

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

AN EXAMINATION OF
LEIBNIZ'S THEORY OF FREEDOM

by
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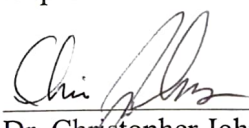
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ABSTRACT

OF THE THESIS OF

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This thesis is concerned with Leibniz's metaphysical and moral philosophy, specifically with a critical examination of Leibniz's account of *Freedom* in order to specify the sense of *Freedom* which Leibniz is working with in the context of a *systematic* metaphysical framework he presents in his *Discourse On Metaphysics* (1686) and other writings belonging to that period, till late 1690's. This task requires first a thorough reconstruction of Leibniz's *concept containment theory*, given the specified context. Second comes the task of a critical investigation pertaining to *Contingency*, a major element of Leibniz's system and a requisite for his account of *Freedom*. The conclusions of the investigation will be drawn and their implications on Leibniz's proposed conception of *Freedom* will be examined and criticized. Third, I examine *Spontaneity* as a candidate in terms of which *Freedom* could be defined. The final task is to argue for a particular definition of *Freedom* grounded in *rational activity*, which I think Leibniz has provided the resources for in his *Discourse On Metaphysics* and to see what it amounts to, *formally and practically*. For the purpose of consistency and for giving Leibniz the principle of charity, I will explicitly assume that the efficient articulation of the metaphysical components and how each part contributes to the whole is what allows for the extraction and examination of the sense of *Freedom* individual substances are endowed with.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis deals with Leibniz's compatibilist view; namely, the view that determinism entails freedom for individual substances. The purpose of my project is to figure out the definition of freedom Leibniz has in mind, in the context of his *Discourse on Metaphysics*.

First, I present his apparent definition of freedom as the ability of an individual substance to do otherwise or what he terms as contingency. Then, I reject this definition of freedom because it is incompatible with his principle of individuation of substances. The conclusion is that freedom as the ability to do otherwise cannot be the way in which Leibniz understands freedom for individual substances. Second, I argue that, if freedom is equivalent to spontaneity, that is, if freedom is defined as a spontaneous action, then this definition is insufficient. The reason that freedom as spontaneity is an insufficient definition is that freedom requires rational activity and spontaneity. Whereas, spontaneity does not necessarily imply rational activity. The conclusion is that spontaneity cannot be the full definition of freedom Leibniz has in mind for individual substances. Finally, I argue that Freedom for Leibniz is grounded in rational activity: the inclination of the intellect to the true and the inclination of the will to the apparent good.

The reason I have chosen Leibniz's *Discourse on Metaphysics (1686)* as the context for my project is that I believe this text has the resources for a complete theory of freedom for individual substances. The other texts written by Leibniz which I have chosen and which span from 1682 till 1689, like *On Freedom*, *On Contingency*,

Primary Truths, *From the Letters to Arnauld*, and others, provide clarity to particular notions in the *Discourse* such as Leibniz's criteria of truth, definitions of necessity and contingency, or what it means to have a sufficiently determined notion.

More importantly, I don't believe that Leibniz changed his conception of freedom nor the sense in which he understands any of the notions I rely on in these texts during this period (1682-1689).

As to these two texts, *From the Letters to Wolff* (1714-1715) and *On the Ultimate Origination of Things* (1697), although they belong to the late period of Leibniz's philosophical contributions and life, I found them useful for understanding what Leibniz means by perfection, a notion he explicitly states that has not changed his mind about.

1.1. Exposition

Engaging with Leibniz's philosophy is engaging with the philosophy of a major pillar of Rationalism, of the seventeenth century, of early-modern philosophical figures alongside Descartes and Spinoza. What it means to be a rationalist is to be committed to the principle of sufficient reason. As a rationalist, Leibniz is committed to the claim that there must be a reason for why the world is this way rather than any other, rather than there being nothing at all.

In *On Freedom*, Leibniz mentions that he had abandoned the necessitarian view he had previously held when he discovered possible ideas which are contingent in themselves (On Freedom 94). He argues that from the fact that one can conceive of possible ideas (worlds, states of affairs, novels) which in principle could exist but don't or won't exist, then what has actually attained existence could have been otherwise.

Something else could have been in its place. He concludes that the actual world is one of infinitely many possible worlds, and therefore it is not absolutely necessary. It is in itself contingent; that is, its denial is not an impossibility.

Pertaining to Leibniz's arguments against logical necessity, he specifically rejected the claim that God, out of the absolute necessity of his nature, actualizes all the ideas in his intellect. Primarily, he argues that '*Spinoza's brute necessity*' is absurd for two reasons. First, it threatens the internal consistency of God's attributes, his infinite goodness, wisdom and power. This is because not all the possible ideas are compossible; if they are actualized together, they will destroy the harmony and consistency of the world. Consequently, God is neither infinitely good nor infinitely wise while allowing this to happen. Second, Spinoza's view¹ robs God of rational spontaneity and ultimately, rational freedom (Theodicy §174). Spontaneity is a necessary condition for God's freedom; it is an action issued from an internal principle, i.e., from the inclination of God's will to his intellect. This is because God's will is in a sense objective; it is subordinated to his intellect and is inclined to that which God's intellect is inclined to. This is opposed to the freedom of spontaneity Spinoza attributes to God; that is, infinite expression out of the (absolute) necessity of his nature. Furthermore, due to Leibniz's strong commitment to the principle of sufficient reason, he argues that there must be a sufficient reason that inclines God's intellect to one object rather than another. Consequently, there must be a sufficient reason behind every act of God's will. Otherwise, if God had no reason, his actions would be arbitrary and absurd. This is why Leibniz insists that logical necessity cannot govern the expression of God's nature.

¹ Spinoza, Benedictus. "Ethics."

In light of the above, on Leibniz's view², God is a metaphysically necessary being, whose essence and existence are one, and whose perfections are infinite in both the quantitative and qualitative respects. No matter how perfect a possible world is, it can never be as infinitely perfect as God is, so it doesn't have the power to bring itself into existence (Blumenfeld 173). Furthermore, since this world has attained existence rather than any other possible world, it follows that there must be a sufficient reason for this, and this reason can only be found in the nature of this world. Granted that existence necessarily pertains to God's nature only, and that his will alone could grant existence to possible essences, there must be a reason, pertaining to the nature of this world, that inclines God to actualize it from the set of possible worlds. This reason inclines rather than necessitates because the world is contingent in itself and is not metaphysically necessary. God's choice is not therefore governed by the principle of non-contradiction. It is governed by the principle of perfection³. Hence, God is morally necessitated to create the best possible world and not metaphysically necessitated.

On Leibniz's account, God is morally necessitated to actualize the best possible world, i.e. the world that exhibits the most harmony amongst its members, the individual substances; or alternatively, the world that contains the greatest variety yet is ordered by the simplest of laws, in accordance with the principle of perfection (Theodicy §345). In God's intellect, there is an infinity of possible worlds, from which he has to choose one to actualize. Each possible world is a combination of possible

² Leibniz opted for a creationist view which should not come as a surprise given his theological commitments as a Christian. Creationism entails that the effect (the world) is *conceptually* contained in the cause (God) but is *ontologically separate* from it² (Lord 37).

³ The principle of perfection is unlike the law of non-contradiction. The law of non-contradiction states that the denial of something absolutely necessary is a logical contradiction; whereas, the principle of perfection states that the more degrees of perfection a thing has, the more it contributes to the general harmony. If a lesser-perfect thing was chosen over the more-perfect thing, no logical contradiction results.

substances which are necessarily compossible⁴ with each other as compossibility is the condition which allows substances to combine. Each substance, has a unique degree of perfection which it contributes to the combination of which it is a part (Blumenfeld 170). This results in each combination having a unique degree of perfection that in turn presents itself as a reason to appeal to God's will so that he chooses to actualize it⁵. In other words, substances are, like God, morally necessitated to bring about the best possible world.

Having averted logical necessity, and since moral necessity entails rational freedom, Leibniz believes he holds a view where determinism and free will are compatible. The task of my thesis is to determine whether Leibniz's deterministic account actually entails freedom for individual substances. If so, then, exactly in what sense is this freedom supposed to be understood?

1.2. Structural Outline

Chapter One: This is the introduction where I attempt to provide a background and a road map for my project.

Chapter Two: I provide an interpretation of the concept containment theory focusing on its structural aspect. This provides answers to what the concept containment theory is, how substances are individuated, how Leibniz construes substance-interaction. This interpretation will serve as a heuristic for the consequent chapters.

⁴ The condition of compossibility entails that the set of combined substances must be logically possible, so that the resultant possible world harbors no internal contradictions. See p. 163 in Blumenfeld, David. "*Leibniz's Theory of the Striving Possibles.*"

⁵ Possible worlds have an intrinsic value as reasons to appeal to God's will. This reading can be found in Blumenfeld, David. "*Leibniz's Theory of the Striving Possibles.*" as well as Lagerlund, Henrik and Myrdal, Peter. "*Possible Worlds and the Nature of Choice in Leibniz.*"

Chapter Three: In this chapter, I focus on three things. First, Leibniz has a particular understanding of God's causal concurrence and foreknowledge. These will be important for chapter five. Second, I argue that God's foreknowledge of future events doesn't depend on his causal concurrence with the substance's actions. Rather, his foreknowledge is true because these actions are contained as contingent predicates in the substance's complete concept. Third, I present Leibniz's freedom as contingency.

Chapter Four: In this chapter, I argue that Leibniz's apparent account of freedom defined as contingency, i.e. the ability of an individual substance to act otherwise, is non-sensical given his principle of individuation.

Chapter Five: In this chapter, I argue that defining freedom as spontaneity alone is not sufficient because freedom requires rational activity which spontaneity does not require nor guarantee.

Chapter Six: In this chapter, I argue that, in the Discourse on Metaphysics, Leibniz has the resources to argue for a definition of freedom for spontaneous intelligent substances, which consists in their reflection, in inclination of their intellect to the true, and the inclination of the will to the apparent good.

Chapter Seven: This chapter is a brief conclusion to the thesis.

CHAPTER 2

LEIBNIZ & THE CONCEPT CONTAINMENT THEORY

Leibniz introduces his famous concept containment theory in section §8 of his *Discourse On Metaphysics*, primarily to explain the complete notion of an individual substance. It explains what he means by the complete notion of a substance, how it is that substances are individuated, and how it is that substances interact: i.e. express, ‘affect,’ and accommodate each other given that Leibniz understands causal activity to be only intra-substantial, not inter-substantial. Furthermore, the concept containment theory serves to distinguish the actions of God from those of individual substances (Discourse on Metaphysics 40). It, therefore, bears a great burden because it is the foundation on which rests Leibniz’s defense of the claim that God’s foreknowledge of future events is compatible with an individual substance’s freedom. This is because, to argue for this latter claim, Leibniz has to show that there is room for contingency in the complete notion of a substance; that is, Leibniz has to show how it is that an individual could do otherwise yet still remain the same individual (On Freedom 95).

In this section of my thesis, I want to argue in favor of a particular reading of Leibniz’s concept containment theory, relying heavily on sections of the *Discourse On Metaphysics*, and on *From Letters To Arnauld, dated May, 1686*, and some texts around that period. This interpretation will function as a heuristic against which I will criticize his account of freedom for individual substances in the later chapters. In this chapter, I will deal with what the complete notion is, substance individuation, and substance interaction. In chapter three, I will deal with the relationship between God’s foreknowledge and the concept containment theory.

Afterwards, I will raise some issues pertaining to the complete notion's inadequacy to accommodate the kind of freedom that Leibniz thinks it can. These will occupy separate chapters.

2.1. What is the Concept Containment Theory?

In his *Discourse On Metaphysics* §8, Leibniz cites the Aristotelian notion of substance: "It is indeed true that when several predicates are attributed to a single subject and this subject is attributed to no other, it is called an individual substance" (Discourse on Metaphysics 41). He, however, rejects it on the grounds that it is merely a nominal definition. The issue with this type of a definition is that it associates 'substance' with any apparent property one utters when pointing to it, irrespective of what it means for that property to belong to that substance, or how it is that this predicate is connected to the substance and whether it sits well with all the other properties/predicates which are 'associated' with that substance. More specifically, a nominal definition doesn't allow one to infer that this substance is a possible substance (Discourse on Metaphysics 57). To be a 'possible' substance for Leibniz is to have internal consistency; that is, the properties or predicates had by it must not logically contradict each other. The reason is that what is possible and what is impossible is determined by the law of non-contradiction. This is what it means to give a *real* definition.

The complete concept then, is a *real* definition because it must allow one to establish the possibility of a substance through proving the logical consistency of its concept. A pre-requisite for this, however, is that the concepts of all the properties or predicates had by the substance must be contained in its concept (conceptual

requirement); likewise, the properties or predicates must be contained in the substance (ontological requirement). Therefore, and relying on the sense in which Leibniz articulates what is involved in each definition in section §24, the complete concept must be a *real and causal* definition, a definition that allows for an *a priori* proof of the possibility of a substance. A real definition proves the possibility of a substance by showing its notion to be logically consistent. A causal definition requires the conceptual and ontological containment of the predicates ‘in’⁶ the substance. How these two, the real and the causal definitions, work together to produce a sufficient definition of a substance will become clear once I make the following crucial remark: the sense in which ‘*a priori*’ was used in Leibniz’s time is different though not unrelated to the sense in which philosophers, from Kant and onwards, use it. Generally speaking, what the later philosophers mean by ‘X can be known *a priori*’ is that knowledge of X can be attained independently of experience; that is, the truth of this knowledge cannot be checked by referring to particular instances or states of affairs, or scientific experimentation. If X is a proposition, then its truth can be demonstrated deductively from a set of other propositions, such as the demonstration carried out in logical proofs. For Leibniz, an *a priori*⁷ demonstration means to prove or infer the effect from the cause (Strickland 104). This means that one begins by analyzing the concept of the cause to draw out the logical consequences pertaining to it. In so far as these consequences are consistent and no opposing (contradictory) conclusions are derived, then the notion of this substance is internally consistent, and this substance is a possible substance. More specifically, an *a priori* demonstration involves making explicit all the

⁶ ‘in’ : logical in i.e. containment of effect in its cause

⁷ The definition of *a posteriori* as well in Leibniz’s time was different. It meant to demonstrate the cause from the effect. See *Leibniz’s Monadology* by Strickland, p. 104-105.

complex predicates included in the concept of the subject (cause), whether formally or virtually. Then, the analysis of these complex predicates either allows for the deduction of primitive predicates or continues indefinitely. Consequently, the examination of the concept reveals two things contrary to a nominal definition: the causal connection of all the predicates to the subject and whether they are logically compatible with one another. This is what it means to give a *real and causal* definition of an individual substance: an *a priori* proof of the possibility of an individual substance. This is what the complete concept of an individual substance must provide.

In section §8, Leibniz writes,

the nature of an individual substance or of a complete being is to have a notion so complete that it is sufficient to contain and to allow us to deduce from it all the predicates of the subject to which this notion is attributed. [...] God, seeing Alexander's individual notion or haecceity, sees in it at the same time the basis and reason for all the predicates which can be said truly of him, for example, that he vanquished Darius and Porus; he even knows *a priori* (and not by experience) whether he died a natural death, or whether he was poisoned, something we can know only through history. Thus, when we consider carefully the connection of things, we can say that from all time in Alexander's soul there are vestiges of everything that has happened to him and marks of everything that will happen to him and even traces of everything that happens in the universe, even though God alone could recognize them all. (Discourse on Metaphysics 41)

In this passage, the first claim Leibniz makes is that the complete notion picks out an individual substance, a substance that is sufficiently⁸ determined. From this I understand that the notion of an individual substance must entail a complete specification of all the substance's predicates, perceptions, causal laws, "passions and

⁸ When Leibniz uses the word 'sufficiently' as in a sufficient reason or an event or substance being sufficiently determined, he means the following: all of God's resolutions, together with the laws of the general order and the events in the world constitute the antecedent. This antecedent would then count as 'sufficient' to determine the consequent i.e. the substance. Strickland emphasizes this in his commentary on *Leibniz's Monadology* section §32, p 87-89.

actions” (Discourse on Metaphysics 40). It must also entail the reasons why these predicates, passions, perceptions... belong to that substance, “what it is to be attributed truly to a certain subject” (Discourse on Metaphysics 41). It is, therefore, a perfect record of the substance’s past, present, and future, ranging from the very minute and intricate details to the most abstract laws of the general order.

Regarding the predicates, “all true predication has some basis in the nature of things, and that when a proposition is not an identity, that is, when the predicate is not explicitly contained in the subject, it must be contained in it virtually” (Discourse on Metaphysics 41). From this, two claims pertaining to predication can be extracted. First, all predicates which are true of the substance must be contained in it. Stated formally, the criteria of truth for Leibniz is the form of containment of the predicate in the substance. If P is in S, then “S is P” is a true proposition. For instance, the proposition “Alexander vanquished Darius and Porus” is true because the concept of the predicate ‘vanquished Darius and Porus’ is included in Alexander’s complete notion, and the predicate itself is in the substance Alexander. Second, there are two types of predicates, the formal or necessary and the virtual or contingent predicates, and both of these are equally true of the substance given the criteria of truth. What distinguishes essential predicates from accidental ones is the type of connection they have to the substance. In section §13, Leibniz says,

I assert that connection or following [*consécution*] is of two kinds. The one whose contrary implies a contradiction is absolutely necessary; this deduction occurs in eternal truths, for example, the truths of geometry. The other is necessary only *ex hypothesi* and, so to speak, accidentally, but it is contingent in itself, since its contrary does not imply a contradiction. And this connection is based not purely on ideas and God’s simple understanding, but on his free decrees and on the sequence of the universe. (Discourse on Metaphysics 45)

A necessary predicate is one whose connection to the substance yields an identity statement in a finite number of steps (On Contingency 28). Take “Alexander is a rational animal” for example. Substitute ‘Alexander’ by ‘man’, the proposition becomes “Man is a rational animal.” Then substitute ‘man’ by ‘rational animal,’ the proposition becomes “Rational animal is a rational animal,” an identity proposition of the form A is A, the denial of which is a logical contradiction. It is impossible to conceive of Alexander without conceiving of him as a rational animal just like it is impossible to conceive of a circle whose diameter-length is unequal to twice its radius’s length. Essential truths or eternal truths are governed by the principle of non-contradiction,⁹ so the denial of a necessary predicate is an impossibility. A contingent predicate, on the other hand, is one whose connection to the substance is through an infinite series of reasons; this connection cannot be reduced to an identity through a finite number of steps. Therefore, if it is not an identity, then its denial yields no impossibility. If I say, “Alexander had a crimson toga at the time he vanquished Darius and Porus,” it is not impossible that I (a finite mind)¹⁰ conceive of Alexander without conceiving of him wearing a toga at the time when he vanquished Darius and Porus, lay alone the particular color of his toga; whereas, it is impossible that I conceive of Alexander without conceiving of him as a rational animal. This implies that the denial of this contingent predicate doesn’t yield a contradiction. Despite this, both necessary and contingent predicates are equally true of Alexander because and only because they

⁹ The ideas governed by the principle of non-contradiction for finite minds are the ideas or forms which are immutable in God’s intellect. Therefore, the Law of non-contradiction conditions the limit of thought for finite minds.

¹⁰ I say this because it will turn out that all the predicates a substance has whether necessary or contingent, are actually necessary for its individuation. For a finite mind, contingent predicates yield contingent truths because a finite mind cannot examine the complete concept *a priori*, while for God, all truths are necessary and deduced *a priori*. I will discuss this further in the chapter on problems with the concept containment theory.

are grounded in his substance as per the criteria of truth as containment. Now, contingent predicates don't depend on the principle of non-contradiction; they depend on the principle of sufficient reason. To know that Alexander had on a crimson toga is to know the chain of antecedent reasons which were sufficient to determine him up to the point when he put on that particular toga. These would include God's resolution to create the best possible world, all the laws of the general order and the subordinate maxims, all the events in the world up till the point Alexander put on the crimson toga; "For it will be found that the demonstration of this predicate of Caesar is not as absolute as those of numbers or of geometry, but that it supposes the sequence of things that God has freely chosen" (Discourse on Metaphysics 46). To sum this up, necessary and contingent predicates are equally true of the substance as per the criteria of truth, and what distinguishes the two types of predicates is : contingent predicates depend of the principle of sufficient reason, while necessary predicates depend on the principle of non-contradiction.

A second claim Leibniz makes in the block-passage concerning the complete notion is that when God examines it, he can *deduce* any predicate that *truly* belongs to the substance, and this deduction is *a priori*. In relation to how I articulated the sense of *a priori* before, given that the concepts of the predicates (effects) are entailed in the concept of the substance (cause), and given that the reasons grounding these predicates are also included in the concept of that substance, then when God considers the complete notion, he is examining the chain of connections which reveals to him why/that these predicates are grounded in the nature of their subject. This is what allows him to deduce every action of a possible substance.

The final claim in the block-passage is that a substance's complete notion has 'traces of everything that happens in the universe.' This claim pertains to how an individual substance is conceived of in God's mind. It is conceived of in relation to the whole series or possible combination of substances, of which it is a part. Let me explain. Each substance is an individual, a whole in itself because it contains everything that pertains to it from causal laws to actions to perceptions. However, it is still contingent in itself, unlike that which is necessary in itself. There are two types of possible ideas or forms in God's intellect: those which are necessary in themselves and those which are contingent in themselves. The latter, such as the concept of a sphere is conceived in and by itself, independent of its relations to any other geometrical concept; its properties are absolutely necessary and impossible to deny. Consequently, its properties, the properties of a circle depend on God's simple understanding (knowledge of pure possibility) and is actual independent of his will (his free decrees). This is why it is an absolutely necessary truth in all possible worlds despite the differences in these worlds¹¹. In contrast, concepts which are contingent in themselves could have been otherwise. They are the way they are/ have the sets of predicates and perceptions they have because they are part of a whole (a combination), and there is an infinite number of combinations. The reason a contingent entity is conceived of as a part of a whole is that a contingent entity cannot actualize itself, unlike a necessary entity which requires only internal consistency to be actual. Existence doesn't belong to a contingent entity's essence; existence is not a predicate necessary of any substance, except God, whose definition is that of a necessary being, or a being whose essence includes existence. The

¹¹ More importantly, essences which are absolutely necessary are so regardless of whether God decides to create a possible world or not. What supports this is that Leibniz's main definition for what is necessary is that whose opposite is a logical contradiction. The definition of necessary, where the notion of possible worlds is involved, is cashed out as I stated it.

existence of contingent entities depends on God's free decrees (intuitive knowledge). The only way for a contingent entity to exist is by forming combinations with other contingent entities to appeal to God's will in order to grant them existence. Therefore, according to Leibniz, a substance is an independent individual, a whole, but it is a part of a bigger whole, which is a possible world comprised of a possible combination of individual substances. In a letter to Arnauld, Leibniz says when God considers one individual substance, he "takes into consideration all the resolutions he has concerning the whole series of the universe; this is somewhat like a wise man who, making a decision about one part of his plan and having the whole plan in view, would decide so much better, if his decision could settle all the parts at once" (From the Letters to Arnauld 69). Recall that the explanation of the second claim in the block-quote above entailed that an *a priori* examination of a complete concept allows God to deduce with certainty all events which are true of an individual substance. Couple this with the interconnectedness of individual substances in one possible world, it becomes clear why Leibniz claims that when God examines the complete notion of one individual substance, he can deduce every true event about the universe (From the Letters to Arnauld 72/ Primary Truths 32). In the *Discourse on Metaphysics*, section §14, Leibniz claims that "each substance is like a world apart, independent of all other things, except for God" (Discourse on Metaphysics 47). This means that its complete concept not only contains what pertains to that particular substance, but it also contains the predicates, passions, perceptions... of every other substance in the series of which it is a part. This is the case for all the substances in one possible world. For Leibniz, this is what it means for an individual substance to be sufficiently determined.

2.2. Identity & Individuation

Now that I have explained the nature of an individual substance or what Leibniz means by its complete notion, I want to move on to how substances are individuated and how they ‘interact’ with one another in one possible world. This is because, the connection between freedom and individuation will become important for chapter four and the mechanism by which substances interact will be important for chapter five.

The individuation of substances is important for ontological and moral reasons. From the ontological point of view, to be an individual is to be one, identical with itself, and causally independent from everything else. If two substances are identical, then they collapse into one because no reason can be given for why they are two and not one. From the moral point of view, where God is in the picture, and where he chooses to create a morally perfect world, substances have a moral duty/responsibility to contribute, through their actions, to the moral perfection of the world. This implies that substances must be free for them to be held morally responsible. Freedom is a condition for moral responsibility; otherwise, if substances have no freedom, no sense can be made of a morally perfect world. Where freedom is concerned, individuation is a pre-requisite. This is because each substance has its own unique contribution in terms of actions, its own degree of accountability because of its actions, and what it is justly owed. For ontological and moral reasons, having an adequate account of individuation is indispensable for Leibniz’s purposes, and unsurprisingly, it is founded on his concept containment theory.

In section §14, Leibniz claims that God views the world from infinite points of view, “the result of each point of view of the universe, as seen from a certain position, is a substance which expresses the universe in conformity with this view” (Discourse on

Metaphysics 47). Thereby, a particular point of view is unique to a particular individual substance. Since everything that belongs to a substance is entailed in its complete notion, then the substance's expression of the world from a particular point of view also belongs to its complete notion. The complete concept determines the substance's actions and perceptions to unfold in a certain order. Since the complete notion entails that a certain individual substance expresses the world from a particular point of view, then the complete notion determines the unfolding of the substance's actions and perceptions from that or in accordance with that point of view. However, the complete notion contains the laws which determine the substance, then it is plausible to argue that what governs the sequential unfolding of the predicates and perceptions of a substance from a particular point of view is a law¹² internal to the complete notion of that substance. When God examines the complete notion of that substance, he sees the events of the world unfolding sequentially from the point of view which that substance expresses. Every substance is individuated this way. Each substance has a law that governs the unfolding of its predicates in accordance with the unique point of view from which it represents the world it is a part of. In short, the principle by which substances are individuated is intrinsic to them, and it is what constitutes their identity.

2.3. Pre-established Harmony & 'Substance-Interaction'

Furthermore, according to Leibniz, there is a pre-established harmony¹³ (From the Letters to Arnauld 85) amongst substances in each possible world. The function of

¹² In the *Monadology*, Leibniz calls these laws, law of series, law of change or progression (Strickland 64).

¹³ Although Leibniz coined the term 'pre-established harmony' in 1694, there is a reference to the idea that there are pre-established laws regulating substances' expression of one another as well as the order of unfolding of perceptions and actions in one substance. The reference is in *From the Letters to Arnauld*, (1687): "For, with respect to divine resolutions, what God foresaw and pre-established with regard to

this pre-established harmony is to ensure that the unfolding of predicates, perceptions, and passions of all the substances is synchronized in order to produce the maximum harmony amongst them. The pre-established harmony is subordinated to God's free decrees; it is there to bring about God's purpose, i.e. the best possible world; in return, the best possible world justifies the pre-established harmony as an initial condition. Furthermore, it consists in these laws entailed in the complete concepts of all the individual substances. The laws which order the unfolding of substances' predicates and perceptions are then subordinated *not* to a logical or a metaphysical necessity. These laws are subordinated to God's free decrees which are contingent and depend on God's reasons. Call this moral necessity, a necessity that inclines to one thing rather than another in so far as there is an antecedent reason determining the decree.

The pre-established harmony also regulates the expression, mirroring, and accommodation of individual substances to each other. This manner of 'substance-interaction' is a substitute for inter-substantial causation which Leibniz rejects. Before I elaborate on the former mechanisms, I want to say why Leibniz opposes inter-substantial causation. To begin with, what lies outside a substance are God and other substances, so there are two sources of external causation. I will discuss inter-substantial causation between created substances in this chapter and reserve God's causal involvement for chapter three.

Leibniz rejects inter-substantial causation to preserve the spontaneity and self-determination of individual substances. What it means to be an individual, a sufficiently

minds was the occasion for his regulating bodies from the beginning so that they might fit together in accordance with the laws and forces he will give them. And since the state of the one is an unfailing, though frequently contingent, and even free, consequence of the state of the other, we can say that God brings about that there is a real connection by virtue of this general notion of substances, which entails that substances express one another perfectly. This connection is not, however, immediate, since it is founded only upon what God has done in creating substances" (From the Letters to Arnauld 85).

determined substance, is to be independent of everything, except in a certain sense, dependent on God as its essence doesn't entail existence. An individual that is independent is the author of its causal activity, actions, and everything that pertains to it must issue from its nature, from its internal states, its own causal laws. In other words, an individual substance must be ultimately spontaneous, self-determining in a sense. Leibniz's thinking is that by getting rid of all external determinations, then substances are self-determining, so he equips his account with a response against necessitarianism, the claim that an individual is necessarily determined by external factors. Consequently, Leibniz argues that all the substance's causal laws, actions (predicates) and more importantly, the reasons grounding those actions in the substance, are contained in it. He endorses intra-substantial causation where the substance is the author of its own actions which issue from its causal laws, and those actions are determined by reasons all pertaining to that substance.

To sum this up, it is for the reasons I have discussed that Leibniz turns away from endorsing any account of external causation. The intra-substantial and the pre-established harmony (expression, mirroring, and accommodation) he resorts to avoid the problems discussed. In what follows, I will articulate what Leibniz means by expression, mirroring and accommodation as the manner in which 'substance-interaction' occurs.

2.4. Mirroring, Expression, & Accommodation

In section §9, Leibniz claims that, "every substance is like a complete world and like a mirror of God or of the whole universe, which each one expresses in its own way, somewhat as the same city is variously represented depending upon the different

positions from which it is viewed” (Discourse on Metaphysics 42). Then in in section §14,

Nevertheless, it is very true that the perceptions or expressions of all substances mutually correspond in such a way that each one, carefully following certain reasons or laws it has observed, coincides with others doing the same—in the same way that several people who have agreed to meet in some place at some specified time can really do this if they so desire. But, although they all express the same phenomena, it doesn’t follow that their expressions are perfectly similar; it is sufficient that they are proportional. (Discourse on Metaphysics 47)

In these passages, Leibniz claims that each individual substance mirrors and expresses the world which is nothing but the combination of substances. This implies that each substance mirrors and expresses all the other substances it is combined with. Now each substance is assigned a unique point of view (Discourse on Metaphysics 47), and to mirror or to express is to represent the world, its events, and all the relations inside it from that particular point of view.

In the passage from section §14, Leibniz claims that substance expression is in accordance with laws or reasons in virtue of which the expression and mirroring of one substance corresponds with those of every other substance. He is referring to the pre-established harmony. The pre-established harmony makes it the case that the laws internal to the complete notion of each substance are coordinated, so that the expression of one is coordinated with the expression of all the others. However, in the same section, Leibniz writes, “nothing can happen to us except thoughts and perceptions, and all our future thoughts and perceptions are merely consequences, though contingent, of our preceding thoughts and perceptions” (Discourse on Metaphysics 47). The pre-established harmony makes it the case that the laws internal to the complete notion of

each substance are coordinated, so that the unfolding of the predicates and perceptions of one substance follows from its previous states (predicates and perceptions). In addition, it makes it the case that the unfolding of the predicates and perceptions of that substance is coordinated with the unfolding of the predicates and perceptions of all the other substances. It is because of this, substances appear to causally interact, especially their physical phenomena (bodies), but in all metaphysical rigor, “one particular substance never acts upon another particular substance nor is acted upon by it” (Discourse on Metaphysics 47). So it is really that “all what happens to each is solely a consequence of its complete idea or notion alone, since this idea already contains all its predicates or events and expresses the whole universe” (Discourse on Metaphysics 47). In what follows, I will give an example to illustrate all of this:

Assume that the world is composed of two substances A and B and a certain event C. Both substances A and B entail event C in their complete concept. The pre-established harmony ensures that the unfolding of event C for substance A is synchronized with substance A’s perception of C from its assigned point of view. Simultaneously, the unfolding of event C for substance B is synchronized with substance B’s perception of C from its assigned point of view. The pre-established harmony also ensures that substance A’s perception of event C from its own point of view, is synchronic with substance B’s perception of event C from its own point of view (A and B’s perception of C unfolds simultaneously). This is what is meant by expression. Furthermore, the pre-established harmony ensures that substance A perceives substance B’s perceiving of event C, and that substance B perceives substance A’s perceiving of event C. If the two substances are conscious substances (minds), then they have the ability to apperceive or reflect (Discourse on Metaphysics 65) each on

itself as it is reflecting on the other. This is what is meant by substances mirroring each other.

In the passage from section §14, Leibniz writes, “But, although they all express the same phenomena, it doesn’t follow that their expressions are perfectly similar; it is sufficient that they are proportional” (Discourse on Metaphysics 47). What he is referring to here is an essential difference in substances, i.e. their difference in degrees of perfection. This difference in degrees of perfection in all the substances, aside from the difference in point of view, affects how well they mirror and express each other. In *On the Ultimate Origination of Things*, Leibniz claims that to be a possible substance is to have some degree of perfection (On the Ultimate Origination of Things 150) where, by perfection, he means internal order, or lawfulness (From the Letters to Wolff 231). No two substances can have the same degree of perfection because there is no reason for there to be two substances with the same degrees of perfection. Thus, substances differ in their degrees of perfection. This difference is translated into how well they mirror and express the world and God and how much order their actions contribute to the general harmony. The more degrees of perfection a substance has, the better it mirrors and expresses God and the world and the more order it contributes to the world. This is because the more the degrees of perfection a substance has, the more clear and distinct all its perceptions are; otherwise, its perceptions are confused and obscure¹⁴.

In section §15, Leibniz claims that although a substance expresses the world in proportion to the degrees of perfection it has, this expression is confused compared to the expression of its own physical phenomena (its body and everything pertaining to it) which is clear and distinct (Discourse on Metaphysics 48). With this in mind, the

¹⁴ In section §24, Leibniz explains what he means by each of these four terms.

manner in which substances ‘act’ on one another can be explained: “the action of one finite substance on another consists only in the increase of degree of its expression together with the diminution of the expression of the other, in so far as God requires them to accommodate themselves to one another” (Discourse on Metaphysics 48).

Assume that in the example I gave, substance A has more degrees of perfection than substance B, and let event C be A saves B from drowning¹⁵. Both substances A and B, regardless of the difference in their degrees of perfection, express their physical bodies distinctly. What appears to be in the physical world as one body A acting on another body B, is, in reality, a predicate unfolding in substance A that increases its degrees of expression while simultaneously diminishing the degrees of expression of substance B. It is then said that substance A exercises its power and acts, so it is an active substance; whereas, substance B is acted upon, so it is a passive substance. Let me clarify this a bit. In the previous paragraph, I said that a substance expresses its own body and what pertains to its body with clarity and distinctness. Then, the reason that substance A’s degrees of expression are increased is that the predicate ‘saves B from drowning’ is actual for substance A. It is the body expressed by substance A that ‘appears’ to have causally acted on the body expressed by substance B. Furthermore, substance A has acted morally by saving substance B from drowning. It has consequently contributed to the perfection of the world. This means that it is an active substance, while substance B is a passive substance. Leibniz writes, “the efficacy [*vertu*] a particular substance has is to express well the glory of God, and it is by doing this that it is less limited. And whenever something exercises its efficacy or power, that

¹⁵ Extrinsic denominations are not predicates, but for the sake of the example, relational predicates do the job of demonstrating the point. Leibniz thinks that all extrinsic denominations are reduced to non-relational propositions about each of the substances involved, yet this has not been proven to be a successful task.

is, when it acts, it improves and extends itself in so far as it acts” (Discourse on Metaphysics 48). By expressing the glory of God, Leibniz means the more the substance mirrors God, the more it is invested in bringing about God’s purpose, i.e. the morally perfect world. The reason is that the more the substance mirrors God, the more distinct its knowledge is of God’s plans to bring about the morally perfect world, the more it understands its own role as part of God’s plans. This leads to it being active, i.e. playing an active role through performing [moral] actions which contribute to the degrees of perfection of the world. The more the substance’s actions contribute to the moral perfection of the world, the more active the substance is.

To tie things up, I have just explained the manner in which substances ‘interact’ according to Leibniz: how substances mirror each other and how they accommodate to each-others’ expression. I think this is what Leibniz has in mind when he claims that substances ‘act’ (physically speaking) but don’t in reality ‘act’ on one another (metaphysically speaking). This discussion will be important for chapter five.

2.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, in this chapter, I have presented the metaphysical set-up, a reading of Leibniz’s concept containment theory, his account of individuation, and his account of substance interaction. This interpretation will serve as my heuristic for all the coming chapters.

CHAPTER 3

ON GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE OF FUTURE CONTINGENTS

It is typical for a compatibilist view, namely the view where determinism allows room for the freedom of individuals, to encounter the difficulty of making sense of freedom where God's foreknowledge is involved. If God foresees what an individual will do in the future, and if what God foresees will certainly occur, then how is it that individual substances are free? If such a compromise can be achieved where God's foreknowledge and the individual substance's freedom can be preserved, then, the individual substance is free. But to show this will require showing how the substance's actions are distinct from God's. More specifically, an account that specifies the radius of the causal efficacy of each, so that the activity of one, God, does not intervene with on the activity of the other, the substances.

Leibniz took up these questions in several of his writings. In this chapter, I will present Leibniz's account of freedom for individual substances found in his *Discourse On Metaphysics*, sections §8 and §13.

As I mentioned in the introductory paragraph to chapter two, Leibniz's other reason for introducing the concept containment theory is to distinguish the actions of God from those of individual substances (*Discourse on Metaphysics* 40). The concept containment theory, therefore, bears a great burden because it is the foundation on which rests Leibniz's defense of the claim that God's foreknowledge of future events is compatible with an individual substance's freedom. Once the barrier is set up between the manner in which and the extent to which God is causally involved in the world, and the substance's sphere of causal activity is defined, then Leibniz can determine the

criteria that distinguishes a substance's free action. To argue for the claim that individual substances are free, Leibniz tries to show that there is room for contingency or possibility in the complete concept of an individual substance. Contingent predicates are predicates whose denial doesn't change the identity of the substance, and these constitute possible alternative courses of action which allow room for a substance to do otherwise, thereby ensuring that the individual substance can choose from a set of possible actions while remaining the same individual. In a nutshell, this is Leibniz's attempt to secure an answer for how it is that an individual is free to do otherwise yet still remain the same individual, i.e. one apparent sense in which freedom of an individual substance his account could saddle.

3.1. Leibniz's Conception of Concurrence

In the first part, I will elaborate on how Leibniz understands God's causal involvement in the world, and how his construal manages to preserve the individual substance's causal autonomy.

First of all, regarding God's causal activity, Leibniz's position emerged from his critique of concurrentist views, especially those of the Dominicans and Jesuits¹⁶.

Concurrentists mainly claim that God concurs with the substance's actions in two ways:

1) he causally interferes on the substance's will (cause) to actualize its inherent potential, i.e. change it from *potenia* to power, as concurrentists thought the will is

¹⁶ In the second half of the sixteenth century, a debate concerning the reconciliation of God's foreknowledge with human freedom occurred between the Dominicans who are the followers of St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas on one side and the Jesuits which include Francisco Suarez and the Molinists followers of Luis de Molina on the other. This debate climaxed in 1656, and it played a central role in the shaping and development of Leibniz's philosophical and theological understanding of freedom. His account thus emerged and was structured out of his attempts to reconcile ideas he conceded to from both parties with the abundant objections he put forth against them.

merely a *potentia* without God's involvement. Then, 2) he causally interferes to bring about the effect the substance 'chooses' by giving it being or *esse* (Murray 76). His first argument is that such a view makes God an accomplice in all the individual's actions, none the least the morally condemnable ones. Even if the Dominicans and the Jesuits claim that what brings about an action is actually a cooperation between God and the individual, it is still God that is actualizing the malicious action willed by that individual. Also, this view renders the individual merely as an intermediate determinate cause, a host that God acts through to bring about actions. This is why Leibniz dismisses this account as incoherent. Another reason behind Leibniz's rejection of concurrentism is that it violates the spontaneity requirement for freedom in the context of determinism. A spontaneous action is an action issued from an internal principle or from the substance's nature. A free action has to be spontaneous; this can be understood as the causal power which brings about the action has to be intrinsic to the substance. Then, any external causal involvement will consequently impede a spontaneous causal act leaving no room for free actions. In brief, for Leibniz's purposes, concurrentism construed as such doesn't allow one to distinguish God's actions from the substance's actions which means that the free actions of a substance cannot be made sense of.

In section §14, Leibniz provides his conception of concurrentism, one where God and the substances meet half way to assure God of his omniscience and omnipotence while at the same time assure substances of their spontaneity and causal-independence. On his conception, substances emanate from God analogously to the manner in which thoughts are produced by the mind (*Discourse on Metaphysics* 47). Then, to guarantee the best possible world will be brought about, God decrees a pre-established harmony, as an initial condition, which ensures the order and harmony

between substances as they express each other, as well as the order and continuity of the flow of the substance's perceptions from previous perceptions and actions from previous actions, as "the state which follows, is in a sense, copied from the preceding state, though in accordance with certain laws of change" (*On the Ultimate Origination of Things* 149). Although God concurs with the substances, he concurs in a particular manner that is restricted to continually conserving the substance as it passes from one state (perception, action) to another (*Discourse on Metaphysics* 61). This safe-guards the substance's spontaneity (*Discourse on Metaphysics* 64), and ensures that God is not causally intervening in the determination of the substance's actions, specifically the free actions. As for causation in individual substances, their complete concepts entail all the laws that govern their activity, specifically their causal activity. Their causal activity is intra-substantial; that is, each substance is causally isolated and independent from all the others for reasons discussed in chapter two.

To sum this up, this is how Leibniz sought to disentangle God's causal activity from that of the individual substances'. This allows Leibniz to claim that God's actions are distinct from those of the substance as part of his argument that his account can saddle an individual substance's freedom.

3.2. Leibniz's understanding of Foreknowledge

Having dealt with the issue of God's causal concurrence, God's foreknowledge still posits a threat to free actions. This is where Leibniz's complete notion, his criteria of truth which is founded on the complete notion, and the *a priori causal* deduction come in handy. In section §13 of his *Discourse on Metaphysics*, Leibniz claims that what God foresees of future actions is certain to happen; it is true, but it is only true

because the nature of the substance is such that it contains all its actions, whether past, present, or future together with the reasons grounding these actions in the nature of their substance (*Discourse on Metaphysics* 44). What he is saying is that if God foresees a future action, this doesn't imply that the action will happen with absolute necessity. The action will happen with a necessity, but this necessity is hypothetical or conditional on the substance's free will as I will soon show. The future action is true of the substance because it and its reason are contained in the substance, and the occurrence of this action depends on the substance's free will. In what follows, I will elaborate first, on what I think Leibniz's conception of God's foreknowledge is and what is involved in it.

In chapter two, I have remarked on the causal sense in which *a priori* must be understood for Leibniz. There is another point pertaining to the sense of *a priori* where God's foreknowledge is concerned. It is that the *a priori deduction* is *causal and atemporal*. This means that God's 'examination'¹⁷ of complete concepts lies outside time (i.e. prior to actualizing a possible world), hence 'not by experience'. He examines them in his intellect, the realm of possibility, in the form of hypothetical scenarios. This is what Leibniz calls God's middle knowledge¹⁸. It is the knowledge of counterfactual

¹⁷ I quoted the word "examination" because God really has an immediate intuition; that is he sees everything all at once with clarity and distinctness. I think Leibniz's resort to hypothetical scenarios is just to provide an epistemic counterpart to his ontology to explain God's foreknowledge and the mechanism of his choice of the best possible world.

¹⁸ The relevant debate here is between Dominicans and the Jesuits in the year 1656. Their disagreement on the construal of God's foreknowledge lead to two opposing positions which Leibniz was well acquainted with. It was out of this debate that he formulated his conception of freedom, concurrence and foreknowledge. For the Dominicans, God knows everything that happens in the world in virtue of knowing his causal contribution in actualizing the potential inherent in the will and in giving being to the effect. More so, this mechanism is not only restricted to the near future in the actual world, it also extends to counterfactual circumstances which yield knowledge of what the human would do otherwise under different circumstances (Murray 77). The Jesuits rejected this as nonsensical. They argued that God cannot know the sufficient antecedent determining circumstances which bring about the outcome of a human's free choice; otherwise, the freedom of humans would be compromised. In other words, even if God, due to his causal involvement, knows all the laws, whether metaphysically necessary or natural laws together with the history of the world and the agent's mental and physical states prior to making the choice, God cannot infer the outcome of the agent's free choice because all these factors put together

scenarios which answer the question *what would the individual do under different circumstances?* This type of knowledge falls between God's *intuitive* knowledge and his simple understanding. God's knowledge of intuition is knowledge of his free decrees. It is contingent as it depends on God's free will or what he chooses to actualize. God's simple understanding is his knowledge of all the possible ideas or forms in his intellect, whether these forms are of necessary or eternal truths, or whether they are of possible substances and worlds where truths about these are contingent truths. God is not the author of all the possible forms or ideas; otherwise, they will all be arbitrary and Leibniz would end up with a view like Descartes¹⁹. What is possible is what is logically possible; that is, possibility depends on the law of non-contradiction. Consequently, they are necessary and eternal; they are independent of God's will. With this in mind, Middle knowledge or God's knowledge of counterfactuals belongs to neither group yet has some features of both. The counterfactuals are independent of God's will like necessary truths, but like God's free decrees, they are contingent rather than necessary. Counterfactuals are contingent because they show God what would have been the case had a substance done otherwise; they are independent of God's will because the truth of the counterfactual depends on the inclusion of the predicate in the substance in the counterfactual world.

Thus, upon examining the complete concept of a possible world in a hypothetical scenario, God sees chain of connections between the substances to each

cannot be sufficient to determine the outcome. Consequently, the type of knowledge God possesses to know the outcome of free choices would have to be pre-volitional; that is, independent of God's concurrency. Such knowledge they termed as "middle knowledge," a counterfactual knowledge which consists of contingently true propositions whose truth value is independent of God's will (Murray 78). See also footnote 142 in *The Source of Contingent Truths*, p. 98 and footnote 109 p. 74.

¹⁹ The reference is to Descartes view that God's will determines what is good rendering the good as arbitrary.

other along with the connections of each substance to its predicates and infers their future actions. Recall in chapter two, I had explained that each individual substance is a whole world in itself, but it has relations to the whole series of which it is a part. When God considers the complete concept of one substance, it is always against the whole series playing out in the background, but all this is hypothetical and involves no causal contribution on his part. In short, this *atemporal a priori deduction* then forms the basis of God's foreknowledge of future events. Events and their determining reasons belong to the substance. They are contained in its complete notion, and this is why they are true of the substance. Thus, the certainty of God's foreknowledge is based on what the substance itself will do under certain circumstances; the fact that he foresaw an action doesn't imply any causal involvement on God's part, nor does it imply that the substance's action is absolutely necessitated.

3.3. Contingency or Freedom as the Ability to Do Otherwise

Now that the issue of foreknowledge is settled and absolute necessity is out of the picture, Leibniz tries to account for contingency in the complete notion by employing a distinction, then he argues that the free actions of a substance are not necessitated in the absolute sense. Rather, they are only hypothetically necessary; that is, they are contingent in themselves and rely on the substance's will.

In section §13, Leibniz resorts to the distinction between reasons that incline (determine) and reasons that necessitate to reveal the element of contingency internal to the complete concept of an individual substance because contingency is a necessary condition for a substance's action to be a free action. To begin with, an *a priori* deduction reveals all the predicates that are true of an individual substance. Of these are

the essential predicates whose denial is logically contradictory as they depend on the principle of non-contradiction. Whereas the others are contingent because their connection to the substance requires infinite reasons as they depend on the principle of sufficient reason. A reason that necessitates pertains to an essential predicate, and it would simply be that the denial of this predicate changes the nature of the substance. A reason that inclines pertains to a contingent predicate. Reasons that incline depend on the principle of perfection. This principle is like the principle of sufficient reason in the sense that 1) it is not derived from the principle of non-contradiction and 2) it pertains to contingent entities. The principle of perfection says that if A and B are contingent entities where A is more perfect than B, then A has more reason to exist or to be true than B because it contributes more degrees of perfection to the world. If however, B is chosen, no impossibility follows because what is imperfect harbors no logical contradiction.

Given the distinction between reasons that incline (determine) and reasons that necessitate, I understand his argument to be follows: the complete notion of an individual substance contains all its predicates, whether virtual or essential, i.e. “everything that will ever happen to him” (*Discourse on Metaphysics* 44). The virtual predicates are contingent, and they yield contingent truths. Contingent predicates like essential ones have their basis in the nature of the substance; however, the connection of contingent predicates to the substance, when analyzed, resolves into an infinite chain of reasons the termination of which is impossible even for God to see as the termination doesn’t exist. Leibniz’s thinking is that the nature of the connection contingent predicates have to the substance is what makes room for a substance to choose freely from the set of possible actions. It is because this connection doesn’t resolve into an

identity, so it's denial is not a logical contradiction; thereby, the substance chooses yet retains its identity. If a substance chooses one action over another, it is because there is a reason which inclines it to that action over the others. Since no metaphysical or absolute necessity is involved here, the reason merely inclines, in accordance with the principle of perfection. Therefore, the free choice of individual substances is guaranteed, (i.e. choosing in accordance with this principle is choosing freely) because there is a reason which inclines them to one possible action from a set of possible actions where each of these actions is contingent in itself. Hence, the same substance is free to do otherwise in so far as there is a reason prior to the choice which determines it one way or the other.

Furthermore, Leibniz says that the connection of contingent predicates to the substance is only hypothetically necessary '*ex hypothesi*', yet these predicates are 'contingent in themselves'. To explain this, I will refer to the section titled, "*On Contingency*," but first I will say something about a hypothetical necessity. This type of necessity is a conditional; it has the form "if A, then B." This conditional is true in three cases: 1) A and B are both true; 2) A and B are both false; 3) A is false, while B is true. Note that Leibniz is interested in the first case here.

From "*On Contingency*," an entity (whether a substance or a predicate) is said to be contingent if the reason for its existence doesn't belong to its essence but lies external to it (*On Contingency* 28). Then, for this substance to exist or for this predicate to be in the substance as opposed to any another, there must be an antecedent reason that determines why this substance should exist or why this predicate is contained in the substance rather than any other. If this antecedent reason is true/occurs, then the consequent follows necessarily. If one denies the antecedent (if it fails to obtain), then

the consequent is denied without any logical contradiction (fails to obtain). The reason that no logical contradiction follows from the denial is that the antecedent, like the consequent entity or event, is 'contingent in itself' which means it in turn has its reason for existence in something prior to it. This is what Leibniz means by a hypothetical necessity governing the connection between contingent predicates and the substance. This connection has the form of an *ex hypothesi* and resolves to an infinite chain of reasons for reasons. Going back to Leibniz's claim that the actions of a substance are hypothetically necessary, I understand it as follows: a substance is free in so far as there is a reason prior to the choice which determines the choice. Then, the claim that a substance's action is hypothetically necessitated would mean that if the reason obtains then the action will follow necessarily, but only hypothetically not absolutely. The reason determining the substance functions as an antecedent, while the choice or the action functions as the consequent. The claim that the free choice of a substance depends on its will can be understood as the will of a substance is inclined to one reason which determines choice A let's say, more than it is inclined to the reason connected to choice B. The reason would be that A appears to be more perfect than B, a choice made in accordance with the principle of perfection. I think this is what Leibniz had in mind pertaining to substance freedom, contingency, and *ex hypothesi*.

3.4. Conclusion & Remarks

Up till this point, I have shown how substances are free to choose otherwise yet remain the same individual substance. Also, I have shown how a substance's actions depend on its will and how a substance's actions are only hypothetically necessary.

Now I want to relate this back to chapter two, draw up conclusions, and tie the system together as I conclude this chapter.

In chapter two, I said that each substance has a law in its complete concept (or the pre-established harmony) which governs the sequence of unfolding of its predicates; that is, this law ensures that consequent actions follow from the antecedent actions determining them just as it ensures that the future perception follows from the perception prior to it. These predicates, i.e. the antecedent and the consequent, their connection has the form of a hypothetical necessity. Then, this law or the pre-established harmony ensures that the consequent action (or perception) follows necessarily from the antecedent action (or perception). This law, in other words, has the form of a hypothetical necessity which it imposes onto contingent entities. However, this law is subordinated to God's free decrees, and God's free decrees are conditioned on his final purpose, i.e. his choice to create the best possible world. The best possible world, being in itself contingent, justifies God's free decrees. This is also a hypothetical necessity, but because it pertains to God's choice, it is called moral necessity (determination of an action by an inclining reason). Leibniz's account is thus governed by moral necessity. God is morally necessitated to create the best possible world which is the most perfect world, and individual substances are morally necessitated to contribute to its perfection. Both God and substances are free in the sense that the reasons determining their choices incline them to what is morally perfect.

The other conclusion is that Leibniz's whole system consists of entities (God, substances and their series of predicates, substance combinations,..) that are contingent in themselves and held together by a hypothetical necessity. This hypothetical necessity involves an infinite series of reasons for reasons, whether pertaining to one substance or

to the combination of substances, the termination of the infinite series is non-existent. I said that it does not depend on the law of non-contradiction, but on the principle of sufficient reason. I want to show how the principle of sufficient reason is related to the infinite series. For something to exist rather than not, and for it to exist in a certain determinate way as opposed to another, there must be a sufficient reason for this. The sufficient reason for the existence of the whole series (world) cannot lie in the series itself as all its constituents are contingent; that is, their essences don't entail existence (*On Contingency* 28). No matter how much degrees of perfection is generated by the combination of substances, the combination cannot bring itself into existence²⁰ (*On the Ultimate Origination of Things* 150). The reason is that existence belongs to the will of God, an absolutely necessary being whose essence and existence are one (*On Contingency* 28). Therefore, the sufficient reason for the existence of the series lies in God's will or his free decrees.

²⁰ See also Blumenfeld, David. "*Leibniz's Theory of the Striving Possibles.*"

CHAPTER 4

CONTINGENT A PRIORI: SUSPECTED & DISMISSED

From chapter three, it is evident that Leibniz takes contingency to be a hallmark for the freedom of both, individual substances and God. On the surface of it, the argument Leibniz provides to show that an individual substance could, in principle, do otherwise while remaining the same individual, is compelling, logically speaking. Leibniz discovers the nature of contingent connections through examining the nature of infinity in mathematics, particularly the relationship between incommensurable quantities. He then, draws an analogy to argue that contingent connections are found between predicates and their substance. Despite his efforts to establish contingency in the structure of the complete notion, there is a body of literature²¹ which argues that what Leibniz's complete notion amounts to is really an *analytic a priori*, that all truths about a substance turn out to be logically necessary as they are necessary to God (Grimm 202). Truths about a substance, to finite minds, only seem contingent due to the inability of finite minds to grasp the infinite.

I think there are good reasons to think that all truths about the substance are necessary, but I wouldn't go as far as to subsume all truths under '*analytic*' because there are truths of existence pertaining to Leibniz's treatment of *existence as a predicate* which present themselves as a counter to necessary truths. This, however, will not be the route I take here.

²¹ See Grimm's paper, "*Individual Concepts and Contingent Truths*," footnotes p.202 for commentators who held that all truths about a substance amount to analytically necessary truths. Also, Murray, in "*Leibniz on Foreknowledge of Future Contingents and Human Freedom*," holds this position in his interpretation of Leibniz's "Innocent Account" (Murray 86).

Instead, in this chapter, I will argue that a thorough examination of the source of contingent connections in incommensurable quantities reveals the exact opposite of what Leibniz concluded, namely that an individual's identity changes if a contingent predicate is denied of the *complete individual concept*²². In this chapter, I will focus on proving this idea. It will turn out that all truths about a sufficiently determined individual substance are necessary for that substance's identity. However, the conception of identity propositions for Leibniz goes beyond analytical, finitely resolvable, propositions. This is the ground for why I have reservations on imposing 'analytic' in the contemporary sense onto Leibniz's complete concept. First, I will present an exposition of his argument. Using this, I will show where and why his analogy missed the mark. Lastly, I will redraw the fitting analogy and conclude that whether in mathematical figures or complete concepts of individual substances, denying a contingent connection changes the identity of the subject. Consequently, the notion of freedom as contingency fails because it clashes with the principle of individuation.

4.1. Criteria of Truth, Necessity & Contingency

Throughout all his philosophical writings, Leibniz is committed to this criteria of truth:

The fact that in every true affirmative proposition, necessary or contingent, universal or particular, the concept of the predicate is always in some way included in that of the subject, *praedicatum inest subjecto* [the

²² To make the argument, I rely on the text *On Freedom* where I assume that Leibniz is talking about the complete notion not the incomplete notion when he asks, "how could the subject lack the predicate without contradiction and impossibility, and without changing that notion?" (*On Freedom* 95).

predicate is included in the subject], or else I do not know what truth is. (Letter to Antoine Arnauld 47)²³

If P is contained in S, then “S is P” is a true proposition where the truth of propositions having this basic²⁴ form can, in principle, be demonstrated *a priori*²⁵ (assuming God’s point of view)²⁶. True propositions are either necessary or contingent, and what constitutes the difference between the two is the type of connection or the demonstration of the connection between the predicate and the subject.

Leibniz, in *On Contingency*, says, “...we say that necessary propositions are true no less than contingent ones, it is necessary that there be some common notion, both of contingent existence and of essential truth” (On Contingency 28)²⁷. From this, I understand that for Leibniz, regardless of the type of the connection, if the predicate is connected to the subject, that is, if, in principle, there is a connection (established in God’s intellect which is the realm of possible ideas), then that predicate is true of the subject. This is the form of truth Leibniz radically endorses and has argued for across multiple texts²⁸.

²³ The quote was taken from a *Letter to Arnauld (4/14 July 1686)*. This is also written in the texts *On Contingency*, p.28 and *Primary Truths* p.31

²⁴ The reason why Leibniz this is the basic form of truth comes from his concept containment theory. An individual substance must be sufficiently determined i.e. its complete concept must contain all that is true of it. This in turn is because substances are individuated by the sequence of unfolding of their predicates. There can be no external causal influence on the substance as that will change its identity.

²⁵ *A priori* here has the same sense as I noted in chapter 2.

²⁶ For finite minds, contingent propositions are demonstrated either *a posteriori* (empirically) or *a priori* (beginning from ‘nothing happens without a reason’).

²⁷ According to Ariew and Garber, footnote 56, p.28, this sentence should read as “it is necessary that there be a notion of existence and a notion of truth, common both to contingent and essential propositions.”

²⁸ Examples of these texts include, *On Contingency* p. 28, *On Freedom* p.95, *Letter To Arnauld (4/14 July 1686)* p.47 in *Shorter Leibniz Texts*, *Primary Truths* p.31, *The Source of Contingent Truths* p.98

4.2. Conflation of Truth Criteria with ‘Analytic’

In the literature²⁹, however, there seems to be a conflation between Leibniz’s notion of truth with ‘analytic’ truth. In ‘analytic’ truth, the predicate is necessarily contained in the subject, such that the denial of the predicate results in a logical contradiction. It is not surprising that nowhere in his writings does Leibniz use the term ‘analytic;’ the reason is that it was coined after his time. The relevant post-Leibnizian distinction here is the analytic/synthetic distinction which was implied in Hume’s distinction between relations of ideas (a necessary deduction) and matters of fact (empirical observation). Then it was Kant that explicitly defined analytic truths as truths where the predicate necessarily belongs to the subject. In contrast, synthetic truths are those where the predicate lies outside the subject but is necessarily connected to it through a third element lying outside experience yet is the condition for its possibility. If ‘analytic’ is anachronistically imposed onto Leibniz’s notion of truth, it will impose the requirement of necessity onto the connection between the subject and predicate thereby limiting the notion of truth to only necessary truths. This rules out any basis for contingent predicates in the nature of the subject. All truths about the subject or substance, then, will be absolutely necessary truths whose denial results in a logical impossibility.

On the other hand, there is good reason to argue that the complete concept really amounts to an *analytic a priori*. Recall from chapter two that the concept containment theory serves to provide a *real and causal definition* of an individual

²⁹ B. Russell, in his book, *A Critical Exposition on the Philosophy of Leibniz*, was the pioneer of this conflation as he read Leibniz’s distinction between necessity and contingency through the eyes of Kant’s analytic/synthetic distinction. Other philosophers followed him; I mentioned some of them in the earlier footnote.

substance: what it means to be a sufficiently determined substance. It is such that when God examines the complete notion *a priori*, he deduces all what truly belongs to that particular substance, all its sufficient determinations whether necessary or contingent truths, along with the infinite series of reasons grounding them in that substance. This is how the individual notion is conceived as a possible essence in God's intellect, the realm of possibility. This is how one particular substance is individuated from all the other possible substances belonging to the same series. Possible essences are governed by the principle of non-contradiction. They make up God's knowledge of his simple understanding³⁰; that is, God is not the author of these possible essences of substances. Therefore, all truths about them are necessary to God, irrespective of the way in which the predicate is connected to the substance as all propositions true of a substance are identity statements pertaining to that substance from all eternity. God cannot change anything about them; otherwise, it won't be the same individual anymore.

To demonstrate why there is good reason to argue that the complete concept really amounts to an *analytic a priori*, I will draw the distinction/contrast between the complete concept and the incomplete concept³¹. The complete concept or notion which sufficiently determines an individual substance is contrasted to the species concept or the incomplete concept (From the Letters to Arnauld 70). The incomplete concept does not contain all the essential truths and truths of fact pertaining to a certain individual. It is not sufficiently determined; it is a vague notion (From the Letters to Arnauld 69).

³⁰ This was discussed in chapter two.

³¹ R. Grimm also draws this distinction, between the general individual concept and the individual concept to make the same point, although his reading of Leibniz's concept containment theory assumes trans-world identity. The general individual concept includes the essential properties of Adam, plus a set containing subsets of all the possible alternative circumstances Adam could have been/done. Whereas, the individual concept of Adam contains his essential properties plus only one set of accidental or contingent properties in one possible world. Which set of properties a sufficiently determined Adam has is conditioned on God's free decrees in that particular possible world (Grimm 216).

Therefore, it cannot refer to an individual substance. To clarify this, I will employ the example of Alexander's complete notion from chapter two, and contrast it to the incomplete notion of Alexander. Alexander's complete notion is sufficiently determined. This means that it contains God's resolution to create the world, all the laws of nature, etc. and every single detail of Alexander's life, including the color of the toga he wore as he vanquished Darius and Porus. If I take out from Alexander's complete notion the event 'vanquished Darius and Porus' and all the events that logically imply this event and all the events that are logically implied by this event, then what I will end up with is an incomplete concept of *an Alexander*. This incomplete concept is not the concept of a sufficiently determined Alexander. This incomplete concept is such that, God sees that the event 'retreated,' when added to the incomplete concept of Alexander would produce the maximally perfect Alexander-prime possible, in another possible world. Then Alexander-prime is *similar to* the actual Alexander yet belongs to another possible world. Both Alexander and Alexander-prime are sufficiently determined individual substances. It is logically necessary for the actual Alexander to have vanquished Darius and Porus because this predicate is included in his complete notion. To deny this predicate of the actual Alexander is a logical contradiction. Similarly, it is logically necessary for Alexander-prime to have retreated because this predicate is included in his complete notion. To deny this predicate of Alexander-prime is a logical contradiction. Whereas, it is not logically contradictory to deny either of the predicates 'vanquished Darius and Porus' or 'retreated' from the incomplete concept of Alexander. This is because the incomplete concept is not sufficiently determined; it doesn't pick out a unique individual Alexander. Rather, the sufficient reason behind why God saw that including the predicate 'vanquished Darius

and Porus' to the incomplete concept of Alexander would produce the maximally perfect possible Alexander is God's goodness, his commitment to the principle of perfection, and the infinity of relations between other substances in the possible world he chose to actualize. Thus, to deny a predicate from an incomplete concept results in no logical contradiction; whereas, to deny a predicate from a sufficiently determined notion or a complete notion results in a logical contradiction. Hence, the complete concept does seem to amount to an *analytic a priori*.

4.3. Discovering Contingency

In his text *On Freedom*, Leibniz actually acknowledges this issue: if truth rests on the entailment of the predicate in the subject, then how could the subject lack the predicate at a certain time “without contradiction and impossibility, and without changing that notion?” (On Freedom 95). In other words, he is inquiring about the possibility of a connection whose nature is such that it allows for the denial of the predicate without contradiction and without changing the identity of the subject. If a connection of this nature is conceivable, then it is not the case that all subject-predicate connections are logically necessary. Consequently, contingent truths can be justified, and by implication, freedom in the sense of the same individual acting otherwise can be accounted for. Upon Leibniz's reflection on the nature of infinity in mathematics, he discovered that connections of this nature are possible:

At last a certain new and unexpected light shined from where I least expected it, namely, from mathematical considerations on the nature of infinity. For there are two labyrinths of the human mind, one concerning the composition of the continuum, and the other concerning

the nature of freedom, and they arise from the same source, infinity. (On Freedom 95)

He considered infinite series and incommensurable quantities. He realized that these truths, when carrying out their demonstration, the analysis never terminates into identities nor equalities. Rather, it proceeds to infinity. To explain what he has in mind, I will use the example of the incommensurability of the measure of the diagonal (or hypotenuse) with that of the side of a perfect³² square (Dialogue on Human Freedom 115).

First, incommensurable quantities, are quantities which cannot be written in terms of one another because there is no measure common to both which allows the expression of one in terms of the other. There is no common measure because one of the quantities is indefinite. A perfect square is two right isosceles triangles having the diagonal as the common base. By applying Pythagorean theorem to one of the right isosceles triangles, the diagonal squared is equal to the sum of the square of each of its sides. This theorem expresses a true relation only in triangles which have a right angle. It expresses the relation between the measure of the diagonal and that of the two sides of the triangle. Yet the measure of the diagonal is incommensurable, i.e. cannot be written in terms of any of the sides. The reason is that there will always be a remainder that cannot be represented by a fraction; that is, the remainder is always an irrational number. Given a right triangle of hypotenuse $\sqrt{2}$, one side 1, other side 1. The square of $\sqrt{2}$ is 2 which is equal to the sum of {the square of 1 which is 1 and the square of 1 which is 1}. Pythagoras theorem holds as a true relation between the three sides. If however, one were to express the ratio $\sqrt{2}:1$, where the value of $\sqrt{2}$ is

³² A perfect square by definition is a square of side equal to one unit just as a perfect circle is a circle of radius one unit.

1.41421356237...one cannot do so because $\sqrt{2}$ is an irrational number. The analysis of $\sqrt{2}$ goes to infinity (by the long division method); if its value goes to infinity then it cannot be identical to anything. If it is impossible to establish an identity, then its denial is not a logical contradiction. Therefore, 1 and $\sqrt{2}$ are incommensurable because the analysis of $\sqrt{2}$ goes to infinity.

On the other hand, even though the hypotenuse is incommensurable with the side of a right triangle, this does not mean that there is no relation involving them that holds true. Pythagoras theorem is a true relation which allows for the expression of the square of the hypotenuse in terms of the sum of the square of each of the two sides. The required condition for this relation to hold true is that the figure has a right angle. By proving the theorem or by applying it, one would be demonstrating a connection involving the hypotenuse (not the hypotenuse squared)³³ and the two sides (not their square values), but this connection is through reasons for reasons. That is, the hypotenuse and the side are indirectly related, through reasons for reasons. Also, given that Pythagoras theorem is true on the condition that it is a right triangle, then one can say that a hypothetical necessity is adequate to express a connection whose denial involves no logical contradiction.

From the fact that 1) one term cannot be written in terms of the other, yet 2) a true relation connects these terms together, Leibniz concludes that, in principle, a connection with this nature is found.

³³ I say this because the relationship between the squared values is an equality. The relation in question here is one that involves the hypotenuse's measure and the sides' measure rather than the squared values of these. What I want to achieve is that the hypotenuse and the sides are indirectly involved in a relation, one that is conditional, even though they cannot be related directly as they are incommensurable. I say indirectly because the hypotenuse's measure and the square function applied to the hypotenuse are different quantities.

4.4. Analogy to Incommensurable Quantities

In *On Freedom, On Contingency*, as well as *The Source of Contingent Truths*, Leibniz draws an analogy between incommensurable quantities and contingent predicates to argue that a contingent connection is conceivable between a substance and its predicates and to demonstrate how contingent predicates are connected to their substance.

But just as there is also a proportion or relation even among incommensurables themselves, despite the fact that their resolutions proceed to infinity and never end (as Euclid has demonstrated), so too in contingent truths there is a connection between the terms, that is, there is truth, even if that truth cannot be reduced to the principle of contradiction or necessity through an analysis into identities. (On Contingency 29)

Briefly stated, the analogy yields: just as one cannot be written in terms of the square root of two because there is no common measure to express this identity, the contingent predicate cannot yield an identity proposition because the nature of its connection to the subject requires an infinite demonstration. Also, just as one and the square root of two are related to each other, though indirectly, through a true relation, Pythagorean Theorem which is a conditional relation, the contingent predicate is contained in its substance thereby being true of it, and its connection to the substance has the form of a hypothetical necessity.

4.5. Inversion of Leibniz's Analogy

It is here where Leibniz's analogy misses its mark. The whole question is about the nature of a connection between a substance and its predicate not two predicates to

each other. Whereas, in the example on incommensurable quantities Leibniz gives as a testimony to the possibility of a contingent connection, the comparison he draws is between two numbers, i.e. two properties, their connection to each other, rather than a property in connection to the substance it is attributed to. I want to clarify a point here pertaining to saying numbers are properties. Numbers for Leibniz, in the most basic sense, are much like Aristotle's units, i.e. abstractions from a unity (a whole, a substance): "For number is a kind of incorporeal figure, as it were, which arises from the union of any beings whatsoever; for example, God, an angel, a man, and motion taken together are four" (Philosophical Paper and letters 77). I, then, take it as safe to treat number as a property, based on what Leibniz says, "Since number is therefore something of greatest universality, it rightly belongs to metaphysics, if you take metaphysics to be the science of those properties which are common to all classes of beings" (Philosophical Paper and letters 77).

Now, I will elaborate my argument. One and the square root of two are measures of two sides of the perfect square. These are two properties abstracted from the subject/substance³⁴ perfect square (because by definition a perfect square is a square of side one unit). The incommensurable relation holds between the two properties of the substance perfect square. However, the connection he is after is between the substance and the predicate not two properties/predicates of the same substance. With this in mind, I will invert his analogy to examine the relationship between the square root of two and its subject, the perfect square. As I pointed out in chapters two and three,

³⁴ A sufficiently determined perfect square as in made of wood, crafted for decorative purposes... is the individual substance for Leibniz. I settled for the abstract perfect square and called it the subject/substance for simplicity's sake. I am dealing with the mathematical properties and their relation to their subject, so it won't affect the argument.

Leibniz claims that denying a contingent predicate of its substance doesn't change the identity of that substance. However, on this version, denying the property square root of two of its subject perfect square will change the identity of that subject. It is because there is no other option for the measure of the diagonal to be other than the square root of two. On the condition that it is a perfect square, i.e. of side one unit, then it is necessary, by Pythagorean theorem that the diagonal has the measure of square root of two³⁵. If, for example, five is the measure of the diagonal, then the subject will be a rectangle of sides three and five. The identity of the substance changes upon changing one of its properties. The predicates of a substance are contained in the substance, and their connection is to the substance not to each other. Even if a conditional relation connects one and the square root of two, though indirectly through a long demonstration, in the conclusion of chapter three, I remarked that the connection between two consecutive predicates or perceptions has the form of a hypothetical necessity, but only because the law determining their sequence of unfolding imposed this connection onto them. This law pertains to the nature of the individual substance, and it determines its identity. Therefore, any change in, particularly, the denial of, a predicate, changes the identity of the individual substance.

Prior to concluding this chapter, I want to remark on an idea I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. I said that I have my reservations on imposing 'analytic' in the contemporary sense onto Leibniz's complete concept. The reason is that this sense of the word is restricted to absolutely necessary truths which are demonstrable in a

³⁵ In *Dialogues On Human Freedom*, Leibniz gives the geometrical proof of this which proves that a perfect square's diagonal has the measure of the square root of two and nothing else. See *Dialogues on Human Freedom* p. 114-115.

finite number of steps into an identity or primitive truth³⁶. However, the conception of identity for Leibniz goes beyond finitely resolvable propositions to include demonstrations that are infinitely long³⁷. The reason is that, what it means to be an individual substance is to be sufficiently determined, and this requires two principles at work: 1) the principle of non-contradiction because the complete notion is *a real and causal definition*, it contains all of its predicates, and 2) the principle of sufficient reason because the substance has relations to the whole series of which it is a part. Now, Logical necessity is defined in terms of the law of non-contradiction which governs the inclusion of necessary predicates in the substance's complete notion. Whereas, the denial of the substance's contingent predicates is also contradictory to its identity. Yet, this contradiction is not a logical contradiction because of the nature of the connection these contingent predicates have to their substance. This contradiction is of a metaphysical nature. Since metaphysical necessity deals with identity and its constituents, and since the denial of the contingent predicates is contradictory to the identity of an individual substance, then metaphysical³⁸ necessity is what governs the inclusion of contingent predicates in the substance's complete notion.

4.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, in this chapter, I aimed to prove that the freedom of an individual substance defined as contingency, i.e. the ability to do otherwise fails because a

³⁶ Primitive truths include "A is A"; "If A is B is true, then A is not B is false"; "everything is as it is"; "nothing is greater or less than itself" (Primary Truths 30). See Leibniz's text *Primitive Truths* p.30

³⁷ E. Begby also makes this distinction between the finitely analytic and infinitely analytic demonstrations (Begby 97).

³⁸ It is somewhat problematic that the complete concepts of possible substances be governed by logical necessity. The reason is that, these possible concepts reside in God's intellect from all eternity. Logical necessity or the law of non-contradiction cannot govern God's intellect because this is the law of thinking for finite minds.

substance could not have done otherwise while retaining its identity. This is because all truths about a substance are necessary for the substance's identity. Therefore, the denial of any predicate is a metaphysical contradiction, contrary to what Leibniz tries to argue for.

CHAPTER 5

FREEDOM AS SPONTANEITY?

From chapter four, I aimed to show that freedom for an individual substance defined as contingency, i.e. the ability of an individual substance to do otherwise cannot be the definition of freedom Leibniz has in mind in his *Discourse on Metaphysics*. This is because, given Leibniz's principle of individuation, this sense of freedom is non-sensical. In this chapter, I want to argue that defining freedom as spontaneity, i.e. equating freedom with spontaneity, is insufficient for a theory of freedom because the way Leibniz understands spontaneity implies that both, the morally active³⁹ substances (minds or intelligent substances) and the morally passive substances (non-intelligent substances) are equally spontaneous. Furthermore, Leibniz's conception of spontaneity implies that, for intelligent substances, both, the actions that result from rational deliberation and the actions that result from passions or desires are equally spontaneous. Freedom, however, requires rational activity in addition to spontaneity; whereas spontaneity doesn't require nor necessarily imply rational activity. Therefore, equating freedom to spontaneity alone is insufficient to have a theory of freedom for Leibniz because it doesn't guarantee rational activity. To make this argument, I will distinguish the notion of spontaneity from the notions of activity and passivity. Then, I will show that although the substance's action is spontaneous, the substance could be morally passive or morally active depending on the degrees of perfection entailed in its essence.

³⁹ By 'morally active' and 'morally passive' I mean substances that contribute to the moral perfection of the world such as minds, and those that don't contribute to the moral perfection of the world such as rocks, animals.

5.1. Spontaneity

To begin with, a spontaneous action is an action that is issued from the substance's inner states (desires, passions, reasons). These inner states incline the substance to choose its actions rather than be coerced to act in a certain way by an external source, i.e. God or other individual substances. Since the complete concept of every individual substance is sufficiently determined, that is, since every complete concept includes everything which belongs to the individual substance (causal laws, actions, passions, perceptions), then every individual substance is a complete world on its own (Discourse on Metaphysics 42), isolated, especially causally isolated, from every other substance and from God (except in a particular sense). This implies that every substance has all what it needs to determine its own actions. This, in turn, means that every substance is equally spontaneous.

In section §30, Leibniz says that “thoughts come to us spontaneously or freely in the order that the notion pertaining to our individual substance contains them” (Discourse on Metaphysics 61). This quote would be interpreted as the individual substance's causal laws, which are internal to its complete notion, determine the order in which the substance has these thoughts. Consequently, a succeeding thought follows from a preceding thought in an orderly fashion, uninterrupted by any external causal influence on the substance. Similarly, every succeeding predicate follows from a preceding predicate without any external causal influence. Thus, the individual substance is self-determining in virtue of its own causal laws. This self-determination or the determination of the inner states of a substance by the laws of its complete concept is what safe-guards its spontaneity.

Furthermore, what assures individual substances of their spontaneity is the fact that Leibniz does away with inter-substantial causation as well as the Dominican-Jesuit conception of God's causal concurrence⁴⁰. This ensures that substances are not subjected to any external causal influence, aside from God conserving the substances' being as they pass from one state to another while following the laws (pre-established harmony) he has decreed (Discourse on Metaphysics 61). The role of the pre-established harmony is to coordinate and synchronize the laws which determine all the individual substances in one possible world. Specifically, the role of the pre-established harmony is to coordinate the mirroring, expression, and accommodation of all the individual substances, so that all these substances are in harmony with each other.

In short, the determinism ensures that all the individual substance's actions are spontaneous, thereby determinism actually reinforces spontaneity. Also, the pre-established harmony ensures that the spontaneous self-determination of each individual substance is synchronized with that of all the rest of the individual substances to produce the world which has the highest degrees of harmony.

However, if one were to equate freedom with spontaneity, one would come to realize that freedom defined as spontaneity alone is insufficient. It is insufficient because on the metaphysical level, 1) all the substances are equally spontaneous if spontaneity means self-determination by the laws of the complete concept. For example, there are intelligent substances (humans) and non-intelligent substances (animals, trees, rocks), both of these are equally spontaneous because they determine themselves in virtue of their causal laws being internal to their complete concepts. In contrast, on the moral level, intelligent substances are active as they contribute to the

⁴⁰ This was discussed in chapter 3.

moral perfection of the world, while non-intelligent substances are passive as they don't contribute to the moral perfection of the world. If freedom were defined as spontaneity alone, then, intelligent and non-intelligent substances are equally free; whereas, for Leibniz, freedom has to do with moral activity which means only intelligent substances are free. 2) Furthermore, on the metaphysical level, for an intelligent substance, an action determined by a reason and an action determined by a passion are equally spontaneous because the determining grounds of both these actions are internal to the complete notion of the intelligent substance. However, on the moral level, an intelligent substance is active when it acts in accordance with a reason, and it is less active when it acts in accordance with a passion or a desire.

In light of this, one can see why defining freedom as spontaneity alone is insufficient. Freedom, on the metaphysical level requires spontaneity, but on the moral level, it requires activity. Thus, freedom requires rational activity in addition to spontaneity, while spontaneity doesn't require nor necessarily imply that an action is determined by a reason. Spontaneity alone doesn't guarantee that an intelligent substance is free because it cannot guarantee rational activity.

5.2. Activity & Passivity

To clarify this point, I will resort to the notions of activity and passivity which I have explained in chapter 2. Activity and passivity pertain to the degrees of perfection an individual substance has in its essence. The more degrees of perfection a substance has, the more active it is. This is because the more degrees of perfection a substance has, the more clear and distinct its knowledge is, and the more clear and distinct its expression is. Conversely, the less degrees of perfection a substance has, the more passive it is. This is because the less degrees of perfection a substance has, the less clear

and distinct (the more confused) its knowledge is, and the more confused its expression is.

Freedom pertains to moral activity, and activity has to do with the degrees of perfection a substance has. The more degrees of perfection a substance has, the better the substance is able to mirror, express, and accommodate to others. This is because the more degrees of perfection, the more clear and distinct the substance's knowledge is of its role as a contributor to the moral perfection of the world. Consequently, the more the substance's actions contribute to the moral perfection of the world.

In his *Discourse on Metaphysics*, section §32, Leibniz writes, "We also see that every substance has a perfect spontaneity (which becomes freedom in intelligent substances), that everything that happens to it is a consequence of its idea or its being, and that nothing determines it, except God alone" (*Discourse on Metaphysics* 64). Intelligent substances or minds, are distinguished from non-intelligent substances in that they are capable of reflection. It is the activity of reflection that makes their knowledge clear and distinct. It is the activity of reflection that makes intelligent substances active on the moral level. Non-intelligent substances are incapable of reflection which means they are passive on the moral level. However, on the metaphysical level, both substances, the morally active and the morally passive, are equally spontaneous. Spontaneity doesn't allow for a distinction between the moral activity and moral passivity, whereas freedom pertains to moral activity which is grounded in rational activity. Therefore, spontaneity alone is insufficient as a definition of freedom because it cannot guarantee rational activity.

In his, *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant criticized the idea of freedom as spontaneity alone,

Here one looks only to the necessity of the connection of events in a time series as it develops in accordance with natural law, whether the subject in which this development takes place is called *automaton materiale*, when the machinery is driven by matter, or with Leibniz *spiritual*, when it is driven by representations; and if the freedom of our will were none other than the latter (say, psychological and comparative but not also transcendental, i.e., absolute), then it would at bottom be nothing better than the freedom of a turnspit, which, when once it is wound up, also accomplishes its movements of itself. (CPrR 5:105-112)

Kant argued that this sort of freedom is a subterfuge. Whether it is a chain of representations or a chain of physical events, where natural necessity (whether psychological or physical) is involved, there can be no room for freedom. This is because, every succeeding state has its determining ground in its preceding state. The individual has no control over the future representations or actions because one cannot change the past. In so far as the future states are determined from the past states, this is still necessity. To pass this chain of determination, even if it is a determination from one's nature, as freedom is deception. A proper sense of freedom has to escape this necessity; that is, a true free action has to have its determining ground not in a past action which in turn had its determining ground in a prior past action and so on. A true free action must have its ground in something that is self-grounding⁴¹. Whereas this freedom of spontaneity, in Leibniz's case, where past representations determine the future representations, the individual substance is reduced to a *automaton spiritual* (CPrR 5:108).

⁴¹ The moral law is the only determining ground of a free will.

On the metaphysical level, Leibniz cannot answer this criticism. Determinism and the pre-established harmony reinforce spontaneity. But, both determinism and the pre-established harmony allow room for active and passive substances equally; active and passive substances are equally spontaneous. It is on the moral level then, that Leibniz has some room to respond to this objection. It is the rational activity of the intelligent substance that allows it to have clear and distinct knowledge. In virtue of this knowledge, a spontaneous intelligent substance becomes morally active in the sense that it can 'interrupt' its chain of determinations, its flow of perceptions and play an active role in contributing to the moral perfection of the world. An intelligent substance is free in so far as it is morally active. This activity is grounded in reflection which is consistent with and can be accounted for in the context of determinism.

In conclusion, in this chapter, my aim was to argue that for Leibniz, freedom for intelligent substances requires reflection and spontaneity. Spontaneity alone is insufficient because it cannot guarantee rational activity. Showing this required a distinction between the notion of spontaneity on the one hand, and the notions of activity and passivity on the other hand. In the next chapter, I will argue that freedom consists in rational activity and the inclination of the intelligent substance's will to the intellect's best judgement.

CHAPTER 6

NEIN, RATIONAL ACTIVITY!

In chapter five, I showed that spontaneity alone is not sufficient for freedom because spontaneity does not necessarily imply rational activity; whereas, freedom requires both spontaneity and rational activity. In this chapter, I will argue that Leibniz has the resources in his *Discourse on Metaphysics* for a better account of freedom, one that finds its basis in the activity of reflection in intelligent substances or minds. In this section, of this chapter, I will make the following argument: 1) Minds or intelligent substances mirror or imitate God in proportion to the degrees of perfection each has in its essence. 2) God's perception is always true, and his will is inclined to the best. Consequently, all the intelligent substances' perceptions are true, but each substance grasps this truth with a certain degree of clarity and distinctness in proportion to its degrees of perfection. Similarly, each substance's will is inclined to the apparent good in proportion to its degrees of perfection. 3) Minds are capable of reflection in virtue of which their knowledge becomes clear and distinct, even adequate. 4) When their will is inclined in accordance with what they know with clarity and distinctness, they imitate God the most. 6) God enjoys freedom in the highest degree, where by freedom, I mean inclination of his will in accordance with the principle of perfection. 7) Minds are free in proportion to the extent to which they mirror God.

6.1.1 Determined to Be Free

To begin with, Leibniz's ontology consists of substances: God being the most perfect mind, intelligent substances or minds, and non-intelligent substances or non-minded substances. In section §36, Leibniz says,

the quality that God has of being a mind himself takes precedence over all the other considerations he can have towards creatures; 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; a single mind is worth a whole world, since it does not merely express the world but it also knows it and it governs itself after the fashion of God. In this way, we may say that, although all substances express the whole universe, nevertheless the other substances express the world rather than God, while minds express God rather than the world. (Discourse on Metaphysics 67)

Also, in section §35, Leibniz says,

certainly minds are the most perfect beings and best express divinity. And since the whole nature, end, virtue, and function of substances is merely to express God and the universe, as has been sufficiently explained, there is no reason to doubt that the substances which express the universe with the knowledge of what they are doing and which are capable of knowing great truths about God and the universe, express it incomparably better than do those natures, which are brutish and incapable of knowing truths or completely destitute of sensation and knowledge. (Discourse on Metaphysics 66)

In these quotes, Leibniz claims that the quality of being a mind is what allows intelligent substances or minds to mirror God, while non-intelligent substances, because they lack minds, mirror the world. The world, however, is nothing over and above the combination of substances comprising it, both, the intelligent and the non-intelligent

ones. Therefore, non-intelligent substances mirror God indirectly, through mirroring the minds which mirror God.

The difference between intelligent and non-intelligent substances is that the former is capable of reflection while the latter isn't (Discourse on Metaphysics 65). The capacity to reflect is what gives minds the advantage of knowing what they are, what their purpose is, and grasping great truths about God and the world. This is because when they reflect, they reflect on themselves as they are reflecting on the attributes of God and his purposes. This will become clear shortly when I explain what reflection consists in. In contrast, non-minded substances lack the capacity to reflect; they are "brutish and incapable of knowing truths or completely destitute of sensation and knowledge" (Discourse on Metaphysics 63). However, these mirror the intelligent substances. Consequently, non-minded substances express, although in a confused and obscure manner, in their complete notion, the knowledge intelligent substances have of the world, yet they don't know or comprehend it as they are not minds.

In section §31, Leibniz says that God "is intimately united with all creatures, in proportion to their perfection" (Discourse on Metaphysics 63). Coupled with the previous claim that minds mirror God and non-minded substances mirror the world, this means that intelligent substances mirror God in proportion to the degrees of perfection entailed in their essence; similarly, non-intelligent substances mirror the world in proportion to the degrees of perfection entailed in their essence. This implies that the more degrees of perfection an intelligent substance has, the better it mirrors God. Likewise, the more degrees of perfection a non-intelligent substance has, the better it mirrors the world.

Now, what does Leibniz mean by the claim that intelligent substances mirror God? I take him to mean that, a substance imitates or expresses God because “every effect expresses its cause, and thus the essence of our soul is a certain expression, imitation or image of the divine essence, thought, and will, and of all the ideas comprised in it” (Discourse on Metaphysics 59). Consequently, it can be said that an intelligent substance mirrors God in two respects: its intellect is inclined to what God’s intellect is inclined to, and its will is inclined to what God’s will is inclined to, of course in proportion to the degrees of perfection it has. God’s intellect is inclined to what is true “since God’s view is always true” (Discourse on Metaphysics 47), and God’s will is inclined to what his intellect determines to be the best, that is, in accordance with the principle of perfection. This implies that an intelligent substance’s intellect is inclined to the true “since God’s view is always true, our perceptions are always true” (Discourse on Metaphysics 47), and its will is inclined to the apparent good (Discourse on Metaphysics 61), in proportion to the degrees of perfection entailed in its essence.

Now, *what does it mean for a substance’s intellect to be inclined to the true?*

Regarding the perceptions of all substances, especially intelligent substances, although all the perceptions a substance has are true, it is not the case that substances perceive this truth with clarity and distinctness. In fact, a substance’s perception of truth (its knowledge of the truth of its perceptions) ranges from confused and obscure to clear and distinct. More accurately, there are varieties of knowledge a substance can have, ranging from confused and obscure to clear and distinct. A perception is confused and obscure when the knowledge a substance has allows it to recognize that two things are different without being able to tell why they are different, i.e. without knowing what their “differences or properties consist in” (Discourse on Metaphysics 56). A perception

is clear and distinct when the knowledge a substance has allows it to examine the properties or marks of a thing and say whether a proposition about or the idea of that thing is true or false. Finally, there are degrees of distinct knowledge. For example, a complex concept can be broken down into simpler or primitive concepts. If the substance knows these primitive concepts, then its knowledge is adequate; otherwise, it is confused (Discourse on Metaphysics 56).

Now, intelligent substances have the capacity to reflect, in proportion to the degrees of perfection they have, while non-intelligent substances lack this capacity (Discourse on Metaphysics 65). I think what is involved when minds reflect is that the concepts which are known to them in a confused and obscure way are analyzed and broken down into their primitive constituent concepts. The more minds reflect, the more clear and distinct their knowledge is. This is because, the more they reflect on the properties or what is involved in their concepts, the better they are at discerning what is true⁴² from what is false in addition to knowing the reasons behind why a certain mark or property belongs to a certain concept. Since these minds mirror God, then their object of reflection is God, his purposes, his decrees, the nature and role substances play in bringing about the morally perfect world, etc. Consequently, the capacity to reflect is what gives minds the advantage of knowing what they are, what their purpose is, and grasping great and eternal truths about God and the world (Discourse on Metaphysics 66). Whereas, non-minded substances lack the capacity to reflect; they are “brutish and incapable of knowing truths or completely destitute of sensation and knowledge” (Discourse on Metaphysics 63). It is because of their ability to reflect that minds have

⁴² For Leibniz, for a concept to be a true concept, one must analyze it to its constitutive concepts to make sure they are logically consistent. This was his objection to Descartes’s ontological argument in section §23, i.e. that Descartes didn’t ensure that all the perfections of God are logically compatible. Rather, Descartes took this for granted as a true idea (Discourse on Metaphysics 56).

moral qualities, and it is because of the lack of this ability that non-minded substances lack moral qualities (Discourse on Metaphysics 65). It is in virtue of possessing this moral quality that minds enter “into society” (Discourse on Metaphysics 66) with God, the “monarch” of “the most perfect republic” (Discourse on Metaphysics 68). This is why Leibniz says that minds “alone can serve him freely and act with knowledge in imitation of the divine nature; a single mind is worth a whole world, since it does not merely express the world but it also knows it, and it governs itself after the fashion of God” (Discourse on Metaphysics 63).

Now that I have explained what Leibniz means by the varieties of knowledge and what the activity of reflection consists in, I want to relate this back to the claim that the intelligent substances mirror God. I said that minds mirror God in two respects: their intellect is inclined to the true, and their will is inclined to the apparent good, in both cases in proportion to the degrees of perfection they have.

First, pertaining to the claim that the intelligent substance’s intellect is inclined to the true, what I think Leibniz has in mind is that the more the substance reflects, the more clear and distinct its knowledge is. But, because the degrees of perfection a substance has affect the extent to which its intellect is inclined to the true, then the extent to which a substance is capable of reflection is conditioned by and proportional to its degrees of perfection. Consequently, the clarity and distinctness of the substance’s knowledge of God’s purposes, eternal truths, its own role in God’s plans etc. is also conditioned by its degrees of perfection.

What does it mean for an intelligent substance’s will to be inclined to the good?

Second, pertaining to the claim that the intelligent substance’s will is inclined to the apparent good. The will is, originally, in a state of indifference (Discourse on

Metaphysics 61). By indifference, I take Leibniz to mean that, originally, the will has no reason to be inclined to one thing rather than to another. It has the power either to do, or to do otherwise, or even to withhold from doing (Discourse on Metaphysics 61).

However, by freely decreeing to create the morally perfect world, God has created all substances in his image, especially the intelligent substances, to realize this teleological end. Therefore, the will of both God and substances is teleological, inclined, rather than necessitated to bring about the morally perfect world. Since the intelligent substance's will mirrors God's will, and since God's will is inclined by reasons in accordance with the principle of perfection to the best, then the intelligent substance's will is inclined by reasons to the apparent good. It is in this sense that God determines, the substance's will to the good without necessitating it (Discourse on Metaphysics 61).

Now, in light of this discussion about what it means for an intelligent substance's intellect to be inclined to the true and what it means for its will to be inclined to the apparent good, I want to argue that the freedom of an intelligent substance consists in its intellect's inclination to the true and its will's inclination to the apparent good, both in proportion to the degrees of perfection the intelligent substance has. I think that it is a plausible argument to make given that 1) intelligent substances mirror God and 2) that God enjoys freedom of the highest degree. Furthermore, 3) God's freedom consists in his intellect inclined to the true and his will is inclined by reasons, in accordance with the principle of perfection, to the best. Therefore, 4) an intelligent substance's freedom, given that it mirrors God, would have to consist, to a certain degree which is proportional to its degrees of perfection, in what God's freedom consists in. 5) This implies that the intelligent substance's freedom consists in the inclination of its intellect to the true. What this means is that the more the intelligent

substance is capable of reflection, the more clear and distinct its knowledge is. Also, the intelligent substance's will, mirroring God's will, is inclined by reasons to the apparent good. The more the substance's knowledge is clear and distinct, the stronger the inclination of its will is to the apparent good⁴³.

In section §30, Leibniz says, “the soul must guard itself against deceptive appearances [*les surprises des apparences*] through a firm will to reflect and neither to act nor to judge in certain circumstances except after having deliberated fully” (Discourse on metaphysics 61). In this quote, I understand Leibniz to be insisting on the importance of reflection prior to any act of will. It is because when an intelligent substance judges based on a confused idea, its will is inclined to the lesser good. Consequently, its actions contribute less perfection to the moral perfection of the world compared to what its action could have contributed had its judgement been based on clear and distinct knowledge.

As to the reason why an intelligent substance is susceptible to ‘deceptive appearances,’ this pertains to the substance's ability to reflect and consequently the inclination of its will to the apparent good are conditioned by the degrees of perfection an intelligent substance has, then a substance is free in proportion to the degrees of perfection it has. Because the substance was determined to have these degrees of perfection (On the Ultimate origination of Things 150), then it can be said that an intelligent substance is free to the extent it is determined to be. What this means is that 1) every intelligent substance is free to a different extent because each of them has a different degrees of perfection. 2) No intelligent substance will have clear and distinct

⁴³ This definition of freedom is not unprecedented in the early modern period. In *Meditation Four*, Descartes argued that one is free when one judges based on a clear and distinct idea where clarity and distinctness are the criteria of truth (Meditations on First Philosophy 84-85).

knowledge of every concept it has as every intelligent substance has a degree of imperfection. On the other hand, it is this lack in perfection which allows it to strive to perfect its knowledge, albeit to a certain extent; otherwise, without this lack, the intelligent substance will have nothing to strive for (Discourse on Metaphysics 62).

6.2. As Free As Determined to Be

What I aimed to show is that an intelligent substance's freedom is grounded in its rational activity which it is capable of in proportion to its degrees of perfection. As fitting and plausible as this definition of freedom is to a rationalist such as Leibniz, and in the context of determinism, this definition might raise the following concern: on the metaphysical level, it seems that, from all eternity, all the individual substances have been sufficiently determined by their complete notion to be what they are and to perform the actions that they do. Even, a certain combination of these substances has been sufficiently determined to produce the morally perfect world. Furthermore, all the individual substances are pre-determined by their degrees of perfection. Consequently, the amount of order they contribute to the moral perfection of the world and the extent to which they are active or passive has been pre-determined for them. With this in mind, even if intelligent substances are capable of the activity of reflection, what does this freedom amount to?

On the practical level, a finite mind can never know its complete notion, nor can a finite mind know all the physical and psychological factors determining its thoughts, actions, passions, and desires. It is this lack of knowledge of determining factors and limitations that ultimately allows an individual to think of herself as free, and thus, as morally responsible to contribute to the moral perfection of the world. Leibniz says,

“without considering what you cannot know and what can give you no light, act according to your duty, which you do know” (Discourse on Metaphysics 61). By duty, he means that individuals should focus on gaining knowledge of their nature, on reflecting on God’s plans, and their role in the world. The more knowledge they gain and the more this knowledge is clear and distinct, the less reluctant and the more acquiescent they become. Consequently, the more they become committed to their roles as contributors to the moral perfection of the world through their understanding, the freer they become.

In the *Discourse on Metaphysics*, sections §30 and §31, Leibniz offers a kind of assurance for individuals. Recall that each individual has a certain degree of perfection in proportion to which each individual is morally active and thereby free. It seems unfair that the extent to which individuals are free has been pre-determined by their degrees of perfection; it is even more unfair that individuals are pre-determined to have different degrees of perfection, and consequently some individuals are freer than others. Leibniz says that the degrees of perfection individuals are pre-determined to have is the ordinary grace God has included in their complete notions, as a first kind of assurance. Individuals, prior to God granting them ordinary grace, have “an original imperfection or limitation connatural to all” (Discourse on Metaphysics 62) of them which is the reason why they are liable to err (Discourse on Metaphysics 62). Because of this ordinary grace, individuals are to some extent good, and their actions can contribute a certain degree of perfection to the moral perfection of the world.

Also, there is extra-ordinary grace, a second kind of assurance, which is distinct from ordinary grace. Extra-ordinary grace, Leibniz says, doesn’t depend on God’s foreknowledge of the future actions of individuals, nor does it depend on God’s

inspection of their natural dispositions (the dispositions of individuals prior to God giving them ordinary grace), nor can one assume that extra-ordinary grace given by God without good reason (Discourse on Metaphysics 62). The fact is, finite minds can never know what God takes into account and to what extent in his dispensation of extra-ordinary grace. The only thing individuals can do is strive to do their duty, and hope that they will be granted extra-ordinary assistance because there is no reason not to receive it.

Finally, the third kind of assurance is that God knows there is a degree of imperfection in every individual, and sometimes the individual might fail to incline his will to the apparent good because of a confused understanding. Leibniz says that God has allowed such events to pass because he can “derive a greater good from it” (Discourse on Metaphysics 61), and that the world which contains these events is, in fact, the most perfect world. This is an occasion “to recognize the *altitudinem divinitarum*, the depth and abyss of divine wisdom, without seeking a detail that involves infinite considerations” (Discourse on Metaphysics 61) because God has determined the world in a way where every event is paid back with interest (Discourse on Metaphysics 61).

All in all, I do think that individual substances, in virtue of their reflection and moral activity, are free. The reason is that, in the least, rational activity is a useful tool which aids in navigating determinism. If one were to bracket-off the teleological element in Leibniz’s account, the idea that freedom is grounded in rational activity and in gaining knowledge is already found in Spinoza’s *Ethics*. The more an individual recognizes that there is no escaping determinism and that the only way to preserve one’s existence is to gain knowledge of the nature of the world, the better one is able to

navigate determinism. In Leibniz's account, however, God has created substances in his image to bring about the morally perfect world. Intelligent substances have a purpose to fulfil and in that process, they become closer to God. Their ability to reflect helps them fulfil their purpose and become closer to God. This is the kind of freedom one would expect to find in religious contexts.

In conclusion, the purpose of this chapter was to show that one could argue for a sense of freedom that is rooted in rational activity. That is, intelligent substances have the capacity to reflect so that they gain more knowledge of their own nature, of God's purpose, and of their role in bringing about the morally perfect world. It is only when they act with clear and distinct knowledge that they are free. This is because when they act on clear and distinct knowledge, they contribute to the moral perfection of the world which is the purpose God tasked them with.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I set out to examine Leibniz's compatibilist view, where he claims that determinism entails freedom for individual substances. In this process, two definitions of freedom for individual substance were eliminated: the first is freedom as the ability of the individual substance to do otherwise while retaining its identity. This failed because it was incompatible with Leibniz's principle of individuation as it is understood in the *Discourse on Metaphysics*. The second definition is freedom as spontaneity which proved to be insufficient as freedom requires rational activity and spontaneity; whereas spontaneity doesn't require nor necessarily entail rational activity. In the final part, I argued for a third definition of freedom which I think Leibniz's account in the *Discourse on Metaphysics* has the resources to support. On this definition, intelligent substances are free to the extent to which they mirror God, of course the extent to which they mirror God is determined by their degrees of perfection. This definition of freedom entails that the more the substance reflects, the more its knowledge of God's purposes, of its nature, and of its role become clear and distinct. Therefore, the more its will is inclined to the action required by its role as a contributor to the moral perfection of the world.

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