

# Monadic Teleology without Goodness and without God\*

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## *Abstract*

Most interpreters think that for Leibniz, teleology is goodness-directedness. Explaining a monadic action teleologically, according to them, simply means explaining it in terms of the goodness of the state at which the agent aims. On some interpretations, the goodness at issue is always apparent goodness: an action is end-directed iff it aims at what appears good to the agent. On other interpretations, the goodness at issue is only sometimes apparent goodness and at other times merely objective goodness: some actions do not aim at what appears good to the agent, but merely at what is objectively good—that is, at what God knows to be good—and that is sufficient for teleology. My paper, on the other hand, argues that both of these interpretations are mistaken. Monadic teleology, I contend, does not have to consist in striving for the good; neither goodness nor God is required to make monadic actions teleological.

## **1. Introduction**

**I**n Leibniz's mature metaphysics, the world is replete with teleology. Not only did God follow the Principle of the Best in creating the world, but there is also teleology in the actions of each created monad: Leibniz explains all monadic actions in terms of appetitions or strivings and calls the monadic realm the kingdom of final causes.<sup>1</sup> How are we to understand the teleology he attributes to finite monads? In the case of the free actions of created rational monads, the answer is quite straightforward: like God, these minds can deliberate about possible courses of action and pursue the option they judge to be best. They thus engage in a rather familiar type of teleology. But what about unfree actions?

An overwhelming majority of interpreters think that Leibniz views even unfree actions as goodness-directed—albeit not perhaps in exactly the same way as free actions—and that this is the reason that they are instances of teleology. Explaining an action teleologically, according to these interpreters, simply means explaining it

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in terms of the goodness, or apparent goodness, of the state at which the agent aims. My paper challenges the widespread assumption that there is a necessary connection between end-directedness and goodness-directedness. On my interpretation, which I call the ‘Neutral Teleology Interpretation’ (‘NTI,’ in short), Leibnizian teleology does not always consist in acting for the sake of the good. Instead, created monads perform many of their actions simply because their natures prescribe these actions, not because these actions are, or appear, good.<sup>2</sup> I argue that teleology as such is independent of—and hence neutral with regard to—the good.

What I just suggested may very well strike some readers as a complete nonstarter. Is teleology not by definition goodness-directedness? Or, at the very least, does teleology not traditionally consist in a striving for the good? If so, is it not extremely implausible to suppose that Leibniz would depart from this traditional definition? And finally, are there not countless passages in Leibniz’s writings that identify—or at least very closely associate—end-directedness with goodness-directedness? I do not deny that there is a long philosophical tradition that views all final causation as goodness-directedness, nor do I deny that Leibniz often says things that appear to indicate his adherence to this tradition. Yet, I will show that a thorough examination of the relationship between monadic teleology and goodness makes two things clear. Firstly, the textual evidence does not in fact provide us with strong reasons for believing that goodness plays the role in monadic actions that most interpreters claim it does. Secondly, Leibniz has excellent reasons for departing from the traditional understanding of teleology as goodness-directedness. In fact, rather surprisingly, his doctrine of monadic spontaneity requires him to reject the Aristotelian identification of ends with goods, as I argue below.

Another reason to take NTI seriously is that the two standard interpretations of Leibnizian teleology face severe problems. The most common interpretation, which I will call ‘Apparent Good Interpretation’ (‘AGI,’ in short), claims that monadic actions always aim at what appears good, or best, to the agent. While this interpretation fits rather well with Leibniz’s Principle of Continuity since it posits a deep similarity among all types of monadic actions, I will show that it does not have strong textual support, and in fact appears incompatible with the ways in which Leibniz describes the least perfect monadic actions. The other standard interpretation, which I will call ‘Objective Good Interpretation’ (‘OGI,’ in short), holds that only some monadic actions aim at what appears good to the agent, while others aim merely at what is objectively good, or at what God knows to be good. Yet, this interpretation also faces serious problems; most importantly, it implies

that only some monadic actions are instances of immanent teleology. That in turn has some very undesirable consequences.

In this paper I will argue—concentrating on the mature period<sup>3</sup>—that NTI is the right way to understand monadic teleology. To do this, I will first discuss the two standard interpretations in more detail and highlight the problems they face. Next, I will explicate NTI and its advantages. This will involve addressing some potential objections, including the two briefly mentioned already: that neutral teleology is hopeless because teleology by definition, or traditionally, consists in a striving for the good, and that Leibniz explicitly sides with this traditional understanding in many texts. I will show that these objections are unfounded and that Leibniz's metaphysical commitments in fact force him to transform the traditional understanding of teleology by severing the connection between ends and goods.

## **2. Preliminaries**

Before turning to the two standard interpretations, I should say a few words about what I, presumably along with other interpreters, mean when I talk of monadic teleology, final causation, or end-directedness.<sup>4</sup> When I say that a monad performs an action for the sake of some end or acts in a certain way because it strives for some end, I mean that this end is the final cause of the action. In other words, the end, or some aspect of the end, explains why the action takes place.<sup>5</sup> A final cause, after all, is supposed to be a type of cause or explanation. Hence, when other interpreters argue that teleology is always goodness-directedness, I understand them as claiming that the goodness or apparent goodness of the state aimed for is a reason for the action. Monads strive for certain ends, on their view, because those ends appear good to the monad, or because they are good. I take this to be the way in which teleology is usually understood. If those who claim that all teleology for Leibniz is goodness-directedness mean merely that all ends are goods, even though this goodness is not always an explanation for the action, I do not have any objections to their view. Yet, that would not be a very interesting claim—for Leibniz, all events in the actual world do in fact contribute to the perfection of the world and hence all strivings that succeed are strivings for some aspect of the best possible world. I take it that most if not all of these interpreters intend to make the stronger claim, namely the claim that the goodness or apparent goodness of the end is part of the explanation for all monadic actions. That is the claim I will challenge.

This explication of teleology immediately makes unavailable one strategy for

connecting teleology with goodness. The strategy I have in mind consists in arguing that an end is by definition a good because whatever an agent strives for is *ipso facto* good, or *ipso facto* seems good to the agent. In other words, what an agent strives for, on this view, is good or seems good simply because the agent strives for it. Let us call this type of goodness ‘ipso facto goodness.’ One might think that if one acknowledges ipso facto goodness, my attempt to divorce goodness from teleology must fail, because it is conceptually necessary that the object of a striving be a good. Yet, given my explication of teleology, this strategy cannot succeed because its account of strivings is circular: it cannot be the case that what an agent strives for is good because the agent strives for it, and that the agent strives for it because it is good.<sup>6</sup> In order to maintain that goodness is the final cause of all monadic actions, one therefore needs a different explanation for the goodness, or apparent goodness, of the end. If the ends of some actions are or appear good only in the ipso facto sense,<sup>7</sup> goodness cannot be the final cause of all actions.

### 3. The Standard Interpretations

Let us take a closer look at the two standard interpretations of monadic teleology that I want to reject: the Apparent Good Interpretation (AGI) and the Objective Good Interpretation (OGI).

#### 3.1 The apparent good interpretation

AGI is by far the most popular way of interpreting Leibnizian teleology. According to this interpretation, every monadic action is performed for the sake of what appears good to the agent, and every monadic striving is a striving for an apparent good. An excellent example of someone endorsing this interpretation is John Carriero. He describes the end-directedness of monads as follows: every monad perceives the entire universe and its “appetites are responsive to what appears best” in its perception (2008:134). This, according to Carriero, “holds as much for bare monads... as it does for spirits” and it holds for all appetitions and perceptions of spirits, whether they are conscious or unconscious. Appetition, he says, “always tends to an apparent good” (2008:135). A further example is Jeffrey McDonough, who argues that for Leibniz there are always two equally valid ways to explain a monadic action. One type of explanation that works for all monadic states is viewing them as the results “of a teleological process governed ultimately by the

creature's perception of the good" (2011:197).<sup>8</sup> Pauline Phemister (2005:223) and Nicholas Jolley (2005:68; 1998:607) also endorse AGI.

### **3.2 The objective good interpretation**

This brings us to the other standard interpretation that I would like to discuss and reject, namely OGI. Like AGI, this interpretation maintains that teleology is always goodness-directedness. Yet, unlike AGI, it holds that some monadic strivings aim not at what seems good to that monad, but rather at what God knows to be best or what is objectively best. The main proponent of this interpretation is Donald Rutherford, and Marleen Rozemond (2009) follows him in endorsing it. According to Rutherford, there are two types of final causation, namely what he calls "natural teleology" and what he calls "desire teleology" (2005:167f.). All monadic actions occur in accordance with the laws of natural teleology, that is, they are explained by appetitions for what is best according to an "external standard of goodness" (2005:167). This external standard is the divine point of view: being subject to natural teleology means striving for what is, from God's perspective—and hence objectively—the best subsequent state of the universe (2005:174).

While some monadic actions are subject only to natural teleology, some are in addition subject to desire teleology: they are strivings not just for what is best from God's point of view, but also for what seems best from the agent's own point of view. Being subject to desire teleology means striving for what one perceives as the best subsequent state (2005:174). Thus, Rutherford fleshes out his claim that all creaturely teleology consists in striving for the good by distinguishing (a) striving for what seems best to the creature, and (b) striving for what is objectively best, that is, what God perceives as best.

## **4. Problems with the Standard Interpretations**

I now turn to reasons to doubt the two standard accounts. The problems they face are so serious, I think, that this constitutes significant support for my alternative, NTI.

### **4.1 Problems with the apparent good interpretation**

AGI has at least two major drawbacks. First, particularly with respect to bare monads, which have neither thought nor sensation, it strains credibility to claim

that they can perceive anything as good, let alone as best.<sup>9</sup> After all, perceiving something as good is entirely different from perceiving some body or physical event. Perceiving a rock rolling down a hill is one thing, and perceiving that rock's motion as good quite another. Bare monads, for Leibniz, are able to do the former, but it is not at all clear that, or how, they are able to do the latter. Yet, on AGI, such a monad would presumably have to possess an appetite for representing the rock's motion,<sup>10</sup> and hence it would have to perceive it as good.<sup>11</sup>

From the way Leibniz describes bare monads, it seems exceedingly implausible that he would want to ascribe to them perceptions of something as good in any meaningful sense. I am unable to find passages in which Leibniz explicitly ascribes to bare monads perceptions of something as good. Moreover, when he does discuss the psychology of bare monads, he admits that we hardly know anything about their appetitions and perceptions, except that they have them. He states, for instance, in a letter to Bourguet from 1715,

Of what the perception of plants consists, we cannot say; indeed, we do not even have any good conception of that of animals. But it is enough to say that the plant has a variety in unity and therefore has a perception; and it is enough that it has a tendency toward new perceptions and therefore appetite, in the general sense in which I use these terms. (L 664/G 3:581)

Given that Leibniz elsewhere seems highly confident in ascribing end-directedness to bare monads, it would be rather odd if he were happy to admit that we do not know what kinds of perceptions and appetitions these monads have while also believing that perceptions of, and appetitions for, apparent goods are requirements for end-directedness. Note also that Leibniz's definition of appetitions in this text and elsewhere does not require anything to appear good to monads: appetitions are merely tendencies to transition from one perception to another (cf. M 14f.; PNG 2).

Someone might object here that since bare monads perceive everything, they must also perceive what is and is not good. Or, alternatively, someone might object that ascribing perceptions of the entire world to bare monads is already highly implausible and that it is no more absurd to throw in another bizarre assumption, namely that they perceive some things as good. However, I think that reflecting on what it might mean to perceive something as good shows that these objections are not compelling. First of all, we should note that goodness is a higher-level property: much like 'stylish' and 'grammatical,' 'good' is not something to be found at the most fundamental level of description. While stylishness, grammaticality, and goodness arguably supervene on this fundamental level, they are not part of that

level. Hence, just as bare monads do not need to perceive anything as stylish or as grammatical in order to perceive the entire world, they do not need to perceive anything as good.

What might it mean to perceive something as good? The most straightforward instance of a perception of something as good, I think, is a judgment that something is good. Rational souls are capable of such judgments: they have an abstract notion of goodness and can analyze a particular perception, concluding that it falls under this notion. Animal souls, lacking reason, are not able to do this. Yet, they can do something else that I am happy to call ‘perception of something as good’ in a broader sense. Animals, after all, are capable of pleasure, which Leibniz typically defines as the perception of perfection (Gr 579; NE 194; 201f.; L 569f.). Perfection in turn is a type of goodness: Leibniz calls it ‘metaphysical goodness’ and says that non-rational substances can be good only in this sense (CD 30ff.).<sup>12</sup> Hence, feeling pleasure just is the perception of goodness and consequently, perhaps, the perception of something as good. Animals can do even more than that, in fact: they are able to learn from experience and hence they can come to associate certain objects with pleasure. It is in this way that a dog can, for instance, learn to run away from the newspaper with which it has been beaten and to perform a trick for which it has been rewarded. We could say, then, that this dog perceives running from the newspaper and performing the trick as good—not in the sense of a judgment, but rather in the sense of an association.

Yet, none of this applies to bare monads. They are unable to feel pleasure, they cannot learn from experience, and they certainly cannot form rational judgments.<sup>13</sup> True, they do have natural tendencies that lead them from one perception to the next, but setting aside what I above called *ipso facto* goodness, it is unclear how goodness is supposed to enter the picture.<sup>14</sup> They are, I contend, simply too dull to register or be motivated by goodness; while they do transition from one perceptual state to the next in accordance with their laws of the series and while these laws presumably pick up on something in the prior perceptual state, it seems vacuous to claim that they pick up on goodness in the prior perception, unless one is able to give some content to the goodness involved in those cases. The same applies to many strivings of animal souls and finite minds: most strivings even of these higher monads are just like the strivings of bare monads, that is, they are not sensible and do not depend on any of the special cognitive abilities that distinguish higher monads from bare monads.

A second reason to reject AGI is that it has trouble explaining cases in which

monads transition to less perfect states, that is, to states with less metaphysical goodness. The most famous such case is Pierre Bayle's example of the dog suddenly beaten from behind with a stick while enjoying its food, transitioning from pleasure to pain.<sup>15</sup> Because Leibnizian substances always act with perfect spontaneity, all the changes in the dog's soul, including the transition to pain, must be explained in terms of its nature or states, that is, its perceptions and appetitions. Yet, it is rather unattractive to say that it somehow seems good to the dog to transition from pleasure to pain.

Here is another example of a transition to a less perfect state, which I find even more compelling than Bayle's dog because it involves a bare monad. Take the central monad of a flower that is growing in a pasture. Call this monad 'Jim.' One day, cows graze on this pasture and one of the cows eats the flower. Jim of course perceives the whole ordeal, because according to Leibniz he perceives the entire universe. Even though this encounter does not destroy Jim—after all, only annihilation by God can destroy a monad—it does involve a major loss of perfection for him: he loses most of his organic body and continues to exist in a very diminished state. Why does Jim transition from a perception of his intact body to a perception of his body's mutilation by the cow? AGI—since it holds that all strivings aim at the apparent good—has to say one of the following four things:<sup>16</sup>

- a) Jim perceives this transition as good.
- b) Jim does not perceive this transition as good, but the transition is the result of the interplay among all of Jim's simultaneous strivings, each of which is a striving for an apparent good. We can describe this by saying that Jim has a "resultant striving" for the transition.
- c) Jim does not perceive this transition as good, but the transition is a consequence of a complex appetite that in turn is prior to its components and that is a striving for an apparent good.<sup>17</sup>
- d) Something other than Jim's strivings explains the transition.<sup>18</sup>

I believe that there are good reasons to reject all of these explanations for what happens to Jim, and hence to reject AGI. First, consider option (d). I do not think this can be Leibniz's view, mainly because he seems to hold that what we do is always explained by our strivings or appetitions. Appetitions, after all, are simply a monad's tendencies to transition to new perceptual states. Contrary to (d), Leibniz appears to believe that whatever a monad's appetitions or strivings on balance demand is what it will do. If a particular appetite is unsuccessful in leading to an action, it must be because there are other opposing appetitions. The only way for



a monad's nature, perceptions, or any other natural factors to influence its actions is by inclining it, or giving rise to appetitions.

There is what I take to be compelling textual evidence for the interpretation I just sketched. First of all, note that Leibniz uses 'appetition' [French: *appetition* or *appetit*] and 'tendency' or 'striving' [*tendance*] interchangeably in the context of monadic actions: he says in a letter to Remond from 1714, "appetite... is nothing other than the striving [*tendance*] from one perception to another" (G 3:622; my translation).<sup>19</sup> 'Inclination' [French: *inclination*] is another term he uses for this.<sup>20</sup> Second, note that according to Leibniz there are infinitely many different strivings or appetitions in a monad at any given time.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Leibniz explicitly says that the resultant of all of one's strivings, or the prevalent inclination, always determines one's actions:

we must acknowledge that we are always predetermined, and that apart from our previous inclinations [*inclinations*] or dispositions, new impressions from objects also contribute to incline us, and all these inclinations joined together and balanced against the contrary inclinations never fail to form a general prevalent inclination... [I]n one way or another we are always... more inclined to what happens or will happen than to what will not happen (SLT 97/Gr 480).<sup>22</sup>

It is clear, then, that monadic actions are the results of an infinite number of competing appetitions or inclinations in the agent. Perceptions do exert an influence, but this influence consists merely in inclining the monad to a particular course of action, that is, in giving rise to appetitions.<sup>23</sup> There is even direct evidence that in cases like Bayle's dog, there is an inclination toward the less perfect state: "The principle of change is in the dog, the disposition of its soul moves imperceptibly towards giving it pain" (WFN 78/G 4:532).<sup>24</sup> This suggests that in transitions like the dog's, there is a resultant striving for the painful state.

All of this, I take it, is compelling evidence for rejecting option (d): it cannot be the case that Jim's representation of his body's destruction is explained by something other than his inclinations or strivings. AGI is thus left with the other three options for explaining Jim's action, namely (a) that Jim perceives this transition as good, (b) that Jim has a resultant striving for this transition, or (c) that this transition is a consequence a complex appetite for an apparent good. Consider (c) next. Of course it can happen that a complex appetite for an apparent good has components or consequences that are not individually perceived as good. For instance, I can desire going to Hawaii even though I despise long flights. In some cases, focusing on broader or even global appetites can indeed help us understand

why an agent would strive for locally imperfect states. Yet, this does not seem to help with the Jim example: the global state to which Jim is transitioning is awful in every respect, and a global appetite for that state is no more plausible than a local appetite for an imperfect state. Moving from local to global does not appear to make this transition any less puzzling.

Let us consider option (b) next. AGI can indeed claim that resultant inclinations do not always aim at an apparent good, but that they result from appetitions that are individually aimed at apparent goods. After all, it can obviously happen that when several inclinations compete, the outcome is an action toward which none of the competing inclinations tended individually. That is evident from the physical analogy of a body that is subject to two equally strong forces,<sup>25</sup> one force pulling it downward, and another force pulling it horizontally to the right. As a result, it moves diagonally to the bottom right. Hence there is nothing generally wrong with saying that the outcome of several inclinations can be something for which none of the individual inclinations aimed.

Yet, in Jim's case, I do not see how this could work. After all, just like the resultant force in the physics example, resultant strivings must be made intelligible by their components. Leibniz is nothing if not a champion of intelligibility. What would be intelligible, I think, is for instance that when Jim has an appetite to move to the right and simultaneously an equally strong appetite to move to the left, he as a result perceives staying in the same place or getting torn apart. Yet, which of Jim's strivings for the apparent good could make the destruction of his body by the cow intelligible? Plausibly, Jim's strivings, on AGI, include appetitions for growing, turning toward the sun, taking in nutrients, repairing damage to his body, and the like. It is unclear to me how such appetitions, which all involve retaining his body and doing different things with his body, could jointly result in the loss of his body, and in this particular way. That seems analogous to a body that is pulled in different directions whose vectors all lie on a plane, but that somehow ends up moving perpendicular to the plane. Hence, in order to render Jim's perception of his body's destruction intelligible, AGI needs to claim that Jim perceives some rather odd things as good, in addition to the somewhat plausible ones just listed.

The least odd candidates that AGI might offer are that Jim perceives it as good to act in accordance with the laws of nature, which prescribe the destruction of his body, or that Jim perceives it as good for the cow that it devour his body. The former suggestion could be spelled out further by saying either that Jim perceives it as good *for the universe* to be governed by these laws, or that he perceives it

as good *for himself* to be the kind of monad whose perceptions are governed by regular laws. Yet, as intriguing as these possibilities may be, I do not think they can ultimately succeed. First of all, even if Jim were somehow able to grasp what is good for the cow, why would he put the cow's interests before his own and sacrifice himself for the sake of the cow? Even minds, for Leibniz, are not capable of that kind of altruism.<sup>26</sup> Second, with respect to the laws of nature: Carriero convincingly argues that these laws are not explanatorily prior to the perceptual transitions of monads. The laws of nature hold because God has created only those monads whose perceptions are naturally in accordance with these laws. Perceptual transitions thus ground the laws of nature and hence the regularity of nature, not vice versa; monads do not have special appetitions for satisfying the physical laws (Carriero 2008:127f.). Hence, it would be getting things backwards to explain Jim's perceptual transitions in terms of his respect for the laws of nature. Finally, with respect to the suggestion that it is good for Jim to act in regular, lawful ways: while that may very well be true, this does not explain why it would *seem* good to Jim to follow such laws. Moreover, even if it seemed good to Jim, there are many different ways to act regularly. Especially if the encounter with the cow happens very early in Jim's history, shortly after his creation, when only very few patterns have been established, there can be several equally regular ways for Jim to continue his history, only some of which involve sacrificing his body.<sup>27</sup>

As a result, I do not see how Jim's tragic demise could be made intelligible by strivings for the good, unless Jim perceives either the destruction by the cow, or some similarly unappealing states that imply destruction by the cow, as good. Hence I think that proponents of option (b) must implausibly posit, just like proponents of (a), that Jim perceives some very odd things as good. At this point, proponents of AGI can of course simply bite the bullet and affirm that such unappealing states appear good to Jim. When asked why these should appear good to Jim, these interpreters could either say that this is a brute fact about Jim, or that Jim has certain principles or mechanisms—albeit fallible ones—for detecting goodness in his perceptions. They can claim that those principles or mechanisms are part of Jim's nature and not analyzable any further.

Yet, in both of these answers, goodness does not seem to do any real work and easily drops out. Instead of saying that it is a brute fact about Jim, or part of Jim's nature, that he perceives getting eaten as good, we can simply say that it is part of Jim's nature to incline toward getting eaten in this unfortunate situation. Likewise, instead of saying that Jim has certain principles or mechanisms for detecting

goodness in his perceptions, we can simply say that Jim has certain principles or mechanisms that govern his inclinations. Perceived goodness seems to be an idle wheel in those cases and in the absence of compelling textual evidence in its favor, I find invoking it extremely unappealing. Hence, I think there are excellent reasons to reject all four options, and thus, to reject AGI.

#### **4.2 Problems with the objective good interpretation**

Given the problems AGI faces, it may be tempting to take refuge in OGI. After all, OGI allows for teleology in lower monads without requiring them to perceive anything as good, and hence it does not require that Jim or the dog perceive their respective transitions as good. This is a significant advantage. Yet, I am not convinced that for Leibniz the reason that there is teleology in lower monads is objective goodness. After all, by claiming this, OGI denies that those monads are subject to immanent teleology:<sup>28</sup> their actions are teleological partly because of extrinsic facts. To give a teleological explanation of these states, OGI invokes something beyond the agent and her states, namely God, or facts about the world as a whole. I agree that Leibnizian monads always do what is objectively best if they are members of the best possible world. Yet, I believe that even the lowest monads are subject to immanent teleology as well, because possessing natural appetitions is sufficient for teleology.

There are good reasons for thinking that there must be immanent teleology in all monadic actions. First, this makes Leibniz's claim that all monadic actions are end-directed much less trivial. Second, defining the teleology of lower monads in terms of an external standard of goodness makes it impossible, on my view, to ascribe any actions to these monads. Given Leibniz's commitment to divine concurrence, he can only ascribe actions to creatures when there is immanent end-directedness, as I argue elsewhere.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the objective goodness OGI invokes does not provide a true, bottom-level explanation for the states of created substances and thus does not meet the criteria for teleology sketched above. Of course I can in some sense explain Jim's perception of his body's destruction with reference to what is good for the world as a whole. For instance, I can point out that it is best for this world to be governed by such and such laws, and that these laws would be violated if a soft, leafy plant were left unharmed despite the best efforts of a cow with sharp teeth. However, explanations like this cannot be the true reason for Jim's perceptual transition. The fundamental reason for this transition must

be internal to Jim's nature. Jim is a member of the best possible world because it is in his nature to produce a particular series of perceptions, and God actualized Jim because the states that Jim naturally produces are precisely the states that God wants to occur. Yet, Jim does not have this nature *because* God wants it. In other words, the reason that it is in Jim's nature to spontaneously produce those perceptions is not that this is best for the world. Rather, Jim has this nature essentially.

Consider the following analogy: a gardener cleverly sows plants on a flowerbed in such a way that when they bloom, the bed looks like the American flag. When asked why one of the plants in the bottom row has a red blossom, one could reply that the design of the flag requires it. That would not be untrue, but it would not be the real, bottom-level explanation for the color of that blossom either. The true explanation must be the natural disposition of this particular plant to produce red flowers, or the bio-chemical facts about that plant in virtue of which it has that disposition; it is in part because of the gardener's knowledge of this disposition that she decided to sow the plant in that location. Hence, the explanation in terms of the flag design presupposes the more fundamental explanation in terms of the plant's disposition.

Explaining Jim's perceptual transitions in terms of what is best for the world as a whole, or what God knows to be best, strikes me as analogous to explaining the color of the blossom in terms of the flag design. Those kinds of explanations do not give us the fundamental or bottom-level explanation. Moreover, just as it would be highly misleading to describe the plant as striving to contribute to the representation of the flag, it also seems misleading to describe Jim as striving to produce a state that is best from God's point of view. Final causes, as seen, are supposed to be explanatory, but objective goodness does not truly explain Jim's perception. Something internal to Jim explains his perceptions.<sup>30</sup> Hence, on OGI, many perceptual transitions of created monads are not, at bottom, teleological at all.

### **5. The Neutral Teleology Interpretation**

For the reasons just cited, an interpretation on which there is immanent teleology in all monadic actions is preferable. At the same time, as seen earlier, there are also good reasons for rejecting interpretations on which the teleology even of the least perfect monadic actions consists in strivings for the apparent good. Luckily, there is a third option: an interpretation on which monadic actions can be teleological

independently of God and the good. That option is NTI. On this interpretation, all monadic actions are teleological because they are the outcomes of the agent's natural strivings, whether or not these strivings aim at the good. In other words, NTI holds that there can be final causation that is not goodness-directedness. Instead, some final causation consists in neutral end-directedness.

NTI consequently maintains that there are different types of strivings in monads, only some of which aim at the good. All in all, I think, one can distinguish three types of monadic strivings: voluntary strivings, non-voluntary but ideally active strivings, and ideally passive strivings.<sup>31</sup> Voluntary or free strivings are just like the strivings described by AGI, or like Rutherford's desire teleology: when I deliberately choose to do something, I am striving for it because I judge it to be best. Most of our strivings, however, are non-voluntary and not aimed at the good in this way; they belong into one of the other two categories. I cannot go into great detail here; suffice it to say that at least strivings of the third type—ideally passive strivings such as the one leading to Jim's perception of his body's destruction—are neutrally end-directed. An agent strives for these states not because they seem good, nor because of God, but simply because that is the agent's nature.

Why would what I just described count as final causation? One thing to note is that there are traditional accounts on which final causation is rather undemanding and a presupposition of all efficient causality. Paul Hoffman (2009) and John Carriero (2008) discuss such traditional accounts and suggest that early modern thinkers like Leibniz might endorse them. On Hoffman's interpretation, authors like Aquinas employ a very thin sense of 'final causation' when arguing that every efficient cause presupposes a final cause: all it takes to be teleological, on this view, is for the cause to be determined to one specific effect (2009:297). Monadic actions are clearly teleological in this sense. Carriero, in contrast, thinks that efficient causation presupposes final causation for authors like Aquinas because these authors have a very robust understanding of *efficient* causation: being an efficient cause in this more robust sense means being an originator of activity, rather than merely "a conduit through which the impulses of earlier members in some indefinitely extended causal series are relayed to subsequent members in the series" (2008:123). In order to be an originator of activity in this sense, Carriero argues, an agent needs to have natural, internal ends, instead of being directed by something external (2008:119). This, I think, is a very plausible explanation for the presence of final causation in even the least perfect monadic actions: all monadic actions are governed by appetitions, which in turn are natural tendencies toward particular

states. Spontaneity guarantees that monads are never directed toward some action externally or violently; instead, they always follow their internal, natural tendencies, and do what their natures demand. Both on Hoffman's very minimalist account of final causation, and on Carriero's more robust interpretation, this qualifies as final causation.<sup>32</sup>

Moreover, there is an important sense in which a monad is functioning properly when it is acting in accordance with its nature and in which the states prescribed by its nature are normative. One can say that given its nature, this is how the monad is supposed to function. If God were to produce a state in a monad miraculously, that would be improper and against its nature. Thus, to the extent that God allows monads to act in accordance with their natures, there is a kind of normativity and teleology. Still, I do not think that we should equate this properness or naturalness with goodness or perfection: Leibniz needs a strict distinction between natural states in which a monad becomes more perfect or better, and natural states in which the monad becomes less perfect or worse.<sup>33</sup> Even though it is natural for Jim to lose most of his organic body in the encounter with the cow, and even though it is in one sense what his nature dictates *should* happen, it is not good for Jim.<sup>34</sup> The natural and the good, and hence the normative and the good, must come apart for Leibniz; that is precisely where he disagrees with Aristotelianism, as we will soon see.

## 6. Obstacles for the Neutral Teleology Interpretation

My discussion so far has shown, I hope, that NTI has several advantages vis-à-vis the two standard interpretations. Yet, there are also potential obstacles to adopting NTI. I already mentioned two of these in the introduction, namely the tradition of equating end-directedness with goodness-directedness and textual evidence suggesting that Leibniz adheres to this tradition. I will examine these in turn and argue that neither of them is insurmountable. In fact, surprisingly, a closer look at the differences between Leibnizian and traditional, Aristotelian teleology will strengthen my interpretation: it will show that Leibniz's doctrine of spontaneity forces him to depart from the traditional understanding of the relationship between teleology and goodness. A third potential objection, which I will address first, is the charge that my account is just as circular as the ipso facto account of teleology.

## 6.1 Circularity

Even if NTI has some advantages, one might worry that it does not in the end manage to avoid the circularity of the ipso facto account of teleology. That circularity consisted in explaining goodness in terms of strivings and strivings in terms of goodness. NTI, one might think, is guilty of something similar: it claims that a monad strives for an action because its nature prescribes this action, even though it is arguably also the case that the monad's nature prescribes this action in virtue of the monad's being directed toward the action. In other words, what states a monad's nature prescribes depends on what it naturally strives for, and hence one cannot hope to explain the monad's strivings in terms of these states. How, then, can the end nevertheless be explanatory, as is required for teleology?

I think NTI can easily respond to these charges. After all, on NTI, the explanation of an action simply bottoms out in natural strivings or appetitions. NTI does not claim to explain the strivings themselves in terms of something else—unlike AGI, which aims to explain the strivings in terms of what appears good to the monad. What NTI does, though, is to explain the occurrence of the action in terms of what the agent naturally strives for. When asked why the monad acts the way that it does, NTI answers that it is because of certain natural appetitions or strivings, that is, because this monad is by its very nature directed toward particular ends. The nature of a monad does not strictly speaking *explain* its end-directedness; rather, the nature of a monad consists, in part, in this end-directedness. There is nevertheless teleology here, because the states toward which monads are by their nature directed are an irreducible part of the explanation of their actions. Ends do enter into the explanation of natural actions because strivings for these ends explain these actions.

## 6.2 Textual evidence

There is, however, some textual support for a close connection between goodness and teleology in Leibniz. He writes, for instance, that “our souls... can only be moved by some reason of good or evil: and this even when no distinct knowledge can be extracted from our mental state” (COE 3). Likewise, in the *Principles of Nature and Grace*, Leibniz states that “the perceptions in the monad arise from one another by the laws of appetites, or by the laws of the *final causes of good and evil*” (PNG 3; his italics).<sup>35</sup> These passages can be seen as evidence for either one



of the standard interpretations because they point to a close relation between final causation and goodness without specifying what precisely this relation is.

There are also a few passages in Leibniz's corpus that, at least taken at face value, seem to support AGI particularly. Leibniz for instance writes to Queen Sophie Charlotte in 1704, "everything in the soul happens morally, or in accordance with perceived good or evil... [E]ven in our instinctive or involuntary actions... there is in the soul an appetite for good or an aversion to evil which directs it" (WFN 224/G 3:347; translation altered). A similar passage occurs in a letter to Lady Masham, also from 1704: "Everything... comes down to a present state combined with a tendency towards changes, changes which are brought about... in the soul by perceptions of good and evil" (WFN 206/G 3:341). These passages do indeed seem to suggest that appetitions are always directed toward apparent goods, and that perceived goodness is the final cause of any monadic action.

There are several things to say about those texts. For the sake of brevity, I will only say this: it is possible to read these passages as invoking only goodness in the sense in which every object of an appetite or desire is *ipso facto* a good for the agent.<sup>36</sup> Calling something a "perceived good," accordingly, could simply be a way of saying that one is inclined toward the object of this perception, or that one is inclined by a certain prior perception. The locution '*x* appears good to monad *m*' would then just be another way of saying '*m* strives for *x*.'

Acknowledging this as a type of goodness is rather common in Leibniz's philosophical predecessors; Aquinas endorses it,<sup>37</sup> and so does Hobbes,<sup>38</sup> to name just two. The sense in which we strive for the good in ideally passive actions could, in other words, be a striving for the good simply in the sense in which all objects of appetitions are *ipso facto* good. Yet, goodness of this type cannot be the final cause of an action or striving, as already argued above. Thus, I can grant that whatever a monad strives for is something that is good for that monad in this derivative sense, and even that it is a perceived good in the sense just described. This does not mean that the goodness or apparent goodness of the object of the striving is the final cause of the action. At bottom, something other than *ipso facto* goodness must explain why the action occurs, for instance the agent's nature, as NTI maintains.

### 6.3 Why would Leibniz depart from the tradition?

There is a long philosophical tradition of equating final causation with goodness-directedness. In particular Aristotelians, starting with Aristotle himself and con-

tinuing in medieval Scholasticism, typically see all ends as goods.<sup>39</sup> I will here focus on the Scholastics, because their version of Aristotelianism was especially pertinent when Leibniz was writing. It is true that for mainstream Scholastic thinkers—such as Thomas Aquinas—ends are always goods, and thus all end-directedness is goodness-directedness. In this, Leibniz differs from the Scholastic tradition, on my interpretation. Why would Leibniz depart from the tradition in this respect? That may seem mysterious or at least highly questionable since Leibniz follows this tradition in so many other respects. Yet, I think that on reflection this departure is not mysterious at all: it is in fact required by Leibniz’s doctrine of spontaneity. He disagrees with Scholastics concerning the causal interaction of created substances, and this requires him to also disagree with them concerning the goodness-directedness of these substances.

To see why Leibniz’s doctrine of spontaneity should have such surprising consequences, we need to take a little detour and examine the Scholastic view more closely. I will concentrate on Aquinas, who provides several arguments for the claim that all ends are goods. Some of these arguments invoke *ipso facto* goodness, which as shown above cannot be the final cause of actions.<sup>40</sup> Yet, Aquinas also provides other arguments that can be interpreted as ascribing immanent final causation to all creatures.<sup>41</sup> These arguments have to do with his understanding of creaturely natures and substantial forms. In rough outline, he holds that whatever is natural, or whatever is specified by a substance’s substantial form, is good, and that “everything, in so far as it is in act, acts and tends towards that which is in accordance with its form” (*Summa Theologica* I q5 a5 corp.).

For Aquinas, every substance has a substantial form in virtue of which it belongs to a certain lowest species and has the characteristics proper to that species.<sup>42</sup> The characteristics in virtue of which a substance belongs to a particular species include powers or potentialities for activities that are essential to that species (see Stump 2003:65f). For instance, the substantial forms of human beings include the power or potentiality for rational activity. Since the substantial form or nature of a substance specifies the characteristics that are proper for the kind of thing that it is, the substance is perfect of its kind to the extent that it actualizes the potentialities that are part of its nature. Human beings, for instance, are perfect human beings to the extent that they actualize their power of reasoning. Thus, Thomistic substantial forms, and consequently natures, include only characteristics that constitute the substance’s perfection.<sup>43</sup>

On one interpretation of this type of argument, goodness is the final cause of

all natural actions. At least when bracketing the fact that creatures originally received their natural inclinations from God, we can say that the perfection that is specified by a creature's substantial form is also the immanent final cause of its actions. Note, however, that this only works because Thomistic natures contain nothing but perfections, so that whatever a substance naturally strives for is a state of increased perfection or being. As a result, whenever a substance becomes less perfect, it is because something interfered with, or prevented the efficacy of, its natural strivings. As Aquinas says in the *Summa Theologica*, "that anything depart from its natural and due disposition can come only from some cause drawing it out of its proper disposition" (*Summa Theologica* I q49 a1 corp.; translation altered).<sup>44</sup> Hence, Aquinas would have no trouble at all explaining what happens to Jim: the cow simply prevents Jim from actualizing his natural dispositions.

Yet, this cannot be how things work for Leibniz. After all, Leibniz denies that there is any true causal interaction among created substances and that God ever prevents creatures from acting in accordance with their natures, except perhaps in very rare cases of miraculous interventions. As a result, a finite substance's loss of perfection cannot strictly speaking be explained through the interference of something else with its nature, on Leibniz's view. When I feel pain, for instance, or lose some perfection, the explanation for this must ultimately lie in myself, that is, in my own natural dispositions. Other substances can only be ideal causes of my suffering, as already explained in footnote 31. Somehow, then, it must be in my nature to feel this pain or lose this perfection; after all, I am producing the painful state spontaneously, without anybody interfering with my natural inclinations. What Scholastics would describe as the interference of external factors with my strivings must, for Leibniz, take place entirely within me and be as it were written into my very nature. This of course constitutes a radical departure from the Aristotelian worldview on which whatever is part of my nature, and whatever I naturally strive for, is also a perfection of my nature. Denying the interaction of finite substances has far-reaching consequences, and one of these is that not all teleology is goodness-directedness.

## 7. Conclusion

I conclude that for Leibniz, many instances of end-directedness are not instances of goodness-directedness. In order to ascribe end-directedness to monads, we need to invoke neither God nor the good. Contrary to AGI and OGI, a large number of

monadic actions are not performed for the sake of the good at all; instead, they are simply based on natural strivings. These natural strivings are sufficient for making the resulting actions teleological; there is no additional requirement that the finite agent or God perceive the objects of these strivings as good.

One reason for favoring NTI, as I have argued, are the disadvantages of the other two options. NTI is more plausible than AGI because it does not require that even bare monads be able to perceive things as good. Moreover, unlike AGI, my interpretation can easily explain cases like Jim's, in which a monad transitions to a less perfect state. Furthermore, unlike OGI, it allows for immanent teleology in all monadic activity. I have also argued that none of the obstacles to adopting NTI are insurmountable. The texts apparently supporting OGI or AGI can easily be interpreted differently, and there is compelling evidence that goodness cannot be a final cause of the least perfect monadic actions. A look at the reasons cited by Scholastics for believing that all ends are goods in fact supports my interpretation, because it reveals that Leibniz cannot agree with them, given his doctrine of monadic spontaneity. Because he holds that all states of a monad—including losses of perfection—arise spontaneously and naturally and can be explained teleologically, he cannot reasonably maintain that all monadic strivings aim at the good.<sup>45</sup>

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*Abbreviations*

- BWE            Leibniz on Wachter's *Elucidarius cabalisticus* (1706). Edited by Philip Beeley, *The Leibniz Review* 12 (2002), 1-14.
- CD             *Causa Dei asserta per justitiam ejus, cum caeteris ejus perfectionibus, cunctisque actionibus conciliatam* (1710). Cited by

MONADIC TELEOLOGY WITHOUT GOODNESS AND WITHOUT GOD

- section number, G 6:439-62.
- COE “Observations on the Book Concerning the Origin of Evil” (1710). Cited by section number; translation E. M. Huggard, *Theodicy* La Salle: Open Court, 1985.
- Dut *Opera Omnia*. Ed. L. Dutens, Geneva: Fratres de Tournes, 1768.
- M *Monadology* (1714). Cited by section number; translation from AG 213-225.
- RPW *Political Writings*. Ed. and transl. by P. Riley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.
- SLT *The Shorter Leibniz Texts: A Collection of New Translations*. Ed. and transl. by L. Strickland. New York: Continuum, 2006.
- Ta “Summary of the Controversy Reduced to Formal Arguments” (1710). G 6:376-387; translation by, and cited by page numbers from, E. M. Huggard. *Theodicy*. La Salle: Open Court, 1985.
- W *Leibniz Selections*. Ed. by P. P. Wiener. New York: Scribner, 1951.

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JULIA JORATI

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MONADIC TELEOLOGY WITHOUT GOODNESS AND WITHOUT GOD

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*Notes*

<sup>1</sup> E.g. M 79; PNG 3; "Against Barbaric Physics," AG 319/G 7:344. For a key to the abbreviations I use to refer to Leibniz's writings, see the list at the end of the paper (the list excludes the abbreviations listed in the back of *The Leibniz Review*). All translations are from the editions listed there unless I indicate otherwise.

<sup>2</sup> Jorgensen suggests something similar in his unpublished paper "Leibniz's Appetite," §4. Yet, Jorgensen requires that in order for a bare monad to strive for some action A, it must perceive that A expresses its nature. I disagree with him: I do not think it is necessary for the monad to perceive this. In fact, I consider it no more plausible to claim that the lowest monads can perceive that something expresses their nature than to claim that they can perceive something as good.

<sup>3</sup> By 'mature period' I mean the period starting around 1695. I will not be able to address the interesting question whether Leibniz held the same views on teleology at earlier times.

<sup>4</sup> I am using these terms interchangeably for the purposes of this paper.

<sup>5</sup> Or, in the case of unsuccessful actions, it explains why the monad attempts to act in this way.

<sup>6</sup> Or, more precisely, it is circular to explain actions in terms of strivings, strivings in terms of goodness, and goodness in terms of strivings.

<sup>7</sup> I do not mean to deny that ipso facto goodness can legitimately be viewed as a type of goodness, nor even that Leibniz acknowledges it as a type of goodness. In fact, I will later suggest that Leibniz does acknowledge it. What I do mean to deny is that ipso facto goodness can be the final cause of monadic actions.

<sup>8</sup> McDonough does admit elsewhere that this kind of teleology is "less intuitive" in the case of lower monads and that one could interpret Leibniz as applying this teleology only in the case of higher monads. Yet, McDonough thinks that Leibniz is committed to applying it across the board (Forthcoming, footnote 28).

<sup>9</sup> I should note that Carriero informed me, in personal correspondence, that when he says that something seems best to a bare monad, he merely means that it is the outcome of a teleological balancing. In order for things to seem best to a monad in this sense, it does not need to be capable of comparing the relative goodness of



different options the way minds do in deliberation. Yet, Carriero maintains, all strivings are for the apparent good. I will therefore talk mainly about the apparent good, rather than the apparent best, since the latter may seem to presuppose the capacity to compare.

<sup>10</sup> I will say more about why this is the case below, when discussing AGI's drawbacks.

<sup>11</sup> In this context, it is interesting to note that many medieval philosophers held that only rational substances can perceive anything as good. See Williams, who argues that for Aquinas, "only beings with the capacity for abstract thought can cognize what is good *qua* good (as opposed to merely cognizing something that is in fact good)" (2012:200; cf. Rozemond 2009:277; Gallagher 1991:576f.); see also Des Chene's assessment of medieval philosophy more generally: "Even those [medieval thinkers] who are inclined to a generous estimate of [animal] capacities, like Suárez, deny that animals recognize the good as good; they are moved without knowing why" (1996:194).

<sup>12</sup> He does not say, to the best of my knowledge, whether they can *perceive* good in the other two senses, that is, physical or moral good. I find it implausible that they would, but this is not important for my argument here.

<sup>13</sup> For the abilities of bare monads and the differences between them and animal souls, see M 19; M 24; letter to Wagner, June 4, 1710, W 504f./G 7:529; letter to Desmaizeaux, July 8, 1711, WFN 239.

<sup>14</sup> Using *ipso facto* goodness, we could say that whatever bare monads are naturally inclined toward, they *ipso facto* perceive as good. Yet, as I showed above, goodness in this sense cannot be the final cause of monadic actions.

<sup>15</sup> See Note H to Bayle's *Dictionnaire* entry "Rorarius."

<sup>16</sup> I am unable to come up with other options, nor have I heard any other options from proponents of AGI.

<sup>17</sup> This is McDonough's solution to Bayle's dog example (Forthcoming).

<sup>18</sup> Carriero is a proponent of this option in cases like Jim's (personal correspondence).

<sup>19</sup> Similarly in a letter to Bourguet, December 1714: "I hold... *appetite* to be the striving [*tendence*] from one perception to another" (L 662f./G 3:575). This is almost identical with PNG 2, where he defines appetitions as "tendencies [*tendences*] to go from one perception to another."

<sup>20</sup> Cf. NE 351: "we do not understand the causes of these inclinations or endeavours [*inclinations ou tendances*] as well as might be wished." Similarly a reply

to Bayle: “the soul does many things... by means of confused perceptions and unconscious inclinations or appetitions [*inclinations ou appetitions insensibles*]” (WFN 105/G 4:550).

<sup>21</sup> This becomes clear, for instance, in the *New Essays*: “there is a striving towards action—indeed there is an infinity of them in any subject at any given time” (NE 110; translation altered). Cf. M 36: “There is an infinity of past and present shapes and motions that enter into the efficient cause of my present writing, and there is an infinity of small inclinations and dispositions of my soul, present and past, that enter into its final cause.” Similarly in a reply to Bayle (WFP 238/WFN 105/G 4:550) and a letter to Remond from 1715 (G 3:657).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. letter to Jaquelot from 1704: “this prevailing inclination [*inclination prevalente*] has the effect of predetermining the future, as in fact everything is predetermined in this way” (WFN 181/G 3:471); see also the following passage: “there is always a predominance of inclination [*une prevalence d’inclination*] for the course adopted” (Ta 382/G 6:381), and similarly T 53: “the prevailing inclination [*l’inclination prevalente*] always triumphs.”

<sup>23</sup> In fact, in another text, Leibniz says that what we usually call the influence of the body on our soul, or the combat between body and soul, consists merely in “the different inclinations [*penchans*] which arise from distinct thoughts and from confused thoughts” (notes on Lamy [1702?], WFN 142/G 4:576). See also T 310.

<sup>24</sup> See also Leibniz’s discussion of an example in which a man is bitten by an insect and feels the painful sting: “the soul changes itself even against its will, for it is enslaved by the feelings and confused thoughts which occur according to the states of its body, and of other bodies through their relation to it... [F]or what happens is confused presentiments, or, better, insensible dispositions of the soul, which represent the dispositions of the body with regard to the sting” (reply to Bayle, WFP 236f./G 4:547).

<sup>25</sup> Leibniz himself uses a physical analogy in T 325: “air if it is compressed too firmly in a glass vessel will break it in order to escape. It puts forth effort at every part, but finally flings itself upon the weakest. Thus do the inclinations of the soul extend over all the goods that present themselves: they are antecedent acts of will; but the consequent will, which is their result, is determined in the direction of that which touches most closely.”

<sup>26</sup> About Leibniz’s ethical egoism, see his “Opinion on the Principles of Pufendorf” (1706), RPW 67/Dut IV.iii.277; cf. Jolley 2005:180f.

<sup>27</sup> If a proponent of AGI tries to solve this problem by saying that Jim perceives

it as good to follow the laws of his own nature, she runs afoul of the ipso facto circularity because following the laws of one's own nature arguably means acting in accordance with one's natural inclinations.

<sup>28</sup> For a description of immanent and external teleology, see Osler 1996:389f.; 2001:152f.; Carlin 2012:54.

<sup>29</sup> See von Bodelschwingh 2011; cf. Carriero: "Ownership of the activity requires naturalness of the end" (2008:119). Saying that events in the created world—not only desire-based actions, but anything that happens in the normal course of nature—are genuinely creaturely actions, rather than God's, is extremely important to Leibniz; this becomes clear in his categorical rejection of occasionalism. See Carriero, who argues that Leibniz "didn't think it was possible to make out this family of metaphysical concepts—substance, force, activity, and unity—without appealing to natural ends" (2008:124). The ends Carriero has in mind here are internal ends (cf. 2008:119), and not merely the extrinsic ends involved in Rutherford's natural teleology. I agree with Carriero here: Rutherford's extrinsic teleology is not sufficient for making out these metaphysical concepts.

<sup>30</sup> See footnote 40, where I spell this out further.

<sup>31</sup> About the terms 'ideally active' and 'ideally passive': Leibniz denies that created substances interact metaphysically or strictly speaking. Yet, as he stresses in several places, he thinks we can make sense of their apparent interaction by talking about the ideal influence of one monad on another (see M 49ff.; T 66; NE 210). The dog that bites me, for instance, is only the ideal cause of my pain. This allows us to say that even though strictly speaking I produce all of my perceptions, I am ideally passive with respect to some—for instance the pain ideally caused by the dog—and ideally active with respect to others, namely with respect to those that are not ideally caused by other monads.

<sup>32</sup> Note, however, that Carriero interprets Leibniz in accordance with AGI, as already seen; even though he does not appear to think that teleology generally has to be goodness-directedness, he thinks that this is the case for Leibniz.

<sup>33</sup> He needs this, for instance, to account for ideal activity and ideal passivity.

<sup>34</sup> At least it is not good for Jim in any relevant sense. It is good for Jim in the ipso facto sense, but this type of goodness is much thinner than the goodness with which Leibniz is typically concerned, and, as already seen, it cannot be a final cause. See footnote 36 below.

<sup>35</sup> See also *On Wachter's Elucidarius cabalisticus*: "in the soul everything happens through effort [*conatus*], that is, through desires in accordance with the laws of

the good” (AG 279/BWE 11).

<sup>36</sup> It is clear that Leibniz acknowledges different kinds of goodness: in several places he distinguishes three types, namely physical, metaphysical, and moral (see CD 29ff.; T 21). The least demanding type of goodness, metaphysical goodness, consists in perfection, as already seen. Yet, perhaps there are two senses of perfection: a loose or thin sense of perfection, according to which acting naturally is always a perfection, and a stricter or thicker sense, according to which only some aspects of one’s nature are perfections. As seen above, Leibniz often uses the term in the latter sense, which he needs for his account of ideal causation. Yet, he may well acknowledge the loose sense as well, a sense co-extensional with ipso facto goodness. Some support for this suggestion can be found in Leibniz’s remarks on Lamy from 1702, in which he distinguishes two senses of ‘natural’: one sense in which everything that happens to an individual is natural, and another sense that comes in degrees. The most natural modification in this latter sense is “that which is entirely in conformity with the perfection of the nature which produces it” (WFN 157/G 4:582). This allows us to speculate that just as there are two senses of ‘nature,’ there are two corresponding senses of ‘perfection,’ and that in one sense, everything that happens to an individual is a perfection, precisely because it is, in one sense, natural.

<sup>37</sup> *Summa Theologica* IaIIae q94 a2 corp; cf. *Summa Contra Gentiles* 1.37.4; 3.3.3; *De Veritate* q21 a1 corp.

<sup>38</sup> *Leviathan* ch. 6, §7; for Hobbes’s definition of appetite and aversion, see ch. 6, §2.

<sup>39</sup> With respect to Aristotle, see *Physics* ii.3, 195<sup>a</sup>23-6 and Johnson 2005:91f.; with respect to the Scholastics, see below.

<sup>40</sup> Aquinas argues, for instance: “the end is that in which the appetitive inclination of an agent... finds its rest. Now, the essential meaning of the good is that it provides a terminus for appetite, since ‘the good is that which all desire.’... Therefore, every action and motion are for the sake of a good” (*Summa Contra Gentiles* 3.3.3). See also *Summa Theologica* I q5 a6 corp. Another argument Aquinas offers, which also does not portray goodness as an immanent final cause for non-rational actions, says that while rational agents direct themselves to the good, non-rational agents are directed to the good by rational agents (see *Summa Contra Gentiles* 3.3.7; *De Veritate* q22 a1 corp. and a5 corp.). This argument is rather similar to Rutherfordian natural teleology: such actions are goodness-directed only because God, or some other rational agent, knows the end to be good and directs the non-rational agent to this end. There is one crucial difference between Aquinas and Leibniz in this

respect, however: Aquinas's God literally builds up creaturely natures by giving them certain inclinations. These creatures therefore owe even their natural end-directedness to God. Leibniz's God, on the other hand, finds creaturely natures ready-made in his intellect: he does not give them appetitions or inclinations; rather, he merely actualizes some of the essences he finds in his intellect, inclinations and all. God makes sure his creatures have the inclinations he wants not by bestowing these inclinations on creatures, but rather by picking the ones that essentially have these inclinations. This is an important difference because it means that the gardener metaphor I use above is much more apt for Leibniz than for Aquinas: like the gardener, Leibniz's God does not construct or alter the natures of creatures; he merely selects the right ones for actualization.

<sup>41</sup> Carlin argues, against most other interpreters, that Scholastic philosophers such as Aquinas did not believe that there is immanent teleology in non-rational creatures (2012). I disagree, because I read Aquinas as acknowledging different types of immanent end-directedness, similarly to Leibniz. The most demanding type of immanent teleology requires rationality, animal souls exhibit a less perfect type in virtue of their sensitive appetite, and insensible natures exhibit an even less perfect type of immanent teleology in virtue of their natural appetite (see e.g. *De Veritate* q22 a4 corp.). In the passages Carlin cites, Aquinas is, on my interpretation, denying only that lower creatures possess immanent teleology of the more demanding types. After all, there are other passages in which Aquinas wants to strictly distinguish what happens based on natural appetite and thus what happens naturally, from what happens because of another agent violently directing the creature to some end (e.g. *De Veritate* q22 a1 corp.; cf. Pasnau 2002:203f.). This distinction, I hold, is best understood as the distinction between immanent and extrinsic teleology, because in cases of the first type, the inclination is not only internal to the creature but part of the its nature (even though it received this nature from God). Non-rational creatures are not instruments of God in the way in which the arrow is an instrument of the archer. My interpretation of Leibniz, however, does not depend on this issue. For the relation between the Scholastic understanding of creaturely natures and teleology, see MacDonald 1991:20; Carriero 2005:120.

<sup>42</sup> See *Summa Theologica* IaIIae q85 a4 corp.; cf. Stump 2003:65.

<sup>43</sup> When making this point, Aquinas uses 'perfection' in what we today would think of as two senses: the substantial form of a human being not only specifies what a good, or perfect, human being ought to do, but it also specifies a state of perfection in the sense of completion.

<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Aquinas says in *Summa Contra Gentiles*, “what is in a thing contrary to the motion of its natural appetite is violent and unnatural. Evil in each thing, consequently, is violent and unnatural, so far as it is an evil for that thing” (1.39.7).

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