

ABSTRACTS OF 1992 ESSAY COMPETITION WINNERS

“Leibniz on Divine Foreknowledge of Future Contingents and Human Freedom,” by Michael J. Murray, Franklin and Marshall College.

Despite Russell's protestations to the contrary, it has become evident that Leibniz had more than a passing interest in a number of the problems plaguing seventeenth century philosophical theology. In published work, correspondence, and private notes, Leibniz spends significant energy sorting through numerous solutions to the standard problems. Not least among these was the perennial problem of how to reconcile divine foreknowledge and providence and human freedom. In this essay I discuss how Leibniz understands this problem against the background of the scholastic tradition up to his own day, how he rejects these solutions, and how he constructs an alternative which he believes will be acceptable to the various scholastic partisans while resolving the difficulties with each alternative. I then discuss the lessons that can be learned about Leibniz's own view of freedom in light of what he says about these matters.

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries there were, roughly speaking, two prominent strategies invoked for reconciling divine providence and human freedom. The first was that of the Thomists, the second that of the Molinists. Leibniz rejected both of these views because (interestingly) he felt that the Thomistic view entailed determinism, and that the Molinist view of freedom

failed to satisfy the principle of sufficient reason, thus leaving God no resources for knowing the truth value of what were then called conditional future contingents (what we now call “counterfactuals of human freedom”).

Thus, Leibniz proposed that any satisfactory view must satisfy the following conditions: 1) *The Prevolitional Condition*: The subjunctive conditionals of human freedom known by God must have their truth value prior to any free decree of God, i.e., must be known prevolitionally. 2) *The Sufficient Reason Condition*: There must be a sufficient reason which explains why a subjunctive conditional of human freedom has the truth value it does, or, alternatively, why a complete individual concept has the related property instead of its negation. 3) *The Spontaneity Condition*: This sufficient reason must be such that it allows for the action of the individual to be spontaneous, i.e., it must not consist of a divine predetermination via efficacious concurrence or external causes.

On the account I propose, Leibniz argues that the truth value of conditional future contingents cannot be determined by divine predetermination, as is the case for the Thomists, nor by natural necessities which govern the activities of physical bodies, as it is for contemporary compatibilists. Both of these answers violate condition 3. What then could allow for spontaneity while still satisfying the sufficient reason condition? To answer this question Leibniz appeals to his faculty psychology by arguing that dispositions of one's intellect, will, and passions deter-

mine the truth value of the relevant conditionals. Through a history of free activity we come to acquire virtues and vices of intellect, will and, passion. These dispositions are sufficient to allow God to infallibly predict what the creature will do in the circumstances in which they might be found.

Of course, one might argue that while this is not physical determinism, it is determinism nonetheless. If God can infallibly predict what a free creature will do under specified circumstances by appealing to the dispositions of the psychological faculties, then what we have is psychological determinism. However, Leibniz argues that the sort of necessity here is *sui generis*. It is neither a metaphysical nor physical necessity but a moral necessity. And in certain contexts Leibniz uses this locution as a description of a modality weaker than metaphysical or physical necessity, and yet a necessity nonetheless.

I then discuss what this account tells us about Leibniz's view of freedom. I argue that it shows us first that Leibniz was not a straightforward compatibilist, in the contemporary understanding of the term. Although he may have held that the behavior of all physical bodies is determined by natural necessities this cannot be the case for the operation of freely choosing *wills*. Second, it provides us with a reason for thinking that Leibniz's account of contingency is not amenable to a possible worlds semantics and that this may have provided some of the motivation for finding the infinite analysis account of contingency attractive.

A more thorough account of these ideas is available in my doctoral disserta-

tion, *The Second Leibnizian Labyrinth: Psychology, Theology, and Freedom*, and also in a greatly expanded manuscript under the same title which is currently under review.

"Leibniz and the Problem of Soul-Body Union," by Donald Rutherford, Emory University.

A number of recent authors have raised the question of Leibniz's commitment, during the 1680s and after, to the reality of corporeal substances. In contrast to the standard reading of him as embracing early on a view of substance which is in all essential respects that of the "Monadology", it has been argued that Leibniz is in fact inclined to recognize two distinct types of substance: on the one hand, unextended soul-like substances (the precursors of his monads); on the other hand, quasi-Aristotelian corporeal substances. Some commentators have seen Leibniz as deciding definitively by the late 1690s in favor of the monadic theory. Others (Garber, Wilson), however, have argued for a more complicated reading of his development, seeing Leibniz as struggling with the problem of corporeal substance for much of his career.

In this paper, I limit my attention to one aspect of the corporeal substance question, mainly as it is played out in Leibniz's later writings. The issue concerns his understanding of the union of the soul and the body. The relation of this topic to the more general question of corporeal substance is as follows. If Leibniz is committed to the existence of corporeal substances, a paradigm of which is the embodied human being, then he