

“Intellect, Will, and Freedom in Leibniz”
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In this paper I claim that there are three primary dimensions to the issue of freedom in Leibniz’s work. The first, and most widely discussed, is the logical dimension. When discussing this dimension, Leibniz is concerned primarily about the relationship between freedom and modality: what does it mean for choice to be contingent? The second dimension is the theological one. When discussing this dimension, Leibniz is interested in considering such issues as the relationships between divine knowledge or providence and human freedom, the nature of freedom in God, the angels, the demons, the blessed, the damned, etc., the relationship between human freedom and divine grace, and like matters. The third dimension treats freedom from the perspective of faculty psychology. In this mode, Leibniz considers how the intellect, will, and passions are related to one another in complete human acts. Questions such as: What is deliberation? What is choice? What is weakness of will?, etc. define this third dimension of the freedom discussion. In a forthcoming paper, an abstract of which appeared in the 1992 issue of this *Review* (pp. 18-19), I discuss the second dimension in some detail. In this paper, I take up the third.

Since freedom was widely discussed by others in the seventeenth century in the terms of faculty psychology, most notably by partisans of scholastic philosophy, I spend much of the first half of this paper situating Leibniz among his contemporaries, contemporaries that I believe Leibniz hoped to engage. I begin back a bit further with a discussion of the topic as it is developed in St. Thomas, the figure to whom most of the parties in this dispute trace their roots. I show that there are sufficient difficulties or ambiguities in St. Thomas’ view to allow for coherent alternative renderings of his position. I then skip forward to the sixteenth century where Suarez, in Disputation 19 of the *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, summarizes what he sees as the possible available positions on this matter and defends his own view. Suarez argues that there are, roughly, two main positions available, one represented by the Dominicans, the other by the Jesuits. According to Suarez, the Dominican view holds that the will is bound to accept the results of the intellect’s deliberation by choosing the “last practical judgment of the intellect.” This last practical judgment represents that which the intellect judges as the act to be willed “here and now and under these circumstances.” The Jesuits, on the other hand, think that this view represents a vicious sort of determinism which must be rejected in favor of an account where the will is able to choose between various acts, each of which the

intellect first judges “eligible for choosing,” without the intellect designating one as the means to be chosen. Only in this way, argues Suarez, can legitimate freedom be maintained.

Suarez’s Dominican critics, on the other hand, argue that their view does not result in a vicious determinism since it is impossible for the will, in light of its nature, to be determined to choose any finite good (i.e., anything other than God seen in His essence). Further, they argue that the Jesuit view is impossible for a number of reasons, among them that it requires that the will reduce itself from potency to act (i.e., a sort of self-moved mover).

Some early seventeenth century figures found the criticisms of each side convincing and so began considering alternative positions. Is there some way, they wondered, of understanding the relationship between intellect and will in the free act that does not require a) that the intellect is causally determined by the last practical judgment of the intellect, or b) that the will have the capacity to reduce itself from potency to act? Out of this sort of questioning there arose a third major view, a view which I argue Leibniz largely endorsed. I explain this third view by looking at some of the works of its champions, primarily Diego Ruiz de Montoya and Diego Granado. According to these two, the will is not causally determined (i.e., “physically necessitated”) to will in accordance with the last practical judgment of the intellect, nor is the will able to choose arbitrarily among the objects judged eligible by the will. Instead the will is merely “morally necessitated” to choose that which is judged best, and this form of necessitation they judge to be consistent with physical and metaphysical contingency. Early moral necessitarians argued that one is morally necessitated to a particular choice when that alternative is judged to be overwhelmingly better than its alternatives. But some later adherents of moral necessity argued that all choices where one alternative is judged better than the competitors are morally necessitated.

The remainder of the paper is an examination of Leibniz’s views on freedom from the perspective of faculty psychology. I argue that Leibniz adopts the position of the later moral necessitarians who argued that all choices are subject to moral necessitation. I claim that he does so by arguing that only this position makes sense against the competing models offered by Dominicans and Jesuits. I further argue that such a position is a natural one for Leibniz, who wants to preserve the applicability of the principle of sufficient reason to free choice and at the same time deny any vicious sort of determinism. Finally, I examine the arguments of recent interpreters who claim that Leibniz is a straightforward causal compatibilist with respect to freedom and argue that the arguments in favor of this position are wanting.