

***LEIBNIZ IN SPANISH: THEODICY***  
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*1. The “Leibniz in Spanish” Project*

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The Spanish Leibniz Society (its acronym is SeL) has begun the Leibniz in Spanish project ([www.leibniz.es](http://www.leibniz.es)) with the goal of providing a Spanish language version of the “Scientific and Philosophical Works” of G.W. Leibniz in a 20 volume set published by Editorial Comares (Granada, Spain). The project’s Editorial Committee, International Advising Council and Research Team are coordinated by Professor Juan Antonio Nicolás of the University of Granada.

A total of more than 50 researchers and professors are participating in this project from Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Universities (Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Brazil, Venezuela, Costa Rica). The project is also supported by leading German, French, North American and Italian Leibniz publishers as well as the four German centers dedicated to the publication of Leibniz’s original works: “Leibniz-Archiv” of Hannover, “Leibniz-Forschungsstelle” of Munster, “Leibniz-Editionsstelle” of Potsdam and “Leibniz-Arbeitsstelle” of Berlin.

The initial focus of this study is the immense, diverse and wide-spread work of Leibniz. The classic editions (Gerhardt, Couturat, Foucher de Careil, Grua, Pertz, Dutens, Erdman, Robinet) are being used as well as the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften and Göttingen Akademie editions. The latter two centers are carrying out an impressive project of a critical edition of the complete works of Leibniz. This edition has published approximately half of the existing texts over more than a century, which gives an idea of just how difficult it is to work with Leibniz’s works.

After a difficult process of text selection, it was decided that our edition would contain the following volumes: Philosophy of Knowledge (vol. 1), Metaphysics (vol. 2), General Science (vol. 3), Encyclopedia (vol. 4), Universal Language, Characteristics and Logic (vol. 5), New Essays on Human Understanding (vol. 6), Writings on Mathematics (vol. 7), Writings on Science (vol. 8), Writings on Medicine and Philosophy (vol. 9), Theodicy (vol. 10), Writings on Theology and Religion (vol. 11), Writings on Ethics, Politics and Law (vol. 12 and 13), Correspondences (vol. 14 through 19), Index (vol. 20).

There is a team working on each volume comprised of one or two editors and several translators. Each team works on their volume independently and under the

supervision of the Editorial Committee who leads the project and is responsible for the final product.

The project was designed to be implemented in several stages, and the first began in 2003. The first stage consisted of putting together a research group in charge of the project that would also plan out the edition (number of volumes, content of each volume), establish project guidelines and regulations to be followed throughout the course of the project, select editors for each volume, find experienced translators and seek out financing. The results of this first phase can be found on the web site [www.leibniz.es](http://www.leibniz.es). In the second phase, the editors drafted content proposals for each volume of the edition, detailing main texts for the corresponding topics. The proposals were discussed, redrafted and later approved by the Editorial Committee. From that point, each team began its translation. Meanwhile financing was sought out from the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, the University of Granada, the Community Government of Andalusia and the SeL group itself. An agreement was also reached with Editorial Comares (Granada, Spain, [www.comares.com](http://www.comares.com)) during this phase to publish the series.

In the third phase, two volumes were published after revision and approval from the Editorial Committee. Presently, volumes 14 (Correspondences I, 2007), 8 (Writings on Science, 2009), 2 (Metaphysics, 2010), and 16 (Correspondences III, in two books, 2011), have been published; and we now present number 10 (Essays on Theodicy, 2012). The remaining volumes will be published as they become ready over the next few years.

Volume 14 (Correspondences I) was published in 2007 and was edited by Juan A. Nicolás and María Ramón Cubells. It includes the correspondence between Leibniz and A. Arnaults as well as the correspondence between Leibniz and B. Des Bosses. In 2009, volume 8 was published (Writings on Science) and edited by Juan Arana. This volume is a collection of texts about Dynamics, Physics, Mechanics, Chemistry, Biology, Optics, Cosmology, Botany and various technical fields. Volume 2, titled “Metaphysics”, was edited by Angel Luis González and it contains some of Leibniz’s most influential writings (Metaphysic Dissertation on Individuation, The Philosopher’s Profession of Faith, Discourse on Metaphysics, The Radical Origin of Things, The Monadology, Principles of Nature and Grace, etc.). Volume 16 “Correspondences III” was edited by B. Orío de Miguel and contains Leibniz’s correspondences with Johann Bernoulli and B. De Volder. His correspondence with J. Bernoulli is compiled in over 1,000 pages and has been completely translated for the first time to a modern language.

Collaboration with Leibniz-Archiv (Hannover) has proven to be essential for locating texts, copies of manuscripts and editions for every volume as well as for gathering bibliographical information for the critical section included in each volume. Each text also includes an Introduction where the main philosophical, historical and critical variables are addressed. A list of original text editions, Spanish text editions, abbreviations and a secondary bibliographical selection specific to the main topics contained in each volume are also provided. The texts are preceded by a technical file which includes the original title, its date of composition, a reference to the manuscript from the Leibniz Text Catalogue belonging to Leibniz-Archiv, a reference of the exact edition used for the translation, other editions of the original text, previous editions in Spanish (if there are any), our edition's translator and a brief note about the context and relevance of the text. In the outer margins of each text, a page reference is provided for the translated text indicating exactly where the source text is found in the reference text (the edition belonging to the Berlin Academy of Science). And lastly, each volume contains a Name Index, a Concept Index, and a brief biographical note about the editors and translators of each volume. Volume 20, the final volume, will collect all the indexes from all of the preceding volumes of the edition.

The "Leibniz in Spanish" project is surely a difficult challenge for the Spanish-speaking philosophy community since there is currently no other project of this magnitude about Leibniz's work in any modern language. The implementation of this project has been made possible thanks to the group of researchers in the Hispano-American area with enough experience in the study of Leibniz, the translation of his texts, the organization of conferences and meetings, assisting international congresses (especially those held by Leibniz-Gesellschaft), etc. The founding of the "Spanish Leibniz Society" in 1985 was an important step for organizing a group of Hispanic researchers in the field of German Philosophy.

*2. Leibniz: Scientific and Philosophical Works. Vol. 10: Essays on Theodicy*

The volume "*Essays on Theodicy*" is the tenth of the "*Scientific and Philosophical Works*" of G.W. Leibniz 20-volume edition being published at the moment ([www.leibniz.com](http://www.leibniz.com)). Five volumes of this edition have already been published and volume 10 will be the sixth. It contains an introduction from the translator and editor, a full Spanish translation of the text including five appendices and a critical section with 1,115 footnotes. The official presentation and publication took place in the "1<sup>st</sup>

Ibero-American Leibniz Conference” organized by the “Ibero-American Leibniz Network” and held in Costa Rica in July of 2012.

In *Theodicy*, published in Amsterdam in 1710, Leibniz addresses the problem of evil and its compatibility with the existence of God and human free will. The work stems from the *Historical and Critical Dictionary* of Pierre Bayle in which some of the articles discuss Leibniz’s published writings. Contrary to Bayle’s fideistic stance, Leibniz vindicates reason and the necessary congruence of religion and principles of rationality. In the spirit of that which would be known as enlightened modernity and the vindication of the light of reason, Leibniz puts forth a debate about and a defense of the necessary compatibility of religious beliefs and reason. This reflection includes a discussion and rejection of all types of fideism and the Double-truth theory; it also calls for an enlightened reflection on the limits of rationality, which extols the work of Kant.

The position Leibniz takes is fundamental to European culture seeing as it gives direction in a key historical moment: sciences were being configured in a modern sense, Europe was divided over the religious point of view of Catholics and Protestants, and the ethical and political structure of modern Europe was dawning. Leibniz’s influence as expressed in *Theodicy* was key in this situation. Leibniz approached the problem of evil from a determined rational viewpoint. The incompatibility of the good of God, which was indisputable for Leibniz, and the existence of evil (in its physical, moral and metaphysical branches) only had one explanation: human free will. God would have been able to impose his good upon the world, but human free will existed in the real world which, according to Leibniz, was unavoidable even for God. This respect for human free will led Leibniz to believe the best possible situation was a balance between good and evil, and that this balance should be the best it could be. There isn’t nor can there be a world without evil because human free will implies both error and correct choice, the appropriate and inappropriate, the fair and the unfair, the correct and the incorrect. That is why the dynamic of reality consists of a rational evolution in which one can only search for the best proportion of good to evil. This is the same idea as saying that we are in the best possible world that is misinterpreted time after time. This thesis must be understood as that the most we can aspire for is the best possible balance between good and evil given real circumstances (free will, contingency, fallibility, finiteness). But this is inherent to the real world of real human beings; anything else wouldn’t be a human world.

This led Leibniz to change the problem of evil into a problem of overall calculation

and overall balance. This is where the limits of Leibniz's model of calculated rationality used in *Theodicy* become clear. This idea ignores the unavoidable individual dimension of evil regarding pain (physical, moral or metaphysical). Yet it turns out to be paradoxical that it is as such, especially for someone who has influenced Modernity so greatly through the elaboration of a metaphysics of individuality.

In either case, the vindication of a logical, calculating model of rationality, which legitimized the emerging sciences, and the criticism of all religious irrationalism were the defining bases from which European culture would be developed. Leibniz was one of the first theorists that thought of and promoted the idea of Europe being a cultural unit. In promoting this, he worked on a religious level uniting the Christian churches, reducing theoretical differences and building bridges between the most influential people on both the Catholic side and on the Protestant side. Politically, he developed an intense relation with and activity in the French court and the church as he worked from his position in the German court in Hannover. On a level of scientific politics, he founded Academies of Science in different European countries as well as scientific journals in an attempt to facilitate communication between scientists and promote the dissemination of their results.

With his work *Theodicy*, a term coined by Leibniz himself, the German philosopher created a discipline situated on the border between theology and philosophy, and whose content has been the object of discussion until the present day.

The work was translated to Spanish by Patricio de Azcárate in 1878 and was later published in Buenos Aires in 1946. There is currently no available Spanish language edition, which makes our edition ideal for fulfilling this need. The work has been fully translated again from the original edition by C. I. Gerhardt published in 1885 and reissued in 1978.

### 3. Other "Leibniz in Spanish" Project Initiatives

In addition to publishing these volumes of Leibniz's work, this project has had other results including the promotion of German-Spanish relations and Portuguese-Spanish relations (<http://www.leibniz.es/granada-lisboa.htm>), the organization of International Congresses (SeL Congresses, the 1<sup>st</sup> Ibero-American Leibniz Congress), and the production of doctoral theses, publications, etc.

There are three initiatives worth mentioning. Firstly, the creation of the "Ibero-

American Leibniz Network” (<http://www.leibniz.es/auiprincipal.htm>), officially founded in the “1<sup>st</sup> Ibero-American Leibniz Congress” that took place in Costa Rica in July of 2012. This network is sponsored by the “Postgraduate Ibero-American University Association” (AUIP – <http://www.aui.org>), and has around one hundred members in Spain, Portugal and most Latin American countries. The “2<sup>nd</sup> Ibero-American Leibniz Congress” is set for March of 2014 at the University of Granada.

Secondly, a “Hispanic Leibniz Library” (<http://www.bibliotecahispanicaleibniz.es>), has been established with the goal of gathering an exhaustive collection of all of Leibniz’s published works as well as those works about Leibniz in Spanish and Portuguese since 1878 (the year of Patricio de Azcárate’s five volume edition of Leibniz’s works) in relation to those languages’ cultural fields. The web page currently has 1,500 entries between publication references and the full texts as permitted by law. The research community also has full and free access to this web page. The “Hispanic Leibniz Library” will continue to be developed and maintained, and it aims to become an essential resource for Spanish and Portuguese-language Leibniz researchers. And of course this resource is available for researchers in any country who are interested in leibnizian philosophy.

Lastly, two publication series have been started: “Leibniz Companion” and “Nova Leibniz”. The former aims to study an important aspect of leibnizian thought and works and it offers a panoramic view of the same, giving a perspective of the current state of research. The “Nova Leibniz” series (<http://www.leibniz.es/novaleibniz.htm>) intends to show the latest developments in research on leibnizian thought as well as ideas from other authors related to Leibniz. It promotes new interpretations or reconstructions of certain aspects of Leibniz works, as well as unedited Leibniz texts and other texts related to direct discussion and critique of leibnizian thought.

In this way, the project has become a tool to mobilize material and human resources and to help build a high-quality scientific, philosophical community.

The complete publication of the “Scientific and Philosophical Works” edition of G.W. Leibniz will undoubtedly be a quality instrument in the Spanish language for approaching leibnizian thought, and it will most likely have a stimulating effect on intellectual mediums for starting similar projects on other philosophers.

This entire project on Leibniz’s works aims to be a contribution to the knowledge of the history of modern thought, to the consolidation of the idea of an international scientific community, of which Leibniz was an advocate, and to the evaluation of

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enlightened Modernity. Not only was Leibniz a decisive player in its origin, but it is also one of the fundamental tasks of philosophy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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