'s *Leibniz & Arnauld,* OC point to his conclusion that Leibniz's modal theory is weaker than superessentialism, and yet, if taken as a *de re* account, Leibniz's views are strong enough that they could underwrite a rejection of transworld identity.[29] This tension is the very tension that OC think a determinist haecceitism could explain. That is, *de re* accounts of transworld identity make sense because Leibniz holds to a form of haecceitism, but the determinist features of Leibniz's view indicate the falsehood of transworld claims about alternative choice. On such a view, some transworld claims might "sneak through" as true, but even granting this possibility, Leibniz still leaves us with a strong superessentialism.[30]

---

[28] O'Leary-Hawthorne and Cover, "Haecceitism and Anti-Haecceitism," 2.

[29] Robert C. Sleigh, Jr., *Leibniz & Arnauld: A Commentary on Their Correspondence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), ch. 4.

[30] See John O'Leary-Hawthorne and J. A. Cover, "Leibniz on Superessentialism and World-Bound Individuals," *Studia Leibnitiana* 22 (1990): 175-83; and John O'Leary-Hawthorne and J. A. Cover, "Leibnizian Essentialism, Transworld Identity, and Counterparts," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1992): 425-45.

Now, there are at least two hurdles facing OC's theory. The first is the fact that Leibniz explicitly rejects haecceitas in his 1663, *Disputatio metaphysica de principio individui.* OC's retort is that "this piece says absolutely nothing about the modal issues broached here, and moreover is too early to count as a guide to Leibniz's considered view of individuation."[31] They thereby set aside the text as moot and argue for the hermeneutic necessity of a pro-haecceitas position, given the tension in Leibniz's claims. Since OC can see nothing in general propositions that allows for tracking particular objects across possible worlds, they argue that to make cogent Leibniz's simultaneous affirmation of transworld identity and his apparent determinism, we must diverge from common wisdom. Yet, in so doing there is no deliverance for Leibniz from the problem of determinism; the pro-haecceitas reading only makes Leibniz's determinism coherent.

The second hurdle is the question of whether the pro-haecceitas position does in fact link Raleigh1 and Raleigh2, for example, as it claims. If we look at the notion of haecceitas in its historical context (the context in which Leibniz would know it) haecceitas is a discrete property, and is necessarily so. For haecceitas is the property of being *this* thing, which excludes the possibility of it being *not-this* thing. Antonie Vos summarizes Scotus' insight thusly:

> [I]t is his point that if we can talk of *one* item of something real, we have to accept that such a unity enjoys *being* (*entitas*). However, we exclusively meet *being one* in an individual. An individual is as such individual, it is essentially individual. **It cannot be subdivided into more identical individuals.** For Scotus, the notions of *being individual, numerical unity,* or *countability* and *singularity* are equivalent. What does he mean by them? Articulated unity (*unitas determinata*) is at stake. He calls it by a fine metaphor: *signed unity. This* unity— the unity of being *this*—is signed unity. ***Being individual*** **and** ***being subdivided into more subjects*** **are incompossible**, but what accounts for this

---

[31] O'Leary-Hawthorne and Cover, "Haecceitism and Anti-Haecceitism," 3-4. Cf. Sleigh, *Leibniz and Arnauld,* 51-2.

in(com)possibility? *This* thing cannot be *not-this* thing; it is *signed* (*signatum*) by its singularity.[32]

To my mind, the use of haecceitas in the contemporary transworld identity discussion runs the risk of violating the very purpose of haecceitas. Haecceitas is the discrete property of being *this*; it is not a universal that can be shared by multiple particulars, the way the predicate *human* can—hence Vos' point that the individual cannot be subdivided into identical individuals. Yet, in the contemporary transworld discussion, haecceitas is used in just this way, namely, to subdivide individuals. If Raleigh1 and Raleigh2 are thought of as discrete particulars residing in separate worlds, and each Raleigh has its own unique set of predicates (past, present, and future), as per Leibniz's view of identity, then the efforts to link these discrete particulars is an effort to subdivide Raleigh's identity into multiple subjects.

Assuming this is in fact how haecceitas is being used, this fails on two levels. First, it fails insofar as haecceitas on this use has ceased to be haecceitas. That is, on such a use, haecceitas is no longer the discrete property of being *this* particular, but a universal shared by multiple particulars. Yet, Scotus' very concern that sparked the haecceitas insight was that hylomorphic views of identity do not give being to particularity, but ascribe being to universals only—hence particularity is nothing more than the enduring conglomeration of a set of universals. Haecceitas was aimed not at identifying a yet-unnamed universal but at granting being to one discrete (i.e., non-universal) property. As Vos puts it, "[W]e are not even able to say that the inalienable dignity of the individual had been *lost* in Greek philosophy. It was never there, nor in other archaic and ancient

---

[32] Vos, *John Duns Scotus,* 11.4.5 (p. 412) (bold emphasis mine).

cultures. It had to be discovered."[33] In this light, I do not see how haecceitas, taken in its historical meaning, can resolve the issue of transworld identity. For both haecceitist and hylomorphic views of identity see particularity as equally discrete, despite their differences on the grounding of particularity. Insofar as the "pro-haecceitas" positions on transworld identity treat haecceitas as a universal shared by multiple particulars, I must conclude that they are developing a notion of identity—and thus a solution to transworld identity—quite unlike that of Scotus, and thus something very unlike what Leibniz himself would have known as haecceitas.

The second way in which the pro-haecceitas solution fails is in its specific application to Leibniz. Even if we grant that Leibniz underwent a shift in his views on haecceitas, and thus harbors an unstated support for haecceitas, we would still face the difficulty that Leibniz links the identity of a particular with its past, present, and future. Hence, even if Raleigh1's particularity is grounded in haecceitas rather than the conglomeration of predicates associated with him, Leibniz links the identity of *this* Raleigh with those predicates. And this means that Leibniz necessarily dissociates the identity of Raleigh1 (*this* Raleigh) from the identity of Raleigh2 (*that* Raleigh). This results in both an ontic and epistemic issue. On the epistemic side, even if Raleigh1's identity is rooted in haecceitas, the predicates associated with Raleigh1 still serve to identify which particular (identity) we are referencing; and the result would seem to beckon that we disassociate Raleigh1 from Raleigh2 who is referenced by a distinct set of predicates, and thus ascribe to Raleigh1 a haecceitas different than we ascribe to Raleigh2. If this epistemic problem is overcome by appeal to ontology (*there exists a*

---

[33] Vos, *John Duns Scotus,* 11.4.5 (p. 413).

property, haecceitas, in both Raleigh1 and Raleigh2 that links them, even if we face

epistemic hurdles in pinpointing this association), we run into a more serious

metaphysical difficulty, namely, that Raleigh1 and Raleigh2 are then the same particular,

but the concept of this particular (Raleigh) entails contradictory predicates. What this

means is that by linking Raleigh1 and Raleigh2 in such a way that they are the same

particular, the concept of Raleigh becomes logically impossible because his concept

contains a formal contradiction (or perhaps several). The pro-haecceitas solution thus

leaves us in the same position as the hylomorhpic reading, neither fixing Leibniz's

tranworld language, nor delivering him from determinism.

  Are the above positions the only possible ways forward for dealing with Leibniz

on transworld identity? I believe the answer is No. I would contend that none of the

above models are in keeping with the metaphysics of Medieval and post-Reformation

scholasticism on the topic of contingency and, by implication, transworld identity. In

keeping with the thesis of this project, this omission is rather serious. In the next section,

I will offer an alternative reading of Leibniz on contingency that is in keeping with older

more metaphysical way of thinking of contingency and identity, and I will argue that this

alternative reading not only balances the tensions with which the above readings are

wrestling, but offers additional support to the libertarian reading advocated in Part 2.

2. A Scholastic Reply to the Problem of Transworld Identity

  All voices noted above in the transworld-identity discussion proceed as if possible

worlds and possible individuals are wholly isolated from one another, "living," as it were,

in different semantic or conceptual universes. And yet, the freedom of Raleigh1 in PW1

depends in some way on the "existence" of a corresponding Raleigh (Raleigh2) in PW2 who displays contrary behavior in like circumstance. Under such a view, problems emerge for hylomorphic views of identity generally and Leibniz's view in specific. For generic hylomorphism finds the apparent separation between Raleigh1 in PW1 and Raleigh2 in PW2 to raise the question *In what sense are these two Raleighs the same Raliegh?* If the particularity of Raleigh in PW1 (Raliegh1) is grounded in the fact that Raleigh is an enduring form-matter composite, and the Raleigh of PW2 (Raleigh2) is an entirely separate enduring subject, there is no apparent connection between these two Raleighs that might link their respective identities. Added to this is the unique difficulty that Leibniz brings, namely, he roots identity in the complete set of predicates—past, present, and future. Because the Raleigh1 in PW1 and the Raleigh2 in PW2 are not only materially divided but also include contradictory sets of predicates, given their contrary choices, they cannot be the same Raleigh. This divide constitutes the problem of transworld identity, which is thought to place libertarian freedom in danger and must be overcome if free choice is going to survive Leibniz's philosophy.

In answering the problem of transworld identity, we must first recognize that the approach to contingency in the above discussion displays a very contemporary sensibility, indicative of current dialogs in modal logic. The problem I see with this approach to Leibniz is that it runs the risk of being anachronistic. The precise nature of possible world semantics, modal terminology, transworld identity, and the like is hotly contested throughout the still-relatively-recent history of formal modal logic. Modal logic, as espoused by Gottlob Frege and his followers, used mathematical functions to analyze predication, semantics, and thought structures. In its early form, predication

analysis was thought to be merely linguistic, having no metaphysical requirements

whatsoever. As Frege put it in his November 13, 1904 letter to Bertrand Russell,

> [I]f all that matters to us is the sense of the proposition, the thought, then all we
> need to worry about is the sense of the signs that constitute the proposition;
> whether or not they also have a *Bedeutung* does not affect the thought. And this is
> indeed the the case in legend and poetry. Conversely, if it is not immaterial to us
> whether the signs that constitute the propsosition are *bedeutungsvoll,* then it is not
> just the thought which matters to us, but also the *Bedeutung* of the proposition.
> And this is the case when and only when we are inquiring into its truth. Then and
> only then does the *Bedeutung* of the proposition enter into our considerations; it
> must therefore be most intimately connected with its truth.[34]

While Russell and Alfred North Whitehead carried on the propositional nature of logic in

their *Principia mathematica* (1910-13), logicians would become increasingly aware of

the unavoidability of metaphysics in logic. In 1948, W. V. Quine argued that statements

of logic cannot avoid ontological entailments, since arguing for a property shared by red

houses and red cars commits us to believing that such properties are entities.[35] And, more

recently, Bernard Linsky has argued that the older forms of logic, such as Russell's, are

indeed metaphysical in nature. In the case of Russell, his logic builds on an unstated and

then-unrecognized theory of universals and particulars.[36] Regrettably, the metaphysical

implications of contemporary modal logic continue to be fiercely disputed today, with no

clear indication of consensus.[37]

Given this lack of consensus, it is not always clear to me how contemporary-

minded analytic philosophers understand Leibniz's possible worlds. *Is the reading merely*

---

[34] Gottlob Frege, "Letter to Russell, 13.11.1904," in *The Frege Reader,* ed. Michael Beaney (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1997).

[35] W.V. Quine, "On What There Is," *Review of Metaphysics* 2 (1948): 21-38.

[36] Bernard Linsky, *Russell's Metaphysical Logic* (Stanford: CSLI Publications, 1999), ch. 2.

[37] See, e.g., the recent collection of papers in *Modality: Metaphysics, Logic, and Epistemology,* eds. Bob Hale and Aviv Hoffmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

semantic or is it metaphysical? If semantic, is this is a creative rereading of Leibniz or is it thought to be true to Leibniz's philosophy? If metaphysical, what is the metaphysic employed and is that metaphysic thought to be true to Leibniz's own? Rather than wading through these questions—the answers to which vary from one interpreter to another—I think it best to leave behind the contemporary discussions surrounding modal logic and deal with Leibniz in more historical terms. After all, Leibniz's talk of possible worlds and modality has a long history prior to him in Medieval philosophy and on into the Protestant scholastics. This backdrop I think to be the more appropriate and helpful way forward, and as we will see, it provides solutions untried in the above discussion on transworld identity and contingency. I will begin, in particular, by discussing the model of contingency and possible worlds found in John Duns Scotus.[38] As argued in Part 2, Leibniz's claim in VNC offers a nuanced understanding of divine knowledge that balances God's *a priori* apprehension of future contingents with the dependence of such contingents on God's decrees. I argued that this theory was most like Scotus' and that there is good reason to believe that Leibniz retains this view in *Theodicée*. Thus, I will here focus on this theory of divine knowledge.

Scotus makes an important distinction between logical possibles and what we might call real possibles, which is particularly relevant to the topic at hand. According to Scotus, logical possibles are much broader than real possibles. To rise to the level of *logically possible,* all that is required is a subject-predicate combination that is free of formal contradiction, or a combination without repugnance.[39] Real possibles are a subset

---

[38] E.g., John Duns Scotus, *Lectura* in *Opera Omnia,* 26 vols. (Paris, 1891-95), I.39.5.46-50.

[39] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.49-50.

of logical possibles. However, to rise from a mere logical possible to a real possible something more than coherence is required. Real possibles require *both* a coherent subject-predicate relationship *and* ontological grounding. Regarding the latter, all real possibles must first find their footing in God. For unless God is willing that anything other than himself exist, no contingent thing—even if logically possible—can constitute a real possible.[40] The rationale here is a common one in Medieval theology, namely, that the concept of a particular contingent thing is never an isolated concept. We can certainly speak in an isolated way about the generic concept of *human* and identify this concept as logically possible, since *biped-rational-animal* is void of contradiction, but the concept of the particular human person *Chas* entails additional concepts of a great many things on which this particular is contingent, to wit: Chas' parents, Chas' world, and a whole network of related contingencies. Moreover, every contingent thing—be it Chas or the things on which Chas is contingent—is ultimately traceable to a non-contingent ground, or First Cause, namely, God.[41]

Keeping this in mind, we may establish the logical possibility of Chas by (a) demonstrating both the internal subject-predicate coherence of the concept of Chas and (b) the compatibility of this concept with the concepts of other things on which Chas is dependent. However, unless God is willing that anything contingent exist, all contingent concepts (both Chas and those contingent things on which Chas is contingent) are void of ontic grounding and are mere logical possibles. For they have no footing in the First

---

[40] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.43-44.

[41] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.18-42 focuses on the question of how contingency is compatible with the ontic necessity of the First Cause, criticizing the approaches of Aquinas et al.

Cause, God. This is why (as noted in chapter 3) Scotus suggests that contingent propositions must be made determinate by an eternal act of the divine will.[42]

Assuming that God is willing that things other than God exist and determines propositions accordingly, ontic footing is provided for contingencies to rise to the level of real possibles. Now, the specifics of how this divine grounding of real possibles works with divine knowledge is disputed among Medieval scholastics. As discussed in chapter 3, Aquinas, speaking as an intellectualist, understands divine simplicity to entail that God's existence is also his act of understanding;[43] and insofar as his existence is perfect, so must his knowledge be.[44] Since, God is the First Cause, God's perfect self-knowledge must entail a perfect knowledge of all things, necessary and contingent, for all things are either God or have their existence from God. Hence, "God sees His effects in Himself as their cause…."[45] Henry of Ghent, speaking as a voluntarist, maintains that contingent truths require a decree on the part of God. If the divine intellect knows a contingent truth to be so, it knows it only because it sees that contingency decreed by the will and knows that the will of God cannot be impeded.[46]

Scotus harbors concerns over both positions. He fears that the intellectualist approach yields necessitarianism, or (less anachronistically) Averroism. Scotus' particular concern is that the intellectualist, who believes that the will necessarily follows

---

[42] Scotus, *Ordinatio* in *Opera Omnia,* 26 vols. (Paris, 1891-95), I.39.25; I.39.64-5.

[43] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Ia q.14.a.5. Latin references to Aquinas are based *Summa Theologiae*, Textum Leoninum ed. (Rome, 1888).

[44] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Ia q.14 aa.1 and 5-6; q.4 a.1.

[45] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Ia q.14 a,7.

[46] Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet VIII* in *Quodlibeta* (Paris: Vaenundantur ab Iodoco Badio Ascensio, 1518), q.2. Cf. John Duns Scotus' synopsis in *Ordinatio* I.39.22.

the judgments of the intellect, must maintain that divine choice is necessary as well. For if the intellect knows necessarily, and the will necessarily follows the intellect, it follows that the modal necessity of divine knowing translates to a modal necessity in divine choosing; this modal necessity in divine choice translates to a modal necessity in that which the divine will chooses.[47] Scotus here argues what contemporary jargon would label the distribution axiom: $\Box(A{\rightarrow}B){\rightarrow}(\Box A{\rightarrow}\Box B)$.[48] In short, if the divine intellect bears a modal necessity and all flows from divine intellect by necessity, then the modal necessity of the intellect is distributed to that which follows from it, and all is modally necessary.

As for Ghent's solution, Scotus agrees that the divine will is required for the grounding of contingents, and grants that this conceptual link between contingents and the will of God beckons a voluntary grounding of propositions. However, Scotus fears that Ghent's approach runs the risk of ascribing to God discursive knowledge, since it God's knowledge follows (so it seems) inferentially from what the intellect knows of and sees in the divine will.[49]

Scotus, unlike Aquinas, maintains that only simple truths fall to God's necessary knowledge. Complex truths, such as future contingents, must be grounded by the divine will, as Ghent argues. Yet, Scotus denies Ghent's claim that the intellect knows contingent truths via the will, siding instead with Aquinas: God knows his essence, and

---

[47] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.42.

[48] In the above axiom, $\Box$ means *Necessarily,* $\rightarrow$ means *if-then.*

[49] See Scotus' characterization of Ghent's solution in *Ordinatio* I.39.64.

subsequently all things according to their being knowable.[50] As we saw in chapter 3, Scotus accomplishes this balancing act by separating the question of how contingent truths are grounded from the question of how the divine intellect knows contingent truths. To the former, Scotus affirms the need for the will to determine propositions; to the latter, he defends the grounding of divine knowledge in the divine essence.[51]

Now, under Scotus' approach to real possibles, grounding is not limited to the divine side of the equation. For the First Cause is not the only cause involved. Contingent things entail both the concept of the First Cause and the concept of its proximate cause. For example, the relationship between a particular fire burning a particular combustible object must first be grounded by divine choice—that is, by God willing the possible existence of that particular fire and particular combustible object. However, the relationship between the fire and the object must also be consistent with the respective natures of the particulars (i.e., the proximate cause) in order for this hypothetical to have both coherence and ontic grounding, and thereby constitute a real possible. Hence, if it is in the nature of fire to emit heat, and if it is in the nature of the object burnt to be combustible, then the proximate causes are also consonant with this hypothetical. Granting both God's choice to ground this hypothetical (i.e., God's possible concourse) and this hypothetical's grounding in the respective natures of the particulars involved (viz., burning and combustion), this hypothetical constitutes a real possible.[52]

---

[50] Scotus, *Ordinatio* I.39.23: Tunc autem non sunt vera contingentia, quia nihil est tunc per quod habeant determinatam veritatem. Posita autem determination voluntatis divinae, iam sunt vera *in illo secundo instant*, et idem erit ratio intellectui divino—quod et in primo—intelligendi ista. Italics mine.

[51] See Scotus, *Ordinatio* I.36.22; and I.39.93.

[52] Cf. Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.38.

Noteworthy is Scotus' point that even though the real possible of fire burning is contingent, there is a sense in which this possible displays a necessary cause-effect relationship. For Scotus here distinguishes two types of necessity. The first is simple necessity (*necessaries simpliciter*), or what we might dub absolute necessity. Simple necessity does not exist in our world, according to Scotus, since our world as a whole is contingent—a fact Scotus treats as axiomatic.[53] The second type of necessity does exist in our world, and this is what is meant when we say a contingent relationship is necessary in a certain respect (*necessaries secundum quid*). The cause-effect relationship between fire and burning combustible objects, for example, is necessary in this weaker sense. Strictly speaking, the relationship between fire and combustion is not necessary (a) because neither the existence of fire nor of combustible objects is necessary, and (b) because the effect of burning combustible objects can be miraculously stayed, should God choose to not concur in the effect—as in the story of the three youths in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:19-97).[54]

To be sure, simply because God-not-concurring-in-fire-burning is logically possible, and simply because we have an instance of God refusing such concourse, this does not mean that *not burning* is a real possible in every instance in which fire is related to a combustible object. As stated above, if *not burning* is to rise to the level of a real possible, *not burning* must be not only coherent but ontologically grounded in either the First Cause, proximate cause, or both. Because fire has only one natural potency, namely, to burn combustible objects, the grounding of *not burning* is never found in the proximate

---

[53] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.91. For Scotus' axiomatic affirmation of contingency, see *Lectura* I.39.5.40.

[54] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.91; see also 5.88.

cause, fire. If found, it is found solely in the First Cause, God. This is precisely why the relationship is necessary in a certain sense: its opposite depends entirely on God performing a miracle. If God does not or would not consider refusing concurrence in the effect of fire, *not burning* remains a merely logical possible void of ontic footing in either the First Cause or proximate cause (i.e., this logical possibility does not correspond to any determinate contingent proposition present to the divine intellect).

In the case of free creatures, Scotus contends that the nature of contingency is much stronger. Unlike fire, which has only one natural potency, free creatures by nature have (a) multiple potencies and (b) the power of choice regarding which potency to actualize.[55] Thus, it is *both* God's willing that Raleigh have freedom (First Cause) *and* Raleigh's free nature itself (proximate cause) that ground contrary possibles. Or, put otherwise, because God wills freedom and Raleigh has freedom, contrary possibles are naturally grounded as real.

Again, the ontology in play here must be kept in mind. Scotus is not concerned with the soft claim that *Raleigh wills* ~p is void of subject-predicate conflict, despite the fact that *Raleigh wills* p is true. Scotus' concern is ontological. His claim is that *Raleigh wills* ~p is a real possible because it has ontic grounding in God's concourse, which upholds freedom, and the fact of Raleigh's freedom of contradiction (will *p* or will not *p*), contrariety (will *p* or will ~*p*), and specification (will *q* instead of *p*).[56] Contrast this with the possibility of fire not burning a combustible object. Fire-not-burning has no

---

[55] Scotus, *Lectura* I.395.46-8.

[56] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.49-50. This threefold structure of free choice is noted by Scotus in *Quodlibet.* 18, n.9 in *Opera Omnia,* 26 vols. (Paris, 1891-95). See also Berard Vogt, "The Metaphysics of Human Liberty in Duns Scotus," in *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association,* 16 vols., ed. Charles A. Hart (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1940), vol. 16, 32.

ontological grounding in fire itself. If it is to constitute a real possible, God must consider

refusal of concourse in its natural effect. Yet, in the case of free creatures, God has willed

that the creature itself have a nature that grounds multiple possibles and freely actualizes

one possible in such a way that could have actualized a different possible. Hence, free

contingencies are quite different than contingencies that are necessary *secundum quid*.

The latter display a natural connection between proximate cause and effect that is

necessary, barring a miracle; the former by natural necessity displays a relationship

between proximate cause and effect that is free and contingent and could be otherwise.

The claim here is an echo of Augustine's realist contention, embraced by many

Medieval and post-Reformation realists, that not even God can make a will that is not

free. For a will void of freedom is on par with a circle void of circularity. It is a matter of

natural necessity that will have libertarian choice, since this is part of its very concept and

possibility.[57] Therefore, if God grounds the real possible of a given free agent (say,

Margot), God's choice to do so entails the grounding of those real possibles that are

grounded in Margot and her choices regarding which possibles to freely actualize.

The foregoing metaphysic, with its distinction between real possibles and their

grounding, provides a way of thinking about libertarian choice quite unlike the

approaches outlined in section one of this chapter, and this difference is particularly

relevant to the problem of superessentialism and transworld identity.

---

[57] See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10 (PL 41:152-3). All patristic references utilizing "PG" or
"PL" refer to J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completes* (Parisiis: Venit apud editorem in vico dicto
Montrouge, 1844-66). Cf. Anselm, *De Concordia praescientiae et praedestinationis.* I.3 in *Opera Omnia*, 2
vols.ed. Franciscus Salesius Schmitt (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag [Günther Holzboog] 1968);
Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* I.47 in *Summa Philosophica seu De Veritate Catholicae Fidei Contra
Gentiles,* ed. P. Lethielleux (Parisiis: Imprimerie Laloux fils et Guillot, 1877); and Gisbertus Voetius,
*Disputatio philosophico-theologica, continens quaestiones duas, de Distinctione Attributorum divinorum,
& Libertate Voluntatis* (Utrecht: Joannes à Waesberge, 1652), pt. II, thesis ii.

Under this more metaphysical understanding of possibles, free contingencies and the possibility of contrary choice are not grounded in the "existence" of parallel possible worlds or in transworld identity. Contingency and alternate possibles are ontologically grounded in things or possible things, namely, the First Cause willing free creatures, the nature of free creatures itself, and the creature's choice. Note that both the myriad of potencies and the free relationship to which of these potencies is actualized are part of the concept of *that* individual in *that* possible world. In the case of Margot, the nature of Margot's freedom is part of the concept of this particular Margot; no parallel Margot is needed in some other possible world to make Margot free or her actions contingent. Hence, we need not posit Margot1 and Margot2, each residing in discrete possible worlds; it suffices that this Margot has inward potencies to multiple acts and freedom of choice regarding his course of action. These ontological facts suffice to make sense of statements regarding the (real) possibility of contrary choice.[58] Simply because the idea of Margot includes the idea of her freely choosing one particular act over another, this neither eliminates the fact that her will grounds possibles she has not chosen nor negates that her choosing is free and could be otherwise.[59] For possibles in this scheme identify what has ontic grounding, given the nature of things, while the actual identifies what is contingently actualized in such a way that it could be otherwise. This ontology is what grounds contingency and the reality of contrary choice, not parallel possible worlds.[60]

Another way of putting the difference between Scotus' view and the contemporary approach is this. The contemporary discussion tends to link possible

---

[58] See Scotus, *Lectura* I.39,5.45-8.

[59] Cf. Scotus, *Lectura* I.39,5.46-50.

[60] See, e.g., Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.45-48; and 60.

worlds with the logically possible and thus link contrary choice with transworld identity. In this approach, if there is no subject-predicate conflict, the specific semantic combination constitutes a logically possible world. Therefore, if Joe can be related to *p* or *~p* without contradiction, both *Joe wills* p and *Joe wills* ~p each constitute a discrete semantic world. By contrast, the metaphysical discussion of real possibles takes a more robust meaning of *possible worlds*. The ontology in play is derived from Medieval realism. To the medieval mind, *contingent* entails that existence is an accidental property, or a predicate that is compatible with but unnecessary to the concept of the given thing. Under such a metaphysic, possible (or contingent) worlds are worlds that subsist in the mind of God (i.e., in the realm of the possible) just as they would in reality with the exception that they lack the property of existence. The singular difference between this world as it subsists in the realm of the possible and this world as it subsists in the realm of the actual is that in the realm of the actual it possesses this additional property.

For this very reason, future contingents obtain in possible worlds in precisely the same way they obtain in the real world. This is why it was said in chapter 4 that the best starting point for thinking about possible worlds is not semantic or logical subject-predicate relations; the best starting point is the real world. For this is the one possible world (granted existence) to which we have direct access, and from which we may conceptually work backwards by removing the predicate *exists* to arrive at a possible world. Starting here, what we find is that individuals face choices and, though having the power of contrary choice, must settle on one choice to the exclusion of others. No parallel individuals are generated by this choice, nor are they needed to protect freedom. For freedom resides in the nature of choice itself. Margot is free because, by natural

necessity, she has libertarian capacities and thus is freely related to *p* in such a way that she could have chosen ~*p* instead—even though she did not. The fact that she cannot choose *p* and ~*p* simultaneously is no threat to her freedom, nor is it a threat to her freedom that there is no universe next door in which a parallel Margot exists choosing ~*p*. So it is in possible worlds. Individuals do not float from world to world; nor do they exist in multiple worlds, with multiple lives, landing in multiple fates. Just as in the real world, they subsist with a single identity and a single, freely-chosen fate in their discrete world. But also as in the real world, their choices are always such that they could have chosen otherwise, and it is this (not some parallel self) that makes their choice free and contingent. The only difference is that those in the realm of the possible lack existence. And it is this property that God grants to a given possible world, should he decree that it move from the realm of the possible to the realm of the actual. The proof of this fact is the contingency of our world, which demands that it once subsisted only in the realm of the possible just as it does now in the realm of the actual with the exception of existence.

Notice that this metaphysical approach to the issue of contingency enables us to accept the charge that an anti-haecceitas view cannot draw any real connection between Raleigh in PW1 and Raleigh in PW2; they are discrete particulars. However, this concession has no bearing on the ability of either the pro-hylomorphism or pro-haecceitas positions to affirm free choice, since this divide between Raleigh1 and Raleigh2 is irrelevant to the question of Raleigh's freedom in PW1 under the older metaphysic. In fact, the divide is as irrelevant as the divide between any other discrete enduring subjects (say Chas and Raleigh). For freedom is not grounded in parallel possible selves in parallel possible worlds, but in the nature of freedom itself.

If Leibniz is indeed working amid such a metaphysic, as argued in Part 2, such a conclusion clears up the confusion surrounding Leibniz's views on transworld identity, superessentialism, and freedom. Under the older metaphysical approach, Leibniz can deny transworld identity, affirming that an enduring subject (such as Raleigh) subsists in only world possible world (say PW1). For this reason, Leibniz can also affirm that a modification to the predicates associated with Raleigh in PW1 would yield a different Raleigh and a different world. But he can also affirm that these choices (and other predicates) obtain contingently, denying superessentialism. For all of these same points can be made in reference to the real world. If our world were otherwise, it would not be the present world; and if my choices were otherwise, I would not be the present me. I have no parallel self. But this does not mean that my accidents are not accidents or that my choices are not contingent. For it is the nature of my power of choice itself—the libertarian capacities I possess—that make my choice such that it could be otherwise and grounds meaningful references to alternative possibilities that I could have actualized. But in the end, only one set of choices obtain (albeit contingently) in this world. Such is true in both the realm of the possible and the realm of the actual.

3. Leibniz and the Problem of Divine Determinism

The above solution may help secure freedom for Raleigh or Margot, but what are we to make of divine freedom? It will be recalled that one of the first arguments offered by Blumenfeld for Leibnizian necessitarianism centered on *God's* lack of freedom, which, by extension, carries implications for creaturely freedom (or the lack thereof). In this section, we will look at the question of divine freedom and whether the above

framework merely delays the problem of Leibnizian necessitarianism, given Leibniz's understanding of divine choice.

Leibniz espouses that the very idea of God entails that God always choose the best. Hence, when it comes to creation, we can have confidence that the world God has chosen to create (i.e., our world) is the best possible world (BPW). This central point in Leibniz's theodicy raises serious concerns regarding free choice—for both God and creatures. First, the *prime facie* reading of this claim is that God has no freedom regarding which world to create. To wit: the very nature of God entails that God will BPW and only BPW; no other choice is compatible with the divine nature.

Second, this lack of freedom in God appears to carry implications for creaturely freedom. For if the very concept of a contingent thing entails the concepts of those things on which it is contingent (as Leibniz maintains), and if all contingent things are ultimately traceable to their common non-contingent ground, God (as Leibniz also maintains), then in order for a thing to rise to the level of a real possible (i.e., to have ontic grounding), it must be compatible with BPW, since the very concept of the divine nature entails the choosing of BPW and only BPW. With regard to creaturely freedom, any creaturely choice that is contrary to the choices found in BPW would thereby be void of ontic grounding. Hence, all contrary choices fall outside the realm of real possibles.

Third, such a metaphysic casts suspicion on even the logical possibility of contrary choice. Since Leibniz maintains that the concept of a given thing is not isolated but implies an entire world, the question of subject-predicate coherence extends beyond the creature to those things external to the creature but entailed by its concept—the greatest of which is God. If a predicate is applied to Raleigh that does not obtain in BPW,

then this subject-predicate combination would constitute a logical impossibility, given that the predicate runs into contradiction when traced back to its First Cause. Hence, it may well be that any subject-predicate combinations regarding choices contrary to those that obtain in BPW are not only ontologically but logically impossible. Even this very minor difference between Leibniz and Spinoza would then dissolve.

To address these difficulties, I will divide the problem of divine freedom into two distinct issues to be addressed in separate sub-sections. First, I will address the question of whether, granting divine determinism, creaturely freedom is also undermined. By appeal to the metaphysic of the previous section, I will argue that creaturely freedom could survive divine determinism. The second issue I will address is whether Leibniz does in fact affirm divine determinism, or is ineluctably driven to it, given his premises elsewhere. I will argue that Leibniz neither affirms divine determinism, nor needs to affirm divine determinism, since he has sufficient resources in his philosophy to preserve divine choice.

3.1. Divine Determinism and Creaturely Freedom

It will be recalled that the way in which Blumenfeld articulated the difficulty of divine determinism and the problems it creates for creaturely choice was as follows:

(1) N(God exists).

(2) N(If God exists, God wills what is best).

(3) N(If God wills what is best, God actualizes BPW).

(4) N(If God actualizes BPW, BPW actually exists).

(5) Hence, N(BPW actually exists). (From (1)-(4)).

(6) If (5) is true, then everything that occurs, occurs necessarily.

(7) Thus, everything that occurs, occurs necessarily. (From (5)-(6)).

(8) If everything that occurs, occurs necessarily, then no one ever acts freely.

(9) Therefore, no one ever acts freely. (From (7) and (8)).[61]

Added to this difficulty was the very peculiar implication that counterparts (or whatever one might prefer to name alternate selves with alternate choices) have their grounding first in divine choice. Hence, one implication of God willing something other than BPW is that, in so doing, God would be willing a world in which he does not exist. Such absurdity would appear to give *prime facie* evidence that anything other than BPW is simply impossible, being utterly incompatible with the concept and nature of God.

In order to answer Blumenfeld, we must keep before us the differences between the contemporary approach to modality employed and the metaphysical approach discussed in the previous section. As argued above, the metaphysical approach does not locate contingency in alternate possible worlds or alternate possible selves. To treat contingency and possible worlds as one and the same topic is, by these scholastic lights, to conflate two distinct issues. Assuming Leibniz is working with this same voluntarist metaphysic, as I have argued, the same is true when these issues are collapsed in Leibniz studies. Granting this older view to Leibniz, contingency does not require the "existence" of an alternate self or alternate world. Free contingencies require (a) the grounding of free agents and their choices by God willing their possible existence, (b) a creaturely nature in these free agents that has multiple potencies that thereby ground multiple real possibles, and (c) the libertarian capacity in these agents to choose one of these potencies in such a

---

[61] Blumenfeld, "Superessentialism," 104.

way that another could have been chosen (PAP). So long as all three of the above

conditions obtain in BPW, the freedom of choosing agents is preserved. Whether there

"exists" an alternate possible world or alternate possible individual very much like our

free individual in BPW is irrelevant to the issue of that individual's freedom in BPW.

By the light of the above reading of contingency, premises (6) and (7) in

Blumenfelds argument fall into the error of conflating the issue of possible worlds and

the issue of contingency. Even if BPW necessarily exists, as per the necessary existence

of God and God's necessary choosing of the best, this does not demonstrate that all that

occurs within BPW is modally necessary. (I am here interpreting modality through the

above metaphysic, rather than contemporary possible world semantics.)

The common wisdom against which I am here arguing is a certain use of the

distribution axiom: $\Box(A{\rightarrow}B){\rightarrow}(\Box A{\rightarrow}\Box B)$. While I think it is certainly the case that if

there is a modal necessity to A, and there is a necessity to the if-then relationship between

A and B, then the modal necessity of A entails a distribution of modal necessity to B. If A

is God's willing of the existence of Chas and concurrence in Chas' free choice, then it

indeed follows that whatever Chas freely chooses necessarily occurs. However, I

understand this modal necessity to indicate the necessity of a category of thing, namely,

whatever it is that Chas freely chooses. Contingency regarding the particularity of what

Chas chooses can survive this type of necessity.

By way of analogy, let us say that there is a choosing agent standing before three

doors (door *p*, *q*, and *r*), and behind each door is a chef. The respective chefs may freely

cook whatever they choose. Now, if there is a modal necessity to the choosing agent's

choosing of door *q*, then there is a modal necessity that the choosing agent open the door

to whatever it is that the chef behind door *q* cook. However, because the chef behind door *q* freely chooses what he cooks, unbound by modal necessity, there is no necessity to the particular dish that this necessary choice entails. The species of thing chosen is modally necessary (*whatever is behind door* q); the particular is contingent and variable.

So in the same way I think it is possible for free choice to survive divine determinism. Even if it is granted that God necessarily wills BPW, this does not mean all that occurs in BPW is modally necessary. For if part of BPW is God's willing that there are free agents in BPW that accomplish whatever they freely choose, then modal necessity applies only to the category of thing—*whatever they freely choose*—not to the particular choice. God, in his foreknowledge, would still have certainty of what this category of thing will yield—hence the decree entails a foreknown particular, or hypothetical necessity—but metaphysically speaking, the particular could be otherwise since it is grounded in the libertarian freedom of the agent decreed and upheld by divine concourse, as argued in the previous section. (The distinction between the infallible and the necessary is relevant here.)

Another way of making the same point is this. The problem of divine determinism asks, in part, whether freedom can survive if the idea of God entails that he make only one specific world. Framed in this way, the question may benefit from consideration of a feature of Patristic literature. In the writings of the Church fathers generally, there is no indication that multiple possible futures attach to a given world—an important contrast with contemporary authors. I think it fair to say that contemporary thinkers often think in terms of multiple possible futures attaching to one world or, perhaps more accurately, one world system. Hence, if God considers creating possible world system 1 (PWS1), then

several possible futures (PFs) attach to PWS1, and each coupling of PWS1 with a different PF constitutes its own possible world (PW). Hence, PWS1 + PF1 = PW1; PWS1 + PF2 = PW2; etc. This is the rationale behind the idea that, if Adam freely sins in PWS1, then PWS1 + *Adam freely sins* constitutes one possible world, while PWS1 + *Adam freely does not sin* constitutes a second possible world. This thinking is foreign to Patristic literature, however.

What we see in the Church fathers, and on into early Medieval thought, is the idea that a given world has a single future attached to it, namely, whatever future contingents are foreknown to be true of that world. Even though the free creatures have multiple potencies and freedom regarding what they choose, the law of excluded middle still applies, such that whatever is future in that world is future. In other words, there is only one answer to the question *What is future?* as applied to a given world. That future is indeed contingent and could be otherwise, given the nature of free choice, but there is still a knowable or determinate truth to what will be freely done in that world.[62]

Because we have focused on the Augustinian tradition throughout this project, I will take Augustine as an example. As discussed in chapter 2 above, in book 5 of *civitas Dei*, Augustine addresses Cicero's concern that divination undermines free choice.[63] His reply is (1) the will is itself a cause that is of necessity free; (2) the Christian notion of

---

[62] See, e.g., Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem,* 2.5-7 (PL 2:289b-294a); Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo,* 88; 102; 140; and 141 (PG 6:685a-8b, 711d-6a, 795c-8b, 797b-800b); Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata,* 1.17 (PG 8:795b-802d); Irenaeus of Lyons, *Contra haereses,* 4.29; 4.38.4 (PG 7a:1063b-4c; 1180d-1109b); Origen, *De oratione,* 4 (PG 11:427b-430a); Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio catechetica magna,* 6-7 (PG 45:11); and Anselm, *De Concordia* 1.1-2, and 3.4. It is a later medieval development to think of God as dealing first with multiple possible worlds to which he adds existence. In fact, it is questionable whether such a concept is fully developed prior to Molina, given that Scotus himself, who lays all the groundwork necessary for such a theory, stops short of developing a theory of possible worlds. See Vos, *John Duns Scotus*, 492, n. 63.

[63] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.9 (PL 41:148-52).

providence sees God as bent on preserving free choice.[64] For our purposes here, I want to

focus on the second point. Augustine develops a dynamic picture of the relationship

between God and creatures, placing the Christian understanding of providence and divine

decree in contrast to the Stoic notion of fate. Fate, for the Greeks, advances without

reference to human freedom: What the fates have woven before Zeus must be;[65] all that is

left to freedom is whether what is fated occurs willfully (as per Zeno of Citium) or

ironically (as per Oedipus).[66] Providence, by contrast, takes into account what is

foreknown about human freedom, dynamically weaving together God's ends with the

free actions of men. In developing the point, Augustine inverts the foreknowledge

problem, arguing that the very concept of foreknowledge implies a subject-object

relationship: foreknowledge implies there is something in the subject to be foreknown.

Contrary to Cicero, who fears that foreknowledge implies necessity, Augustine argues

that foreknowledge demonstrates the opposite, namely, the future existence of wills that

make free choices.[67] The balance here is between the ontic dependence of creatures upon

God's decrees and the genuine freedom of creatures. Our existence as creatures is wholly

dependent upon God; yet, it is God who chooses to create free agents and permit them to

achieve what they will. Hence, God's decrees in eternity display a synergistic subject-

object relationship rooted in foreknowledge and preservation of free choice: "A man does

---

[64] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.9 (PL 41:148-52).

[65] Cf. Epictetus, *Discourses,* 1.1; 1.14; 2.6; 2.14, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* 520 vols., eds. T. E. Page, et al*.,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), vol. 131, 6-15; 100-15; 246-55; 306-15.

[66] See Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* in *The Loeb Classical Series* ed. Hugh Lloyd-Jones, et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), vol. 20, 335-39, 361, 397-99, 469-71, 483.

[67] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10 (PL 41:152-3).

not sin unless he wills to sin; and if he had willed not to sin, then God would have foreseen that refusal."[68]

Notice that Augustine does not understand creaturely freedom to ground several possible worlds—some in which a given agent does this and others in which he does that. Rather, Augustine understands God's decree that a given free agent exists and achieves what he freely chooses to entail a single foreknown outcome that is foreseen because it will be so. Unlike a view that understands God to determine which world is better—the world in which Adam sins or the world in which Adam does not sin—the older view understands divine prerogative to fall to the question of whether Adam exist; the hypothetical necessity that attaches to the world in which Adam exists (e.g., *Adam eats from the tree*) falls to Adam; God's decree is permissive and in keeping with his decision that Adam exist and have freedom. And Augustine is not alone.

I think it fair to say that Patristic writers generally do not seem to have a concept of possible worlds subsisting in the mind of God that precede God's decision to grant one existence. Writers such as Tertullian speak as if God's choice to create the world is the very thing that grounds God's foreknowledge of what will transpire in it. In fact, Tertullian goes so far as to suggest that it would be unjust of God to interact with creatures, or penalize them, on the basis of things they have not yet done. Hence, if it is foreknown that man sins, God cannot justly revoke the gift of freedom on the basis of that foreknowledge, since this would be to punish man for misconduct that he has not yet engaged in nor would engage in if his freedom were revoked.[69] The implication is that

---

[68] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 5.10 (PL 41:152-3).

[69] See Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem,* 25-7; 2.24 (PL 2:289b-94a, 292d-4a).

God cannot justly make decisions based on a merely possible world, but must interact with actual creatures and actual worlds if he is to deal justly with creatures.

Now, combining this understanding of foreknowledge as linked to the actual only with John of Damascus' comments on providence, we arrive at the same problem at the fore of this section. John of Damascus displays all the same assumptions concerning foreknowledge as his fellow Patristic writers, but he adds to it the following view of providence:

> [P]rovidence is that will of God by which all existing things receive suitable guidance through to their end. But, if providence is God's will, then, according to right reason, *everything that has come about through providence has quite necessarily come about in the best manner and that most befitting God, so that it could not have happened in a better way*.... God alone is by nature good and wise. Consequently, in so far as He is good He provides, because one who does not provide is not good. Even men and brute beasts naturally provide for their own offspring, and the one that does not will incur blame. Then, in so far as He is wise He provides for existing things in the very best way.[70]

If we grant that God does not face a choice between multiple possible worlds, but creates only one and knows only its future, and we add to this view that God's act of creation and all his subsequent acts of providence are (by their very concept) done in the very best way, void of all deliberation, then we may ask the very same question of John that we pose to Leibniz: *Is our world and all that occurs in it absolutely necessary?*

One feature of the answer is found in the qualification that John adds to his claim that God does the best, and this qualification opens the door to the very reply offered above. He states, "I am referring to those things which do not depend upon us, because those which do depend upon us do not belong to providence, but to our own free will."[71]

---

[70] John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa,* 2.29 (PG 94:963a-70b) (emphasis mine).

[71] John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa,* 2.29 (PG 94:963a-70b).

In other words, John's view of providence includes the idea that God deemed it best to give to certain creatures free choice and permit them to act freely, even when their choices are not the best. In this light, I think we can safely say that John presumes that our world is the BPW (following from the idea of providence). But because one feature of the best is the existence of free creatures, the particulars that attach to the BPW may vary. Had the future that attached to our world include Adam not eating of the apple, for example, this would not change the fact that ours is the best world system, that God's choices in our world would be done in the best way, or that God's way of synergizing our ends with his own would be done in the very best way. What would change is merely the content added by us which providence engages.

Returning, then, to the case made earlier (viz., that creaturely freedom can survive divine determinism if God necessarily wills the existence of free creatures and permit them to act freely), John's claims regarding providence is in keeping with this case. John grants a categorical necessity that God always choose the best. Even if we infer from this that it is necessary that God choose to create our world system and that it is equally necessary that God conduct himself in the best possible way amid world history, it does not follow that either necessity entails that every happening in our world is modally necessary. For one of the things that the above necessities entails is that God create free creatures and permit them to behave freely—a common assumption throughout Patristic literature. Hence, even if we take the claim that God always does the best to indicate that God lacks freedom of contrary choice (a claim neither I nor John of Damascus grant), free variables would remain, given the existence of free creaturely agents and God's decree to permit them to choose freely.

Building on this point, it is noteworthy that if the divine decree entails variables in our world—namely, the free choices of creatures—this adds a reciprocal layer of modal contingency to divine choice as well. For if providence entails that God do all things in the very best way, but this *best* includes God giving it to creatures to determine certain futurities, then God's providential acts in history are not monergistic. Rather, God's providential acts are *best* in a synergistic sense.[72] We can thus be certain that God has orchestrated his ends in this world in the best way, given the fact of Adam's sin, for example, but if Adam's sin is free in a libertarian sense and could be otherwise, the orchestration of God's ends (as well as the particularities of divine concourse) would look different had Adam not sinned.

In this light, if the modal necessity applied to creation in the distribution axiom entails only a necessary genus of thing (i.e., *it is necessary that whatever a free creaturely freely chooses come to pass*), which leaves the particular choice contingent, then the same follows with regard to the divine modal necessity in the distribution axiom: God does things in the best possible way, but because this *best* entails the preservation of free contingencies, the modal necessity that God do the best must apply to the genus of divine action only. There is a reciprocal contingency here between free contingencies and what constitutes the *best* relative to those contingencies. In other words, $\Box(A{\rightarrow}B){\rightarrow}(\Box A{\rightarrow}\Box B)$ holds true in reference to the God-world relationship if *A* refers to the categorical *best* and *B* refers to the necessity of freedom entailed by the best; however, because the categorical necessity of freedom entails contingent particulars, and

---

[72] I am here speaking in terms of providence generally. I am not offering a judgment on the soteriological question of whether regeneration is mongeristic (counter-Remonstrant) or synergistic (Remonstrant).

best in the context of providence is synergistic, the particulars of providence must also reflect the modality of freedom. Hence, on the synergistic particulars of providence, $\lozenge C \rightarrow \lozenge D$ holds where *C* represents particular free choices and *D* is the best providential use of these particulars in the orchestration of divine ends.[73]

Now, to be sure, this layer of modal contingency does not demonstrate freedom in God. It merely hedges against the danger of absolute necessity in God's decree, which some fear could spill over into creation. The point is simply this: even if God is somehow determined by his nature to do as he does and no different, this does not amount to absolute necessity, since part of what God does is preserve freedom in creatures.

In sum, if Leibniz is working under the metaphysical approach to possible worlds described in §2 above, then we have reason to think that even if God necessarily chooses the BPW and this genus of divine action is modally necessary this would not mean that the same necessity extends to free actions in the BPW. For one of the necessities to which God's wisdom and goodness bind him is his willing of the existence of free creatures, the preservation of their choices, and his making the best use of what these creatures choose. Hence, this modal necessity in God (should there be one) would not pass to the particular choices free creatures make. Quite the contrary, this modal necessity would make it an absolute necessity that creatures within the BPW are free.

3.2. Leibniz and Divine Freedom

The foregoing defense of contingency still presumes that divine determinism is an implication of Leibniz's view of providence. But is this so? Does Leibniz believe that

---

[73] In the above if-then relationship, $\lozenge$ means *Contingent.*

God has free choice? If so, does Leibniz's metaphysic leave adequate room for such a belief?

In addressing these questions, I will begin by addressing one of the issues that is more easily dealt with, namely, the issue of moral necessity. It will be recalled that in chapters 2 and 3 this problem came to the fore. Some readers take Leibniz's affirmation that God acts by moral necessity (e.g., C 21) to be a denial of the power of contrariety and thus an affirmation of psychological determinism.[74] As we saw, however, Leibniz merely affirms the very traditional position that God (and the blessed) always acts out of virtue (*ex virtute agant*); there is no indication that this in itself entails psychological determinism. Patristic writers recognize that God operates by moral necessity, but reject outright divine determinism as entirely contrary to Christian theology;[75] early Medieval writers, such as Anselm, plainly identify God as operating in accord with moral necessity, but simultaneously reject the notion that God's choices displays modal necessity;[76] and, as we saw in chapter 2, both Medieval intellectualists and voluntarists recognize the danger of inferring divine determinism from divine moral necessity, but both camps are committed to avoiding this conclusion.[77] The Reformed scholastics, as we saw, also echo this conclusion. Franciscus Junius is clear that God is the freest of beings, and, though recognizing that God operates out of moral necessity, Junius notes that God retains freedom of contradiction with regard to singular goods and freedom of contrariety with

---

[74] See, e.g., Jack Davidson, "Imitators of God: Leibniz on Human Freedom," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 36, no. 3 (1998): 402-5.

[75] See, e.g, Irenaeus, *Contra haereses,* 2.1.1; and 2.5.4 (PG 7a:709c-10a; 723c-4a); Ambrose, *De fide ad gratianum Augustum* 2.6 (PL 16:569); and John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa,* 1.14 (PG 94:860a-2a).

[76] Cf. Anselm, *De Concordia,* 1.3 with 3.4.

[77] See chapter 2, §1.2 above.

regard to multiple goods.[78] Franciscus Gomarus is equally clear on this point, and makes

additionally clear his denial of compatibilism in favor of libertarianism. For he sees a

mere lack of coercion as inadequate for true freedom (even falling rocks and dogs are

free from coercion); freedom of contrariety and contradiction refer to the real possibility

of the opposite outcome (PAP), the knowledge of the object remaining the same.[79]

Hence, there is clear precedence within the Augustinian tradition for affirming both

moral necessity in God and libertarian choice with regard to God's specific acts.

The more serious difficulties surrounds the question of whether God's specific

acts are absolutely necessary, given Leibniz's claim that the very concept of God entails

that God know and choose the best. For even if the claim of the previous subsection that

the best is relative to creaturely choice is so, this only demonstrates that the

circumstances with which providence deals could be otherwise; it does not indicate that

the possibility of contrary action in God is grounded in divine freedom. Instead, we have

only established that God, acting relative to free creatures, may well have acted otherwise

had his creatures acted otherwise. Can divine determinism be avoided, given Leibniz's

insistence that God necessary knows and wills the best? I believe it can.

To begin answering this question, I will return once again to John of Damascus,

whom, we have noted, is a forerunner of Leibniz's claim that the very concept of

providence indicates that God always knows and does the best.[80] In keeping with the

---

[78] See Franciscus Junius, *Theses theologicae Leydenses et Heydelbergenses* in *D. Francisci Junii Opuscula theological selecta*, ed. Abraham Kuyper (Amsterdam: F. Muller and J. Hermann, 1882), xxii.

[79] See the second definition of a "free act" in Franciscus Gomarus (Gilbertus Jacchaeus), *Disputatio theologica de libero arbitrio* (Leiden: I. Patii, 1603); see also Gomarus's pupil, Voetius, *Disputatio philosophico-theologica*. See also chapter 3, §1.3 above.

[80] John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa,* 2.22 (PG 94:939d-50a).

faculty psychology of the Church fathers, John understands creaturely deliberation regarding means and ends to indicate ignorance, fallibility, and corruptibility—ignorance because it shows uncertainty regarding the good; fallibility because the creature is susceptible to apparent goods, rather than true goods; and corruptibility because the creature is open to goods inferior to the highest good. Neither ignorance, nor fallibility, nor corruptibility applies to God, however. Hence, John concludes that deliberation is wrongly applied to the deity who always knows the best means relative to any given end and is always disposed toward the good. In keeping with these premises, the extension to the conclusion that our world, being chosen by God, is thereby the BPW is not surprising. John of Damascus, as we saw above, explicitly affirms this implication in his treatment of providence.[81] Given Leibniz's familiarity with and use of this particular passage in John, it is worth asking whether John, the forerunner of Leibniz, understands this conclusion to entail divine determinism.

John does not spend a good deal of time on the question of divine freedom. However, in the context of expositing God's immutability and, subsequently, his eternal acts of knowing, seeing, and willing, John offers a very brief statement aimed at the preservation of divine freedom amid divine immutability: "And, finally, there is the fact that all that He wills He can do, even though He does not will all the things that He can do—for He can destroy the world, but He does not will to do so."[82] John indicates that divine power is capable of carrying out whatever God wills, but this does not mean that God does everything of which he is capable. In short, John echoes the standard patristic

---

[81]John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa,* 2.29 (PG 94:963a-70b).

[82]John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa,* 1.14 (PG 94:860a-2a).

position that God possesses the power of choice regarding *how* he uses his power and

thus acts freely, unbound by necessity.[83] To speak anachronistically, John defends the

idea that God has both freedom of contrariety (there are things that God's power makes

possible but God does not do) and freedom of contradiction (though he has chosen to

preserve our world, he could choose to destroy it).

In his Greek context, John presumes a distinction between the nature (*ousia* or

physis) of a thing and its operations (*energeia*). Just as the mind has a simple rational

nature but many operations (math, logic, linguistics, etc.), so with God, the divine *ousia*

is one and simple, but the operations (*kata energeia*) of its innate powers (*kata dynamus*)

are many.[84] Such a distinction was thought vital in Greek patristic thought (a) because

they presumed both the simplicity of the divine nature and the irreducible multiplicity of

divine operations,[85] and (b) because, despite the natural necessity that God is what he is,

God retains freedom regarding his chosen use of his natural operative power.[86] The latter

point is the Greek patristic equivalent of the later Latin scholastic distinction between

God's absolute power (*potentia absoluta*) and ordained power (*potentia ordinata*).[87]

---

[83] Cf., e.g., Irenaeus, *Contra haereses,* 2.1.1; and 2.5.4 (PG 7a:709c-10a; 723c-4a).

[84] See John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa,* 1.9 and 13 (PG 94:833b-8b and 849c-60a); cf. Basil of Caesarea, *Epistolae*, 234 (PG 32:867b-72a). See also David Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West: Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1-5. Cf. Aristotle, *Topics* 1.15 106b19-20; *Protrepticus* B63-5; and B79-80. For various uses of *energeia* in Aristotle, see Chung-Hwan Chen, "Different Meanings of the Term Energeia in the Philosophy of Aristotle," *Philosophy and the Phenomenological Research* 17 (1956): 56-65.

[85] John of Damascus , *De fide orthodoxa,* 1.9 (PG 94:833b-8b); cf. Basil, *Epistolae* 234.1-3 (PG 32:867b-72a).

[86] See John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa,* 1.3-4; 1.9; and 1.14 (PG 94:793b-800c; 833b-8b; and 862a-9a).

[87] On the topic of God's absolute power versus God's ordained power, see William Courtenay, *Capacity and Volition: A History of the Distinction of Absolute and Ordained Power* (Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina Editore, 1990); and Francis Oakley, "The Absolute and Ordained Power of God in Sixteenth- and Seventheenth-Century Theology," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59, no. 3 (1998): 437-61.

John's rejoinders to divine determinism have clear precedence in Leibniz's own texts. Leibniz affirms, with John, that God knows all determinate truths without deliberation (G 6.126; 129; 131-2), and Leibniz affirms that God never fails to do the best when acting; hence, whatever world he has chosen to create must be the BPW (G 6.49-50; 106-7; 127; 131-2). Moreover, Leibniz affirms, like John, that God's power grounds a great many possibles (even if John does not develop this into a possible world metaphysic) that are nowhere actual (e.g., G 6.115; 126). Yet, the most significant qualifier John offers is that God has freedom of contrariety and of contradiction. As argued above, John understands providence to always do the best in whatever world God has chosen to create, but John is clear that God need not do anything, and thus, to make the world and uphold its ongoing existence is a matter of divine choice. Can Leibniz say the same?

In answer to this question, I begin by returning to a point made in chapter 4 in my treatment of *Theodicée*. It will be recalled that in my treatment of free choice, I identified two key features of choice, identified by Leibniz, that protect against determinism. The first is that the mind is able to slow and redirect patterns of thoughts, stirring and working within various determined pathways. We illustrated the point with reference to a metal ball in a maze that could be tilted this way and that.[88] Unfortunately, this solution is of no help in reference to God. For the analogy presumes the successive and mutative existence of creatures, the assailing passions, and other influences that prompt certain involuntary movements with which the mind must work. Such realities do not apply to God.

---

[88] See chapter 4, §1.3 above.

The second point raised is more helpful in the current context, namely, the scholastic distinction between *volo* (choice), *nolo* (active resistance), and *non volo* (passive refraining from choice). I argued that, while Leibniz maintains that the will always chooses in keeping with the dominant inclination, this does not in itself require determinism or undermine contrary choice because the creature need not choose at all. Here the concept of *non volo* is key, for if the statement *the creature need not choose* is read as *nolo,* then this is simply a negative choice that must therefore reflect the dominant inclination. However, if *the creature need not choose* is understood as *non volo*, this indicates a lack of movement or passivity, which is not a choice in the proper sense of opting for one option over another; it is a withholding of choice. This seems to be the best reading of John of Damascus' claim that God need not do anything of which he is capable. While John would not use the Latin terminology of *non volo,* it was common for the Church fathers to insist that no passion or reason can move the will, which is precisely why the will must move itself;[89] hence, John's claim is that only God's will can move God to action.

The value of the *non volo / nolo* distinction in the creaturely context is that it enables Leibniz to affirm that action is always in keeping with the dominant inclination without presuming determinism. For Leibniz could affirm, as argued in chapter 4, that if Etheline chooses at T_1, Etheline will choose in keeping with her dominant inclination at T_1; however, Etheline is free to not choose (*non volo*) at T_1 and wait until T_2 or T_3. If Etheline refrain from choosing at T_1 and choose at T_2 instead, Etheline's dominant inclination may well be different than at T_1. Hence, determinism does not follow simply

---

[89] See, e.g., Origen, *De principiis,* 3.1.4 (PG 11:251c-4b).

because the will always chooses in keeping with the dominant inclination. For the will is never compelled to movement by any inclination; it remains free to choose (*volo*) or not choose (*non volo*). Could this *nolo* / *non volo* distinction be used by Leibniz in defense of divine freedom?

On first blush, the answer appears to be No, or at least not in the same way. Unlike creatures, God is immutable; hence, no mutation in inclining reasons occurs. It would thereby seem to follow that whatever inclining reason toward the BPW is in God, that reason must be an extension of his nature (i.e., his knowledge, wisdom, and goodness), and God necessarily chooses as he does. That is, even though it is God's choice to do the best in every instance, and this is the first of the divine decrees (G 7.309-10), this decree is the only choice compatible with the divine nature. (We will return to the question of whether Leibniz's theology negates divine freedom of contrariety in a moment, but for now, let us grant it.) While we cannot say the same of God that we say of Etheline—namely, that if God refrains from choosing for a time his inclining reasons will shift—it is important to recognize nonetheless that Leibniz grants the freedom to not choose (*non volo*) to God. In a statement on modal contingency, Leibniz writes, "And therefore, one may concede that it is necessary to God to choose the best [*optimum*], or the best is necessary; yet, it does not follow that to choose is necessary, because no demonstration is given that the best is. And here in this place we have the recent distinction of some between the necessity of the consequence and consequent…. [I]n the end the necessity is a necessity of the consequence, not consequent, that … because the best is supposed from that granted hypothesis of the infallible election of the best is necessary" (A 6.4:1652). Leibniz here grants that *if* God choose, he chooses the best—

there is a necessity of the consequence (i.e., of the if-then relationship) at play. What he does not grant, however, is that there is a modal necessity in divine choice, full stop. For, as John of Damascus affirms, God need not choose at all. In short, God possesses freedom of contradiction.

At the very least, then, Leibniz is able to stay the necessity of divine choice, preserving God's freedom in one instance, namely, whether to choose. The BPW may well follow necessarily from divine choice should it occur, but the occurrence of divine choice does not follow necessarily from the divine nature or the idea of God; it has its roots in divine freedom. This would explain why Leibniz insists that our world is contingent because it is a product of divine freedom (e.g., G 6.50-1; 53-4; 216-7). If divine choice follows necessarily from the idea of God, then God's modal existence would extend to the BPW (as per the distribution axiom). However, Leibniz stays this necessity by affirming that God can withhold choice (A 6.4:1652).

Now, is this the only room Leibniz leaves for divine freedom? Is divine choice limited to the withholding of choice (*non volo*) or choose the BPW? Or might Leibniz have room for freedom of contrariety in God? To answer this question, we will need to look beyond John of Damascus to Medieval scholasticism (and beyond) in which divine choice is coupled with something much closer to the possible world metaphysics with which Leibniz is working. In particular, I will look at the approaches of Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus, respectively.

In keeping with John of Damascus, Aquinas affirms that the concept of providence entails that God always do the best.[90] To see how, we must review the

---

[90] Aquinas' similarities with John of Damascus are not incidental; rather, he cites John positively in his treatment of the subject. E.g., Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Ia q.83 a.1; and Ia-IIae q.6 aa.1-2.

difference between faculty psychology as understood in reference to creatures versus God, as discussed in chapter 2. Aquinas presumes that final causality is rooted in the nature of the given thing—the eye for seeing, the ear for hearing, and so on.[91] In reference to man, what the will desires is good, and the particular good the will desires is happiness. That is to say, happiness is the overarching end, or final cause, that governs all human choice.[92] While there is no liberty of choice with regard to this ruling end, freedom of choice remains in reference to subordinate ends and the means of achieving these subordinate ends.[93] In keeping with the governing end of happiness, Richie may choose life over death and thus will to eat rather than starve; and in reference to the subordinate end, *eat*, Richie has a freedom of means—*eat salad or pastrami*. Richie may also refrain from choosing (*non volo*), should none of these means be deemed desirable and not choosing be compatible with choosing life over death.[94]

Several differences emerge between divine and creaturely choice. First, as already stated in reference to John of Damascus, a key difference between God and creatures is that creatures are fallible and corruptible. As such, a creature may fail to see the true good and associate deficient subordinate ends with its final cause as well as deficient means with that subordinate end.[95] In the case of God, however, neither fallible judgment nor corruption is possible.[96] Second, according to Aquinas, God himself is the object of his

---

[91] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia q.82 a.1.

[92] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia q.19 a.3; and q.82 aa.1-2.

[93] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia q.82 a.2.

[94] See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Ia q.82 a.2; and Ia-IIae q.1 aa.1-8.

[95] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Ib q,6 a.2.

[96] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia q.14 a.7; q.19, a.3; and a7.

own willing. In other words, divine goodness is to God what happiness is to man.[97] Third, appetite in creatures is directed at an end it lacks and thus action brings a movement from potentiality toward actuality; however, such a movement is inapplicable in reference to divine goodness because God lacks nothing. The perfection of divine goodness is in fact what (or part of what) preserves divine freedom, for Aquinas. God may will his own goodness without willing creation. For divine goodness has no necessary attachment to any of the subordinate ends or means associated with those subordinate ends precisely because God's goodness lacks nothing and is not enhanced by his actions. To quote Aquinas, "Although God necessarily wills His own goodness, He does not necessarily will things willed on account of His goodness; for it can exist without other things."[98]

This third point is important to Aquinas' understanding of divine freedom. Aquinas speaks of the willing of both means and of ends. For example, he says, "if anyone in one act wills an end, and in another act the means to that end, his willing the end will be the cause of his willing the means."[99] Aquinas does not exclude such talk in reference to God; instead, he offers the qualification that God does not understand means subsequent to ends, but in conjunction with them: "Hence, as in God to understand the cause is not the cause of His understanding the effect, for He understands the effect in the cause, so, in Him, to will an end is not the cause of His willing the means, yet He wills the ordering of the means to the end. Therefore, He wills this to be as means to that; but does not will this on account of that."[100] As in the case of creatures, the governing end

---

[97] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Ia q.19 a.7.

[98] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Ia q.19 a.3.

[99] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Ia. q.19 a.5.

[100] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* Ia. q.19 a.5.

(for creatures happiness, for God divine goodness) canvasses all choices. Every choice is under this larger genus of acts, and in both God and creatures, there is no freedom with respect to that governing end. However, this does not mean that there is no freedom whatsoever with regard to ends. For there is a freedom with regard to ends subordinate to this final cause. A great many choices, including the choice to not create at all, are in keeping with divine goodness. The existence of PW1 or PW2 does not increase divine goodness; it is only a product of it.

In short, it is necessary that God will his own goodness, but because this goodness is perfect in itself, nothing willed attaches to it necessarily. We might think of it as if the governing end (divine goodness) constitutes the genus of whatever God wills; the subordinate end for which God creates the world is a species beneath this genus; and whatever God does in that world in service to that subordinate end constitutes the particulars within that species. Given the necessary connection between means and ends, the connection between the species and particulars is necessary; however, because the genus (divine goodness) has no necessary entailment, any of the species (subordinate ends) is in the purview of divine choice.

Leibniz's own texts offer little clarity on this particular solution to the problem of divine choice. No doubt Leibniz is working with an older faculty psychology that presumes judgment in reference to both means and ends (e.g., G 6.116-7; 119; 143-6). Moreover, Leibniz is clear that God is operating in relation to certain ends—God is rational, not arbitrary (e.g., G 6.218-21). What Leibniz leaves unclear is whether God has any liberty of subordinate ends. He is quite clear that means are not a matter of indifference to God because, like a grand Architect, he gives careful consideration to both

the whole and all the particulars contained therein (G 6.144-6). Because subordinate ends are themselves a means relative to the governing end, presumably subordinate ends are not a matter of indifference either. Later Leibnizians would invoke the idea of subordinate ends in response to the charge of necessitarianism.[101] But I think it would be a hard case to establish Leibniz's own sympathies for this solution.

Putting aside the question of textual evidence, a rather serious question lingers in my mind when considering the viability of Aquinas' solution for Leibniz. The first is raised by Leibniz's Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR). To wit, even if there is no necessary connection between divine goodness and its subordinate ends (the way there is between subordinate ends and their means) we still must ask: *What is the basis for God choosing a subordinate end?* It will be recalled that in chapter 4, the defense of libertarian freedom still granted that the will, when it wills, wills in keeping with the then-dominant inclination. Given that God's inclinations do not undergo change, I see an undesirable dichotomy afoot. On the one hand, we could force Aquinas to admit that the divine intellect has a reason for judging one subordinate end preferably to others—that is, for judging it best—and this admission would beg the question of why God does not see this subordinate end in conjunction with the governing end, just as he sees the best means in conjunction with subordinate ends. For at the end of the day, the chosen subordinate end is a means to the governing end. On the other hand, if Aquinas denied this connection to preserve God's freedom of contrariety (which is what this solution aims at) we could read Aquinas as endorsing equipoise. That is, because there are a host of subordinate ends

---

[101] See, e.g., *Philosophiæ Leibnitianæ & Wolphianæ Usus in Theologia, per præcipua Fidei capita: Præmittitur Disseratio de Ratione & Revelatione, de Natura & Gratia," in Historia Litteraria: Or, An Exact and Early Account of the Most Valuable Books Published in the Several Parts of Europe*, ed. Archibald Bower (Printed for N. Prevost, 1732), no. 20, vol. 4, art. 9, pp.191-92.

compatible with the governing end, and no subordinate end is tied by necessity to this governing end, there is a certain indifference in divine choice concerning subordinate ends—the practical intellect offers no decisive judgment to the will. This latter option, of course, would be rejected out of hand by Leibniz, as it makes God's choice arbitrary and irrational, and it espouses the chimera of indifference (e.g., G 6.218-21). Applied to Leibniz, then, this solution is no solution at all, since (from what I can tell) it demands either equipoise—a demand Leibniz could never meet—or a rejection of freedom of contrariety, which is the very problem it attempts to solve.

The only alternative I see under this particular solution is this. One could take the one horn of the dilemma above that does not eliminate freedom of contrariety (viz., equipoise), and argue that divine choice can still be rational and satisfy PSR. Let us suppose that because divine goodness is fully actualized and ontologically independent of creation, all subordinate ends are a matter of indifference, so long as they are compatible with God's justice and goodness. Reason therefore offers no judgment that may incline God toward one or another. Here, we arrive in the Buridan's ass scenario, so let us use this scenario as a starting point. As Lloyd Strickland has pointed out, the ass really faces three choices: pile of hay 1, pile of hay 2, or starve. If the ass has rejected the third choice (i.e., starvation), then he has a sufficient reason for choosing randomnly between hay 1 and hay 2.[102] Such a random choice would be the most rational decision available. And one could therefore argue, as Richard Swinburne has for different reasons, that God "has reason to use some process of random selection or some arbitrary feature of a world to

---

[102] See Lloyd Strickland, "God's Problem of Multiple Choices," *Religious Studies* 42 (2006):143-7.

determine which to create."[103] One need not go as far as Swinburne on Aquinas' solution; one could simply affirm that God randomly chooses a subordinate end, and this narrowing of the field, as it were, allows the intellect to offer definitive judgment concerning the best means to this subordinate end. God therefore has a clear rationale for his chosen means, but the subordinate end under which these sit is randomly selected.

The difficulty I see with this solution is threefold. First, it treats *non volo* as an affirmative choice. In other words, the solution presumes that God faces two choices: *create* or *do not create*. Presented in this way, however, God faces a choice between *volo* and *nolo*. But the latter presumes that an affirmative judgment has been made in reference to creation, and the will must decide whether to operate in accord with that judgment (*volo*) or refuse it (*nolo*). In the above scenario, however, the problem is that no affirmative judgment has been made that might be refused. Thus, the choice is one between random choice (*volo*) or passive restraint of choice (*non volo*). In this light, the choice is singular: *Do you want to act randomly?* If the answer is No, and we can easily see this as the response from a rational and good agent, *non volo* follows.

The response I anticipate to this objection brings us to the second difficulty I have with this solution, namely, that it is better to create than to not create. I expect that some might argue that the choice is better framed, not by randomness, but by creation: *Would you like to create a world?* The negative reply is not as obvious when framed in this way. However, I suspect the contemporary impulse to suggest that it is better for God to create

---

[103] Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 115. The context of Swinburne's remarks are his insistence that the notion of a best possible one is incoherent (see 113-4). On this point, see also J. L. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 173; Michael Banner, *The Justification of Science and the Rationality of Religious Belief* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 157; Joshua Hoffman and Gary S. Rosenkrantz, *The Divine Attributes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 158-9. We will consider this particular objection in the next chapter.

than to not create is due to a divergence from the older Patristic and Medieval metaphysics. My guess is that there is some sympathy for the notion that God gains something by creating; that perhaps his goodness or justice or love is not fully actual without objects on which to bestow them—they are mere potential. Suffice it to say that neither Aquinas nor Leibniz nor any other orthodox Patristic or Medieval figure would grant this. While it is part and parcel of creaturely existence that we are filled with potentiality that is not moved into actuality without active harnessing of this potency, this is not true of God. By way of analogy, I have the ability to learn to play the piano. If I begin to practice, this act will display whatever level of perfection I currently possess, but it will also serve to move my *potentiality* in this area into *actuality.* Let us say, however, that I harness my maximal potential in the area of piano, so that I became the greatest pianist the world has ever known, and I have no room for growth—no further potentiality to move into actuality. Two things would follow. First, when I play, I would not be moving potentiality into actuality, but merely displaying outwardly by operation (*energeia*) an inward perfection already possessed and fully actualized. Second, if I sat passively before a piano and told someone I was the greatest pianist the world has ever known, this statement would be true, even though I am not actively playing piano. And if I refused to play for that person, it would remain true. The latter part of the analogy is the closest creaturely approximation we have for God. In his act of creation, God does not move his own potential into actuality; he merely displays outwardly by this operation a perfection fully actualized and already possessed. This is what Aquinas means when he suggests that God's goodness is complete in itself and not enhanced by any subordinate end. In this light, it is not as obvious as one might think that God would choose creating

over not creating, anymore than a pianist might choose to play rather than not play. Moreover, if we frame the question by combining both of the above characterizations, we get this: *Do you want to create a world randomly?* Again, there is reason to think that a just and good agent would answer No, especially if nothing of his justice and goodness is enhanced by an affirmative reply.

The third difficulty I have with this solution is that I am unconvinced it enhances divine freedom. For the end result of this solution is not that God possesses freedom of contrariety, since he still inevitably links the best means with his chosen subordinate end. It merely adds a layer of randomness to the choosing process. Aside from the fact that I think Leibniz would be appalled by such an idea, I think this layer of randomness is both dangerous and unnecessary. Regarding the former, a great many of Leibniz's responses to Bayle build on the insistence that God does not randomly condemn any man or randomly allow evil. Rather, he justly and dutifully considers his obligations to every individual alongside his duty to the whole, and seeks to bring about the maximal good possible amid this complex network of duties. If, however, the subordinate end that points God to our world is perfectly random, then it seems that evil truly is the product of blind chance against which God battles. As for the point at which it is unnecessary, this randomness at best protects against the modal necessity of divine choice and thus against the distribution of that necessity to our world; it does not produce freedom of contrariety in God. Yet, this protection against modal necessity has already been satisfied by God's ability to refrain from choosing (*non volo*). Therefore, I see no reason to entertain this so-called solution.

An alternative solution is found in Scotus, and it is found in the context of the very theory of divine knowledge that I have argued is closest to Leibniz's own.[104] In *Lectura* I.39.5.42-44, Scotus argues for a voluntarist reading of divine choice by taking aim at the intellecustlist position. Scotus poses the basic question: *What produces the acts of the first cause, God's intellect or will?*[105] Not surprisingly, Scotus answers *God's will*. Scotus' contention is rooted in his concern that an intellectualist view of choice undermines divine freedom and leads to absolute necessity. There are two layers to the problem, but both build on Scotus' insistence that necessity follows from necessity (as per the distribution axiom). The first layer of the problem identifies divine knowing as a modal necessity, and submits that if one of the things known with necessity is divine choice, then the modal necessity of divine knowing passes to divine choosing, lest the divine will falsify the divine intellect, which is impossible. The second layer is that if there is modal necessity in the knowing of divine intellect, and the will necessarily follows the intellect, as in an intellectualist framework, then that modal necessity is passed on to divine choice. If the First Cause (God) operates by absolute necessity, then, according Scotus, that modal necessity is passed on to secondary causes as well. Because Scotus takes it as given that our world contains contingency, he thinks it evident that the intellectualist view is false, and divine choice must be rooted in the will.[106]

Now, one may legitimately wonder whether the type of necessity at work in the divine intellect is, for Aquinas, what Scotus makes it out to be. However, I am less concerned here with whether Scotus' critique of Aquinas is a fair reading as I am with

---

[104] See chapter 3, §5; and chapter 4, §1.2.

[105] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.42.

[106] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.42.

Scotus' solution to the problem of divine choice. Though Scotus is convinced that the intellectualist view must be rejected on the grounds that it yields necessitarianism, Scotus recognizes a serious problem facing voluntarism, to wit: if voluntarism means that the will simply contradicts the intellect, then voluntarism implies that the will is evil. To explain, according to the faculty psychology of the Medievals, intellective judgments aim at discerning the good. If the will contradicts the intellect without reason, then the will does evil for evil's sake—choosing arbitrarily contrary to what the intellect tells it is good. Moreover, in the case of God, such contrary movements would be against what is known to be good, not what is fallibly judged good. Therefore, while Scotus feels bound to defend voluntarism out of concern for genuine freedom, he recognizes that an adequate defense must show that voluntarist choice cannot simply be choice that contradicts the good without reason.[107]

Scotus' solution is the very differentiation between God's speculative knowledge and God's necessary knowledge discussed in §2 above. As noted in that section, Scotus understands the truth or falsity of contingent propositions to depend on the divine will for grounding. These contingent truths, though still known to the divine intellect via the divine essence according to their being knowable, fall to God's speculative knowledge and are grounded by divine choice, which is precisely the rationale behind the distinction between mere logical possibles and grounded real possibles explained above. Therefore, the divine will is what grounds the content of divine knowledge judged by the intellect.[108] How this addresses the problem of divine freedom is that it adds a layer to the

---

[107] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.43.

[108] Scotus, *Lectura* I.39.5.44.

relationship between intellect and will that is foreign creation, namely, that the determinate truths which the intellect judges are first grounded by the will.

By way of analogy, let us think anthropomorphically about the intellect-will relationship, as if the intellect were one boy (Uzi) and the will were another boy (Ari), and let us think of the means considered by the intellect as assorted colored pencils. In creatures, we can think of the relationship this way. Uzi and Ari sit at a table together, and on the table are various colored pencils. Uzi selects the pencil he thinks best and presents it to Ari. For the intellectualist, Ari is blind and must therefore trust Uzi's judgment. For the voluntarist, Ari may send Uzi back to the drawing board, as it were, or merely refuse to choose any pencil. Applied to God, this analogy creates the difficulty with which we are currently dealing, namely, that Uzi is infallible and the pencil he chooses is not *thought* best but *is* best, and therefore, Ari is cannot send Uzi back to the drawing board unless Ari is corrupt and opposes the good. However, Scotus' theory of divine knowledge demands a modification to the analogy when applied to God. Under Scotus' theory of divine knowledge, Uzi and Ari first sit at a table on which are no pencils, and it is Ari that places a myriad of pencils on the table for Uzi's consideration. Even if we grant that Uzi is infallible in his judgment of the best, this judgment varies depending on what is placed before him. If Ari places red, yellow, and blue before Uzi, blue may be chosen as the best; but if Ari places red, green, and blue before Uzi, he may choose green. Both choices would be true (let us say) to Uzi's infallible judgment of the best, but in both cases the judgment is different because what is present is different. Hence, the choice is best, given what is available. In short, Scotus protects divine freedom by placing its choice not only after but also before the judgment of the intellect.

Is such a solution available to Leibniz? I think it is. I have already argued in Part 2 that the theory of divine knowledge Leibniz advocates is closest to Scotus.[109] And the above nuance does not change my assessment. Leibniz is quite clear that truths are foreseen because they are determinate (G 6.124). If Leibniz does indeed hold that contingents must be grounded by the will, then unless a proposition is made determinate by the divine will (i.e., is grounded), then it is not foreseen by the intellect nor included in its judgments; and we have reason to believe that Leibniz holds this view. We have seen that he sides with the predeterminators on the point that it is not possible to "know a contingent event in a way that is independent of knowledge of its causes" (G 6.125-6), and this includes knowledge of the First Cause. As we saw in chapter 3, this is precisely why Leibniz postulates two decrees by God, one in the realm of the possible that grounds contingents and another in the realm of the actual that adds existence to a particular series (C 23; cf. G 6.147-8); and we have seen that Leibniz continues to affirm that the divine decrees are represented in divine reason as part of its concept of possible worlds (*in signo rationis*) (G 6.147). Thus, there is reason to think Leibniz does understand the will to first make propositions determinate so that they may be judged. Moreover, the idea that the will is active in the determination of truth prior to any judgment would make sense of Leibniz's portrait of God as entering into all the details of a given possible world and "having pondered upon everything and compared it with other possible sequences" (G 6.148).

I do see three potential objections to this theory, however, that merit attention. The first is this. It could be objected that the contingents are part of the eternal verities

---

[109] See chapter 3, §5; and chapter 4, §1.2.

(e.g., G 6.126); hence, the notion of a divine choice preceding these determinate truths is impossible. However, as has already been noted in chapter 4, this is not a problem for Scotus' theory, since he understands the determination of truths by the will to be an eternal decision by God.[110] The *prior* in this instance is a logical, not temporal order.

Second, Leibniz suggests that "all conditional futurities must be comprised" in the eternal verities (G 6.126), which one could take to mean that there is no divine choice with reference to conditional futurities, since all conditional futurities are present. A conceptual error is afoot in this objection, however. Returning to the analogy of Uzi and Ari, the objection presumes that, as in the analogy, Ari has various colored pencils beneath the table. If he presents orange, blue, and red, the reason he could have presented green, yellow, and brown is because he has green, yellow, and brown pencils. Yet, this is precisely where the analogy breaks down. For if we think of future contingents in this way, we arrive at a picture in which the will has already every contingent that it could possibly ground but only selectively makes these available to the intellect for judgment. But this is not the case in the Scotist theory of divine knowledge. Rather, whatever the will grounds is what is knowable and thus known by the intellect; if a contingent is not grounded by the divine will it is not a future conditional. Analogically, it would closer to think of Ari as producing colored pencils *ex nihilo,* and if he does not produce a certain colored pencil, it is not hidden; rather, it does not exist. So, it is with conditionals grounded by divine choice. On the Scotist theory of divine knowledge, one can truly say that all future conditionals are present to the divine intellect because any that have not been grounded by the will are not future conditionals. This is not to say that the will

---

[110] Scotus, *Ordinatio* I.39.25; and I.39.64.

could not have grounded other future conditionals, but it is to say that the only future conditionals that are, are those the will has grounded.

The third difficulty is the most serious. This objection asks why the will grounded those future conditionals that it did in fact ground and not others. In other words, is the first act of divine will truly arbitrary in the sense of being will void of reason? I see two possible replies. First, this objection may well slip into the same conceptual error as the previous objection, as if the will randomly selects a certain set of conditionals amongst others; but this, once again, is not the concept in play. (I will not rehearse the reply of the previous paragraph here.) This point leads to the other line of reply.

The second response is that there is a certain level of ignorance that must be admitted here, since we have no reference point in creation to which we may appeal; for the layer of choice added here is not part of creaturely experience. The closest approximation at which I can arrive is the imagination. Let us say, for analogy's sake, I want to write a story about a fantastical creature. I will begin to produce possible creatures in my mind for consideration. My imagination will be limited by the laws of logic, and will take its cues from what I know of the Great Chain of Being. And those possibilities generated will be judged relative to my aims in the story. For my part, I cannot pinpoint precisely what governs the generation of possibilities in such an imaginative exercise, other than my desire to create (in a literary sense) something. I am confident it is not random, and I have a clear sense that I may direct and redirect the process, but there is a level of inscrutability to the process itself. Granting that my mind's ability to direct and redirect thought is reflective of my libertarian freedom and that I am correct that the process is not random, I can affirm that the process is free, rational, and

could be otherwise. But I can say little beyond this. I will return to this point concerning inscrutability in the next section. For now, let it stand.

In light of the foregoing, what can we conclude regarding Leibniz's ability to avoid divine determinism? Based on the foregoing, Leibniz has available to him at least three ways forward:

(1) Even if we grant that the divine intellect may inevitably arrive at the judgment that our world is the BPW, such that this judgment could not be otherwise, the intellect cannot move God to action. Hence, it remains with the divine will to choose in keeping with this judgment (*volo*) or to refrain from choice (*non voloi*). At the very least, then, it is a matter of freedom whether God create or not create the BPW.

(2) Though God has no liberty with regard to his governing end, nor with regard to the association of means and subordinate ends, it could be argued that God has freedom of ends subordinate. Because any number of subordinate ends is compatible with divine goodness, God has freedom of contrariety regarding which subordinate end to choose in service to the governing end of his own goodness. Therefore, even if God necessarily chooses the best means to any given subordinate end, it is not necessary that God choose any particular subordinate end.

(3) Should the argument for contrariety from subordinate ends be rejected, the Scotist theory of divine knowledge offers the solution that because contingent propositions must be grounded by the divine will, the intellect can only judge those possibles grounded in the speculative knowledge of God. While the divine

intellect may necessarily incline toward one possible as best, the range of possibles grounded and known by the intellect for judgment is ultimately determined by divine choice. Therefore, God's freedom of contrariety is preserved, not because the intellect may fail to be inclined toward the best, but because *the best* is a judgment of options that are first grounded by the will.

Any one of these replies in itself could preserve divine choice. Even if God has no freedom of contrariety, as per solutions (2) and (3), the fact that God can withhold action altogether, such that there might be no world at all, is an affirmation of freedom of contradiction in God. This solution has clear textual support in Leibniz, so we can be confident that Leibniz denies divine determinism in this very basic sense. As for whether divine choice goes beyond freedom of contradiction, this falls to the second two solutions. As noted above, solution (2) was advocated by later Leibnizians; however, I find its viability in reference to Leibniz himself to be questionable at best. As for solution (3), though it does show God to have freedom of contrariety after the judgment of the intellect, it does provide a way of thinking of divine freedom of election prior to this judgment. I think this solution is, at the very least, compatible with Leibniz's writings, and has the merit of explaining his more active depictions of God in reference to possible worlds. For my part, I am inclined to think that Leibniz is able to defend divine freedom of specification, given his theory of divine knowledge. But I suspect some readers would be less than satisfied with the appeal to inscrutability, and this anticipation dissatisfaction brings us to the final section of this chapter.

4. Postcript on the Nature of Freedom

While I suspect that the foregoing is satisfactory to many libertarian readers, I also expect thatcompatibilist readers to be less than satisfied. More specifically, I suspect that the compatibilist would insist on invoking Leibniz's PSR at every turn, demanding a reason or cause for the choice made, and in so doing would attempt to reduce divine choice to psychological determinism. With regard to God's freedom of contradiction (*volo / non volo*), I anticipate that the compatibilist would press this solution along the following lines: *Is not the choice to not create one choice among many subordinate ends that is in competition with other subordinate ends? And does not the intellect's judgment of subordinate ends necessitate that the divine will be left with only one choice, namely, the best?* Regarding the freedom of subordinate ends, I anticipate that the compatibilist would ask: *Is not the subordinate end a means to the governing end? If so, does it not follow that God, in seeing the best means with its given end, necessarily link the best subordinate end with the governing end?* The implication is again one of psychological determinism. And, with regard to the will being the ground of God's speculative knowledge, I expect the compatibilist to inquire: *Why did the divine will choose to ground these possibles and not other possibles?* The implication is simply that a reason must be given, lest God's choice proves to be irrational and arbitrary, and therefore, the choice to ground certain possibles and not others must fall again into psychological determinism.

In this string of objections, what becomes evident is both the fundamental disconnect on first principles between libertarians and compatibilists and common misunderstandings of the nature of choice in traditional faculty psychology. Beginning

with the latter, there is a sense in which the compatibilist line of inquiry betrays a

reductionist view of the nature of will, a view that faculty psychology aims at avoiding.

By continually pressing for the reason or cause for the will choosing as it does, the

objector reduces will to intellect, making the will merely the final step in a sequence of

intellective judgments. Such is the point of the faculty psychology of the scholastics,

namely, to prevent intellective deliberations from producing action without any self-

moving faculty of choice that may freely stay the movement or initiate it. This is

precisely why Leibniz distinguishes a soul with understanding only from a soul with

understanding and will (G 6.122-3). The very point of the intellect-will distinction is to

account for the phenomenon of freedom. The intellect arrives at judgments, but these

judgments do not move the rational creature. An act of will is required. Hence, intellect

may present its judgment, but no movement occurs simply by virtue of this fact; the will

is the moving faculty, and if it does not act on the intellective judgment, that judgment

has no bearing on the choice of the being. Hence, the above lines of inquiry which press

for the cause of divine choosing, as if the cause were an intellective judgment, ultimately

aim at obliterating the intellect-will distinction by reducing will to intellect.

Along similar lines, there seems to be an reductionist view of *non volo* as well.

The type of objections anticipated above tend to treat not-willing as one of many means

or subordinate ends that the intellect judges, as if *non volo* is identical to *nolo*. Quite the

contrary, the freedom of the will, as espoused in older faculty psychology, includes

freedom of contrariety (will *p* or will ~*p*) and contradiction (will *p* or not will *p*).

However, not willing is not merely one of many means, as if the intellect were deciding

which end is the best end and not doing anything is one possible means. Instead, *non volo*

recognizes that no intellective judgment moves the will, for the will alone can move itself. Hence, while the intellect may offer to the will its judgments regarding any number of given ends—just as the passions may press in upon the agent, bidding action—the will need not act at all. *Non volo* is not one of the means judged, but merely a phenomenological fact that nothing outside the will compels it to move, for not moving at all is within the free capacity of the will. To somehow press this capacity into one of the means judged is to again try and reduce the movements of the will to merely an intellective judgment that necessarily moves the individual.

A third reductionist tendency in play is that there is an apparent conflation of *reasons* and *causes*. Let us take the phenomenon of creaturely choice as expounded in the above in chapter 4, §1.3. If Chas finds himself tempted by a seductress, he will be assailed by inclining reasons from both his passions and his rational nature. These competing incentives oscillate in a competition for dominance. At T_1 the dominant inclination may be Chas' conscience, while at T_2 Chas' passions and desire for sexual pleasure may take the upper hand. In keeping with Leibniz's claims concerning choice, if Chas wills, he wills in keeping with the dominant inclination. However, there is no necessity in his choosing. The reason is that Chas need not choose at T_1 or T_2. If he wills at T_1 he wills in keeping with his conscience, since it is the dominant inclination. But because inclinations incline without determining or necessitating action, Chas can refrain from willing until T_2 and thus will in keeping with his passions. Or he could refrain from willing at all and simply not will with regard to the choice at hand.

The reason this point is important is because it highlights the distinction between *reason* and *cause*. It is quite true that the choosing of Chas is rational and his choice is for

a reason. Should Chas will retreat at T_1, Chas' reason is that his conscience is the dominant inclination. Should Chas will adultery at T_2, Chas' reason is that his passions are dominant. However, the *cause* of Chas' choosing is his free spontaneity. As R. Cranston Paull has argued, Leibniz's PSR does not prevent free decisions from constituting sufficient reasons: "the fact that the chooser has the specific [nature] that he does provides a sufficient reason for the miraculous choice."[111] Aspects of Leibniz's writings may seem contrary to this, such as Leibniz's mockery of the Jesuit notion that freedom has a privileged status among creation of moving without cause (G 6.127-8). However, it should be remembered that the context of such statements is always Leibniz's rejection of equipoise. The above distinction between reason and cause does not fall prey to this criticism. If the will moves, it has inclining reasons and is thus rational. But because the will is never necessitated to act by any inclining reason and is ultimately an irreducible cause of its own free movements, reasons incline; they never necessitate. Or, put otherwise, reasons incline; they never cause action, for the will is the free and spontaneous cause of its own actions.

While all of the above qualifications are quite necessary when making plain why the determinist use of the PSR is overly reductionistic, there is a more serious and fundamental divide between the compatibilist and the libertarian that is in play here. The compatibilist perpetually insists on getting behind the will in order to offer a mechanical explanation of choice. Hence, its line of inquiry continually falls into determinism precisely because its search for a cause is not satisfied with the inscrutable mystery of freedom; it insists on there being a determining cause behind these voluntary causes. This

---

[111] R. Cranston Paull, "Leibniz and the Miracle of Freedom," *Noûs* 26, no. 2 (1992): 228.

tendency is articulated by J. R. Cresswell when he writes in reference to Scotus, "Here we are obliged to leave the Subtle Doctor, for there is no answer to the final question: What is the 'reason' for the will's act? or, What are the conditions for the sake of which the free decision of the will can make the object an end?"[112] In the face of such a question, we arrive at the most fundamental distinction between libertarians and determinists. The libertarian is committed to something akin to the reply of Immanuel Kant: the free movements of the will are inscrutable, for if a mechanistic explanation could be offered, such as what is found among empirical cause-effect nexus, our willing would not be free.[113] This commitment to the will as an inscrutable bedrock of choice (or a voluntary cause) is invariably the stand the libertarian must take. The will is the ground of choice that cannot be gotten behind or forced into mechanical categories without violating the very nature of freedom, anymore than a circle could be scrutinized if its scrutinizers demanded that it be explained by being squared.

My invocation of Kant, here, is quite intentional. For Kant is a useful catalyst for bringing to the fore some key distinctions between the older metaphysics (and their corresponding espistemologies) and the newer approach of the compatibilists. First, Kant's argument for freedom is instructive because he acknowledges that the empirical faculties inevitably press without ceasing for a mechanical efficient cause that moves the will to choose. This is simply the nature of the empirical faculties: they process things in terms of mechanical cause and effect. However, Kant is clear that our empirical faculties do not perceive things as they are in themselves—hence God, the soul, and freedom itself

---

[112] J. R. Cresswell, "Duns Scotus on the Will," *Franciscan Studies* 13 (1953): 157.

[113] See, e.g., A549-50/B577-78. Citations refer to the standardized German *Akedemie* pagination, which can be found in the margins of Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, eds., *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, 15 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1995-2013).

are beyond our empirical intuitions. Our moral faculties give us a sense of what is required of freedom—how it is to be defined in terms of contingency and contrary choice—but it never gives us an empirical intuition of it. Were our empirical faculties to try to give an empirical intuition, these faculties would invariably search again for a mechanical cause and undermine freedom. This is precisely why Kant labels freedom inscrutable: it cannot be thought by the empirical faculties, but it is demanded and defined by the moral faculties.[114]

To be sure, my intention is not to press Kant backwards onto Leibniz. However, Kant's point is important because it has precedence in the Christian tradition prior to Leibniz. The epistemological limitations expressed in Kant's reply have precedence among a number of Church fathers, as do their application to the mind itself. Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzen on up through John of Damascus understand the structures and limits of human reason to be dictated, not by the outside world, but by the innate limitations of our faculties. I will focus here on Basil of Caesarea as one example.[115]

Basil discusses the limitations of our faculties in the context of Christian knowledge of God. His discussion hinges on the patristic distinctions between *ousia, hypostasis,* and *energeia.* The distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* is likely more familiar to readers, given its centrality to the Nicene understanding of the Trinity. Briefly

---

[114] See, e.g., A548/B576; and 6:20-1.

[115] I develop the parallels between Kantian epistemology and Cappadocian epistemology much more thoroughly in "What Hath Königsberg to Do with Byzantium? An Eastern Reply to the Problem of Post-Kantian Theology" (paper presented at the annual international meeting for the International Congress of Medieval Studies, May 2010); also see my "Kant and the Problem of Revelation: An Appraisal in Light of the Writings of the Eastern Church Fathers," in *Kant and Theology,* eds. Chris L. Firestone, Nathan A. Jacobs, and James H. Joiner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

stated, the Eastern fathers make a distinction between the particular or subject that has a

certain nature (*hypostasis*) and the nature (*ousia*) had by the subject. The pro-Nicenes

maintained the moderate realist position that multiple members of a given species share a

common nature. For example, Bob, Bill, and Bernice are not three humans (*human*

denoting the species or nature that subsists in the subject), but are three human (singular)

persons (plural). The distinction was at the heart of the pro-Nicene understanding of the

Trinity, according to which Christians do not profess three Gods (*God* here indicating the

divine nature, which is simple and one), but profess three divine (singular) persons

(plural).[116] As for *energeia,* the term, as discussed above, identifies operations that

proceed from fully actual perfections and are non-mutative.[117] The concept enabled the

Christians, with Aristotle, to affirm that God is pure actuality, and is thus void of

movements (i.e., mutations from potency to actuality), but still say that God is operative

in the world.[118] Second, the concept provided a way to speak of human participation in

the divine via God's operative power (*energeia*) without collapsing God and world into a

---

[116] E.g., Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Ablabium;* Basil of Caesarea, *Epistulae* 38 and 236; Gregory of Nazianzen, *Orationes* 29, 13. I defend this reading of the Cappadocians in Nathan Jacobs, "On 'Not Three Gods'—Again: Can A Primary-Secondary Substance Reading of *Ousia* and *Hypostasis* Avoid Tritheism?," *Modern Theology* 24, no. 3 (July, 2008): pp. 335-42. See also Erismann, "The Trinity, Universals, and Particular Substances," pp. 278-84; Richard Cross, "Gregory of Nyssa on Universals," *Vigiliae Christianae* 56:4 (2002); J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (Harper, 1978), 263-69; H. A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* (Harvard, 1956), 337f.; Andrew Louth, *St. John Damascene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 96-97, 113-114; Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. , "The Threeness/Oneness Problem of the Trinity," *Calvin Theological Journal* 23 (1988), 37-53; Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., "Social Trinity and Tritheism," in *Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays,* eds. Ronald J. Feenstra and Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. (University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 21-47; and William P. Alston, "Substance and the Trinity," in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity,* eds. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins (Oxford, 2004), pp. 179-86.

[117] Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West,* pp. 7-23, esp. 12.

[118] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII.6 1071b20-22; Basil of Caesarea, *Epistle* 234.2 (PG 32:869b-870c). In Basil's *Epistle* 234, it also becomes apparent that the distinction between *ousia* and *energeia* enabled the Church fathers to explain how the former could be simple and one but the latter many.

common nature (*ousia*).[119] By way of analogy, the operative powers of fire include

heating and lighting, but these operations can be communicated to metal without

changing the *ousia* of metal—the metal remains metal but is "energized" by a foreign

nature, namely, that of fire.

Employing these distinctions, Basil gives reason to think that one can be ignorant

of *ousia* and yet not of its *energeiai* nor of the *hypostases* in whom it subsists. For, Basil

argues that our to grasp *ousia* is not restricted to the divine. Rather, *ousiai* generally are

beyond the grasp of human faculties. Take, for example, a human person. Basil submits

that there is a distinction between the appearance of the subject, which is superficial and

based on properties manifest in matter, and the form immanent in matter that gives rise to

these properties. We perceive the former, and from these properties and the operative

powers we observe we infer what nature is immanent. However, we do not perceive the

essence directly. Basil writes:

> The quibble is just as though any one were to say, Do you know Timothy? Oh, if
> you know Timothy you know his nature…. Yes; but I at the same time both know
> and do not know Timothy, though not in the same way and in the same degree….
> I know him according to his nature and other properties; but I am ignorant of his
> essence. Indeed, in this way too, I both know, and am ignorant of myself. I know
> indeed who I am, but, so far as I am ignorant of my essence I do not know
> myself.[120]

In this passage, Basil professes to know Timothy (the *hypoastsis*) but confesses

ignorance of Timothy's essence (*ousia*). Basil's claim is not that he is unsure whether

Timothy is human, but he is presuming a more Aristotelian epistemology, according to

which he has neither innate ideas nor direct access to Timothy's essence. Instead, he

---

[119] E.g., Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit,* 9.23; *Epistle* 236; Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua* (PG 91.1088; 1076); Pseudo-Macarius, *Fifteenth Homily,* 38 (PG 34:602).

[120] Basil of Caesarea, *Epistle* 235.2.

moves from observation of the subject to an abstract idea of his nature (*eidos*).[121] But the

inferential abstract offers a type of propositional knowledge regarding Timothy's nature;

to apprehend the essence directly is a different matter. And the latter is plainly beyond

Basil's faculties. Lest we read Basil as saying that these epistemic limits apply to only

objects external to him, he is clear that the same limits apply to his self-understanding:

Basil does not know his own essence.

The aim of Basil's argument is to defend the coherence of claiming that we do not

apprehend the divine essence, but can still profess knowledge of the divine *hypostases*

and *energeiai*.[122] However, for our purposes here, the nuances of Basil's case are

informative with regard to the respective epistemologies of more traditional theological

schools and the later compatibilists. The former view, as expressed by Basil and echoed

in other patristic writers,[123] indicates that they do not presume to apprehend freedom as

such. Quite the contrary, "Indeed, in this way too, I both know, and am ignorant of

myself. I know indeed who I am, but, so far as I am ignorant of my essence I do not know

myself."[124] Hence, it would not be controversial to claim with regard to the will that we

do not apprehend its nature, such that we can get behind it and dissect it. We know only

its operations and particular uses. To say this is not to admit complete ignorance of the

will. On the contrary, to grasp propositionally that its operations are contrary to

---

[121] Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* 980a21-983a3; *On the Soul,* 429a10-429a29; 429b22-430a25; 431a16-431a17; *On Memory and Reminiscence,* 449b24-450a14; 451a15-451a25; 453a5-453a14. On Basil's affirmation that operations are also a means by which we know persons, see his opening remarks to Maximus the philosopher in *Epistle* 9.1.

[122] Basil of Caesarea, *Epistle* 234.2 (PG 32:869b-870c).

[123] See, e.g., Irenaeus, *Contra haereses,* 4.20.5-11 (PG 7:1034c-41c); Origen, *De principiis.* 1.1.5-6 (PG 11:118a-9a); and 1.1.9 (PG 11:120b-120c); and Gregory of Nazianzen, *Orationes*, 27-28 (PG 36:11a-74a).

[124] Basil, *Epistolae*, 235.2 (PG 32:871c-4b).

mechanical determination and thus cannot be explained in this manner is to grasp something quite meaningful, just as to grasp propositionally that God's essence is infinite and thus cannot be circumscribed by the finite intellect is to grasp something quite meaningful.[125]

We can, therefore, offer some level of predication based on the operations of freedom. However, to infer a predicate based on the operations is quite different than apprehending its nature directly. Hence, we find propositions regarding freedom in older literature, but these are non-reductive propositions. For example, in Gomarus we find its the basic requirements: *q is embraced in such a way that q may be rejected; q is elicited in a way that the act may not be elicited without any change in understanding; the act is free from necessity and coercion; the act cannot be reducible to a movement of habit; and the act is spontaneously chosen, that is, by an inward potency to produce or not produce the act*.[126] These sorts of conditions are common, but there is no claim to have gotten behind freedom or provided a mechanism for choice. Instead, there is only an understanding, based on experience and the demands of moral culpability, that the operations of freedom are of such a kind that the above predicates apply.[127]

To be sure, the distinction between the compatibilist and the incompatibilist is not whether one makes a bald appeal to mystery (incompatibilist) or does not (compatibilist).

---

[125] Basil, *Epistolae.* 233.2 (PG 32:865c-8b).

[126] Franciscus Gomarus(Gilbertus Jacchaeus), *Disputatio theologica de libero arbitrio*, (Leiden: 1602), theses iii-v.

[127] The appeal to the demands of moral intuitions (i.e., that culpability demands both knowledge of the moral law and the ability to do it or not) is not a Kantian appeal, but one that is traceable to the writings of the Church fathers. See, e.g., Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem,* 2.4-8 (PL 2:288a-94c); Origen, *De oratione,* 4 (PG 11:427b-30a); Justin Martyr, *Apologia I pro Christianis,* 43-44 (PG 6:391c-6c); Irenaeus, *Contra haereses,* 4.4.3; 4.29.1; 4.37.1-5 (PG 7a:982b-3b; 1063b-4a; 1099b-1103a); Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio catechetica magna,* 30-31 (PG 45:75c-8d); Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata,* 1.17 (PG 8:795b-802d); Chrysostom, *Homiliae XXIV in Epistolam ad Ephesios,* 2 (PG 62:17-22).

Instead, the discussion is indicative of a reductionist empiricist tendency that emerges in the 16th and 17th centuries,[128] and gives rise to compatibilism in the 17th and 18th centuries.[129] The more traditional epistemology described above is indicative of an Aristotelian tendency in which there are non-empirical realities that press in on matter. Our faculties do not apprehend these non-empirical realities directly; they perceive only the operations of these realities from which they make inference to the reality that undergirds them. Reason also perceives that there are non-empirical realities, such as mathematics and universals, that press in on the understanding but not on the senses.[130] With the rise of the mechanical philosophy, however, the anti-Aristotelian bias pushed back against this way of thinking, demanding empirical mechanisms for the order of things (or at least speculation regarding empirical mechanisms).[131] Formal causality (what it is) was often reduced to or conflated with material causality (of what it is made); and with the dissolve of the distinction between formal and material cause, *cause* itself was often reduced to efficient cause only—hence Robert Boyle's fear that the mechanical philosophy would ultimately dispose of final causality as well.[132]

So it was with freedom. The insistence on getting behind freedom became reductionist because it presumed that a mechanical answer can be given with regard to

---

[128] See Marie Boas, "The Establishment of the Mechanical Philosophy," *Osiris* 10 (1952): 412-541.

[129] See William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1866), ch. 5; and Richard Muller, "Edwards and the Absence of Free Choice: A Parting of Ways in the Reformed Tradition," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011).

[130] See, e.g., Origen, *De principiis*, 1.1.7 (PG 11:126c-8a).

[131] See Boas, "The Establishment of the Mechanical Philosophy," 430.

[132] See Richard Muller, "God and Design in the Thought of Robert Boyle," in *The Persistence of the Sacred in Modern Thought,* eds. Chris L. Firestone and Nathan Jacobs (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 87-111.

the cause of choice. The more traditional tendency, however, tends to accept the limits of reason. Much like Kant, the older philosophy recognizes that it faces empirical limits. Based on moral intuition and the existential experience of freedom, basic predication is assigned to freedom—what it includes and excludes—but there is a recognition that the nature or essence of freedom itself is inscrutable. Hence, the older view is satisfied with affirming that its choices are rational (as per the above distinction between causes and reasons) and providing the conditions of choosing (contra necessitarianism), but this is the limit of our understanding of voluntary causes.

Returning, then, to Leibniz, we face the question of where he sits on this topic—with the new or old philosophy. PSR is often read as a reductionist tendency: Leibniz demands a cause behind freedom. I, however, side with Paull that Leibniz's PSR does not require a reductionist treatment of free choice; it suffices that the will has a reason (given its embrace of the then-dominant inclination); the cause of choice is the will itself, which accords with Leibniz's use of *voluntary causes*. As for the inscrutability of this cause, I think it is relevant that Leibniz distinguishes *explain, comprehend, prove,* and *uphold,* and based on his definitions, unless he offers an *a priori* proof for freedom, it cannot be proven and therefore cannot be comprehended; it can only be upheld (G 6.52). In addition, it is worth remembering that Leibniz returns to Aristotle after a youthful jaunt in the world of the mechanical philosophy, and I have sought to highlight throughout Part 2 the degree to which Leibniz remains committed to the older philosophies. Finally, I find that a number of Leibniz's claim simply do not make sense apart from libertarian choice, as I have argued here and in Part 2. In the end, therefore, I believe the libertarian reading of Leibniz is not only viable, but may prove to be the most charitable.

CHAPTER 6

Challenges to the Best and the Contemporary Task of Theodicy

To this point, we have seen that there is good *prime facie* evidence for this

Augustinian reading of Leibniz's philosophical theology, and that this rereading casts

suspicion on the respective necessitarian, deistic, and Spinozistic portraits of Leibniz of

the past three centuries. This chapter takes two final steps in completing this project. In

specific, I turn my attention to the contemporary discussion concerning the problem of

evil. First (section 1), I consider contemporary objections to the very idea of a "best"

world. As we will see, the previous chapters provide ample material for addressing these

remaining difficulties. Second (section 2), I consider the alternatives to Leibniz's

theodicy in the current literature. I will argue that the affirmative approaches to theodicy

that presume a traditional understanding of God either reiterate some aspect of Leibniz's

theodicy or could be affirmed as a sub-point within his theodicy. Thus, while there is

resistance to Leibniz's theodicy among contemporary defenders of God's justice,

Leibniz's opponents prove unsuccessful in offering true alternatives.

1. Objections to "the Best"

Contemporary objections to Leibniz's theodicy often center on his claims

concerning "the best." In this section, we will consider four such objections: (1) *Does the*

idea of "the best possible world" make sense? (2) *Even if there is not a best possible*

world, it would still be rational for God to create because a world is better than no

world. (3) *One cannot sin against possible agents, only against actual agents; hence God*

has no obligation to any possible worlds other than the one he chooses to actualize. (4) *A Christian worldview does not require that God create the best possible world.* I will deal with each of these objections in turn.

I. *Does the idea of "the best possible world" make sense?*

There are two sides to this coin. The one side, advocated by Robert Merrihew Adams, is that there appears to be no limit to the number of possible worlds, and thus no "maximum" perfection that could constitute a "best possible world."[1] The other side of this coin can be found in Richard Swinburne, J. L. Mackie, Michael Banner, Joshua Hoffman, and Gary Rosenkrantz who suggest that if it is intelligible to speak of a maximum level of merit that a world can have, then it is likely that more than one possible world would possess this level of merit.[2] This difficulty, or set of difficulties, is what leads a number of scholars to seek some procedure according to which God may rationally select a world, despite the absence of a *best* option.[3] I contend such efforts are unnecessary, as I see at least four replies.

The first is Leibniz's claim that if equilibrium were to occur, no choice could follow (G 6:107). The reply is a simple *modus tollens*:

1. If no best can be found among possible worlds, then no world would exist.

2. Our world exists.

---

[1] Robert Merrihew Adams, "Must God Create the Best?" *Philosophical Review* 81 (1972): 317-332.

[2] Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 113-4; J. L. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 173; Michael Banner, *The Justification of Science and the Rationality of Religious Belief* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 157; Joshua Hoffman and Gary S. Rosenkrantz, *The Divine Attributes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 158-9.

[3] Adams, "Must God Create the Best?" 317-332; D. Howard-Snyder and F. Howard-Snyder, "How an Unsurpassable Being Can Create a Surpassable World," *Faith and Philosophy* 11 (1994): 260-8; Swinburne, *The Existence of God,* 115; Lloyd Strickland, "God's Problem of Multiple choice," *Religious Studies* 42 (2006): 141-57.

   3.   Therefore, a best can be found among possible worlds. (1 & 2)

Leibniz's case, as discussed above, is based on what he knows *a priori* of God, and we have seen that he has patristic and medieval support for his understanding that providence does everything in the best possible way.[4] But I expect that his assumptions concerning faculty psychology would be contested by proponents of this objection, and thus, while the above argument is valid, many would question whether it is sound.

   The second reply is directed at Adams' version of the objection. Though Leibniz offers the following remark in a very different context, the point is perfectly relevant here. Leibniz states: "Even so there are asymptote figures in geometry where an infinite length makes only a finite progress in breath" (G 6:279). The statement is found in the context of Leibniz's claim that the damned can perpetually mitigate their sufferings by restraint but never achieve bliss; yet the geometric analogy could be used just as well in the current context. Even if we grant that there are an infinite number of possible worlds, it does not follow that there is limitless goodness to be found amongst these worlds. A best may still be available. Coupled with the above *modus tollens* claim, Leibniz could quite easily argue that *the best* is not only an intelligible concept, but one we have reason to believe obtains.

   The third reply calls into question the understanding of possible worlds in view. It is evident that the proponents of this objection take *possible worlds* in the strictly logical sense. Hence, there is no limit to the number of possible worlds, and every conceivable subject-predicate combination that is void of contradiction is available to God. Yet, two points should be kept in mind concerning the limiting of possible worlds. The first is

---

   [4] E.g., John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa,* 2.29 (PG 94:963a-970b); Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* in *Summa Theologiae*, Textum Leoninum ed. (Rome, 1888), Ia q9 a1; Ia q14 a7; Ia a5 q19 a3.

Leibniz's own point concerning compossibles. Though there may be no limit to the number of goods we can imagine, Leibniz insists that not all possible goods are compossible goods. Such a claim adds a layer of intelligibility to the idea that there is a maximal concatenation of compossible goods, even if the number of possible goods is not limited. The second point is this. Granting the metaphysical understanding of the possible argued throughout this project, not every logically possible world obtains in the realm of the possible. Hence, as Leibniz himself points out, we do not know what possible worlds are available to God. In this light, demonstrating that the objection holds water becomes much more difficult. For even if one can conceive of two worlds that are perfectly equal in goodness, this does not demonstrate that both imagined worlds can be found in the realm of the possible.

The fourth and final reply is that the concept of *world* utilized in the argument is too limited. Let us say that there is a maximum level of goodness that a possible world can possess (*p*). And let us also say that God finds in the realm of the possible multiple worlds that possess *p*. For the sake of argument, we will say that 50 possible worlds posses *p*. Might God be able to actualize all 50 possible worlds simultaneously in different dimensions? If the answer is Yes, and I see no reason to answer otherwise, then those 50 worlds would constitute *the world* on Leibniz's use of the term. For Leibniz uses *world* (*Monde*) in the broad sense of *creation* (e.g., G 6:107). Leibniz could therefore reply to the objection thusly: If multiple possible worlds were found to be equal in goodness, but all such worlds could be actualized simultaneously in parallel dimensions, then this concatenation of compossible goods in multiple worlds would constitute the best

possible world. In this light, it is questionable whether the version of the objection as formulated by Swinburne, et al., is intelligible.

II. *Even if there is not a best possible world, it would still be rational for God to create because a world is better than no world.*

This objection is an extension of the previous one, and takes aim specifically at premise 1 of the above *modus tollens* argument. Proponents of this objection, such as Swinburne, argue that without *the best*, "[God] surely has reason to use some process of random selection or some arbitrary feature of a world to determine which to create…. [U]nlike Buridan's ass, he may make an arbitrary selection, and that will have been the rational thing to do."[5] The assumption is that no creation is worse than a creation that is not the best, and therefore God would be truer to himself if he created a less-than-best world than if he refused to create.[6]

This objection is another version of the point of confusion argued against in the previous chapter. It will recalled that I suggested that some contemporary scholarship displays sympathy for the notion that God gains something by creating. This line of objection makes this very presumption. As argued above, however, neither Aquinas nor any other orthodox patristic or medieval figure would grant that God's goodness is enhanced by creation.[7] In his act of creating, God does not move his own potential into actuality—he has no potentiality. He merely displays outwardly by his operations those perfections that are fully actualized and already possessed from eternity. This is what

---

[5] Swinburne, *The Existence of God,* 115. Cf. D. Howard-Snyder and F. Howard-Snyder, "How an Unsurpassable Being Can Create a Surpassable World," 260-68.

[6] Adams, "Must God Create the Best?" 317-319.

[7] See, e.g., chapter 2, §1.2 above.

Aquinas means when he suggests that God's goodness is complete in itself and not enhanced by any subordinate end on which he might choose to act.[8]

In this light, we have reason to maintain that, contra Adams, no act by God is required for him to be true to himself. For, God's being is perfectly actualized independent of the creation and any exercise of will. Nonetheless, *if* an act is willed by God, *then* it must be in keeping with his character. Framed in this light, to not create is perfectly compatible with the idea of God. But we have very good reason to question whether acting randomly, arbitrarily, or capriciously is true to God's nature and character. In this light, if God's only options are to create randomly (contrary to his character) or refrain from creating (in keeping with his character), then we have reason to believe that restraint would be exercised instead of random action. Leibniz's premise 1 can thus be argued to have theological merit over against the claims of Adams, Swinburne, et al.

III. *One cannot sin against possible agents, only against actual agents; hence God has no obligation to any possible worlds other than the one he chooses to actualize.*

This objection also comes out of Adams. He suggests that there is a significant difference between *possible beings* and *actual beings*. God has no obligation to treat in a certain way the former, "for they are not"; but clearly the latter deserve to be treated a certain way, "for they are."[9] No doubt this objection has *prime facie* merit, as it would seem strange for one to suggest that we are just as obliged to "beings" that lack existence as we are to those that have existence.

---

[8] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 1a, q9, aa1-2; q6, a3; and q19, a3.

[9] Adams, "Must God Create the Best?" 319-320.

To answer this objection, we must consider how Leibniz understands divine duty. He speaks of God's duty to the best in two distinct ways. The first emphasizes the fact that God, unlike a tutor or a mother, has a duty to everything in creation. That is, as God, his duty is to the whole, and nothing is outside of his providential jurisdiction (G 6:175-7; 188). The second way in which Leibniz speaks of God's duty to the best is in reference to God's own self. That is, God's duty to perform the best is a duty to the perfections of his very divinity, namely, his wisdom, goodness, and power (G 6:183).

In neither of the above senses of *duty* must Leibniz appeal to God's obligation to possible agents. Instead, both senses are reducible to God having an obligation to God's self. In the first sense of *duty*, Leibniz's claim is twofold. First, God (unlike creatures) cannot misjudge a good, rendering it too much or too little, or incline toward it in a manner disproportionate to the goodness it possesses. Second, and as an extension of the first, God cannot exalt the good of one particular entity or set of entities above the good of others if in so doing he becomes disproportionately concerned with that particular aspect of creation over the whole. Much like a parent with multiple children, he cannot seek the good of one child in such a manner that it causes him to neglect his duty to his other children. Or, to use Leibniz's analogy, a guard whose duty is to keep watch over a town cannot justly stop a fight between two men in town if doing so requires that he fail in his obligation to the town as a whole, thereby putting more lives in danger (G 6:117). Such a claim is not about God's duty to possible individuals, but about his duties as God to the whole of creation.

The second sense of *duty* is more closely related to the objection, since it is the basis for Leibniz's claim that God has a duty to the best. Yet, this second sense of duty is

not a claim that one group of possible individuals is more entitled to existence than another set of possible individuals. On the contrary, the claim is again that God cannot fail in his obligation to himself. That is, it would be unworthy of divine intellect and wisdom to judge something less than the best to be best. Likewise it would be unworthy of the divine will, which inclines perfectly toward the good, to choose contrary to the known good (i.e., the best) in favor of a lower good. The claim is an extension of Leibniz's contention that the hypothetical necessity of the best follows *a priori* from the very idea of God. Hence for God to create a world that does not meet this hypothetical necessity is for God to destroy his very divinity, since in so doing he would will something utterly incompatible with his divine nature (G 6:183). In the end, the duty is not to possible agents; the duty is to God's own nature, since, as John of Damascus puts it, "according to right reason, everything that has come about through providence has quite necessarily come about in the best manner and that most befitting God, so that it could not have happened in a better way."[10]

IV. *A Christian worldview does not require that God create the best.*

This fourth objection comes out of Adams as well. Now, the claim that a Christian worldview does not require God to create the best beckons the question: How does one define *Christian worldview?* The extent to which we find antecedents of Leibniz's theodicy in the Christian tradition makes me wonder whether such a premise is so easily granted. However, for the sake of argument, let it stand.

Adams argues the point by suggesting that the Judeo-Christian God has a loving disposition, being graciously disposed toward creatures. Because grace loves without

---

[10] John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa,* 2.29 (PG 94:963a-970b).

consideration of merit, a "Gracious Person" loves others without fretting over whether there is someone better to love.[11] Adams' conclusion is that grace is antithetical to the idea that God chooses the best possible world, since God does not create beings because they are better but because he is gracious. Where Adams heads with this conclusion is that it would be an act of grace for God to stoop down and create a world that is inferior to the best. For, in so doing God would display his gracious character by giving existence to a world that does not merit it.[12]

Four points should be noted in response. First, the irony of this objection is that Adams has previously argued that God has no obligations to possible entities, only toward actual entities.[13] Yet, the above objection (i.e., *a gracious God would create a world that does not merit it*) hangs on the opposite presupposition: Possible worlds have merits or demerits, and God's choices regarding possible worlds can reflect justice (rendering what is due) or grace (granting good things that are not due). If, however, God has no obligations toward any possible world, how can God's choosing of possible world 1 (PW1) over PW2 constitute an act of grace toward PW1 by which he overlooks its relative demerits?

Second, even if we grant that somehow God's dealings with PW1 and PW2 could display God's gracious character, Adams' picture of grace is a distorted one. The picture he paints is not of grace but of capricious and unjust dealings. For, if it is possible for God to be obligated to a possible world because of its ontological merits, then PW2 can rightly claim that it has been treated unjustly in being passed over for PW1. Notice that in

---

[11] Adams, "Must God Create the Best?" 324-25.

[12] Adams, "Must God Create the Best?" 324-26.

[13] Adams, "Must God Create the Best?" 319-20.

Christ's parable of the late workers, for example, the vineyard owner pays the workers who labored in the vineyard all day their proper wages. His generosity was shown in that he paid the eleventh-hour workers a full day's wages as well (Matt 20:1-16). What Adams calls grace would be equivalent to the vineyard owner refusing to pay those who labored all day and paying only the eleventh-hour workers. No doubt God may give creatures goods that they have not merited (grace), but he may not forego his duty to render to each what is due (justice). Or, as Leibniz puts it, God does not operate by a despotic power by which he may condemn innocence (G 6:208-9).

Third, this entire line of reasoning hinges on understanding God's duty in the sense refuted above—that is, as *duty to possible entities*. If God's duty is not to possible entities, however, but is to himself and his perfections, as Leibniz argues, then this line of argumentation is wrongheaded. For the question is not *Which world, if chosen, would display God's gracious election?* A world consisting of a single mineral might be the best answer if formulated in this way. The question instead is *What world is most true to God's wisdom, goodness, and power?* God's duty does not concern the entitlements of PW1 or PW2, but the divine nature itself.

Fourth, one might anticipate Adams replying to the previous point by suggesting that the Christian worldview emphasizes grace as primary in God. Thus, the attribute to which God must fulfill his duty is not his goodness or wisdom or justice or power, but his grace. Even granting this claim—which I think is suspect—Adams does not escape Leibniz's central contention. For, at the end of the day, Adams' claim on this reformulation is that the end for which God created the world is to show forth his grace, and our world is the best possible means for doing so. The implication is that Adams still

lands precisely where Leibniz begins: Ours is the best possible world, given God's aim of showing forth his grace. The great difference between Leibniz and Adams is that Adams has a more specific claim concerning God's end in creating the world. Leibniz, by contrast, admits ignorance on this point.

2. Leibniz and the Contemporary Task of Theodicy

Throughout this project, I have made the case that Leibniz's theodicy is not original or innovative, but gathers together various insights from the history of Christian theology generally and from the Augustinian tradition in particular. As we now consider the contemporary task of theodicy, I will argue that Leibniz not only gathers into one place the central insights of the Augustinian tradition, thereby articulating the theodicy tacitly present throughout its history, but also anticipates the majority of defenses or theodicies that have been forwarded in recent years.[14]

To illustrate the point, we will look at the problem of evil as articulated in contemporary literature, after which we will home in on those defenses or theodicies that have emerged in response. Under this heading, we will look at two types of approaches. One approach looks backward to the giants of Christian theology in an effort to dust off resources that offer a reply. As an example, I will focus on an essay by Eleonore Stump on Aquinas. We will see that the insights Stump draws out from Aquinas articulate point by point the claims of the Leibnizian theodicy. The second approach we will consider is the constructive efforts of recent scholarship to develop a fresh answer to the problem of evil. We will examine three such defenses/theodicies in the work of Alvin Plantinga,

---

[14] I use "defense or theodicies" because Plantinga makes a distinction between the two. See Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 28.

John Hick, and Marilyn McCord Adams, respectively. We will see that each of these figures emphasizes a different aspect of the problem and thus takes a different strategy in reply. Yet, I will argue that each of their responses can either be found explicitly in Leibniz or assumes a line of argumentation implicitly present in his work. We will begin with the former approach as found in Stump.[15]

In Stump's essay on providence and evil, she notes that she had previously established a trio of premises rooted in the basic Christian creation-fall-redemption-consummation narrative: (1) man fell into sin by free choice and passed corruption to its inheritance; (2) natural evil occurs because of the fall of man; and (3) depending on the given man's condition at death, he goes to heaven or hell.[16] Her aim in addressing the topic of providence seeks to build on this case in two ways, only one of which is of concern here, namely, to show that she rejects the view that God wills evil in order to produce the best of all possible worlds.[17]

Stump succinctly summarizes a number of claims that sit at the foundation of Augustinian theology, such as the goodness of being and the identification of God and Goodness, following from divine simplicity.[18] In addition, she sets forth from Aquinas a traditional understanding of the relationship between divine sovereignty and creaturely freedom. That is, God has limitations when dealing with creatures but only insofar as God chooses to create them in a certain way and to interact with them according certain

---

[15] Eleonore Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," in *Christian Philosophy*, ed. Thomas P. Flint (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 51-91.

[16] Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 52. See Eleonore Stump, "The Problem of Evil," *Faith and Philosophy* 2 (1985), 392-424.

[17] Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 53.

[18] Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 53; 57.

rules.[19] Stump argues that God's providential dealings with creatures are an extension of his goodness, and the ultimate *telos* of his creatures is union with him. Hence, God in his goodness aims at reuniting his creatures with himself. For simplicity sake, she identifies both the plan and its execution as *providence*.[20]

Now, Stump acknowledges that problems emerge when considering arguments that God's will not only directs creatures back to himself, but succeeds in doing so. One group of arguments consist in stating that God's will is not always accomplished, and thus it would seem that God's plans are frustrated by men.[21] In addressing this difficulty, she uses Aquinas to distinguish God's antecedent will from his consequent will. She notes that God in his antecedent will desires that all men are saved.[22] The antecedent will, notes Stump, considers the particular thing in the abstract, and thus desires nothing but its *telos* for it.[23] Yet, the consequent will is God's will with reference to the particular thing in the given circumstances. She uses the example of Jonah, suggesting that Jonah contravenes God's antecedent will, but not his consequent will. For, although God desires Jonah's obedience (antecedently), God allows Jonah to sin against him, and thus permits evil (consequently).[24]

God's permitting of evil can be understood in two ways, argues Stump. One understanding attributes to God a good end, but not a good object (i.e., what is actually

---

[19] Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 57-58.

[20] Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 58.

[21] Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 58-59.

[22] Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 59-60.

[23] Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 61.

[24] Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 61-62.

done).[25] According to Aquinas, however, to let good ends justify evil means is to have a good end but a bad object, which is immoral.[26] Therefore, Stump argues that no one is justified in permitting evil because they can compensate for that evil with a good outcome. She therefore argues that evil is permissible only when it is the best and only means available for preventing a greater evil from occurring. For, to permit a lesser evil in order to avoid a greater evil is to actually have a good end and a good object, despite the fact that a lesser evil is permitted in the process.[27] The permissive will of God must therefore be understood in this latter sense.

In this light, Stump is suspicious of Alvin Plantinga's claim that God's permitting of evil is often "mysterious."[28] Her point is that the truth of this claim depends on the sense in which "mysterious" is taken. If he means that we have no idea why God permits evil, she disagrees. The distinction between God's antecedent and consequent will allows us to say with confidence that evil is permitted because it could not be prevented without a greater evil occurring. However, as for what that greater evil is or how this evil fits into the whole relative to the alternatives, this remains unclear to us and is in that sense mysterious.[29]

Needless to say, the parallels between Stump's claims and Leibniz are evident. Stump presumes the creation-fall-redemption-consummation narrative of Christianity, as

---

[25] Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 63.

[26] Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 66.

[27] Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 66-67. For Stump's discussion of Aquinas' view of the relationship between the end and the object of an act, see "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 53-55.

[28] Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 82. Stump cites on the point *Alvin Plantinga,* ed. James Tomberlin and Peter van Inwagen (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1985), 35.

[29] Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 82-84.

well as the traditional metaphysics concerning God and providence as laid bare by Aquinas. She invokes a free choice defense in reference to the fall and subsequent evils. In reference to God, she argues that he in his goodness has as his object the good of all things. But having created man in certain ways (i.e., free) and chosen to deal with man according to certain rules, this good is not always attainable. Hence, God antecedently wills nothing but good for each particular creature within creation and wills their obedience and *telos*. Yet, God, in his consequent will, must consider each creature in context. It is here that God permits evil. Lest one read this as *good ends justify evil means*, however, the permitting of evil must be understood as a permission that prevents still greater evils, and thus has both a good end and a good object.

The great irony of Stump's case is that she understands her essay to be contrary to the view that God permits evil in order to create the best possible world.[30] Stump's claim on this point seems to be based on a misreading of Leibniz, however. That is, Leibniz's God wills the best as well as the evils actually done. Hence, while Leibniz's God has a good end, his God has a corrupt object, which makes his will immoral. Her claim that God permits evil only to prevent greater evils aims at remedying this distortion. Yet, as we have seen throughout Part 2, Leibniz does not understand God to will evil affirmatively or approve of evil, nor does he advocate a good-ends-justify-evil-means perspective. Instead, he takes the willing of evil in precisely the same way as Stump. Thus, while Stump sees herself as having unearthed a better way of understanding God's permissive will, one that is contrary to the theory of the best, the end result is that she parrots from Aquinas Leibniz's very theodicy.

---

[30] Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," 53.

Stump's use of Aquinas gives only further confirmation of the ties between

Leibniz's claims and those of the Augustinian tradition. Yet, what of the more

constructive efforts that have emerged in recent years? Do we find among these

something new? Perhaps the best place to begin is with the basic formulation of the

problem in current literature. The analytic problem of evil is a triad of premises that

appear to be incompatible, but must all be affirmed by a traditional theist (i.e., one who

affirms something like the Judeo-Christian understanding of God and his attributes):

1. God is omnipotent.

2. God is omnibenevolent.

3. Evil exists.

Contemporary proponents of the problem of evil include J. L. Mackie, H. J. McCloskey,

William L. Rowe, and J. L. Schellenberg.[31] Mackie sets up the problem in a syllogistic

fashion, harkening back to Hume's well-known paraphrase of Epicurus.[32] Mackie argues

that a contradiction emerges when holding the above three premises in tandem, and the

theist must abandon one of these premises to remain consistent. Mackie takes this fact to

be reflected in the solutions ranging from Manicheism, which denies (1), to the denial of

evil as an illusion, which denies (3). In the end, the conclusion of these proponents of the

problem is that, given the reality of natural evils (e.g., earthquakes), extreme evils (e.g.,

the holocaust), and superfluous evils (e.g., the rape and beating of a child), no

---

[31] See, e.g., J. L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence," *Mind* 64:254 (April, 1955): 200-212; and H. J. McCloskey, "God and Evil," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 10, no. 39 (1960): 97-114;; William L. Rowe, "Grounds for Belief Aside, Does Evil Make Atheism More Reasonable than Theism?," in *God and the Problem of Evil*, ed. William L. Rowe (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 124-136; J. L. Schellenberg, "Stalemate and Strategy: Rethinking the Evidential Argument from Evil," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (2000): 405-419.

[32] Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence," 200-201 . Cf. David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 108.

justification for evil can be offered by the theist, and thus it is likely, if not certain, that God does not exist.[33]

Though some theists concede the point and thus seek a revised understanding of divinity,[34] a great many seek to offer constructive and innovative defenses or theodicies amid a traditional view of God. To be sure, these theodicies are "traditional" not in the sense that the theology presumed throughout is orthodox, but in the sense that the view of God presumed throughout is broadly traditional. There are typically three major components of these traditional defenses/theodicies: (i) moral evil is the product of free moral agents; (ii) certain higher goods are not possible without risking certain evils; and (iii) a long-term vision is essential to seeing how the permitting of evil is morally permissible. Exactly what each of these claims looks like varies from proponent to proponent, but each one regularly comes to the fore in traditional defenses/theodicies.[35] I will here focus on three examples coming out of Plantinga, Hick, and McCord Adams.

---

[33] Rowe, "Grounds for Belief Aside," 126-36; Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence," 212; and McCloskey, "God and Evil," 114; and Schellenberg, "Stalemate and Strategy," 405-406-; 413-417. The above nuance regarding whether the non-existence of God is certain or probably represents the distinction between Rowe and Schellenberg. The former consistently returns to *the improbility of God,* while the other argues that it is deductively certain that God does not exist. See Schellenberg, "Stalemate and Strategy," 405.

[34] See, e.g., David Ray Griffin, "Creation out of Nothing, Creation of Chaos, and the Problem of Evil," in *Encountering Evil,* ed. Stephen T. Davis (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001); and Charles Hartshorne, *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes* (New York: SUNY Press, 1983).

[35] See, e.g., John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (London; Macmillan, 1985); John Hick, "An Irenaean Theodicy," in *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy*, ed. Stephen T. Davis (Atlanta: Westminster/John Knox, 1981), 38-68; Marilyn McCord Adams, "The Problem of Hell: A Problem of Evil for Christians," in *Reasoned Faith: Essays in Philosophical Theology in Honor of Norman Kretzmann*, ed. Eleonore Stump (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 301-327;; Richard Swinburne, "Some Major Strands of Theodicy," in *The Evidential Argument from Evil*, Daniel Howard-Snyder (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996): 30-48; ; Peter Van Inwagen, "The Problem of Evil, the Problem of Air, and the Problem of Silence," *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 (1991): 135-165;; Ninian Smart, "Omnipotence, Evil, and Supermen," *Philosophy* 36, no. 137 (1961): 188-195; ; Eleneore Stump, "Providence and the Problem of Evil," in *Christian Philosophy*, ed. Thomas P. Flint (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 51-91.

Plantinga is perhaps the most well-known advocate of the "free-will defense" in recent years, which exemplifies (i) and (ii). Plantinga labels his reply a *defense* rather than a *theodicy,* since he takes the latter to imply a more normative claim concerning the reasons for the existence of evil. A *defense,* by contrast, merely aims at showing that an answer can be given to the analytic problem of evil, and in showing this, undermines the analytic certainty of God's non-existence.[36]

Plantinga sets his free-will defense on the backdrop of contemporary anti-theodicy approaches, such as that of Mackie.[37] Plantinga highlights the fact that if the anti-theodicy argument aims at granting certainty of God's non-existence, it must demonstrate a formal contradiction between the attributes of God (traditionally understood) and the existence of evil. For only if *God is omnipotent, and omnibenevolent* (*c*) lands in a formal contradiction with *evil exists* (*d*) is the case proven.[38] The free-will defense aims at undermining the anti-theodicy case by showing that if *c* is conjoined with a third proposition (*e*), and the conjoining of *c* and *e* entails *d*, then there is no formal contradiction between *c* and *d*.[39] *God creates creatures with free will*, it is suggested, is *e* and when conjoined with *c,* this may well entail *d*.

One key objection to this line of argumentation is the logical possibility of free creatures who do not sin. That is to ask: *Is it not logically possible for God to create a world where men always freely choose the good?*[40] In reply, Plantinga challenges the

---

[36] See note 14 above.

[37] Alvin Plantinga, "God, Evil, and the Metaphysics of Freedom," in *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 164-165.

[38] Plantinga, "God, Evil, and Freedom," 164-65.

[39] Plantinga, "God, Evil, and Freedom," 164-65.

[40] Plantinga, "God, Evil, and Freedom," 167-69.

conflation *logically possible worlds* with *actualizable worlds*, and thus argues that not all of the former fall within the sphere of the latter.[41] In defense of this claim, he draws a distinction between *creating* and *actualizing.* The former is unilateral—God alone does it—but the latter may not be. For example, if one of the conditions of a person choosing the good freely is that they do so without influence from outside agents, then the contingency of the act falls to the free agent, not to God. God can *create* free agents, but he cannot *create* free-agents-freely-choosing-the-good. The latter must be actualized by the agent making this choice.[42] Granting such distinctions, there are a great many logically possible worlds that God cannot actualize, for many logically possible worlds involve free agents choosing this or that, and God cannot do this on their behalf. This conclusion opens the door to the possibility of transworld depravity: That is, though not every logically possible world with free agents includes evil, every actualizable world with free agents does.[43]

A second influential theodicy in recent years is that of John Hick. Hick develops what he calls an Irenaean soul-building theodicy, which emphasizes (iii), but also brings to bear (i) and (ii). Drawing on St. Irenaeus, Hick parts ways with the "Augustinian" understanding of the fall in which Adam was an ideal being that dragged humanity down from its heights into corruption. Instead, according to Hick, Adam was immature and needed to develop virtue through a good use of free choice.[44] Though Adam went astray,

---

[41] Plantinga, "God, Evil, and Freedom," 169-70.

[42] Plantinga, "God, Evil, and Freedom," 165-67; 170-72.

[43] Plantinga, "God, Evil, and Freedom," 170-72.

[44] See Hick, *Evil and the God of Love,* III.ix-x. Cf. Augustine, *Contra Epistolam Manichaei Quam Vacant Fundamenti* 24.26-25.27, 26.28 (PL 42:190-191, 192-193); *Confessiones* 7.3, 7.5 (PL 32:735, 736-737); *Contra Julianum Pelagianum* 5.14 (PL 44:769-776); *De Civitate Dei* 9.16, 11.9, 12.2, 12.4-5, 14.26,

this did not drag humanity down from paradise, but was simply one of many missteps in the long trail of the moral and spiritual development of humanity. Such development is precisely the aim of our world. According to Hick, "The Irenaean approach, representing in the past a minority report, hinges upon the creation of humankind through the evolutionary process as an immature creature, living in a challenging and therefore person-making world."[45] In Hick's theodicy, the "challenges" of this world that help catalyze human growth include not only natural evils, pain and suffering, and the ability to go morally awry, but also epistemic distance between humanity and God—distance that preserves our freedom regarding whether to love God or reject God.[46]

In keeping with his pluralistic convictions, Hick argues that the building of souls must ultimately be efficacious in the life to come. That is to say, God's aim of building souls must succeed for every human person. Hick writes, "If Augustine is correct [that our hearts are restless until they rest in God], then sooner or later, in our own time and in our own way, we shall all freely come to God; and universal salvation can be affirmed, not as a logical necessity but as the contingent but predictable outcome of the process of the universe interpreted theistically."[47]

19.4 (PL 41:269-271, 327-328, 350, 351-353, 434-435, 627-631); *De Genesi ad Litteram Imperfectus* 1.3 (PL 34:218-219); *De Natura Boni contra Manichaeos* 5, 8 (PL 42:553, 554); *Enchiridion ad Laurentium de Fide et Spe et Caritate* 12-13, 23 (PL 40:236-238, 244); *De Praedestione Sanctorum* 17.34 (PL 44:985-986).and Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses* 3.20.1-3.20.2, 4.37.5, 4.38.1-4.38.3, 4.39.1-4.39.2, 5.6.1 (PG 7:942a-944a, 1102b-1103a, 1105a-1108c, 1109c-1110d, 1136c-1138c); *Ostensio Apostolicae Praedicationis* in *Démonstration de la Prédication Apostolique*, ed. and trans. Adelin Rouseau (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1995), c12, vol. 406 of *Sources Chrétiennes.*

[45] Hick, "An Irenaean Theodicy," 39.

[46] See Hick, *Evil and the God of Love,* IV, esp. IV.xii.3; IV.xiii.7; and IV.xiv-xv.

[47] Hick, "An Irenaean Theodicy," 52. See also John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion* (Yale University Press, 2005)*,* Part IV.

Like Plantinga's defense, Hick's soul-building theodicy addresses the problem of evil classically formulated. If *God is omnipotent, and omnibenevolent* (*c*), how is *evil exists* (*d*) possible? Although both thinkers posit a version of the free-will defense, Hick advances on Plantinga's theodicy by way of anthropology. In Plantinga's version of the free will defense, *c* is conjoined with a third proposition, *e* (freedom), that results in *d*. Hick affirms the addition of *e*, but he believes another proposition is still needed: *Free creatures come into being morally and spiritually unformed, and must be formed through trials* (*f*). Granting *f,* we have both an explanation of why freedom results in evil (viz., the inevitable immaturity of newly created beings) and a purpose, beyond freedom itself, that justifies the temporary permitting of evil (viz., the moral/spiritual formation of free creatures). In other words, Hick does not believe that freedom in itself is a good capable of justifying evil or even of explaining why evil exists. Freedom may be a necessary condition for reconciling *c* with *d*, but it is not a sufficient condition. What is required is both an explanation of why free creatures inevitably sin and a purpose beyond freedom itself that makes their temporary follies a price worth paying. Proposition *f,* argues Hick, offers both.[48]

A third approach to the problem of evil is the defense of Marilyn McCord Adams.[49] McCord Adams homes in on the problem of hell as the centerpiece of the problem of evil. The basic contention is that if God exists, hell cannot.[50] McCord Adams highlights three significant difficulties that the doctrine raises. First, hell is counter to the

---

[48] See Hick, *Evil and the God of Love,* IV.xiii.2-7.

[49] Marilyn McCord Adams, "The Problem of Hell: A Problem of Evil for Christians," in *Reasoned Faith: Essays in Philosophical Theology in Honor of Norman Kretzmann*, ed. Eleonore Stump (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 301-327.

[50] Adams, "The Problem of Hell," 301-02.

overall good of the person, as it does not reform or redeem, but only promotes evil.[51]

Second, the problem is exacerbated if coupled with the doctrine of election—especially

in its more fatalistic formulations—for the result is a diabolic picture of God as one who

creates and destines individuals for torment without a view to their good or ultimate

redemption.[52] Third, the problem faces the disproportionate difficulty, or the problem that

the punishment rendered to the individual seems grossly disproportionate to the crimes of

the damned.[53]

McCord Adams considers the prospect of a free choice defense. She thinks this

explanation fails in reference to hell. The primary difficulty she identifies is that humans

have trouble conceiving what they have not experienced. The rejection of God in favor of

eternal damnation is not, then, a fully informed choice.[54] In addition, McCord Adams

thinks the defense is stymied by the notion of the fall, according to which a single sin in

utopia results in innumerable evils and ultimately in original sin, which makes it

impossible for men to respond to the gospel without prevenient grace.[55] She therefore

sides with Hick in rejecting the Augustinian view.[56] She considers several other

approaches, all of which she thinks faill: A Molinist approach in which God saves those

he knows will accept the gospel; a psychological view in which hell is locked from the

inside but the damned are hardened in rebellion; and an annihilationist view in which the

---

[51] Adams, "The Problem of Hell," 304.

[52] Adams, "The Problem of Hell," 305-06.

[53] Adams, "The Problem of Hell," 308-10.

[54] Adams, "The Problem of Hell," 309-11.

[55] Adams, "The Problem of Hell," 310-11; 313-14.

[56] Adams, "The Problem of Hell," 310-11.

damned are destroyed rather than tormented in perpetuity.[57] In the end, McCord Adams

maintains that hell, being wholly incompatible and unreconcilable with the idea of God,

must not exist. In short, the only possible defense is universalism—all will be saved.[58]

With these three defenses/theodicies before us, we can see that all three of the

above responses are compatible with Leibniz's overarching argument. Notice that

Plantinga's distinction between a defense and a theodicy does not distance him from

Leibniz. Quite the contrary, this distinction, if granted, indicates that Leibniz's own

project is rightly labeled a defense, not a theodicy. For, as we saw above, Leibniz does

not claim to know the reasons why God created the world or offer a definitive answer to

every problem. Quite the contrary, he insists, despite Bayle's prodding, that he need not

account for every evil, but only show that divinity is compatible with the permitting of

evil:

> [B]ut I do not undertake to give [a complete explanation]; nor am I bound to do
> so…. It is sufficient for me to point out that there is nothing to prevent the
> connection of a certain individual evil with what is the best on the whole. This
> incomplete explanation, leaving something to be discovered in the life to come, is
> sufficient for answering the objections, though not for a comprehension of the
> matter. (G 6:189)

It is Bayle, not Leibniz, who insists on a complete explanation of evil. Leibniz is satisfied

to offer a defense of God's justice, or *theo dikā.*

---

[57] Adams, "The Problem of Hell," 314-315; 321-323 ; and 322-324. For the Molinist claim that all who are willing to be saved are saved in our world, see William Lane Craig, "Talbot's Universalism," *Religious Studies* 27 (1991): 297-308; Raymond J. Vanarragon, "Transworld Damnation and Craig's Contentious Suggestion," *Faith and Philosophy* 18 (2001): 241-60; and William Lane Craig, "Is 'Craig's Contentious Suggestion' Really so Implaussible?" *Faith and Philosophy* 22 (2005): 358-62. For a defense (and a depiction) of the view that hell is locked from the inside, see C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Harper One, 2001), ch. 8; and C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001). For a defense of annihilationism, see Edward William Fudge, *The Fire that Consumes: A Biblical and Historical Study of Final Punishment* (Houston: Providential Press, 1982).

[58] Adams, "The Problem of Hell," 301-02.

Yet, beyond the overall strategy, the particulars of Plantinga's approach can all be found explicitly in Leibniz (granting the reading argued herein). Plantinga's free-will defense has two major features. Its central claim is that God may not be able to actualize freedom (itself a good) without evil attaching by concomitance. As we have seen (per chapter 3), Leibniz states explicitly that God only permits evil if it attaches by concomitance to some greater good, and he entertains the possibility that freedom itself may be the very good that cannot be had without evil resulting as a consequence (see chapter 4, §2.2-3 above).

The second major feature of Plantinga's defense is the possibility of transworld depravity. We saw above that Plantinga distinguishes logically possible worlds from actualizable worlds. That is to say, there is a difference between creating a world and actualizing a state of affairs. The former God does unilaterally, but the latter, if it includes free creatures acting freely, is brought about synergistically. Simply because a certain state of affairs is logically possible, this does not mean it can be actualized by God unilaterally if that state of affairs requires that free agents freely choose certain things.[59] This nuances moves Plantinga much closer to the metaphysical view of possible worlds argued for in Parts 2 and 3 of this project. According to this rereading of Leibniz, not every logically possible world obtains in the realm of the possible, and only those worlds that obtain in the realm of the possible can be granted existence by God.[60] The push in both Plantinga and Leibniz (again, granting this reading) is for a more nuanced understanding of possible worlds that limits what is available to God and opens the door

---

[59] Plantinga, "God, Evil, and Freedom," 169-70.

[60] See chapter 4, §1.2; and chapter 5, §2 above.

to the possibility that a sinless world may not be possible in the sense of being unilaterally actualizable by divine decree.[61]

The theodicy of Hick, while not contained explicitly in Leibniz, is also perfectly compatible with Leibniz's central claim. Hick rejects Leibniz's theodicy as repugnant, arguing that Leibniz treats the smattering of good and evil as mere aesthetics.[62] Yet, Hick goes on to argue that God's central aim in creation is to build souls, and our world is justified because it is the best means for reaching this end. Hick's conclusion is that this goal, when combined with free choice and the general immaturity of creation, is sufficient to justify the temporary existence of evil. There are significant theological differences between Hick and Leibniz (e.g., Hick is a pluralist; Leibniz is not; Hick denies the fall in the Augustinian sense; Leibniz does not). However, Leibniz's defense could quite easily affirm that Hick's central claim may well be correct. It may well be that the end (or one of the ends) for which God created the world is to build souls, and that our world is the best means for reaching that end. Moreover, it may be true that the formation of souls, as it occurs in our world, is a good that cannot be had without evil attaching to our world by concomitance. The great difference between Leibniz and Hick is that Hick is more dogmatic regarding the end for which God created the world. Leibniz, by contrast, remains agnostic regarding God's reasons.

We find a similar result in reference to McCord Adams' defense. Because McCord Adams finds hell to be the centerpiece of the problem of evil, she finds universalism and only universalism to solve the problem. Leibniz would not accept her

---

[61] See chapter 4, §2.3 above.

[62] Hick, *Evil and the God of Love,* 154-55.

insistence on this being the only solution to the problem of hell—hence his manifold

barrage of possible solutions discussed in chapter 4, §3.3. However, we did see that

Leibniz includes in his list of possible solutions universalism (à la Origen, Gregory of

Nyssa, et al.) (G 6:60-1). Leibniz himself thinks a retreat to this position is unnecessary

(G 6:165), but he grants its possibility. In the end, the great difference between McCord

Adams and Leibniz is the same difference between Hick and Leibniz: McCord Adams

offers a dogmatic answer, while Leibniz thinks it suffices to catalog the various possible

solutions (in which hers is included), while remaining agnostic about which will be

shown correct in the life to come (G 6:279-80).

This result can be found to carry throughout the majority of the contemporary

literature that offers a defense or theodicy. Most authors tend to either offer a reason why

God would permit evil or forward a hypothetical that could undermine the specific evil in

view. In the former case, the reason is typically reducible to a good that cannot be had

without evil attaching as a consequence (such as freedom) or an end for which God

created our world (such as soul-building) that cannot be had without our world.[63] In the

latter approach, the hypothetical offered, if having any representation in the history of

Christian orthodoxy, can typically be found to be explicitly entertained by Leibniz or to

be implied in or compatible with his work. If there is a difference between Leibniz and

---

[63] See, e.g., Douglas Straton, "God, Freedom, and Pain," *Harvard Theological Review* 55, no. 2 (1962): 143-159; G. A. Boyd, *Satan and the Problem of Evil: Constructing a Trinitarian Warfare Theodicy* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2001); Hugh J. McCann, "The Author of Sin?," *Faith and Philosophy* 22, no. 2 (2005): 144-159; James S. Spiegel, "On Free Will and Soul Making: Complementary Approaches to the Problem of Evil," *Philosophia Christi* 13, no. 2 (2011): 405-413; Nick Trakakis, "On the Alleged Failure of Free Will Theodicies: A Reply to Tierno," *Sophia* 42, no. 2 (2003): 99-106; Osmond G. Ramberan, "God, Evil and the Idea of a Perfect World," *Modern Schoolman* 53 (1976): 379-392; Paul Ewart, "The Necessity of Chance: Randomness, Purpose and the Sovereignty of God," *Science and Christian Belief* 21, no. 2 (2009): 111-131; Ralph G. Wilburn, "Reflections on the Problem of Evil," *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1981): 126-141' Stewart Goetz, *Freedom, Teleology, and Evil* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2008); W. Norman Pittenger, "Is God Responsible for Evil," *Modern Churchman* 19, no. 3 (1976): 86-89.

these contemporary authors, it more often than not centers on the cogency of "the best."
But, as we have seen above in §1 above, it is questionable whether any successful
refutations of this concept are forthcoming. In short, I think it is fair to say that the
contemporary literature on theodicy is a footnote to Leibniz.

<p style="text-align:center">*******</p>

As stated in the opening of this work, the defense of Leibniz's theodicy contained
herein is both historical and constructive. On the historical side, I have sought to show
several things. My overarching case has been that Leibniz's philosophical theology,
rightly interpreted, represents a traditional brand of Augustinianism, and the claims
throughout his theodicy are an undefiled extension of this tradition. Hence, Leibniz's
theodicy is not his own, but is the tacit claim of a longstanding theological tradition made
explicit and brought to bear on the problem of evil as articulated in Leibniz's day.

As an extension of this claim, I have also argued a number of subordinate claims,
the most significant of which center on how we read Leibniz on the God-world
relationship and on free choice. Regarding the former, I have argued that Leibniz's
understanding of possible worlds, foreknowledge, divine decree, pre-established
harmony, predetermination, premotion, and divine concourse all have precedence in and
are a recapitulation of older Augustinian, theistic views of God-world interaction. As for
free choice, I have made the case that the Augustinian tradition is not only incompatiblist,
but was recognized as such in Leibniz's day. Hence, in adhering to this tradition, Leibniz
knowingly embraces a libertarian theology.

As noted at the outset, however, this project is not strictly a work in the history of ideas. Rather, this work has included in its aims an assessment and defense of the viability of Leibniz's theodicy for Christian theology and the task of theodicy today. Toward this end, I have constructively engaged Leibniz's contemporary objectors and the current literature on the problem of evil, devoting the latter part of this project to lingering objections and interlocution with current approaches to the problem of evil. I have sought to demonstrate that we have sufficient evidence to think that Leibniz's theodicy, when read in the light of the Augustinian tradition, is theologically orthodox and philosophical cogent and defensible.

I close this project with two notes, one related to the constructive side of this defense and the other related to its historical side. Beginning with the latter, how one determines what is entailed by a Christian worldview likely depends in large part on one's confessional commitments. For those, such as myself, who take their cues from the ecumenical councils, the confessions of the early Church, and the norms of patristic and early-medieval theology generally, the extent to which Leibniz's theodicy is rooted in historical theology is important. For my part, I do not take Christianity to be metaphysically neutral,[64] and thus am unwilling to part ways with the normative assumptions concerning ontology, the nature of God, or even faculty psychology as found throughout the first millennium (or so) of Christianity. And I, for one, am convinced that Leibniz's claims are a natural, if not inevitable, extension of these early Christian commitments. I recognize that late-Medieval developments and the deconfessionalizing trends of the post-Reformation era provide escape routes from Leibniz's claims.

---

[64] I argue this point in "Are Created Spirits Composed of Matter and Form? A Defense of Pneumatic Hylomorphism," *Philosophia Christi* 14:1 (2012): pp. 79-108.

However, I am unconvinced that such innovations are true to the faith once given over to the Saints, articulated and defended in the Patristic era, and received by the early Medievals. Therefore, I take Leibniz's response to be not only philosophically cogent and defensible, but to be the most viable response to the problem of evil for traditional Christian theology—if not the inevitable response of traditional Augustinianism.

The second note, on which I close this project, concerns the constructive side of this defense of Leibniz. Though this project falls under the rubric of the history of ideas, the success and value of this project does not hang solely on its persuasiveness as a rereading of Leibniz. Were one to somehow find conclusive evidence that the interpretation of Leibniz defended herein is not true to his texts, the theodicy expounded and defended here would not thereby disappear. For regardless of whether the theodicy expounded and defended here is rightly attributed to Leibniz, it remains a theodicy expounded and defended nonetheless. In this light, the question of whether this theodicy is Leibniz's theodicy is different from the question of whether this theodicy is viable and defensible. One could affirm the former and deny the latter; one could deny the former and affirm the latter; one could affirm the former and the latter; or one could deny the former and the latter. In this project I have maintained both claims, to wit, this theodicy is rightly ascribed to Leibniz and this theodicy is viable and defensible Christian defense of the justice of God. But should this exposition and defense be somehow dissociated from Leibniz, it would remain a theodicy now in the literature nonetheless.

APPENDIX

Theological Theses for Public Defense

Theses Pertaining to the Ph.D. Dissertation

1. From the eighteenth century until today, Leibniz has often been painted as standing outside of traditional Christian theism. This reading is suspect because it is based on a number of interpretive assumptions that are contrary to traditional Augustinian theology, the very theology Leibniz claims to affirm.

2. Augustine of Hippo opposes physical determinism, theological determinism, and psychological determinism. Over against these, he argues that the Christian view of providence understands God's decrees to operate synergistically, foreknowing and upholding free choice.

3. High medieval Augustinians, such as Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus, recognize the danger of psychological determinism that follows from the doctrines of divine omniscience and omnibenevolence, and show agreement that psychological determinism must be rejected as contrary to free choice.

4. The response to the compatibilism of Jonathan Edwards in eighteenth century British literature indicates a general agreement among British writers in this period that the Reformed tradition is opposed to determinism.

5. Eighteenth and nineteenth century compatibilists display a markedly different understanding of the theological divides between Greek and Latin Christians, Augustinians and Pelagians, and Reformed and Arminians than earlier incompatibilist understandings.

6. Because Leibniz affirms the traditional understanding of divine foreknowledge, namely that God foreknows future contingents apart from experience, Leibniz believes we must affirm that all truths are analytic.

7. Though God's knowledge of individuals includes those predicates that are in the subject, namely future contingents, Leibniz does not understand this to yield determinism because God knows these predicates to be in the subject contingently. Hence the predicate could be negated without contradiction.

8. Leibniz understands God to move agents by particular concourse, but in doing so, God is not the cause of evil. For evil is a privation; hence whatever is

ontologically positive in the act is produced by God (the efficient cause), while whatever is regressive belongs to the creature (the deficient cause).

9. Though Leibniz affirms that the will always chooses in keeping with its dominant inclination, this does not yield determinism in Leibniz since he denies that the will is never bound to choose, and he affirms that the will is able to anticipate and redirect chains of thought that may lead to a given inclination.

10. Leibniz's understanding of possible worlds reflects neither the intellectualist model of Aquinas, the voluntarist model of Henry of Ghent, nor the middle knowledge model of Luis de Molina. Rather, his understanding of God's grounding of possibles by the will and God's knowledge of possibles by the intellect's knowledge of the divine essence reflects the middle way of John Duns Scotus.

11. Drawing on John of Damascus, Leibniz affirms that God antecedently inclines toward, and indeed wills, every possible good proportionate to its goodness, but because not all goods are compossible, God consequently wills the best concatenation of compossible goods.

12. According to Leibniz, God can only permit sin if preventing this evil would require that God sin and the permitting of sin is the only and best way to prevent a still greater evil.

13. Leibniz argues that it may not be possible for God to prevent free creatures from misusing their freedom by perpetual miracle while fulfilling his duty to the whole of creation.

14. The fall of creatures, says Leibniz, must be ascribed to the free choice of these creatures. For God provided all that was necessary for them to refrain from sinning, though they did not make a right use of it.

15. Leibniz's view of election and reprobation denies both infralapsarianism and supralapsarianism on the basis that God decrees an entire world in total. Thus there is only one decree of God that entails all the particular decrees in the given world.

16. Leibniz's understanding of prevenient grace is broadly Arminian. For he sides with those who affirm that God has given grace sufficient for salvation to all, if only they would make a right use of it.

17. Leibniz denies that hell is eternal because the transgressions committed by the damned merit infinite punishment. On the contrary, the damned continue to sin in hell, and thus their finite punishments continue in perpetuity.

18.   Because the punishment of the damned is proportionate to their sin, Leibniz argues that the damned may restrain themselves and lessen their torments, though in doing so the damned cannot attain blessedness.

19.   Leibniz's solution to the problem of original sin, namely whether it has its source of perpetuation in God, combines the solution of the pre-existent soul with traducianism. On this solution, all souls are present in creation at its inception. The human souls in Adam are thus corrupted in the fall, but the properties of consciousness and personhood are not added to the soul by God until they become the subject of a procreative act around which other monads organize.

20.   Leibniz does not understand the contingency of a given act to reside in transworld identity, according to which an individual exists in multiple worlds, engaging in different acts, but to reside in the nature of the free act itself. That is, the predicate is in the subject in such a way that it can be negated without contradiction, and thus was chosen in a way that reflects the free capacity of the will and its power of contrary choice.

21.   God is not bound to create since he is pure actuality. As such, his goodness is complete in itself and does not increase in his act of creation; creation only displays outwardly that which is already possessed fully inwardly. Hence God may choose to create or choose to refrain from creating, as both are compatible with divine goodness.

22.   Because God need not create, it is within the purview of divine goodness, reason, and freedom to refrain from creating. The world is therefore modally contingent because it does not follow necessarily from the idea of God, only from the hypothetical necessity that if God creates, then he creates the best.

23.   Even if there are an infinite number of possible worlds, this does not mean that there is no maximally good world. For there are geometric lines that are infinite but make only finite progress, and the range of possible worlds is limited by the notion of compossibility.

24.   Even if there are multiple worlds of equal good, this does not mean that there is no best possible world. For so long as several worlds can be actualized simultaneously, in different dimensions, for example, this collection of equally good worlds would constitute the best "world" in Leibniz's sense of the word, namely, as creation.

25.   It is not an act of grace for God to create a world that is less than the best, for God has no obligation to any possible world. Therefore his choice of world can only do justice or injustice to his own goodness, not to any possible worlds that are passed over or decreed.

26. Leibniz's theodicy naturally unfolds from premises central to the Augustinian tradition, such as evil as privation, the intellect judging the good, the will inclining toward the good, divine omniscience, divine omnipotence, and so on. Thus, a traditional Augustinian cannot deny Leibniz's theodicy without abandoning some standard aspect of this tradition.

27. The affirmative contemporary replies to the problem of evil in figures such as Alvin Plantinga, John Hick, Marilyn McCord Adams, et al. are compatible with Leibniz's theodicy and thus could be appropriated into his theodicy.

Theses Pertaining to Ph.D. Coursework

28. The epistemology of the Cappadocian Church fathers points away from a Platonic reading. For these fathers consistently deny that humans have, or can have, knowledge of essence. Rather, human knowledge infers essence by its encounter with the operative powers of an essence.

29. John Calvin's view of perseverance affirms the hypothetical necessity that if one falls away from the faith, they will be damned, and he thus reads warning passages concerning the conditional nature of salvation as affirming this hypothetical necessity. His view of perseverance is rooted in confidence in God's providential care for the elect, not in the impossibility of apostasy by believers.

30. Karl Barth's reply to Lessing's ditch identifies the problem as one of both subjective epistemology and temporal distance from historical events. Barth's reply to this problem emphasizes the objective reality of God for man in Christ, independent of epistemic certainty, and the presence of Christ here and now in the gospel, as opposed to there and then in history.

31. John Hare's divine command theory drives a wedge between natural goods and moral goods, but appeals to the fitting nature of moral goods for their rationale. This view must lapse into either natural law, per its emphasis on the fitting nature of the commands, or into repugnance by granting that God may command that which strikes the faculties as necessarily immoral, such as the torture of infants, per the rift between natural and moral goods.

32. Though John Nevin admits to having been influenced by German philosophy in his early years, Nevin's later emphasis on Christ as the point of union between God and humanity and Nevin's emphasis on the organic spread of the salvation to the world is indicative, not of Schleiermacher or Hegel, but of the influence of the Cappadocian fathers.

33. Contra the claim of Philip Clayton, panentheism does not naturally accommodate the current scientific picture of organic development as bottom-up, for panentheism conceives of creation moving from being toward non-being, or top-

down. The contemporary understanding of organic development is better accommodated by the Augustinian picture of creation *ex nihilo* in which creatures move from non-being toward being.

34. Augustine distinguishes the gift of prevenient grace from the gift of perseverance. As a result, he affirms that not all who receive prevenient grace persevere to the end. But because predestination refers to one's ultimate destination, he does affirm that only those who are predestined to be saved receive the gift of perseverance.

35. Gregory Palamas' distinction between *ousia* and *energeia* and his related understanding of epistemology, namely that the Christian comes to know God via the transfiguration of the faculties by participation in the divine *energeia*, is true to the view of the Greek fathers, especially the Cappadocians.

36. The case made by the Eunomians that the unbegotten Father is ontologically superior to the Only-Begotten Son and the Spirated Holy Spirit falls into the category error of confusing efficient causality with formal causality. These distinctions of unbegotten, begotten, and spirated identify a distinction in efficient causality (how they have the divine nature) not a distinction in formal causality (what they are by nature).

Theses of Personal Interest

37. Kant's rational religion, as articulated in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason,* reflects a Kabbalist influence, evidenced in his advocacy of monopsychism in Book 1 and his NeoPlatnonic Christology in Book 2, which mirrors the Kabbalist concept of Adam Kadmon.

38. The Greek Church fathers show consistent commitment to the view that God is the creator of bodies that include both essence and accidents. Thus they argue that all created entities, including spirits, are hylomorphic.

39. The Cappadocian fathers and Immanuel Kant show very similar commitments to the limits of human knowledge, which give rise to the problem of religious epistemology in Kant's philosophy. The respective solutions to this problem, however, shows that Kant is committed to the immutability of the faculties of reason, while the Cappadocians believe that the human person can be transfigured by participation in the operative power of God, thereby enabling them to participate in an otherwise foreign knowledge, namely, God's own.

40. Artwork is an outward manifestation of inward perfections acquired by the artist, and because it has this ontological grounding, value judgments concerning artwork have a definite truth-value based on the judgment's correspondence to the perfections manifest in the work itself.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Robert Merrihew. "Must God Create the Best?" In *God and the Problem of Evil,* edited by William L. Rowe, 24-37. Malden: Blackwell, 2001.

_____. "Must God Create the Best?" *Philosophical Review* 81 (1972): 317-332.

_____. *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Aiton, E. J. *Leibniz: A Biography*. Bristol, England: Adam Hilger Ltd., 1985.

Albert the Great. "De resurrectione." In *Sancti doctoris Ecclesiae Alberti Magni [...] Opera omnia,* 37 vols., edited by Wilhem Kübel. Aschendorff: Monasterii Westfalorum, 1958.

Alexander, Adam. *A summary of geography and history, both ancient and modern; containing, an account of the political state, and principal revolutions of the most illustrious nations in ancient and modern times; [etc.].* Edinburgh: A. Strahan, 1794.

Ambrose of Milan. *De Fide ad Gratianum Augustum.* In *Patrologiae Latina*, 217 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1844-1855: vol. 16.

Andrewes, Lancelot. *Apospasmatia sacra, or A Collection of Posthumous and Orphan Lectures: Delivered at St. Pauls and St. Giles his Church, by the Right Honourable and Reverend Father in God Lancelot Andrews, Lord Bishop of Winchester.* London: R. Hodgkinsonne, 1657.

Anselm of Canterbury. "De Concordia Praescientiae et Predestinationis nec non Gratiae Dei." In *Patrologiae Latina*, 217 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, volume 158. Paris, 1844-1855.

_____. "De Casu Diaboli." In *Opera Omnia Tomus Primus Volumen I,* edited by Franciscus Salesius Schmitt. Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag [Günther Holzboog], 1968.

_____. "De Conceptu Virginali et de Originali Peccato." In *Opera Omnia Tomus Primus Volumen II,* edited by Franciscus Salesius Schmitt. Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag [Günther Holzboog], 1968.

_____. *Monologion*. In *Patrologiae Latina*, 217 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1844-1855.

Antognazza, Maria Rosa. *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation*. Translated by Gerald Parks. New Haven: Yale, 2007.

_____. *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Archimedes. *The Works of Archimedes,* translated by T. L. Heath. London: Cambridge University Press, 1897.

Aristotle. *Metaphysica.* In *Aristotelis Opera*, edited by Immanuelis Bekkeri. Oxionii e Typographeo Academico, 1837.

_____. *Physica*. In *Aristotelis Opera*, edited by Immanuelis Bekkeri. Oxionii e Typographeo Academico, 1837.

_____. *Rhetorica.* In *Aristotelis Opera*, edited by Immanuelis Bekkeri. Oxionii e Typographeo Academico, 1837.

_____. *Metaphysics.* In *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited and translated by Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, 2001.

_____. *Physics.* In *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited and translated by Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, 2001.

_____. *Rhetoric.* In *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited and translated by Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, 2001.

_____. *Topics.* In *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited and translated by Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, 2001.

Arminius, Jacobus. *Apologia adversus Articulos xxxi*. In *Opera theologica*. Leiden, 1629.

Ashworth, A. J. "Odo of Tournai's 'De Peccato Originali' and the Problem of Original Sin." In *Medieval Philosophy & Theology,* vol. 1, edited by Stephen F. Brown et al. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991.

Asselt, Willem J van. "Scholastic Protestant and Catholic: Medieval Sources and Methods in Seventeenth-Century Reformed Thought." In *Religious Identity and the Problem of Historical Foundation: The Foundational Character of Authoritative Sources in the History of Christianity and Judaism,* edited by Judith Frishman, Willemien Otten, and Gerard Rouwhorst, 457-470. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

_____. "The Theologian's Tool Kit: Johannes Maccovius (1588-1644) and the Development of Reformed Theological Distinctions." *Westminster Theological Journal* 68 (2006): 23-40.

_____, et al., eds. and trans. *Reformed Thought on Freedom: The Concept of Free Choice in the History of Early-Modern Reformed Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Aubert, François. *Entretiens sur la nature de l'ame des bêtes*. Basle, 1760.

Augustine. *City of God*. Translated by Henry Bettenson. New York: Penguin Books 1984.

_____. *Civitas Dei.* In *Corpus christianorum*. Ed. Lucas Verheijen. Turnholti: Brepols (1981).

_____. *Confessions*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

_____. *Confessionum*. In *Patrologiae Latina*, 217 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1844-1855.

_____. *De Dono Perseverantiae*. In *Patrologiae Latina*, 217 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1844-1855.

_____. *De Trinitate*. In *Patrologiae Latina*, 217 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1844-1855.

_____. *Enchiridion*. In *Patrologiae Latina*, 217 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1844-1855.

_____. *Enchiridion*. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 1996.

_____. *The Trinity*. Brooklyn, New York: New City Press, 1991.

"The Augustinian System." *The Dublin Review* 109 (July-Oct 1891): 48-68.

Ballor, Jordan. "Covenant, Causality, and Law in the Theology of Wolfgang Musculus." PhD. diss., University of Zurich, 2011.

Banner, Michael. *The Justification of Science and the Rationality of Religious Belief*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

Basil of Caesarea. *Epistulae.* In *Patrologiae Graeca*, 161 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1857-1866.

Bassler, Bradley O. "Motion and Mind in the Balance: The Transformation of Leibniz's Early Philosophy." *Studia Leibnitiana* 34:2 (2002): 221-231

Bayer, Jacob. "Biographiae Professorum Medicinae qui in Academiâ Altorfinâ unquam vixerunt." *Le Journal des Sçavans* 90 (Jan., 1730).

Bayle, Pierre. "Chapitre 3." In *Réponse aux Questions d'un Provincial*, vol. 3. Rotterdam: Reinier Leers, 1706.

Baynes, Thomas Spencer. "Pelagianism." In *The Encyclopaedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and General Literature*. 9th edition, edited by Thomas Spencer Baynes. New York: Henry G. Allen & Co., 1888.

_____. "Pelagius." In *The Encyclopaedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and General Literature*. 9th edition, edited by Thomas Spencer Baynes. New York: Henry G. Allen & Co., 1888.

_____. "Semi-Pelagianism." In *The Encyclopaedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and General Literature*. 9th edition, edited by Thomas Spencer Baynes. New York: Henry G. Allen & Co., 1888.

Beck, A. J. "Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676): Basic Features of His Doctrine of God." In *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*, edited by W. J. van Asselt and E. Dekker, 205-226. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.

_____, and A. Vos. "Conceptual Patterns Related to Reformed Scholasticism." *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 57, no. 3 (July, 2003): 223-233

Blumenfeld, David. "Superessentialism, Counterparts, and Freedom." In *Leibniz Critical and Interpretive Essays*, edited by Michael Hooker. Manchester: Manchester University Press 1982.

Boas, Marie. "The Establishment of the Mechanical Philosophy." *Osiris* 10 (1952): 412-541.

Bonansea, B. M. *Man and His Approach to God in John Duns Scotus*. University Press of America: Lanham, 1983.

Bonaventure. "Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi." In *Doctoris seraphici S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia,* 10 vols. Ad Claras Aqua (Quaracchi), vol. 2. Colegii S. Bonaventurae, 1882.

Bost, Hubert. "Pierre Bayle, A 'Complicated Protestant'." In *The Persistence of the Sacred in Modern Thought*, edited by Chris L. Firestone and Nathan A. Jacobs, and translated by Albert Gootjes, 185-208. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.

_____. "Pierre Bayle, un «protestant compliqué»." In *Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), le philosophe de Rotterdam: Philosophy, Religion and Reception, Selected Papers of the Tercentenary Conference held at Rotterdam, 7–8 December 2006*, edited by Wiep van Bunge and Hans Bots, 83-102. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008.

Bourke, Vernon J. *Will in Western Thought: An Historico-Critical Survey*. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964.

Bowen, Francis. *Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Schopenhauer and Hartmann.* 9th edition. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906.

Bradshaw, David. *Aristotle East and West: Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Bradwardine, Thomas. *De causa Dei, contra Pelagium, et De Virtute Causarum.* Londini: Ioannem Billium, 1618.

Broad, C. D. *Leibniz: An Introduction.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

Brucker, Johann Jakob. *The History of Philosophy, from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the Present Century; Drawn up from Brucker's Historia Critica Philosophiæ. By William Enfield, LL.D.* 2 vols. London: J. Johnason, 1791.

Burton, Marion le Roy. *The Problem of Evil: A Criticism of the Augustinian Point of View.* Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1909.

Calmet, Augustin. "Liberty." In *Calmet's great dictionary of the Holy Bible . . . Revised, corrected, and augmented, with an entirely new set of plates, Explanatory, Illustrative, and Ornamental, under the direction of C. Taylor.* 2 vols. London: Charles Taylor, et al., 1797-1801.

_____. "Pharisee." In *Calmet's great dictionary of the Holy Bible . . . Revised, corrected, and augmented, with an entirely new set of plates, Explanatory, Illustrative, and Ornamental, under the direction of C. Taylor.* 2 vols. London: Charles Taylor, et al., 1797-1801.

_____. "Predestination." In *Calmet's great dictionary of the Holy Bible . . . Revised, corrected, and augmented, with an entirely new set of plates, Explanatory, Illustrative, and Ornamental, under the direction of C. Taylor.* 2 vols. London: Charles Taylor, et al., 1797-1801.

Čapek, Milič. "Leibniz's Thought Prior to the Year 1670: from Atomism to a Geometrical Kinetism." *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 20 (1966): 249-256.

Chen, Chung-Hwan. "Different Meanings of the Term *Energeia* in the Philosophy of Aristotle." *Philosophy and the Phenomenological Research* 17 (1956): 56-65.

Cherry, Conrad. *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: a Reappraisal.* Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1974.

Cicero. *De divinatione.* In *The Loeb Classical Library*, edited by T. E. Page, *et al.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

_____. *De fato.* In *The Loeb Classical Library*, edited by T. E. Page, *et al.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

Clayton, Philip. *Mind and Emergence: From Quantum to Consciousness.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Clement of Alexandria. *Protrepticus.* In *Patrologiae Graeca*, 161 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1857-1866.

_____. *Stromata*. In *Patrologiae Graeca*, 161 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1857-1866.

Cockin, William. *The Freedom of Human Action Explained and Vindicated: In Which the Opinions of Dr. Priestley on the Subject are Particularly Considered*. London: for the Author, 1791.

Coetlogon, Dennis de. *An universal history of arts and sciences: [...] The whole extracted from the best authors in all languages, [...] By [...] Dennis De Coetlogon, [...]*.London: John Hart, 1745.

Collins, Anthony. *A philosophical inquiry concerning human liberty*. London: R. Robinson, 1735.

Collins, John. *Commercium epistolicum D. Johannis Collins, et aliorum, de analysi promota, jussu Societatis Regiae in lucem editum*. London: J. Tonson, and J. Watts, Jacobum Mack-Euen, 1722.

Combachius, Johannes. *Joh. Cambachii Metaphysicorum: libri duo vniversam primae philosophiae doctrinam theorematibus brevissimis comprehendentes, & commentariis necessariis ilustrantes: studiosis ejus disciplinae perquam utiles & fructuosi*, I.xiii, commentaries, 183-184. Oxford: W. Hall, 1662.

Copleston, Frederick. *A History of Philosophy: Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Leibniz*. 9 vols. London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1958.

Courtenay, William. *Capacity and Volition: A History of the Distinction of Absolute and Ordained Power*. Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina Editore, 1990.

Couturat, Louis. "Concerning the Metaphysics of Leibniz." Translated by R. Allison Ryan. In *Leibniz: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by Harry G. Frankfurt, 19-45. New York City: Anchor Books 1972.

_____. "Sur la Métaphysique de Leibniz." *Revue de Métaphysique et de morale*,10 1902: 1-25.

_____. *La Logique de Leibniz d'après des documents inédits*. Paris: Félix Alcan, 1901.

_____. *Opuscules et fragments inédits de Leibniz*. Paris, 1903.

Craig, William Lane. "Is 'Craig's Contentious Suggestion' Really So Implausible?" *Faith and Philosophy* 22 (2005): 358-361.

_____. "Talbot's Universalism." *Religious Studies* 27 (1991): 297-308.

Cresswell, John. "Duns Scotus on the Will." *Franciscan Studies* 13 (1953): 147-158.

Cunningham, William. "Sir William Hamilton on Philosophical Necessity and the Westminster Confession." *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 7 (1858): 199-252.

_____. *S. Austin and His Place in the History of Christian Thought*. London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1886.

_____. *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1866.

Curley, E. M. "The Root of Contingency." In *Leibniz: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by Harry G. Frankfurt, 191-213. New York City: Anchor Books, 1972.

D'Argens, Marquis. *New memoirs establishing a true knowledge of mankind, by discovering the affections of the heart, and the operations of the understandin, [...]By the Marquis d'Argens, [...] with letters from the Baron de Spon, [...] two novels, Spanish and French; and [...] Thoughts on the art of beautifying the face. By Mademoiselle Cochois, [...]*. 2 vols. London: D. Browne, R. Hett, and A. Millar, 1747. Vol. 2.

Dasal, Marcelo. "Ex pluribus unum*? –* Patterns in 522+ Texts of Leibniz's Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe VI, 4." *The Leibnizian Review* 13 (Dec, 2003): 105-154.

Davenant, John. *A Treatise on Justification: Or the Disputatio de Justitia Habituali Et Actuali*. 2 vols. London: Hamilton, Adams and Co., 1844-1846.

Davidson, Jack. "Imitators of God: Leibniz on Human Freedom." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 36, no. 3 (July, 1998): 387-412.

Dekker, Eef. "Was Arminius a Molinist?" *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27 (1996): 337-352.

Desaguliers, J. T. *A Course of Experimental Philosophy*. London: A. Millar, *et al*., 1763.

Descartes, René. *Epistolae*. 3 vols. Amsterdam: Elzevirius, 1668.

_____. *Oeuvres de Descartes*. 12 vols. Edited by. C. Adam and P. Tannery. Paris, Vrin/CNRS, 1964-76.

"*Die Christliche Lehre von der Sünde*: von Julius Müller. Breslau, 1844," *The North British Review* 12, no. 24 (Nov 1849-Feb 1850): 411-442.

Ditton, Humphry. *A discourse concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ: In three parts*. S. Palmer, 1722.

Drexel, Jeremias. *Nicetas seu Triumphata Incontinentia*. Sebastianum Cramoisy, 1624.

Dunton, John. *The Athenian Oracle: Being an Entire Collection of all the Valuable Questions and Answers in the Old Athenian Mercuries. Intermix'd with many*

cases in Divinity, History, Philosophy, Mathematicks, Love, Poetry. 3 vols. London: Andrew Bell, 1703-4.

Edwards, Jonathan. *Freedom of the Will*. Edited by Paul Ramsey. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.

_____. "The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners." In *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, vol. 19 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards,* edited by Harry S. Stout, 336-377. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

"Edwards and the Theology of New England." *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 7 (1857): 544-562.

Epictetus. "The Discourses." In *The Loeb Classical Library,* edited by T. E. Page, *et al.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967. Vol 131.

Euler, Leonhard. *Lettres a une princesse d'allemagne sur divers sujets de physique et de philosophie*. London: La Société Typographique, 1775.

Falckenberg, Richard. *History of Modern Philosophy*. 3rd English edition from 2nd German edition. Translated by A. C. Armstrong, Jr. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1897.

Fechtius, Joanne. *Consideratio Status Damnatorum, Quod Actiones Ipsorum, Inprimis Malas Concernit*. Spirae: C. Olffen, 1683.

Fisher, George Park. "The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards." *The North American Review* 128, no. 268 (1879): 284-303.

Fitch, Gregory. "Analyticity and Necessity in Leibniz." *The Journal of the History of Philosophy* 57, no. 1 (Jan., 1979): 29-42.

Fletcher, John. *The Works of the Reverend John Fletcher, Late Vicar of Madeley*. 4 vols. New York: Lane & Scott, 1851.

Fludde, Robert, *Tractatus Theologo-Philosophicus in Libros Tres Distributus*. Oppenheimii: Joh. Theod. de Bry, 1617.

Fontenelle (Le Bovier, Bernard). *Oeuvres diverses de m. de Fontenelle, de l'Academie Françoise*. Antoine van Dole, 1736. Vol. 5.

Formey, Jean Henri Samuel. *Histoire Abrégée de la Philosophie*. J. H. Schneider, 1760.

Fransisco de Sales. *Practica del amor de Dios*. Imp. Ramón Ruiz, 1793.

Frege, Gottlob. "13.11.1904 Letter to Russell." In *The Frege Reader,* edited by Michael Beaney, 290-292. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1997.

French, Nicholas. *The Doleful Fall of Andrew Sall, Jesuit of the Fourth Vow, from the Roman Catholick and Apostolick Faith; lamented by his constant friend; with an open Rebuking of his embracing the Confession contained in the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England*. London, 1749.

Fudge, Edward William. *The Fire That Consumes: A Biblical and Historical Study of Final Punishment*. Houston: Providential Press, 1982.

Fuller, B. A. G. *A History of Modern Philosophy*. 3rd edition. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960.

Garber, Daniel. "Motion and Metaphysics in the Young Leibniz." In *Leibniz: Critical and Interpretive Essays,* edited by M. Hooker, 160-184. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

_____. "Leibniz on Form and Matter." *Early Science and Medicine* 2:3 (1997): 326-352.

Gerhardi, Ioannis. *Loci theologici,* 9 vols. Gust. Schlawitz, 1863-75.

Gildersleeve, B. L., and Vonzalez Lodge. *A Latin Grammar*. London: MacMillan, 1963.

Gomarus, Franciscus. (Jacchaeus, Gilbertus). *Disputatio theologica de libero arbitrio*. Leiden, 1602.

Greene, Donald. "Latitudinarianism and Sensibility: The Genealogy of the 'Man of Feeling' Reconsidered." *Modern Philology* 75, no. 2 (Nov., 1977): 159-183.

Gregory of Nazianzen. *Oratio*. In *Patrologiae Graeca*, 161 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1857-1866.

Gregory of Nyssa. *De infantibus qui praemature abripiuntur*. In *Patrologiae Graeca*, 161 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1857-1866.

_____. *De Virginitate*. In *Patrologiae Graeca*, 161 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1857-1866.

_____. *Oratio Catechetica Magna*. In *Patrologiae Graeca*, 161 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1857-1866.

Griffin, David Ray. "Creation out of Nothing, Creation of Chaos, and the Problem of Evil." In *Encountering Evil,* edited by Stephen T. Davis, 108-124. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001.

_____. *God, Power, and Evil: A Process Theodicy*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004.

Gumerlock, Francis. "Gottschalk of Orbais: A Medieval Predestinarian." *Kerux* 22, no. 3 (Dec, 2007): 17-34.

Hale, Bob, and Aviv Hoffman, eds. *Modality: Metaphysics, Logic, and Epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University press, 2010.

Hamlyn, D. W. *A History of Western Philosophy*. London: Viking, 1987.

Hannequin, A. *Etudes d'histoire des sciences et d'histoire de la philosophie*. Paris, 1908.

Harris, Samuel. *The Philosophical Basis of Theism: An Examination of the Personality of man to Ascertain His Capacity to Know and Serve God, and the Validity of the Principles Underlying the Defence of Theism*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883.

Hartshorne, Charles. *Aquinas to Whitehead: Seven Centuries of Metaphysics of Religion*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Publications, 1976.

_____. *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes*. New York: SUNY Press, 1983.

Hazard, Paul. *European Thought in the Eighteenth Century: From Montesquieu to Lessing*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*. Edited by Walter Jaeschke. Hamburg, 1983-85.

Henry of Ghent. *Quodlibet.* In *Opera Omnia,* edited by G. A. Wilson. Leuven, 1991.

Hick, John. "An Irenaean Theodicy." In *Encountering Evil*, edited by William L. Rowe, 38-51. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.

_____. "Soul-Making Theodicy." In *God and the Problem of Evil*, edited by William L. Rowe, 265-281. Wiley-Blackwell, 2001.

_____. *An Interpretation of Religion*. Yale University Press, 2005.

_____. *Evil and the God of Love*. London: Macmillan, 1985.

Hill, George. *Lectures in Divinity*. Edited by Alexander Hill. Philadelphia: Herman Hooker, 1842.

Histoire de l'Académie royale des sciences et des belles lettres de Berlin. Berlin: Royal Academy, 1749.

Hoffman, Joshua, and Gary S. Rosenkrantz. *The Divine Attributes*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.

Honderich, Ted. "Determinism." In *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*. 6 vols. Edited by Maryanne Cline Horowitz. New York: Thomson Gale, 2005.

Howard-Synder, D., and F. Howard-Synder, "How an Unsurpassible Being Can Create a Surpassable World." *Faith and Philosophy* 11 (1994): 260-268.

Hume, David. *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. London: Penguin Books, 1990.

Irenaeus. *Contra haereses.* In *Patrologiae Graeca*, 161 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1857-1866.

Jacchaeus, Gilbertus (Franciscus Gomarus). *Disputatio theologica de libero arbitrio*. Leiden, 1602.

Jacobs, Nathan A. "Are Created Spirits Composed of Matter and Form? A Defense of Pneumatic Hylomorphism." *Philosophia Christi* 14, no.1 (2012): 79-108

_____. "Kant and the Problem of Revelation: An Appraisal in Light of the Writings of the Eastern Church Fathers." In *Kant and Theology.* Eds. Chris L. Firestone, Nathan A. Jacobs, and James H. Joiner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming.

_____. "On 'Not Three Gods'—Again: Can A Primary-Secondary Substance Reading of *Ousia* and *Hypostasis* Avoid Tritheism?" *Modern Theology* 24, no. 3 (July, 2008): 331-362.

_____. "What Hath Königsberg to Do with Byzantium? An Eastern Reply to the Problem of Post-Kantian Theology." Paper presented at the International Congress of Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 2010.

Jacquelot, Isaac. *Conformité De La foi avec La Raison; Ou Défense De La Religion, contre les principales Difficultez répandues dans le Dictionaire Historique et Critique De Mr. Bayle*. Amsterdam: Henry Desbordes & Daniel Pain, 1705.

John Chrysostom. *Homiliae XXIV in Epistolam ad Ephesios*. In *Patrologiae Graeca*, 161 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1857-1866.

John Damascus. *De fide orthodoxa*. In *Patrologiae Graeca*, 161 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1857-1866.

John Dun Scotus, *Ordinatio*. In *Opera omnia Ioannis Duns Scoti.* 12 vols. Lyons, 1639. Reprinted: Hildesheim, 1968.

_____. *Lectura* I 39. In *Opera omnia Ioannis Duns Scoti.* 12 vols. Lyons, 1639. Reprinted: Hildesheim, 1968.

_____. *Quaestiones quodlibetales.* In *Obras del Doctor Sutil, Juan Duns Escoto.* Edited and translated by Flexi Alluntis and Allan B. Wolter. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianas, 1963.

Jones, William. *An Essay on the First Principles of Natural Philosophy: Wherein the Use of Natural means, or Second Causes, in the Oeconomy of the material world, is demonstrated from Reason, Experiments of Various Kinds, and the Testimony of Antiquity*. Oxford, 1762.

J. TH. C. of Wirtembergh. "Philosophiæ *Leibnitianæ & Wolphianæ* Usus in Theologia, per præcipua Fidei capita: Præmittitur Disseratio de *Ratione & Revelatione,* de *Natura & Gratia.*" In *Historia Litteraria: Or, An Exact and Early Account of the Most Valuable Books Published in the Several Parts of Europe.* Ed. Archibald Bower, vol. 4, no. 20, 172-198. London: N. Prevost, 1732.

Junius, Franciscus. "Theses theologicae Leydenses et Heydelbergenses, xxii. De libero arbitrio." In *Opuscula theological,* edited by Abraham Kuyper. Amsterdam: F. Muller com soc. et J.H. Kryt, 1882.

_____. *De libero arbitrio*. In *Opuscula theological.* Ed. Abraham Kuyper. Amsterdam: F. Muller com soc. et J.H. Kryt, 1882.

_____. *Theses theologicae Leydenses et Heydelbergenses*. In *Opuscula theological,* Ed. Abraham Kuyper. Amsterdam: F. Muller com soc. et J.H. Kryt, 1882.

Justin Martyr. *Apologia Prima*. In *Patrologiae Graeca*, 161 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1857-1866.

_____. *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo*. In *Patrologiae Graeca*, 161 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1857-1866.

Kaiser, Christopher B. *Creational Theology and the History of Physical Science: the Creationist Tradition from Basil to Bohr*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

Kames, Lord Henry Home. *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*. London: J. Bell and J. Murray, 1779.

Kane, Robert. "The Contours of the Contemporary Free Will Debate." In *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, edited by Robert Kane, 3-41. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Kant, Immanuel. *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*. In *Kants gesammelte Schriften.* Edited by Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences. Berlin: Georg Reimer and Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1900.

_____. *Kants gesammelte Schriften.* Berlin: G. Reimer, 1902.

Kaplan, David. "How to Russell a Frege-Church." *Journal of Philosophy* 72 (1975).

Krauth, Charles Porterfield. *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology: As Represented in the Augsburg Confession, and in the History and Literature of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. J.B. Lippincott and Co., 1871.

Kretzmann, Norman. "Philosophy of Mind." In *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, edited by Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump, 128-159. Cambridge: Cambridge, 1993.

Lalande, André. "Determinisme." In *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, 7th edition, edited by André Lalande Paris: P.U.F., 1956.

Le Clerc, Jean. "Article VII." In *Bibliothèque Choisie*, vol. 7. Amsterdam, 1705.

Le Clerc, Monsieur. *The Lives of the Primitive Fathers, viz., Clemens Alexandrinus, Esebius, Bishop of Caesarea, Gregory Nazianzen, and Prudentius, the Christian Poet [. . .] Also a Short History of Pelagianism*. London: Thomas Ballard, 1701.

Lecq, Ria van der. "Duns Scotus on the Reality of Possible Worlds." In *John Duns Scotus: Renewal of Philosophy*, edited by E. P. Bos. Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1998.

Leibniz, G. W. *Die Leibniz-Handschriften der Königlichen öffentlichen Bibliothek zu Hannover.* Edited by Eduard Bodemann. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1966.

_____. *Die philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*. Edited by C. I. Gerhardt. 7 vols. Berlin, 1875-90.

_____. *Dissertation on Predestination and Grace.* Edited and translated by Michael J. Murray. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

_____. *G. W. Leibniz, Mathematische Schriften*. 7 vols. Edited by C. I. Gerhardt (1849-63). Reprinted Hildesheim: Olms, 1971.

_____. *G. W. Leibniz: Textes inédits*. Edited by G. Grua. Paris, 1948.

_____. *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: Philosophical Papers and Letters.* 2 vols. Edited and translated by Leroy E. Loemker. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956.

_____. *Leibniz Philosophical Papers and Letters*, 2nd edition. Edited by L. E. Loemker. Dordrecht, Holland, 1969.

_____. *Leibniz: Discourse on Metaphysics*. Edited by P. G. Lucas and L. Grint. Manchester, 1961.

_____. *Leibniz: Logical Papers*. Edited by G. H. R. Parkinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966.

_____. *Leibniz: Philosophical Papers and Letters*. Edited by G. H. R. Parkinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966.

_____. *Leibniz: Philosophical Writings*. Edited by G. H. R. Parkinson and translated by Mary Morris and G. H. R. Parkinson. London: J M Dent & Sons, 1973.

_____. *Leibnizens Gesammelte Werke*. Edited by G. H. Pertz. Hanover, 1847.

_____. *New Essays Concerning the Human Understanding*. Edited by A. G. Langley. New York, 1896.

_____. *Nouvelles lettres et opuscules inédits de Leibniz*. Edited by A. Foucher de Careil. Paris, 1857. Reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1971.

_____. *Opera philosophica quae exstant latina, gallica, germanica omnia.* Edited by J. E. Erdmann. Berlin: G. Eichler, 1839-40.

_____. *Opuscules et fragments inédits de Leibniz*. Edited by L. Couturat. Paris, 1903.

_____. *Philosophical Works of Leibniz.* Edited by G. M. Duncan. New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse, and Taylor, 1890.

_____. *Refutation Recently Discovered of Spinoza by Leibniz.* Translated by O. F. Owen. Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1855.

_____. *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*. Edited by The Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Darmstadt, 1923-; Leibzig, 1938-; Berlin, 1950-.

_____. *The Leibniz-Arnauld Correspondence*. Edited and translated by H. T. Mason. Manchester, 1976.

_____. *The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings.* Edited and translated by Robert Latta. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898.

_____. *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God and the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*. Translated by E. M. Huggard. La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1997.

Lessing, G. E. "On the Reality of Things outside of God." In *Lessings sämtliche Werke*, edited by Robert Petsch. 6 vols. Berlin, 1907.

_____. *Philosophical and Theological Writings*. Edited and translated by H.B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Lévy-Bruhl, Lucien. *History of Modern Philosophy in France*. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1899.

Lewes, George Henry. *The History of Philosophy from Thales to Comte*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1867.

Lewis, C. S. *Out of the Silent Planet*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943.

_____. *Perelandra*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944.

_____. *That Hideous Strength*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946.

_____. *The Great Divorce*. New York: Harper Collins, 2001.

_____. *The Problem of Pain*. New York: Harper One, 2001.

Lewis, Charlton T. *A Latin Dicionary; founded on E. A. Andrew's edition of Freund's Latin-German Dictionary*. Revised by Charlton T. Lewis. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980.

Lewis, David. "Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic." *The Journal of Philosophy* 65, no. 5 (March, 1968): 113-126.

Lewis, Frank A. *Substance and Predication in Aristotle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Linsky, Bernard. *Russell's Metaphysical Logic*. Stanford: CSLI Publications, 1999.

Literary memoirs of Germany and the north, being a choice collection of essays on the following interesting subjects, viz. alchemy, ... [etc.]. Done from the Latin and High-Dutch by a Society of Gentlemen. 2 vols. London: J. Warcus; and J. Ross, 1759.

Lloyd, G. E. R. *Aristotle: The Growth & Structure of His Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.

Loemker, Leroy E. "Leibniz and the Herborn Encyclopedists." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22, no. 3 (1961): 323-338.

Lombard, Peter. *Libri IV Sententiarum* vol. 2, 3rd edition. Grottaferrata Romae: Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1981.

Look, Brandon. "The Platonic Leibniz." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 11, no. 1 (2003): 129-140.

Maccovius, Johannes. *Collegia Theologica, quae extant omnia. Tertio ab auctore recognita, emendata, & plrimis locis aucta, in partes duas distribute*. Franekerae: Impensis Vlderici Balck, 1641.

Mackie, J. L. "Evil and Omnipotence." In *God and Evil Readings on the Theological Problem of Evil in Contemporary Perspectives in Philosophy Series*, edited by Nelson Pike. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1964.

_____. "Evil and Omnipotence." *Mind* 64, no. 254 (April, 1955): 200-212.

_____. *The Miracle of Theism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Marsden, George. *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

Martin, Benjamin. *Biographia Philosophica. Being an Account of the Lives, Writings, and Inventions, of the Most Eminent Philosophers and Mathematicians Who have flourished from the Earliest Ages of the World to the Present Time*. London: W. Owen, 1764.

Martin, John. *The philosophical transactions (from the year 1732, to the year 1744) abridged, and disposed under general heads, the Latin papers being translated into English. By John Martyn, [...]*. 2 vols. London: W. Innys, et al., 1747.

Martinez, Matthias. *Novum dictionarium tetraglotton: in quo voces Latinae omnes, & Graecae his respondentes, cum Gallica & Teutonica singularum interpretatione, ordine alphabetico proponuntur*. Amstelædami: Henricum Wetstenium, Rodolfum and Gerhardum Wetstenios, 1714.

Maseres, Francis. "A Method of extending Cardan's Rule for resolving the Cubick Equation $y^3 + qy = r$, or $qy + y^3 = r$, to the resolution of the Cubick Equation $qy - y^3 = r$, when [etc.]." In *Scriptores logarithmici; or, A Collection of Several Curious Tracts on the Nature and Construction of logarithms, Mentioned in Dr. Hutton's Historical Introduction to his New Edition of Sherwin's Mathematical Tablets: Together with Some Tracts on the Binomial Theorem and Other Subjects Connected with the Doctrine of Logarithms*, 6 vols, edited by Francis Maseres. London: J. Davis, 1791-1807.

Mates, Benson. "Individuals and Modality in the Philosophy of Leibniz." *Studia Leibnitiana* 5, no. 2 (1972).

McCloskey, H. J. "God and Evil." In *God and Evil Readings on the Theological Problem of Evil in Contemporary Perspectives in Philosophy Series*, edited by Nelson Pike, 61-66. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1964.

McCord Adams, Marilyn. "The Problem of Hell: A Problem of Evil for Christians." In *God and the Problem of Evil*, edited by William L. Rowe, 282-309. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.

_____. "The Problem of Hell: A Problem of Evil for Christians." In *Reasoned Faith: Essays in Philosophical Theology in Honor of Norman Kretzmann*, edited by Eleonore Stump, 301-327. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993.

M'Clintock, John, and James Strong. *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1894.

Mellone, S. H. *The Dawn of Modern Thought: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz*. London: Oxford University Press, 1930.

Mercer, Christia. *Leibniz's Metaphysics: Its Origins and Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Mettrie, Julien Offray de la. *Oeuvres philosophiques*. Berlin: Jean Nourse, 1751

Miller, Perry. *Jonathan Edwards*. Cleveland: World, 1969.

Molina, Luis de. *Concordai liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, Divina praescientia, providential, praedestinatione et reprobation, ad nonnullos primae partis D. Thomae articulos*. Lisbon: Antonium Riberium, 1588.

_____. *Liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providential, praedestinatione et reprobation Concordia*. Edited by Johannes Rabeneck. Madrid: Collegium Maximum, 1953.

Möhle, Hannes. "Scotus's Theory of Natural Law." In *Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, edited by Thomas Williams, 312-331. Cambridge: Cambridge, 2003.

Monboddo, Lord James Burnet. *Antient Metaphysics: or, the Science of Universals. With an Appendix, Containing an Examination of the Principles of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy*. Edinburgh: T. Caadell, J. Balfour and Co., 1779.

Mondadori, Fabrizio. "Reference, Essentialism, and Modality in Leibniz's Metaphysics." *Studia Leibnitiana* 5, no. 1 (1973): 74-101.

Mosheim, Johann Lorenz. *An ecclesiastical history: antient and modern, from the birth of Christ, to the beginning of the present century*. Translated by Archibald Maclaine. 5 vols. A. Millar, 1768.

Mugnai, Massimo. "Leibniz on Substance and Changing Properties." *Dialectica* 59, no. 4 (2005): 503-516.

Muller, Richard A. "God and Design in the Thought of Robert Boyle." In *The Persistence of the Sacred in Modern Thought,* edited by Chris L. Firestone and Nathan Jacobs, 87-111. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.

_____. "Grace, Election, and Contingent Choice: Arminius's Gambit and the Reformed Response." In *The Grace of God: The Bondage of Will*, edited by Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware, 251-278. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995.

_____. *God, Creation, and Providence in the Thought of Jacobs Arminius: Sources and Directions of Scholastic Protestantism in the Era of Early Orthodoxy*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991.

_____. "Edwards and the Absence of Free Choice: A Parting of Ways in the Reformed Tradition." In *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 1, no. 1(2011): 3-22.

_____. *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003.

Murphy, Arthur E. "Jonathan Edwards on Free Will and Moral Agency." *The Philosophical Review* 68, no. 2 (1959): 181-202.

Murray, Michael J. "Introduction." In *Dissertation on Predestination and Grace*, edited and translated by Michael J. Murray, xv-li. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

_____. "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge of Future Contingents and Human Freedom." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 55, no. 1 (Mar., 1995): 75-108.

_____. "Spontaneity and Freedom in Leibniz." In *Leibniz: Nature and Freedom*, edited by Donald Rutherford and J. A. Cover, 194-216. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Nadler, Steven. *The Best of All Possible Worlds: A Story of Philosophers, God, and Evil*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2008.

Newton, Isaac. "An Account of the Book Entitled 'Commercium Epistolicum Collinii Aliorum, De Analysipromota; Published by order of the Royal-Society, in relation to the Dispute between Mr. Leibnitz and Dr. Keill, about the Right of Invention of the Method of Fluxions, by some call'd the Differential Method'." *The Royal Society of London, Philosophical Transactions (1683-1775)* 29, no. 342 (1715): 178-216.

Nicholas Cusa. *De docta ignorantia.* Strassburg, France: Martin Flach, 1489.

Noiré, Ludwig. *A Sketch of the Development of Philosophic Thought from Thales to Kant*. London: MacMillan and Co., 1900.

North, John. *God's Clockwork: Richard of Wallingford and the Invention of Time*. London: Continuum, 2005.

Nourrisson, Jean Félix. *La philosophie de Leibniz*. L. Hachette, 1860.

O'Leary-Hawthorne, John, and J. A. Cover. "Haecceitism and Anti-Haecceitism in Leibniz's Philosophy." *Noûs* 30:1 (Mar., 1996): 1-30.

_____. "Leibnizian Essentialism, Transworld Identity, and Counterparts." *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 9 (1992): 425-444.

_____. "Leibnizian on Superessentialism and World-Bound Individuals." *Studia Leibnitiana* 22 (1990): 175-183.

O'Higgins, J. "Introduction." In *Determinism and Freewill: Anthony Collins' 'A Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Human Liberty'*, 1-46. Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff and The Hague, 1976.

Oakley, Francis. "The Absolute and Ordained Power of God in Sixteenth and Seventheenth-Century Theology." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59, no. 3 (1998): 437-461.

Odo of Tournai. *De Peccato Originali*. In *Patrologiae Latina*, 217 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1844-1855: Vol. 160.

Oresme, Nicole. *Le livre du ciel et du monde.* In *University of Wisconsin Publications in Medieval Science,* edited by Albert Douglas Menut and Alexander Joseph Denomy. University of Wisconsin Press, 1968.

Origen. *De Oratione*. In *Patrologiae Graeca*, 161 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1857-1866.

_____. *De Principiis*. In *Patrologiae Graeca*, 161 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1857-1866.

Owens, Joseph. *Cognition: An Epistemological Inquiry*. Houston, TX: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1992.

Pace, Edward. "Petrus Aureoli." In *The Catholic Encyclopedia.* New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907.

Paull, R. Cranston. "Leibniz and the Miracle of Freedom." *Noûs* 26, no. 2 (June, 1992): 218-235.

Pelagius. "'To Demetrias.'" In *The Letters of Pelagius and His Followers*, edited and translated by B. R. Rees. New York: Boydell Press, 1991.

Plantinga, Alvin. *God, Freedom, and Evil.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977.

Pope, Alexander. "Letter LXVII. To Prevent the Mistake Notions Some may entertain from the Reading of M. de Voltaire's Candid, or All for the Best." *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* 25 (July 1759).

_____. *Essay on Man*. Upsala: L. G. Berglund and John Fred Edman, 1799.

_____. *The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope, with His Last Corrections, Additions, and Improvements. From the Text of Dr. Warburton. With the Life of the Author*. 2 vols. London: C. Cooke and Paternoster-Row, 1795.

Portalie, Eugene. *A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine*. London: Burns & Oates, 1960.

Priestley, Joseph. *An Examination of Dr. Reid's Enquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense, Dr. Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, and Dr. Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion*. London: J. Johnson, 1774.

_____. *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated; being an appendix to the Disquisitions relating to matter and spirit*. London, 1777.

Quine, W.V. "On What There Is." *Review of Metaphysics* 2 (1948/1949): 21-38.

Racine, Louis. *La religion, poëme; par Monsieur Racine, De l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres*. 2 vols. London, 1785.

Rademaker, C. S. M. *Life and Work of Gerardus Joannes Vossius (1577-1649)*. Van Gorcum, 1981.

Rauzy, Jean-Baptiste. "An Attempt to Evaluate Leibniz' Nominalism." *Metaphysica* 1 (2004).

Reid, Thomas. *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*. Edinburgh and London: John Bell and G. G. J. & J. Robinson, 1788.

_____. *Essays on the Intellectual and Active Powers of Man*. 3 vols. Dublin: P. Byrne and J. Milliken, 1790.

Rescher, Nicholas. *Leibniz: An Introduction to His Philosophy*. Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1979.

Rist, John M. "Augustine on Free Will and Predestination." *Journal of Theological Studies* 20 (1969): 420-447.

Robinet, A. *Architectonique disjunctive, automates systémiques et idéalité transcendantale dans l'œuvre de G. W. Leibniz. Nombreux texts inédits*. Paris, 1986.

Rowe, William L. "Grounds for Belief Aside, Does Evil Make Atheism More Reasonable than Theism?" In *God and the Problem of Evil*, edited by William L. Rowe, 124-137. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2001.

Russell, Bertrand. *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1937.

_____. *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz with an Appendix of Leading Passages*. London: Routledge, 1997.

_____. *A History of Western Philosophy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945.

_____. *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*. Eds. Alasdair Urquhart and Albert C. Lewis. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Rutherford, Donald. *Leibniz and the Rational Order of Nature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

St. Augustine, Bishop and Doctor; A Historical Study. Dublin: M. H. Gill & Son, 1886.

Schellenberg, J. L. "Stalemate and Strategy: Rethinking the Evidential Argument from Evil." In *God and the Problem of Evil,* edited by William L. Rowe, 159-179. Malden: Blackwell, 2001.

Schelling, Fredrich Willhem Joseph. *Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling Sämmtliche Werke,* vol. 7, part 1. Edited by Schelling. Stuttgart and Augsburg: J. G. Cotta, 1860.

_____. *Of Human Freedom*. Translated by James Gutmann. Chicago: Open Court, 1936.

_____. *On the History of Modern Philosophy*. Translated Andrew Bowie. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

_____. *Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling Schriften von 1813-30*. Edited by Karl Friedrich August Schelling. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968.

Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Parerga and Paralipomena*. Translated by E. F. J. Payne. New York: Oxford, 2001.

Schwertner, Thomas. "Durandus of Saint-Pourçain." In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909.

Sertillanges, R. *Le Problème du mal l'histoire*. Paris, 1948.

Shim, Michael K. "Leibniz on Concept and Substance." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (Sept., 2006): 309-325.

Simonson, Harold P. "Jonathan Edwards and His Scottish Connections." *Journal of American Studies* 21, no. 3 (1987): 353-376.

"Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy." *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* 28, no. 1 (Jan-April, 1853): 70-83.

Sleigh, Jr., R. C. "Leibniz on Freedom and Necessity: Critical Notice of Robert Adams, Lebniz: Determinist, Theist, and Idealist." *The Philosophical Review* 108, no. 2 (Apr., 1999): 245-277.

_____. *Leibniz & Arnauld: A Commentary on Their Correspondence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.

_____, Vere Chappell and Michael Della Rocca. "Determinism and Human Freedom." In *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*. 2 vols., edited by Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers, vol. 2, 1193-1278. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Smart, Ninian. "Omnipotence, Evil, and Supermen." In *God and Evil Readings on the Theological Problem of Evil in Contemporary Perspectives in Philosophy Series*, edited by Nelson Pike, 103-112. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1964.

Smith, Justin Erik Halldór. "Christian Platonism and the Metaphysics of Body in Leibniz." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 12, no. 1 (2004): 43-59.

Snobelen, Stephen D. "The Myth of the Clockwork Universe: Newton, Newtonianism and the Enlightenment." In *The Persistence of the Sacred in Modern Thought*. edited by Chris L. Firestone and Nathan Jacobs, 149-184. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.

Soner, Ernst. "Demonstratio Theologica, et Philosophica, quod aeterna impiorum supplicia non arguant Dei justitiam, sed injustitiam." In *Fausti et Laelii Socini, item Ernesti Sonneri Tractatus aliquot theologici*. Amsterdam: Typis Godfridi Philadelphi, 1654.

Sophocles. "Oedipus Tyrannus." In *The Loeb Classical Series*, edited by G. P. Goold, vol. 20. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Sterne, Laurence. *Yorick's Meditations upon Various Interesting and Important Subjects*. London: R. Stevens, 1760.

Stewart, Dugald. *The Collected Works*. 10 vols. Edited by Sir William Hamilton. Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1854-1860.

Storms, C. Samuel. "Jonathan Edwards on the Freedom of the Will." *Trinity Journal* 3, no. 2 (1982): 131-169.

Strauss, Leo. *Persecution and the Art of Writing*. Glencoe: Free Press, 1952.

Strickland, Lloyd. "God's Problem of Multiple Choice." *Religious Studies* 42 (2006).

Stump, Eleonore. "Providence and the Problem of Evil." In *Christian Philosophy*, edited by Thomas P. Flint, 51-91. South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990.

_____. "The Problem of Evil." *Faith and Philosophy* 2 (1985): 392-423.

_____. *Aquinas*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Stumpf, Samuel Enoch. *Socrates to Sartre: A History of Philosophy*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966.

Suárez, Francisco. *Disputationes metaphysicae*. In *Omnia Opera*. Paris: Vives, 1866.

_____. *De divina gratia*. In *Opera Omnia*. Venice, 1741.

Swinburne, Richard. "Some Major Strands of Theodicy." In *God and the Problem of Evil,* edited by William L. Rowe, 240-264. Malden: Blackwell, 2001.

_____. *The Existence of God*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.

Taylor, Richard. "Determinism." In *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 8 vols., edited by Paul Edwards. New York: The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1967: Vol. 2.

Tertullian. *Contra Marcion*. In *Patrologiae Latina*, 217 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1844-1855.

_____. *De Spectaculis*. In *Patrologiae Latina*, 217 volumes, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1844-1855.

TeSelle, Eugene. *Augustine the Theologian*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1970.

Thomas Aquinas. "De malo." In *The De malo of Thomas Aquinas,* translated by Richard J. Regan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

_____. "Summa Contra Gentiles." In *Summa Philosophica seu De Veritate Catholicae Fidei Contra Gentiles*, edited by P. Lethielleux. Parisiis: Imprimerie Laloux fils et Guillot, 1877.

_____. "Summa Theologiae." In *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, Doctoris Angelici, Ordinis Praedicatorum Opera Omnia*. New York: Musurgia Publishers, 1948.

_____. *Quaestiones Disputate De Veritate vol. 1*. Edited by Petri Marietti. Rome, 1949.

Tooke, William. *A New and General Biographical Dictionary; Containing an Historical and Critical Account of the Lives and Writings of the Most Eminent Persons in Every Nation; Particularly the British and Irish; from the Earliest Accounts of Time to the Present Period [etc.]*, 15 vols. Revised by William Tooke (et al.) London: G. G. and J. Robinson, *et al.* (1798): vol. 11.

Tucker, Josiah. *Letters to the Rev. Dr. Kippis*. Glocester: Raikes, 1773.

Turretin, Francis. *Institutio theologiae elencticae*. Geneva, 1688.

Ueberweg, Friedrich. *History of Philosophy from Thales to the Present Time*. New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Company, 1876.

Ursinus, Zacharias. "Die Vorarbeiten des Ursinus: Summa Theologiae und Catechesis minor." In *Der Heidelberger Katechismus: und vier verwandte Katechismen.* Edited by August Lang, 151-199. A. Deichert, 1907.

Van Inwagen, Peter. "The Problem of Evil, the Problem of Air, and the Problem of Silence." In *God and the Problem of Evil,* edited by William L. Rowe, 203-234. Malden: Blackwell, 2001.

Vanarragon, Raymond J. "Transworld Damnation and Craig's Contentious Suggestion." *Faith and Philosophy* 18 (2001): 241-260.

Voetius, Gisbertus. *Selectae disputationes*. Utrecth: Joannes à Waesberge, 1648.

_____ and Engelbertus Beeckman. *Disputatio philosophico-theologica, continens quaestiones duas, de Distinctione Attributorum divinorum, & Libertate Voluntatis*. Utrecht: Joannes à Waesberge, 1652.

Vogt, Berard."The Metaphysics of Human Liberty in Duns Scotus." In *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association,* 16 vols., edited by Charles A. Hart. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1940.

Voltaire, François-Marie. *Candide, ou l'optimisme*. London, 1759.

_____. *Philosophical, Literary, and Historical Pieces*, 2nd edition. Translated by W. S. Kenrick. London: Fielding and Walker, 1780.

_____. *The Metaphysics of Sir Isaac Newton: or, a Comparison between the Opinions of Sir Isaac Newton and Mr. Leibnitz*. Translated by David Erskine Baker. London: R. Dodsley, 1747.

Vos, Antoine. "Always on Time." In *Understanding the Attributes of God*, edited by Gijsbert van den Brink and Marcel Sarot, 53-74. New York: Peter Lang, 1995.

_____. "Scholasticism and Reformation." In *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*, edited by W. J. van Asselt and E. Dekker, 99-119. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.

_____. *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006.

Vossius, Gerardus Joannes. *Gerardi Johannis Vossii Historiæ de controversiis: quas Pelagius eiusque reliquiæ moverunt, libri septem*, 2nd edition. L. & D. Elzevirios, 1655.

Wainwright, William J. "Theological Determinism and the Problem of Evil: Are Arminians Any Better Off?" *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 50 (2001).

Warburton, William. *A vindication of Mr. Pope's Essay on man, from the misrepresentations of Mr de Crousaz, [...] By the author of The divine legation of Moses demonstrated. In six letters*. London: J. Robinson, 1740.

Warfield, Benjamin B. *Studies in Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1932.

Webb, Clement C. J. *A History of Philosophy*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915.

Weber, Alfred. *History of Philosophy.* Translated by Frank Thilly. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896.

Weemes, John. *Portraiture of the Image of God in Man*, 3rd edition. London, 1636.

Williams, Thomas. "From Metaethics to Action Theory." In *Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, edited by Thomas Williams, 332-351. Cambridge: Cambridge, 2003.

Wolff, Christian. "De Notione Entis." In *Philosophia Prima Sive Ontologia*, edited by Joannes Ecole. Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung Hildesheim, 1962.

Wright, Conrad. "Edwards and the Arminians on the Freedom of the Will." *Harvard Theological Review* 35, no. 4 (1942).

Wundt, Wilhelm Max. *Ethics: An Investigation of the Facts and Laws of the Moral Life*. Translated by Margaret Floy Washburn. London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1897.

Xavier, Francis. *Lettres de S. Francois Xavier: apôtre des Indes et du Japon,* 2 vols. Perisse Frères, 1828.

Zanchi, Girolamo. "De libero arbitrio in homine post ipsum non renato," In *Omnia opera*, 8 vols. Genevae: Ex typographia Samuelis Crispini, 1619.

_____. "De libero primorum parentum ante lapsum arbitrio." In *De operibus Dei intra spatium sex dierum creates.* In *Omnia opera theological,* 8 vols. Genevae: Ex typographia Samuelis Crispini, 1619.

_____. "De operibus Dei intra spantium sex dierum creates." In *Omnia opera theological,* 8 vols. Genevae: Ex typographia Samuelis Crispini, 1619.

_____. "De primi hominis lapsu, de Peccato & de Lege Dei." In *Omnia opera theological,* 8 vols. Genevae: Ex typographia Samuelis Crispini, 1619.