

## Leibniz on the Labyrinth of Freedom: Two Early Texts\*

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### Abstract

Leibniz devoted immense energy and thought to questions concerning moral responsibility and human freedom. This paper examines Leibniz's views on freedom and sin in two important early texts – “*Von der Allmacht Allmacht und Allwissenheit Gottes und der Freiheit des Menschen*” and “*Confessio Philosophi*” – as a propaedeutic to a detailed examination of the development of Leibniz's views on freedom and sin. In particular, my aim is to see if Leibniz's early thinking on freedom and sin in these early writings was among those metaphysical topics about which he changed his mind. My focus is on human, not divine, freedom, and the young Leibniz's metaphysical psychology, rather than his early efforts in theodicy. I conclude that Leibniz's views on freedom and sin are in place as early as 1672/3, and remain relatively stable thereafter.

Leibniz devoted immense energy and thought to questions concerning moral responsibility and human freedom. His essay, “*Von der Allmacht und Allwissenheit Gottes und der Freiheit des Menschen*,” probably written sometime in the period of 1670-1, begins:

Of all the questions that bewilder the human race, none is pursued with more passion, more often repeated, more dangerously and cruelly pressed than this point of contention: How the free will of man, punishment and reward can exist, given the omnipotence and omniscience of an all-ruling God (A VI 1 537).<sup>1</sup>

Leibniz never wavers from emphasizing the centrality of such questions. Nearly 40 years later, in the preface to the *Thèodicèe*, he writes:

There are two famous labyrinths where our reason very often goes astray: one concerns the great question of the Free and the Necessary, above all in the production and the origin of Evil; the other consists in the discussion of continuity.... The first perplexes almost all the human race, the other exercises philosophers only (G VI 29; H 53).

Leibniz's preoccupation with freedom throughout his career was not accidental. His juridical and political writings of the 60s and 70s reveal the depth of his

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commitment to moral and political order. Leibniz was keenly aware of the contentious theological and philosophical controversies caused by disagreements concerning free will, and so rarely missed the opportunity to comment critically on what he took to be the inadequacies of the theories of others. The primacy Leibniz attached to freedom and responsibility reflect his belief that morality and Christianity presuppose both. Further, providing a clear way out of the first labyrinth would validate Leibniz's vision that a true metaphysics would provide the bridge to philosophical synthesis, Church reunion and political peace.

Leibniz was a bold and eclectic thinker, willing to modify and even accept previously rejected theses when doing so solved problems that were hitherto intractable.

In a letter of May 1697 to Thomas Burnett, Leibniz writes that he has been deliberating and meditating on some philosophical matters for 20 years. He then adds:

I changed and re-changed my mind on account of new insights [*lumières*], and it is only for about the last twelve years that I find myself satisfied, and that I have arrived at demonstrations on matters which it did not at all seem capable of being demonstrated (G III 205).

This letter suggests that Leibniz dates the period of relative philosophical stability from the 1686 *Discours de Métaphysique*. Leibniz's philosophical conversions, renouncements, and new conversions, coupled with his eclecticism and penchant for being extremely parsimonious concerning the ultimate motivations for his views, make contemporary attempts to trace Leibniz's philosophical development extremely exciting.

My goal here is more modest: to examine Leibniz's views on freedom and sin in two important early texts as a propaedeutic to a detailed examination of the development of Leibniz's views on freedom and sin. In particular, my aim is to see if Leibniz's early thinking on freedom and sin in "Von der Allmacht" (as it shall be called hereafter) and "Confessio Philosophi" were among those metaphysical topics about which he changed his mind, and if so, why. My focus is on human, not divine, freedom, and the young Leibniz's metaphysical psychology, rather than his early efforts in theodicy. Much of Leibniz's thinking on freedom and sin in these texts is developed in the course of attempts to exculpate God's responsibility for moral evil. Nonetheless, the issues are distinct. Consider the question of why Judas betrays Jesus. Leibniz gives different answers to this, depending on the level of discourse: the particular answer appeals to facts of Judas' psychology, while a more general answer appeals to Judas' part in

contributing to the universal harmony. My interest here is in exploring the details of the former answer.

**1. VON DER ALLMACHT UND ALLWISSENHEIT  
GOTTES UND DER FREIHEIT DES MENSCHEN**

“*Von der Allmacht*” is an unfinished experimental text in which Leibniz suggests that ordinary German language, of the sort understood by “the poorest peasant,” possesses the clarity of meaning (long lost by debauched Latin) to illuminate the chimeras that have led to so much misunderstanding and harm on questions of reward, punishment, and providence. The envisioned project, of which “*Von der Allmacht*” is an early (and quirky) trial, was never launched; nonetheless, the unfinished paper is fascinating as a very early glimpse of Leibniz’s thinking on the above questions.

In § 4 Leibniz places questions of freedom and providence center-stage, charging that misunderstandings and prevarication on such topics have done more damage than any comet, earthquake, or plague. The pagans wisely restrict such matters to the philosophy halls, and the Turks use the belief in fatalism to incite feats of incredible bravery among their soldiers. Leibniz laments that Christians debate such questions openly. In his view, the public discussion of these matters leads to acrimonious divisions without generating any social utility whatsoever.

In § 13 Leibniz turns his attention to the role of the will in sinning. Replying to a form of theological fatalism stemming from divine omniscience, Leibniz writes:

What depends upon your will is up to you. Now, if you do not will to sin, then you will not sin, for the sin is found only in the will; someone asleep or drunk does not sin when there is no will. If you will not sin, then you will also not be destined to sin. The explanation of whether you are destined to sin or not is also up to you. Thus, you may accuse neither predestination [*Versehen*] nor God, but yourself or your will (A VI 1 542).

The above response is in line with the solution Leibniz adumbrates in § 19 of this text and elsewhere to the *de Auxiliis* debate.<sup>2</sup> Following the crisis of the Protestant Reformation(s), Catholic leaders came together at the Council of Trent (1545-1563) to delineate Christian orthodoxy from Protestant heresy. Because issues surrounding divine grace and foreknowledge proved resistant to sharp resolution during the council, Catholic thinkers later in the century were encouraged to continue working on these topics. One massive contribution to this project was

Luis de Molina's *Concordia*, published in 1588 in Lisbon. The publication of the *Concordia* ignited the already volatile relations between the Dominicans and Jesuits.<sup>3</sup> The Dominicans charged that the Jesuits' libertarian views on freedom were Pelagian, the Jesuits countering that the Dominican views, at bottom, were indistinguishable from Luther's and Calvin's view on the will, and thus absolutely destructive of human freedom.<sup>4</sup> The debate became so ugly by 1594 that Pope Clement VIII intervened, establishing a council on aids for grace. Clement died before issuing a ruling, while the next papacy lasted only 24 days. Pope Paul V, having been present as a cardinal at the previous debates, ruled against the majority of the cardinal consultors, who recommended condemning 42 propositions of Molina, declaring that both sides were compatible with the faith.

One important issue in the volatile *scientia media* debate is whether there are contingent truths that God knows pre-volitionally, that is, prior to deciding to actualize a world. One such truth God knew prior to creation was: "If asked in the courtyard of the high priest whether he knew Jesus, Peter would deny knowing Jesus." The Dominicans agreed that God knew such truths. What they denied was the Molinist claim that such truths were known pre-volitionally; the Dominicans replied that such an account radically undermines God's universal causality and omnipotence.

Leibniz's various remarks on the controversy are often in tension with what he says elsewhere. His treatment of the form of theological fatalism sketched in § 13, however, is clear enough: divine omniscience per se does not threaten human freedom, because in the relevant cases, God foreknows what we will will, while what we will is up to us. This, however, merely pushes the question one level deeper. Leibniz rejects any account of free will according to which acts of willing lack sufficient causes (§ 19). Leibniz lays the blame for the confusions and perversions surrounding freedom on philosophers. By contrast:

... most ordinary people, as long as their minds are not distorted and at the same time made false by the forced, incomprehensible whims of philosophers, hold that he has sufficient free will who can do what he wills and wills what he considers good (A VI 1 545).

One criticism Leibniz offers in § 19 is that Molinism is impotent to explain how God knows true counter-factuals of freedom. A famous proof text in the late scholastic foreknowledge debate was Samuel 22. Informed that the Philistines were sacking Keilah, David and his men attack and save the city. When he learned that at long last his elusive quarry had reentered his territory, Saul mobilizes his forces and marched on the city. Informed that Saul was mobilizing,

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David summoned the priest. Through the ephod, an instrument of divination, David was told that “If Saul attacked Keilah, the citizens would hand him over” (henceforth “K”). In light of this information, David and his men escaped into the sanctuary of the desert.

Since K is a true counter-factual, “The difficulty lay in how to deduce such foreknowledge [*Vorwissen*] from the divine attributes, especially from the noblest principal attribute, according to our understanding, namely His being the first cause of all things” (A VI 1 546). According to Leibniz, Molina takes refuge in mystery, assigning a name—*scientia media*—to mask this lacuna at the heart of his theory. Leibniz’s alternate account, according to which “free will has as its cause the apparent goodness of present things and circumstances” easily solves this question, since “God knows infallibly the circumstances that then would have appeared in the thoughts of the Ziklagians in virtue of the contemporary state that he created” (ibid.).<sup>5</sup> It is natural to read these causes as psychologically determining, since they are the means by which God knows true counterfactuals of freedom.

Consider now an act of willing with momentous stakes—Judas’ decision to betray Christ. Why did the betrayal appear good to Judas? In particular, why did God not create Judas with less desire, more faith, and so on? Leibniz answers:

But here comes the last and hardest shock. You say, “why did God not create me better, why did He not give me a more moderate constitution, a different will, a more enlightened understanding, a happier upbringing, more advantageous opportunities, more sensible parents, more diligent teachers, in one word, greater grace? The way I am, I must be a sinner, must be damned, must be in despair, must be condemned for eternity, and for eternity cursing.” Here I am not obliged to answer you; it is enough that you did not want to give up your sinning and take responsibility for your salvation. Punishment belongs to the evil will—no matter whence it comes. Otherwise, no misdeed would be punished. There is always a cause of the will outside the willing subject, and yet it is what makes us human beings and persons, sinners, blessed, damned (A VI 1 542).

I want to highlight four features of this extraordinary passage. First, Leibniz’s absolute denial that he is “obliged to answer” why some individual did not receive a better upbringing and education and so forth is, to my knowledge, never repeated. Elsewhere he accepts the burden of proof that he brusquely dismisses here and at least attempts an answer. Second, it is tempting to view his claim that if punishment does not “belong to the evil will—no matter whence it comes... no misdeed would

be punished” to be an example of Leibniz’s juridical and political concerns temporarily trumping his metaphysical and ethical concerns regarding justice and fairness. (Whether the later texts permit this reading will be discussed in § 3.3 below.) Third, the young Leibniz trumpets the claim that “there is always a cause of the will outside the willing subject’s will,” language that is conspicuously absent in writings from his maturity. (Whether the *idea* expressed by such language is still present in the mature works will be discussed in § 3.1 below.) Notice, too, that claiming that there is always a cause of the will outside the willing subject’s will puts considerable strain on the claim that what depends upon your will is up to you. In the absence of some theory of reconciliation, such declarations exacerbate rather than resolve questions of freedom and the fairness of eternal reward and punishment. Last, his assertion that “it is *the will* that makes us human beings and persons, sinners, blessed, damned [emphasis added]” is often augmented in later texts to include intelligence.

Call voluntarism the view that gives primacy to the will over other mental faculties such as reason and intellect. Voluntarists in this sense generally locate the ultimate source of sin or wrongdoing in the will, often because they see the will as able to operate and decide contrary to the deliverances of reason. §§ 13 and 13<sub>1</sub> are interesting in that while making the will the locus of sin is voluntarist in spirit, the insistence that there is always a cause of the will outside the willing subject is not.

## 2. THE *CONFESSIO PHILOSOPHI*

The *Confessio Philosophi* (the *Confessio* hereafter) was probably written sometime in the 1672-3 period. It is a dialogue between a philosopher, Leibniz’s spokesperson, and a theologian. Like Berkeley, Leibniz’s efforts in the genre are not his best form; however, also like Berkeley, he gives his interlocutor deep and potent objections. The first part of the work is primarily devoted to the problem of exonerating God’s responsibility and participation in the sin of human agents, a difficult problem made harder by Leibniz’s commitment to the principle of sufficient reason and the doctrine of divine concurrence. Leibniz’s solutions are much too complex to investigate here, but involve demonstrating that sins follow from God’s nature or existence, not from his will and thus that God is the ground, but not the author, of sin. The theologian then raises a devastating objection:

What’s the good of absolving God, if the wicked are absolved with Him?  
What is the gain, in exempting the divine will, if we extinguish all will? For

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what, I implore, is human freedom, if we depend on external things, if they are what causes us to will, if a certain fatal connection guides our thought no less than the turning and collision of atoms? (A VI 3 132)

Consider Judas' betrayal of Christ. According to the theodicy developed in the first part of the *Confessio*, the betrayal is due to Judas' will rather than his existence, while the same sin is due to God's existence rather than the divine will. The theologian's telling objection is that the philosopher's asymmetry thesis is not justified. In response, the philosopher sets out to explain acts of will by way of some of the general principles of human psychology.

### 2.1 *The Faculties of Intellect and Will*

Leibniz writes within a Scholastic framework in which the soul is numerically one and thus has unity. Nonetheless, the soul is described as operating according to its faculties or powers. The two faculties that matter for freedom are the intellect and will. The Philosopher begins by explaining why we will as we do:

...we will nothing except what appears harmonious. However, what appears harmonious depends on the disposition of the percipient, of the object and of the medium. That is why even if it is in our power to do what we will, nevertheless it is not in our power to will what we will. Rather, we will that which we experience as pleasing, i.e., judge to be good. But to judge or not judge that something holds is not in our power. No one, not even if he were to tear himself apart by willing in favor or willing against, would bring it about without a reason that what he believes he would no longer believe. Therefore, since opinion is not under the power of the will, the will itself will not be under the power of the will (A VI 3 132).

Leibniz's conception of the relationship between the will and intellect is rooted in the medieval tradition inspired by Aristotle. The special cognitive capacity of the soul is the intellect; the special appetitive capacity the will. The will has a natural inclination towards the good as a *telos*, just as the intellect has toward truth. I believe that Leibniz, from early to late, regards these as necessary (or constitutive) elements of personal, conscious minds, divine and human.<sup>6</sup> In a letter, perhaps to Molanus, ca. 1679, Leibniz writes:

... Descartes's God is something approaching the God of Spinoza, namely, the principle of things and a certain supreme power or primitive nature that puts everything into motion [*action*] and does everything that can be done. Descartes's God has neither *will* nor *understanding*, since according to Descartes he does not have the *good* as object of the will, nor the *true* as object of the understanding (emphasis in the text, A II 1 501; G IV 299; AG 242).

The will wills that which is presented as good (or the best) by the intellect; this is to say that the will is determined by the intellect's apprehension of a certain thing or action as good. As Leibniz puts it:

... having posited that we believe something good, it is not possible that we do not will it; having posited that we will it and at the same time that we know that the external aids are available, it is not possible that we do not act (A VI 3 133).

In Leibniz's metaphysical psychology, the will does not have the privilege of impartial choice; rather it is conditioned and directed by the intellect's perception of the good. To put the point in scholastic terms, Leibniz, unlike Ockham and Molina, denies the liberty of indifference understood as the ability of the will to choose an action contrary to the intellect's judgment of the best.

The *Confessio* account of willing presupposes an account of human nature inspired by Aristotle and developed by the great medieval philosophers, according to which: (1) Human persons are created with a natural drive for personal well-being or *eudaemonia*. (2) The parts of human persons are ordered so that their operations contribute to the person's natural inclination for *eudaemonia*. (3) The function of reason is to discern the relative goodness of states of affairs and options available to the person. (4) The function of will as rational appetite is a natural hunger for what is perceived as best by the intellect. Leibniz adds to the above: (5) What is perceived as best by the intellect is the result of: (a) the temperament and state of the agent and (b) the disposition of the object to affect the agent (A VI 3 123-5). (6) Beliefs of the sort exemplified by "Action *x* is the best action available to me" are involuntary (A VI 3 132). (7) What we will is psychologically determined. The temperament and state of the agent are the result of early upbringing and education; the disposition of the object on the agent as perceiver is the result of the previously mentioned factors plus how the physical properties of the object affect our sense organs. This entails: (8) The causal antecedents of acts of willing lay outside the willing agent's will (*ibid.*). It is out of these materials that Leibniz constructs his theory of human freedom.

### 2.2 *Theories of Freedom*

The philosopher begins by rejecting as impossible an account of free choice as "a power that can act and not act, all the requisites for acting having been posited, and moreover, all the requisites that exist both outside and inside the agent being equal" (A VI 3 132). Leibniz takes this to be a conceptual truth, since the internal and external requisites are jointly sufficient for the act of willing. The theologian then suggests amending the definition by deleting the phrase "inside the agent"

(A VI 3 133). The philosopher agrees, provided it is understood as: "... even if all the aids for acting are at my disposal, I can nevertheless omit the action, if in fact I will not to do it." He goes on to explain:

[A] Nothing is truer, nothing less opposed to my position. Indeed, Aristotle defined *spontaneity* as obtaining when the principle of action is in the agent, [B] <and *freedom* as spontaneity with choice. From which we may conclude: each one is all the more spontaneous, the more his acts flow from his nature, and the less they are altered by external matters; and all the more free, the greater his capacity for choice, that is, the more he understands many things with a pure and tranquil mind. Therefore spontaneity comes from power; freedom from knowledge>. . . [C] It is sufficient for protecting the privilege of free choice that we are placed at a crossroad of our lives so that we are able to do only what we will, to will only what we believe good; and to investigate by the most ample use of reason what things are to be considered good. Thus, we have less reason for blaming nature than if it had given us this monstrous power of some rational irrationality (the material within the <> is a later addition to the text; letters [A-C] are my insertion; A VI 3 133).

Readers of the *Thèodicèe* will recognize in the above a partial intimation of Leibniz's mature theory as codified in § 288. Unfortunately, the text is surprisingly resistant to analysis. Parkinson's commentary on this passage in his insightful article on sufficient reason and freedom in the *Confessio* provides a helpful entrée to the exegetical issues.<sup>7</sup> I want to consider three important features of Parkinson's reading. First, he claims that prior to explicating freedom "as spontaneity with choice," "[w]hat Leibniz has said about freedom . . . suggests that any person can be called free who has and exercises that rational capacity which is called 'choice'".<sup>8</sup> Second, Parkinson says that when Leibniz clarifies (B) as (C), he introduces "a different sense of freedom from that which Leibniz employed when he spoke of freedom as spontaneity with choice."<sup>9</sup> Parkinson then considers reading the emphasis on reason in (C) as an endorsement of the Stoic understanding of freedom, according to which the passions are external to our true nature. In this view, acting under influence of the passions means that such actions are not properly autonomous and so not free; Parkinson rejects this reading because there is no evidence in the *Confessio* that the passions are external to agents in the relevant sense. He suggests, and this is his third point, that:

... we can make better sense of what Leibniz says about reason and freedom if we take him to be operating with a concept of freedom which is not associated with any particular philosopher or school, but is held by ordinary

people. According to this way of thinking about freedom, to be free is to have the power to do what one wants to do. The relation of reason to this sort of freedom can be put in the following way. In so far as the passions obstruct the reason, they impede something which enables us to achieve our ends. An intellect which is pure, therefore (i.e. not clouded by the passions) gives us the power to achieve our ends, i.e. to do what we want to do. That is, in so far as we follow the reason we are free.<sup>10</sup>

I agree with Parkinson that the *Confessio* discussion of freedom prior to (B) suggests that an agent is free who “exercises that rational capacity which is called ‘choice’”. However, since this statement, understood in the right way, is one to which most parties in the free will dispute would assent, more needs to be said concerning Leibniz’s endorsement of it.

Parkinson’s second claim is that (B), clarified as (C), introduces a new conception of freedom. The issues involved here are complex. I agree that we get more on freedom in (A-C) than we have earlier in the text, but this is unremarkable. As a dialogue, the *Confessio* has a dialectical development not present in most of Leibniz’s other non-dialogical writings. It is not that the earlier discussions of freedom are particularly maladroit; rather (A-C) adds details to the earlier sketches, as the philosopher, under the steady and sustained prompting from the theologian, gradually fills in more and more detail in his representation of human freedom.

The interpretative difficulty, in my view, is not so much that we get in (A-C) a different conception of freedom from that of earlier discussions, but rather that (A-C) itself contains two different accounts. The first, (B), attributed with approval to Aristotle, is a later addition, whereas (C) is in the original text. I shall consider them in the order of composition.

According to (C), “It is sufficient for protecting the privilege of free choice [*liberi arbitrii*]... [when]: “[a] we are able to do only what we will, [b] to will only what we believe good; and [c], to investigate by the most ample use of reason what things are considered good” (letters [a-c] are my insertion; A VI 3 133). Two ideas are involved in (a). The positive idea is that the causal route to any of my free choices must run through my will; free choice is the product of my will. The negative idea is that if the causal route of some choice is independent of my will, that action is not free; free choices are not forced on the agent from without. The idea involved in (b) was discussed in § 2.1 above. Considerable light is shed on how to read (c) in a later passage:

Well then, how foolish we are, who, having spurned the privileges of God

and nature, demand a kind of unknown chimera, not being content with the use of reason, the true root of freedom. Unless an irrational power is given to us, we believe that we are not sufficiently free, as if it were not the highest freedom to use our own intellect and will perfectly, and, accordingly, for the intellect to embrace them—to be unable to resist the truth, to receive pure rays from objects, not refracted, nor discolored by a cloud of passion.... Certainly the freedom of God is the highest kind, even though He cannot err in selecting the best, and that of the blessed angels is augmented, when they ceased to be able to fall. Therefore, freedom comes from the use of reason, and in so far as reason is pure or, on the other hand, infected, we proceed correctly on the royal road of duties, or we stagger through a wasteland (A VI 1 135).

In Parkinson's analysis of (c), reason per se is not essential to freedom, which is understood as "having the power to do what one wants to."<sup>11</sup> Rather, reason is only instrumentally valuable as a vehicle for satisfying our wants; since passions obstruct reason's work, they are instrumentally bad. Parkinson's ingenious reading, however, should be rejected. Suppose, reverting to a stock medieval example, that I have sexual desire for another woman *and* I want to be faithful to my wife. I have, in this case, two competing desires, and nothing in Parkinson's analysis gives me any reason for identifying more with my desire for fidelity. If freedom is, as Parkinson suggests, simply having the power to do as I want, and reason is a value-neutral instrument, I can use it to achieve either desire. This does not make sense of Leibniz's claim that "in so far as reason is pure... we proceed correctly on the royal road of duties." For Leibniz, madness, not freedom, is indexed to an agent's ability do anything she wants. Leibniz's account is essentially teleological—reason's natural terminus are "true goods" (*vera bona*), while these values are the natural object of the will. Condition (c)—"to investigate by the most ample use of reason what things are considered good"—involves the intellect discriminating true from ersatz goods.

By contrast, according to addition (B), freedom (*liberum*) is "spontaneity with choice." (1) An agent's action is more spontaneous the more the action (i) originates in her nature and (ii) is not "altered by external things." (i) can be read as expressing at least two different ideas: (a) an agent's action is more spontaneous the more it is self-originated—i.e., the more it depends upon the agent as author; (b) an agent's action is more spontaneous the more it expresses her nature—i.e., her values, beliefs, goals, and so forth. Since what is most essential for humans as agents is our volitional and intellectual faculties, (a) and

(b) come together for Leibniz. The idea expressed in (ii) is that these self-originated actions are more free the less they are frustrated by external circumstances.

Choice is understood in the Aristotelian definition as essentially connected with knowledge: “the greater his capacity for choice... the more he understands many things with a pure and tranquil mind” (ibid.). Leibniz is drawing on a rich philosophical tradition that sees the passions as powerfully capricious and dangerous elements of human nature that often unseat reason and self-interest and lead to ruin. Under the influence of the passions, we can misperceive some evil action as good that right reason would dispassionately represent as evil. Accordingly, an agent has more choice the more her decision is guided by dispassionate reason. Notice that according to the Aristotelian conception, freedom and its constituent elements, spontaneity and choice, admit of degrees.

To sum, according to (C), agent *S* freely chooses *A*, if *S* does *A* because *S* wills *A*, *S* believes *A* to be good, and *S* believes *A* to be good as a result of intellectual reflection. According to (B), agent *S* does *A* more freely, the more *A* is self-originated and the less it is impeded by external circumstances, and the more *A* is the result of pure intellectual perspicacity unaffected by the occluding influences of the passions.

The definition in (C) of *liberum arbitrium* is not quantitative, that is, one meets it or one does not. By contrast, the definition in (B) of *liberum* is quantitative, that is, it admits of degrees. In 1677, Leibniz met with the great Danish anatomist and geologist Nicholas Steno, who, at the time was serving in Hanover as the Pope’s special envoy to Protestant Germany and Scandinavia. In “*Conversatio cum Domino Episcopo Stenonio de Libertate*” (“*Conversatio*” henceforth) Leibniz writes, “According to the ancients the free differs from the spontaneous as species from genus; surely, freedom is rational spontaneity” (A VI 4 1378; Gr 272). Here we encounter a third “formulation” of freedom. What should we make of this plurality of “definitions”? First, we should remember that even in later works, Leibniz says different things concerning freedom in different contexts. One of the few places Leibniz is very careful to distinguish the various senses of freedom is in *Nouveaux essais*, book 2, chapter 21 § 8. Leibniz’s claim, right before (A-C), that I am free when “... even if all the aids for acting are at my disposal, I can nevertheless omit the action, if in fact I will not do it” (A VI 3 133), is very close to what he calls “freedom to do” (or, freedom of action) in *NE* 2.21 § 8. What the other definitions in the *Confessio* and “*Conversatio*” share is a conception of freedom as a normative concept, according to which our desires

are guided and controlled by sound reasoning that tracks and illuminates true values or goods. This is the kind of freedom that in later works Leibniz calls the “freedom to will” (*le franc arbitre*—NE 21 § 8), or the freedom that consists in intelligence (*l’intelligence*—T § 288, G VI 288). An agent is most free when he acts according to right reason, that is, in accordance with the good; the freedom to do anything you want is rejected as a fool’s bargain.

### 2.3 Sin

The theologian sees immediately that a consequence of the philosopher’s psychological model is that “all sin arises from error” (A VI 3 135). Leibniz is committed to the following: for any goods  $x$  and  $y$ , an agent cannot at the same time have an occurrent practical judgment that  $x$  is better than  $y$  and choose  $y$ . Call this view *intellectualism*. *Anti-intellectualism* denies the preceding and affirms the following: for any goods  $x$  and  $y$ , an agent can at the same time have an occurrent practical judgment that  $x$  is better than  $y$ , and do  $y$ .

To maintain that all sin is preceded by an intellectual mistake is audacious and immensely counterintuitive—it flies in the face of the phenomenology of our own experience of acting against the full knowledge of an action’s moral wrongness. To make matters worse, since ignorance often attenuates and sometimes exculpates blame, intellectualism appears to undermine morality and religion. What leads Leibniz to embrace so dangerous and implausible a doctrine?<sup>12</sup>

First, even in these early writings, Leibniz is willing, like Plato, to follow where reason leads.<sup>13</sup> If his metaphysical principles lead far from common sense, so much the worse for common sense; by philosophical temperament, Leibniz is, in Strawsonian terms, a revisionary rather than descriptive metaphysician.

Various of Leibniz’s remarks imply that he sees intellectualism as a conceptual truth.<sup>14</sup> Leibniz never seriously considers a non-teleological world. Humans have been created to pursue *eudaemonia*—this is our nature. Since sin is harmful to the sinner, the only possible explanation for it is madness or ignorance. The *Confessio*’s philosopher writes: “No one voluntarily makes himself evil, otherwise he would already be evil, before he made himself evil” (A VI 3 136). To be truly evil, one must have evil intentions. One cannot have evil intentions unless one is evil. But to be evil is to be corrupt. And no one would voluntarily corrupt himself, unless one were already in a state of corruption.

Intellectualism follows from several of Leibniz’s first principles. Agreeing with the principle of sufficient reason, the theologian comments:

For all men, when they experience something, especially if it unusual, ask

*why*, that is, for the cause, either the efficient cause, or, if its author is a rational being, the final cause.... And a reason having been given—if there is time for it or if it appears worthwhile—they seek a reason for the reason, until philosophers come upon something clear, which is *necessary*, that is, is its own reason, or common folk come upon a common reason already familiar to them, where they stop (A VI 3 118).

Leibniz is committed to the principle of sufficient reason because in his view all of reality is intelligible. Freeing the will from reason's rule would detach the will from its proper and natural end, the good, thereby reducing freedom to arbitrary and random caprice. Such acts would be unintelligible, as would be the minds and the world which contain them.

In addition to what Leibniz calls first principles, Robert Sleigh has called our attention to

“attitudinal first principles... attitudes at work, which can be formulated as principles, to which he rarely referred, but which must be recognized in order to grasp his reasoning—for example, a commitment to a form of substance/mode ontology, a commitment to real causation as opposed to mere constant conjunction, a commitment to the principle “no real entity without identity” and its variant “no real identity where convention is required.”<sup>15</sup>

I propose two additional attitudinal principles that guide Leibniz's reasoning. The first is a commitment to a top-down metaphysics, where this is understood to mean that analysis must start with the most real being at the “top” of the great chain of being. This means Leibniz starts with God, the being of utmost aseity, and the reason for all that exists apart from him. Since God is essentially morally perfect and omniscient, there is no room for the indeterminism required by partisans of libertarian freedom. God is determined to will the best, and such determinism perfects freedom. Since we imitate God in our cognitive and volitional natures, as far as creaturely finitude permits, our freedom must be understood as compatible with psychological determinism as well. By way of contrast, in Luis de Molina's bottom-up metaphysics, freedom receives its fundamental analysis at the human level, and then is adjusted as needed to accommodate divine freedom.<sup>16</sup>

Another attitudinal principle guiding Leibniz's thinking is his commitment to the primacy of the intellect over the will, in the divine and human case. Consider a question that puts strain on either omnipotence or omniscience, such as of why God wills as he does. One can divide the great theistic philosophers into those

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who are omnipotence (Descartes) or omniscience (Aquinas) theorists. Omnipotence theorists stress the unlimited power of the divine will, while omniscience theorists stress divine understanding over divine power. Leibniz's letter to Magnus Wedderkopf of May 1671 makes clear his own sympathies:

What therefore, is the ultimate reason for the divine will? The divine intellect. For God wills the things which he understands to be best and most harmonious and selects them, as it were, from an infinite number of possibilities.... Since God is the most perfect mind, however, it is impossible for him not be affected by the most perfect harmony, and thus to be necessitated to do the best by the very ideality of things. This in no way detracts from freedom. For it is the highest freedom to be impelled to the best by a right reason. Whoever desires any other freedom is a fool (A II 1 117; L 146-7).

Leibniz's commitment to a top-down metaphysics, and to omniscience over omnipotence, yields intellectualism quite naturally.

Leibniz was not unaware that intellectualism appears to deny a common feature of everyday experience, given dramatic voice by Ovid's Medea: *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*—"I see the better way and approve it, but I follow the worse way." Leibniz's deflationary analysis of this case is that while Medea knew, in a period of rational and emotional equilibrium, that murdering her children was wrong, under the influence of the passions she no longer attended to that piece of knowledge; at the moment preceding action, it was merely dispositional, since she was focusing on the good of revenge and retribution.

### 2.4 Moral Responsibility, Punishment, and Damnation

The theologian observes that the philosopher's intellectualism has the following unsalutary consequence: Sin is a result of a failure of reason, as is insanity. Since we do not hold the insane responsible, neither should we hold sinners responsible. The philosopher's response is extremely interesting; speaking of the insane, he says:

Pulling themselves together and thinking—*say why you do this now*, in which all prudence is contained, and if the thought came to mind, holding on to it—these are things that the insane cannot do even if they want to, no more than drunks or dreamers. The foolish, the mistaken, the evildoers, use their reason in a sane way, but not with an eye on the most important things; they deliberate, but concerning everything other than happiness. A sickness and a matter that is harmful to the nerves and animal spirits, and a certain insomnia, so to speak, disturb the insane. In the case of fools and evildoers reason is perverted by a reason of another kind, a lesser reason perverts the

greater reason, a certain particular reason, fixed in the mind by temperament, education, and use perverts universal reason. <And so it cannot be doubted that evildoers appear as foolish as fools do to us> (A VI 3 136).

Rather than retreat from his intellectualism, the philosopher draws a distinction between two kinds of cognitive malfunction. The insane are no longer responsive to reasons in a way that the sane are. A sane agent can ask herself, “Say why you do this now.” Should there be a bad fit between the action and the relevant state of world (e.g., unreflectively lighting a cigarette while pumping gas), the agent can change. The insane lack this ability—changes in the world are not reflected in the appropriate changes in the agent. Due to this structural failure of reason, the insane are not culpable.

What, however, of fools and evildoers? In these cases, the philosopher states that a lesser reason perverts universal reason. Perhaps the sense is as follows: Unlike the insane, sane humans are responsive to reasons and the world, that is, they are rational in the sense that they use reason to respond to their environment and satisfy their desires. Fools and evildoers, however, due to particular deficiencies in upbringing, education and temperament, use their reasoning faculties to pursue counterfeit goods, rather than true *eudaemonia*. They are rational, in the lesser sense, by deliberating and using reason to pursue the objects of their desires. All of sound mind are rational in this lesser sense. They are not rational, in the universal sense, because they are not following right reason to the true goods that lead to *eudaemonia*. On this reading, all humans of sound mind are responsive to reasons, and thus rational and morally responsible.<sup>17</sup>

This analysis, the theologian notes, does not solve the deep question: If the ultimate source of willing is external to the willing subject’s will, and no one voluntarily makes himself evil, the curses of the damned cannot be dismissed. The theologian explains:

For this inexorable difficulty is placed before us, whatever sophistry we may employ: the apparent justice of the lament of the damned—that they were born in such a way, sent into the world in such a way, came upon such times, persons, and occasions that they were not able not to perish; their minds, occupied prematurely by vicious thoughts, existed in circumstances that favored evil, that stimulated evil; they lacked circumstances that would have released them, that would have restrained them, as if the fates conspired in the ruin of the wretched. If any helpful advice had intervened, they would have lacked the attention and very *reflection*, which is the soul of wisdom; namely, *say why you are doing this now*; and *pay heed to the goal*—the greatest

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gift of *grace*. Only by perceiving this correctly are we vigilant. How unfair that, in the shared sleep, some are awakened, while others left to the slaughter (A VI 3 136).

To which the philosopher replies, “That is how, in fact, it has happened. For it is all the same whether something takes place by fate or by lot or on account of universal harmony” (ibid.). To assuage the harshness of his admission, the philosopher asks the theologian to imagine a sinner taken on a personal tour of hell, eyes agog at the horrors in store, should he continue to sin. The theologian admits that if the sinner wills not to sin so as to avoid being damned, he would not sin or be damned, but then rightly points out that the sinner “... will impute everything to his own will, but he will impute his will to fortune, i.e., to God, or, at any rate, as you would have it, to the nature of things” (ibid.). The philosopher replies:

No one is the voluntary cause of his own will, for what someone wills to will, he already wills, just as, according to the rule of law, “He who is able to bring it about that he is able, is already able.” Therefore if this excuse [to impute the state of an agent’s will to fate or God or the nature of things] is to be accepted, then punishment must be removed from the nature of things; no one will be evil, no one deserving of punishment, no one without an excuse.... What then? Nothing except that in every judgment concerning the infliction of punishment it suffices to believe that there is a will, recognized as deliberative and evil, whatever its source. Hence, what foolishness it is on the part of those who criticize divine justice in order to avoid punishment, to want to go beyond the ascertained will of the evil person, i.e., into infinity (A VI 3 137-8).

At long last, the philosopher has laid his cards on the table. Ascriptions of moral responsibility and justified punishment require only a deliberative and evil will. This theory of moral responsibility is internalist, in that responsibility consists solely in facts internal to an agent’s psychology.<sup>18</sup> According to the rival theory, externalism, moral responsibility depends upon facts external to an agent’s psychology as well. The theologian is an externalist—he thinks it obvious that a consideration of the agent’s history is relevant to evaluating moral responsibility. Should we come to appreciate the terrible abuse a murderer suffered as a child, how his every attempt at kindness and honesty was brutally exploited, we typically view such facts as mitigating and extenuating moral responsibility. The fact that someone does evil (or has an evil will) is not enough—it matters how they came to do evil (or to have an evil will).

The philosopher responds that if we deny internalism, there would be no moral responsibility and no punishment. Since this is absurd, it ends the argument for the philosopher. Again he attempts to ameliorate the harshness of his doctrine, this time by introducing a theory of continual self-damnation. When Judas, for examples, dies without grace, he dies in a state of burning hatred for God. With no new perceptual ideas, his soul concentrates solely on its last thoughts, his hatred of God. As love of God increases for those in paradise, so does the intensity of hatred for God for those in hell; thus it is that the damned continually damn themselves anew. However, should they cease their hatred of God, they would be immediately set free (although they never will). This account of continual self-damnation is also internalist, focusing exclusively on the will of the damned, and not on how they came to have the will they had.

It is to Leibniz's great credit that though the theologian is often temporarily mollified by the philosopher's grand metaphysical explanations, at heart he remains dissatisfied. Near the end of the dialogue, he asks yet again "*why the circumstances of things brought it about that this soul rather than that, placed in this mass of flesh rather than that, rendered itself unhappy, indeed, willed its unhappiness*" (emphasis in the text, A VI 3 145). This time the philosopher gives a quite different answer. Locating the question as one concerning the principle of individuation, he concludes that souls or minds are individuated by:

... place and time. This posited, the entire question vanishes. For to ask why this soul rather than another is subjected from the beginning to these circumstances of time and place (from which the entire series of life, death, salvation or damnation arises), and why, consequently it passes from one set of circumstances to others—the series of things external to itself bringing things forth in this manner—is to ask why this soul is this soul (A VI 3 148).

According to the philosopher's ultimate explanation, Judas cannot complain about the causal history that shaped his character and values and that led to his willing to betray Jesus, since without the betrayal Judas would not exist.

### 3. CONFUSED JUVENILIA?

Are the views on freedom and sin developed in "*Von der Allmacht*" and the "*Confessio*" to be included among those early ideas Leibniz later discards as a series of false starts? Even a cursory reading of these texts reveals that the answer is "No"; indeed, many of Leibniz's considered views on freedom and sin were in place by 1673. It is to the details of this claim that I now turn.

### 3.1 The will

Leibniz retains the basic theory of mind presupposed in “*Von der Allmacht*” and the *Confessio*, according to which mental faculties are understood teleologically: reason aims at truth, discerning relative goodness, while the will aims at and desires goodness. In later works, Leibniz adds the intellect to the “*Von der Allmacht*” claim that it is the will that makes us humans. Trumpeted in these two early works but conspicuously absent later is the claim that there is always a cause of the will outside the willing subject’s will. Leibniz never abandons, except in one aberrant passage, the claim that the will cannot will to will; that is, the will seeks and assents to the deliverances of the intellect’s apprehension of the good.<sup>19</sup> Declaring that there is always an external cause of an agent’s willing undermines the doctrine of spontaneity; as Leibniz begins to advertise the virtues of the latter as a buttress against external or physical determinism, the former claim is quietly dropped. However, even in Leibniz’s mature metaphysics, according to which bodies supervene on souls or monads, he remains committed to providing an account of perception whereby rational minds “receive” information about the external world. Leibniz’s theory of perception is very abstract; what matters for present purposes is that he is committed to the thesis that many of a rational monad’s decisions will be based on their “perception” of the external world. Thus Leibniz remains committed to the thesis that there are “causes” of the will outside of the willing subject’s will. Strictly speaking, given the principle of spontaneity, these influences are not causal; rather there is what Robert Sleight has called “a relation of dependence between a created agent and its external environment.”<sup>20</sup> When facing the objection that this relation of dependence is deleterious of human freedom, Leibniz says in later texts is that in addition to perceptions “from” the world, there are also certain primitive mental dispositions, and that these are sufficient for securing freedom.<sup>21</sup>

### 3.2 The theories of free will

In the *Confessio* Leibniz does not distinguish the various senses of freedom that he does later in *Nouveaux essais* 2.21 § 8. However, we do find various formulations of what he calls there the freedom to do (freedom of action) and freedom of mind. The former is satisfied when an agent acts because she wills that action, without external constraint or coercion. The latter is expressed in different ways even in the writings from Leibniz’s maturity. What is central, however, is that actions are most free that are in accordance with right reason and thus yield true goods. Unlike the freedom of action, freedom of mind is essentially teleological. What matters is not that the agent can act in any way

whatsoever, but rather that her will tracks and assents to true goods. In the previously mentioned passage in *Nouveaux essais*, Leibniz quotes with approval the Stoic saying that “Only the wise man is free.” The wise agent is most free because there is perfect conformity between her desires and the natural object of her will, the good (and for Leibniz, God). Within this conception, the point of freedom is to act in perfect harmony with the true and good. By contrast, when an agent acts foolishly, there is conflict between her desires and the natural object of her will. Since freedom of action can be satisfied when the action is outside the bounds of reason, freedom of mind is the freedom that most matters for Leibniz.

Another important element of Leibniz’s later thinking on freedom that is presupposed in the *Confessio* is the idea that human agents are free insofar as they imitate God. Created to be godlike, humans are free because they can ascertain and love the good; their volitional and intellectual faculties imitate God as far as limited, created natures allow.<sup>22</sup> As Leibniz puts it in the *Discours de métaphysique* § 36:

...only minds are made in his image and are, as it were, of his race or like children of his household, since they alone can serve him freely and act with knowledge in imitation of the divine nature (G IV 461; AG 67).

What is missing in these early texts that is prominent in later writings is the emphasis that human freedom requires contingency, along with a theory according to which human (and divine) actions are contingent. We find this confirmed in the previously cited letter of May 1671 to Wedderkopf, to which Leibniz later adds, “I later corrected this, for it is one thing for sins to happen infallibly, another for them to happen necessarily” (A II 1 118; L 146).

### 3.3 Sin, Moral Responsibility, and Punishment

The *Confessio*’s intellectualism is echoed in the *Thèodicèe*—from early through late Leibniz retains the thesis that moral failings necessarily involve some degree of ignorance. Moral therapy, then, always involves intellectual illumination; the road to virtue passes from *opinio* to *scientia*. Given reason’s responsibility in sin, one would expect that when explicating the basis of moral responsibility and justified punishment, Leibniz would focus exclusively on culpable ignorance. However, in both “*Von der Allmacht*” and the *Confessio*, Leibniz asserts that punishment is deserved solely on the basis of a deliberative and evil will, whatever its source. This is puzzling and problematic. If the will cannot choose contrary to the deliverances of the intellect, should not wrongdoing be attributed to the intellect and not the will? Further, according to freedom of mind, a sinner is least free when sinning, yet it is on the basis of such actions (or omissions) that one is

condemned to hell.

Leibniz never abandons the internalist principle that just punishment only requires “a bad will.” In the *Discours de métaphysique* § 30 he writes that all an evildoer need do is not will sinful actions:

It is only a matter of not willing, and God could not put forth an easier and more just condition; thus judges do not seek the reasons which have disposed a man to have a bad will, but only stop to consider the extent to which particular will is bad (G IV 454-55; AG 61).

In *Thèodicèe* § 264 Leibniz says much the same:

And the consideration of the wickedness of men, which brings upon them well-nigh all their misfortunes, shows at least that they have no right to complain. No justice need trouble itself over the origin of a scoundrel’s wickedness when it is only a question of punishing him; it is quite another matter when it is a question of prevention (G VI 274; H 289).

Several problems are associated with this principle. First, while internalism might be defensible for human judges, given their epistemological limitations, it is not credible for divine judgment and punishment. Second, Leibniz gives a conceptual argument that no one voluntarily makes himself evil, which entails that no one can choose evil as evil. This means that *a deliberative and evil will* is not, as one might have assumed, a will that intentionally chooses evil but is rather one that assents to intellectual misapprehensions that result in evil actions.<sup>23</sup>

It is generally assumed that one is justly punished for an action only if one is morally responsible for the action, and one is morally responsible only if one is free with respect to that action. These conditionals hold for Leibniz for freedom of action, but not for freedom of mind. Freedom of mind is a normative ideal which we can only approximate short of the beatific vision and special grace. Moral responsibility and punishment require only freedom of action, the less important species of freedom.

Internalism about moral responsibility and punishment is a hard doctrine, but if adopted does make compatibilism considerably easier to defend. Further, while Leibniz denies throughout his career that “the will is alone active and supreme... like a queen seated on her throne, whose minister of state is the understanding” (“*Remarques sur le Livre de l’origine du mal*” § 16, G VI 416; H 421), the will does have power and influence. When we do not reason or deliberate, it is the fault of the will:

How many of us have not heard a thousand times this saying: “Say why you do this now” or “Pay attention to your goal” or “Watch what you do,” and

nevertheless it is certain that by means of a single, unique maxim of this type, correctly understood, and constantly set in front of us—as if ratified in earnest by certain laws and punishments—each man, as if in the blink of an eye, by *an instantaneous metamorphosis*, will become infallible and prudent, and blessed beyond all the paradoxes of the wise person of the stoics (emphasis in the text, A VI 3 135).

While Leibniz's optimism is more tempered in later works, he continues to stress that sin is due to our failure to pay attention (the responsibility of the will), which is due to our failure to understand the importance of paying attention (the responsibility of the understanding). The ultimate metaphysical justification for internalism is the doctrine of superintrinsicness.<sup>24</sup>

#### 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The "*Confessio*" is an enormously rich text, providing as it does a window into Leibniz's thinking on freedom, sin, and moral responsibility before his thinking has calcified into some of the formulaic phrases we find in his mature writings. While the philosopher is clearly Leibniz's spokesman, or at any rate the side of his thinking that dominates later, it is Leibniz as theologian that adds depth and excitement to this work. In the theologian we have a Leibniz not entirely satisfied with the consequences of his theodicean project, a thinker a step closer to Bayle than to the sure, didactic apologist of the *Thèodicèe*. The tension between these two points of views in the *Confessio*, while not, in my view, impugning the sincerity of the *Thèodicèe*, represents a thinker far more sensitive to doubt and the costs attached to his theodicy than is visible in his public works. The disappearance of this thinker in later works is a loss.<sup>25</sup>

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Notes

<sup>1</sup> Many thanks to Brandon Look and Robert Sleigh for their generosity in sharing translations. In this paper, I follow Look's translation of "*Von der Allmacht und Allwissenheit Gottes und der Freiheit des Menschen*," and Sleigh's translation of "*Confessio Philosophi*" and "*Conversatio cum Domino Episcopo Stenonio de Libertate*."

<sup>2</sup> I say more on this controversy, and Leibniz's adjudication of it, in "Untying the Knot: Leibniz on God's Knowledge of Future Free Contingents" *History of Philosophy Quarterly* (1996): 89-116. I now think Leibniz's solution is far less consistent than I did when writing "Untying". For other views on these topics, see Michael Murray's "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge of Future Free Contingents" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (1995): 75-108; Robert Sleigh, Jr.'s "Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge" *Faith and Philosophy* (1994): 547-71; and Michael Griffin's "Leibniz on God's Knowledge of Counterfactuals" *Philosophical Review* (1999): 317-43.

<sup>3</sup> The full title is *Liberi Arbitrii cum Gratiae Donis, Divina Praesentia, Providentia, Praedestinatione et Reprobatione Concordia*.

<sup>4</sup> For a summary of the reasons Luther gives for denying human freedom, see the concluding section in *De servo arbitrio*. For Calvin's reasons for denying human freedom, see *Institutio Christianae religionis*, Bk III, chap.24, §§5-6.

<sup>5</sup> For reasons unknown to me, Leibniz refers to the citizens of Keilah as "Ziklagians" in this text.

<sup>6</sup> The qualifications matter: the first precludes any conception of a world soul; the second precludes the bare monads (from Leibniz's mature metaphysics) who only have unconscious perception and lack memory.

<sup>7</sup> "Sufficient Reason and Human Freedom in the *Confessio*," in *The Young Leibniz and His Philosophy (1646-76)*, ed. Stuart Brown (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 199-222.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> I explore Leibniz's intellectualism in more detail in "*Video meliora proboque, Deteriora*: Leibniz on the Source of Sin," forthcoming in *Leibniz: Nature and Freedom*, Jan Cover and Donald Rutherford, eds., (Oxford University Press).

<sup>13</sup> Much later in the Preface to the *Nouveaux essais*, Leibniz writes of Locke's

philosophy, “His is closer to Aristotle and mine to Plato, although each of us parts company at many points from the teaching of both of these ancient writers. He is more popular whereas I am sometimes forced to be a little more esoteric and abstract” (RB 47-8).

<sup>14</sup> As does Aquinas, at least in most of his writings: “For since the will of itself is ordered to good as to its proper object, that it tends to evil can occur only from this that evil is apprehended under the aspect of good; which pertains to a defect of the intellect or reason, from which liberty of choice has its choice has its origin.... (*Quaestiones disputatae de malo* q.16, a.5). See also *Summa Theologica* 1a 2ae, q. 77, a.2).

<sup>15</sup> R.C. Sleigh, Jr., *Leibniz & Arnauld: A Commentary on Their Correspondence* (Yale University Press, New Haven: 1990), 6.

<sup>16</sup> Consider Molina’s claim in Disputation 52-3 of the *Concordia* that God lacks knowledge of his own free or prevolitional knowledge of his own decisions.

<sup>17</sup> Another exegetical possibility is that Leibniz, like Aquinas, is following Aristotle in distinguishing between universal and particular knowledge as an explanation of the practical syllogism used by the incontinent (see *ST* 1a2ae, q. 77, a.2). On this reading, the fool or evildoer has “a certain particular reason” or knowledge that “This action leads to pleasure” but is not attending to the universal premise that “Every pleasure should not be pursued” (or “Every sin should be avoided”).

<sup>18</sup> This terminology is introduced by Fischer and Ravizza in *Responsibility and Control: A Theory of Moral Responsibility* (Cambridge University Press, New York: 1998), 252.

<sup>19</sup> The aberrant passage occurs in some notes on Bellarmine (Gr 302). The issues are more complicated, in that in some later texts, Leibniz acknowledges the power of the will to suspend action. Since this power does not surface in the two texts under consideration, I shall ignore it in this paper.

<sup>20</sup> “Determinism and Human Freedom,” in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers, eds., (Cambridge University Press: 1998), Vol. II, 1264.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Gr 327.

<sup>22</sup> I argue for this reading in “Imitators of God: Leibniz on Human Freedom,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol 36 (1998): 387-412.

<sup>23</sup> “Whoever has a depraved will, is punished deservedly. A depraved will is nothing other than depraved judgments or opinions concerning moral matters. Whoever has depraved opinions concerning practical matters and acts on them is punished deservedly for this reason alone, because his crime did not arise from

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an error of fact, but from an error about morality, i.e., from thoroughly deplorable opinions and carefully considered reasons. From this it is evident that nothing else is required in order to punish a crime than that someone commits the crime and nevertheless knows that it is a crime. Therefore no other freedom is needed” (“Conversatio,” A VI 4 1378; Gr 272).

<sup>24</sup> “But someone else will say, why is it that this man will assuredly commit this sin? The answer is easy: otherwise, he would not be this man,” *Discours de métaphysique* § 30 (AG 61). The term superintrinsicness was coined by Sleigh. For a guide to the issues involved in the superessentialism/superintrinsicness debate, see chapter four, op. cit.

<sup>25</sup> A very early version of this paper was read at the International Conference on the Young Leibniz at Rice University. I benefited from the questions and comments offered on what was then very much a work in progress. I also thank Sean Greenburg, Michael Murray, and Robert Sleigh for helpful comments on a later version of the paper .