

**Spontaneity and Freedom in Leibniz**  
Michael J. Murray  
Franklin and Marshall College

**I. Introduction**

In the history of metaphysics philosophers have disagreed, sometimes with vigor, over whether or not an agent can be free and responsible in choosing, while also being determined to so choose. In contemporary metaphysics those who think an agent can be free and responsible while so determined we call “compatibilists” and those who do not we call “libertarians.”

Historically, those who are committed to libertarianism are usually so committed for at least one of two reasons. First, some are convinced that the very idea of an agent acting freely and responsibly is incoherent when sufficient conditions for the choice obtain, whether internal or external to the agent. If, it is claimed, the choice of the agent can be traced back to states of affairs which are sufficient for the choice, the choice is simply a consequence of those conditions, and this not an act of the *agent herself*. As a result, such choices are neither free nor something for which the agent is morally responsible.

Others, however, are committed to libertarianism for theological reasons. The intuition here is that if the agent is determined to do what she does by external forces, then the agent is not ultimately responsible for her actions and, what is worse, God is. As a result, libertarians of this sort aim to preserve the notion of free and responsible action in the world as a way of preventing culpability from working its way back to God. Libertarian freedom provides the needed buffer.

Likewise, those who are committed to compatibilism are so committed for one of two reasons. First, some are convinced that the very idea of an agent acting freely and responsibly is incoherent unless the agent is the ultimate source of the action. However, the compatibilist thinks that ultimacy requires (merely?) that cognitive and/or conative states internal to the agent be the proximate cause of the act. Further, the compatibilist thinks that this is a sufficient condition for an act being free. As a result the compatibilist might agree, and find it uninteresting, that the internal states which are the proximate

cause of the act are themselves, in turn, caused by other states, perhaps even other states external to the agent.

Other compatibilists, more rare among metaphysicians these days, are motivated by theological considerations. The Reformed theological tradition is noted, or perhaps notorious, for endorsing compatibilism on such grounds. This tradition regards God's unfettered exercise of providence over nature to be a centerpiece of proper theology. Thus, Reformed theologians typically defend the claim that all events in the created order happen as a result of unconditional divine decrees. In order for God to exercise robust control over creation, all events in the created order must find their ultimate cause in God. Thus Francis Turretin, a typical seventeenth century Reformed theologian, affirms that the divine decrees must be held to necessitate each event, offering five arguments for the claim:

- (1) All things were decreed of God by an eternal and unchangeable counsel; hence they cannot but take place in the appointed time. Otherwise the counsel of God would be changed, which the Scriptures declare to be impossible. . .
- (2) Scripture predicts such necessity . . . "The Son of Man goeth, as it was determined" (Luke 22:22) . . .
- (3) The most fortuitous and casual things are said to happen necessarily. . .
- (4) As all things are foreseen by an infallible foreknowledge, so they must necessarily happen infallibly.
- (5) They are certainly predicted as future so that the word of God cannot fail, nor can the Scripture be broken. Therefore, they must happen necessarily . . . (Turretin 1688-90: 320)

Still, in spite of the affirmation of the necessitation of all events by unconditional divine decree, Reformed thinkers still believed there to be room for creaturely freedom. Thus, Turretin continues:

Although in relation to the first cause, all things are said to be necessary, yet taken according to themselves, certain things can be free, contingent, and fortuitous, because each thing is and may be judged according to proximate and particular causes . . . Hence we might rightly say, "Adam sinned freely and necessarily": the latter with respect to the decree and the futuration of the thing; the former with respect to his will and as to the mode. For no matter what the necessity of the decree, still Adam sinned voluntarily and consequently most freely. (Turretin 1688-90: 321)

Yet while these libertarians and compatibilists come down on opposite sides of the question of whether or not freedom and determination are compatible, they all agree that free and responsible acting requires that the agent be the locus of explanation in some central sense. And thus each camp is, in its own way, committed to the claim that

when it comes to free action, the explanation for the act properly terminates in the agent in some important sense. This internal, self-initiating character of free acts is what both compatibilists and libertarians mean when they talk of “spontaneity.”

Careful attention to the way in which figures in the history of metaphysics use the word 'spontaneous' (and its antonyms, such as 'violent' and 'coerced') is useful in getting to the heart of their respective positions on freedom, because it allows one to discern just what kinds of determination each figure takes to be consistent or inconsistent with freedom. For each different sort of determination which presents a threat to freedom, there is a corresponding variety of “spontaneity.” But what sorts of determinism were seen to be threatening to freedom in the seventeenth century, and what sorts of spontaneity were touted as necessary conditions for free action?

In his *Institutio*, the Reformed theologian Turretin, in the work mentioned earlier, provides a list of six sorts of determination or necessity that were regarded by various figures as inconsistent with spontaneity, and thus with freedom. They are as follows:

First, the necessity of coercion arising from an external agent (he who is compelled, contributing nothing). Second, physical and brute necessity occurring in inanimates and brutes who act from blind impulse of nature or a brute instinct and innate appetite, without, however, any light of reason . . . and without any choice. The third necessity is the necessity of the creature's dependence on God . . . (to wit, the government of providence: [1] in the antecedent decree; [2] in the subsequent execution). This necessity is called hypothetical both of infallibility (with respect to prescience) and of immutability (with respect to the decree and actual concurrence). Fourth, rational necessity of determination to one thing by a judgment of the practical intellect (which the will cannot resist). Fifth, moral necessity or of slavery arising from good or bad habits and the presentation of objects to their faculties. . . . Hence it will happen that the will (free in itself) is so determined either to good or to evil that it cannot but act either well or badly. . . . Sixth, the necessity of the existence of the thing or of the event, in virtue of which, when a thing is, it cannot but be. (Turretin 1688-90: 661-2)

Advocates of the most extreme forms of libertarianism in the period would require that free actions are not determined in any of the first five respects. Leibniz, no friend of libertarianism, does not want to go so far. But Leibniz sees more of these sources of determination as threats to freedom than are traditionally acknowledged. In this paper I will argue that Leibniz takes freedom-preserving spontaneity to be inconsistent with the first three types of necessity described here. In addition, I will argue that Leibniz has

similar difficulties with necessity of the fourth and fifth sorts when the necessity is understood to be metaphysical or physical necessity.

To that end, I begin, in section II, with an examination of a variety of spontaneity often endorsed by Leibniz, which clearly will not serve his deeper metaphysical aims. This sort of freedom is the sort Leibniz attributes to substances in virtue of his basic metaphysical commitments, which include the claim that substances contain within themselves the complete *ratio* for all of their properties. In section III I then go on to show that Leibniz rejects the first two sorts of necessitation, physical necessity and coercion. In section IV, I show that Leibniz is willing to accept the claim that the will is necessitated by practical deliberation and/or moral habits, as long as the sense of necessity is carefully qualified. Finally, in section V I argue that Leibniz rejects the third sort of necessity, i.e., divine necessitation, by arguing that such necessitation, if present would both undermine creaturely freedom and render God culpable for creaturely sin. From this I will conclude that Leibniz has many more anti-compatibilist sympathies that is commonly recognized.

## **II. Freedom and Spontaneity-for-free**

Throughout his philosophical career Leibniz affirms and reaffirms his commitment to the claim that spontaneity is a necessary condition for freedom. The oft-cited definition of freedom from the *Theodicy* is typical:

I have shown that freedom, according to the definition required in the schools of theology, consists in intelligence, which involves a clear knowledge of the object of deliberation, in spontaneity, whereby we determine, and in contingency, that is, in the exclusion of logical or metaphysical necessity. Intelligence is, as it were, the soul of freedom, and the rest is as its body and foundation. The free substance is self-determining and that according to the motive of good perceived by the understanding, which inclines it without compelling it: and all the conditions of freedom are comprised in these few words. (H §288; G VI 288)

And shortly thereafter he affirms the standard doctrine of spontaneity as follows:

The spontaneity of our actions can therefore no longer be questioned; and Aristotle has defined it well, saying that an action is *spontaneous* when its source is in him who acts. . . . Thus it is that our actions and our wills depend entirely upon us. It is true that our actions and our wills depend entirely upon us. (H §301; G VI 296)

Clearly, Leibniz thinks there is something about his account which guarantees that we act with spontaneity. What is it? The answer can be discerned from a variety of texts, of which the following are typical:

True spontaneity is common to us and all simple substances, and . . . in intelligent or free substance this becomes a mastery over its actions. That cannot be better explained than by the System of Pre-established Harmony, which I indeed propounded some years ago. There I pointed out that by nature every simple substance has perception, and that its individuality consists in the perpetual law which brings about the sequence of perceptions that are assigned to it, springing naturally from one another. . . . Whence it follows that the soul has in itself a perfect spontaneity, so that it depends only upon God and itself in its action. (H §291; G VI 289-90)<sup>1</sup>

In short, Leibniz thinks that his doctrine of pre-established harmony secures the spontaneity of substances “for free.” Seen in a certain way, Leibniz’s defense of spontaneity is not surprising. After all, the pre-established harmony doctrine does entail that the complete explanation for any state of a substance is contained in the prior state of that substance. And thus, Leibnizian substances seem to have all the spontaneity it is possible to have. Given the pre-established harmony, spontaneity seems to be secured for free.

On the other hand, securing spontaneity-for-free, as Leibniz so often does when writing on freedom, seems in many respects to undercut his own view. The reason for this is that it simply does not serve to nail down the distinction between free and unfree action that spontaneity was supposed to secure. Rather, spontaneity is invoked, by all parties, as a way of excluding from the domain of free action both i) those acts that are directly caused by external agents, and ii) coerced acts. On the former we find Bishop Bramhall, as one representative example, claiming:

For the clearer understanding of these things, and to know what spontaneity is, let us consult awhile with the Schools about the distinct order of voluntary or involuntary actions. Some acts proceed wholly from an extrinsical cause; as the throwing of a stone upwards, a rape, or the drawing of a Christian by plain force to the idol’s temple; these are called violent acts. Secondly, some proceed from an intrinsical cause, but without any manner of knowledge of the end, as the falling of a stone downwards; these are called natural acts. . . . So then the formal reason of liberty is election. The necessary requisite to election is deliberation. Deliberation implyeth the actual use of reason. But deliberation and election cannot possibly subsist with an extrinsical predetermination to one. How should a man deliberate or choose which way to go, who knows that all ways are shut against him and made impossible to

him, but only one? This is the genuine sense of these words voluntary and spontaneous in this question. (Bramhall 1839: Number 8, 83)

And later, with respect to coercion, Bramhall continues:

All this proceeds from the sensitive passion of fear, which is a perturbation arising from the expectation of some imminent evil. . . . Fear is commonly of one, deliberation of more than one; fear is of those things which are not in our power, deliberation of those things which are in our power; fear ariseth many times out of natural antipathies, but in these inconveniences of nature deliberation hath no place at all. In a word, fear is an enemy to deliberation, and betrayeth the succours of the soul. If the horse did deliberate, he should consult with reason, whether it were more expedient for him to go that way or not; he would represent to himself all the dangers both of going and staying, and compare the one with the other, and elect that which is less evil; he should consider whether it were not better to endure a little hazard, than ungratefully and dishonestly to fail in his duty towards his master, who did breed him and doth feed him. This the horse doth not; neither is it possible for him to do it. (Bramhall 1839: Number 8, 83)

If we are to take Leibniz at his word in the *Theodicy* and numerous other texts where he endorses the spontaneity-for-free doctrine, we will have to conclude that Leibniz holds that the Christian being dragged into the idol temple, and the person who is coerced by fear, *are* acting spontaneously.

This would be a very high price to pay, and one surely Leibniz did not want to pay. In the context of discussing freedom, at any rate, Leibniz was going to have to deliver some way of making the distinction which does not simply fall out of the pre-established harmony. Thus, readers of Leibniz must dispense with the sort of confident bluster one gets when he says , for example, that:

There is no coercion in voluntary action, because, even though numerous representations of external things might exist in our minds, our voluntary actions are always spontaneous, because such acts have their causes within the agent. The theory of the harmony between body and mind pre-established by God from the beginning explains this more clearly than has been possible until now. (Leibniz, 965:108; G VI 455)

### **III. Freedom from external causes**

Although Leibniz frequently insists that spontaneity-for-free gives him the spontaneity requisite for genuine freedom, we have seen that he cannot consistently maintain such a view. And in fact, in numerous other texts he backs down from this bold claim, and

offers an account of spontaneity and external determination that moves him closer to a traditional notion of spontaneity.

Leibniz thinks that there are two types of external quasi-causes which must be absent for spontaneous action to occur. First, and most obviously, it must be the case that the action of the agent is not physically quasi-caused. In the *Theodicy* Leibniz remarks:

When we act freely we are not being forced, as would happen if we were pushed onto a precipice and thrown from top to bottom; and when we are not prevented from having a free mind when we deliberate, as would happen if we were given a potion to deprive us of discernment. (H §34; G VI 122)

Second, Leibniz holds, in keeping with tradition, that free acts must be free of coercion. In the following, he describes two sorts of “constraint” which are incompatible with freedom, the second of which is coercion:

As for 'constraint,' it is useful to distinguish two sorts: physical, as when a man is imprisoned against his will or thrown off a precipice; and moral, as for example the fear of a greater evil. . . . (NE II.xxi.13)

In both of these cases, the acts are not spontaneous because they can be attributed to an external source or quasi-cause.

Since Leibniz is committed to the claim that each state of a substance can be fully explained in terms of its own law of the series alone, he is going to have to provide some account to distinguish those states of the substance that are genuinely spontaneous from those that are rightly ascribed to external quasi-causes. In various texts Leibniz appears to provide three related but distinct accounts of how such discriminations might be made. According to the first account, spontaneous states consist of clear perceptions in the monad, while confused perceptions are not spontaneous. In a published response to Bayle, Leibniz employs this distinction:

Everyone who accepts immaterial indivisible substances attributes to them a simultaneous multitude of perceptions, and a *spontaneity* in their reasonings and their voluntary acts. I am therefore only extending that *spontaneity* to their confused and involuntary thoughts, and showing that their nature is to contain everything that is external. . . . In another sense, however, it is reasonable to call those things which consist in confused thoughts, through which there is involuntariness and incomprehension, *perturbations* (as the Ancients did) or passions. And this is what in ordinary speech we not unreasonably attribute to the conflict of the body with the mind, since our confused thoughts represent the body or the flesh, and constitute our imperfection. (Woolhouse and Francks, 1997: 118)<sup>2</sup>

Here Leibniz simply identifies the spontaneous states of a substance with its clear perceptions.

In other texts, Leibniz offers a second account. On this second account, spontaneous states are those which result when an agent moves from having less clear to more clear perceptions, and thus from lesser to greater overall perfection:

As I have already said, anything which occurs in what is strictly a substance must be a case of 'action' in the metaphysically rigorous sense of something which occurs in the substance spontaneously, arising out of its own depths; for no created substance can have an influence upon any other, so that everything comes to a substance from itself (though ultimately from God). But if we take 'action' to be an endeavour towards perfection, and 'passion' to be the opposite, then genuine substances are active only when their perceptions (for I grant perceptions to all of them) are becoming better developed and more distinct, just as they are passive only when their perceptions are becoming more confused. . . . From that point of view a body can be said to 'act' when there is spontaneity in its change, and to 'undergo passively' when it is pushed or blocked by another body; just as with the true action or passion of a true substance, we can take to be its 'action', and attribute to the substance itself, any change through which it comes closer to its own perfection; and can take to be its 'passion', and attribute to an outside cause any change in which the reverse happens. (NE II.xxi.72).<sup>3</sup>

Here, whether or not a state is spontaneous depends on facts about the immediately preceding state of the substance. If the transition from state to state is one in which the substance moves from lesser to greater perfection, then the succeeding state is spontaneous, and if not, it is externally quasi-caused.

There is what appears to be a still further account in other texts. On this account, spontaneity depends on the explanatory relationship between states of distinct substances. Specifically, if state  $S_1$  of substance  $B_1$  is a clear perception, and  $S_1$  provides us with an explanation for the existence or coming to be of a state  $S_2$  of some distinct substance  $B_2$ , then  $B_1$  is active with respect to  $S_1$  and  $B_2$  is passive with respect to  $S_2$ .

[W]hat is active in certain respects is passive from another point of view; active in so far as what we distinctly know in it serves to explain what takes place in another, and passive in so far as the explanation of what takes place in it is to be found in that which is distinctly known in another. (AG 219-20; G VI 615)

In virtue of what, one might wonder, could the state of one substance serve to ground the explanations of the state of another? The answer, found earlier in the text, is that in

harmonizing substances, God brings it about that  $S_2$  exhibits  $B_2$  in order to make its co-existence with  $S_1$  harmonious.

My interest here is not in arguing for the ultimate consistency of these accounts or for their relative merits taken severally. What is important is that we see that Leibniz was not content to rest with spontaneity-for-free. Such spontaneity could not distinguish free acts from physically determined nor coerced acts—something Leibniz saw a need to do, and for good reason.

#### **IV. Freedom from Psychological Determinism**

Above we saw that some figures in the seventeenth century were keen to preserve another sort of spontaneity in freedom. This is the sort of spontaneity that preserves causal independence of volitions from the deliverances of the practical intellect. In other words, this variety of spontaneity aimed to exclude psychological determinism or, more specifically, volitions which are causally necessitated by psychological antecedents. Two questions arise concerning this sort of spontaneity. First, why did various thinkers want to endorse spontaneity of this sort? Or, more specifically, what sort of problem was psychological determinism of volition via practical intellect seen to present? Second, what reasons are there to think that Leibniz wanted to endorse spontaneity of this sort?

This second question is especially significant since one might think there is good reason to suppose that psychological determinism would not trouble Leibniz at all. There are at least two reasons for this. First, he seems to accept inter-substantial quasi-causal determinism at the phenomenal level of description. Second, also seems to accept intra-substantial causal determinism between adjoining temporal states of a substance at the ground floor metaphysical level.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, if Leibniz wanted to reject psychological determinism as I claim, one wants to know what could motivate such a rejection. Surely, Leibniz was not motivated by the libertarian intuitions outlined earlier, according to which freedom is incompatible with sufficient conditions. Nonetheless, there are passages where Leibniz nonetheless indicates that *efficient causal* sufficient conditions are not compatible with choice. Here are two:

Mr. Hobbes refuses to listen to anything about a moral necessity either, on the ground that everything really happens through physical causes. But there is nonetheless reason to draw an important distinction between the necessity which constrains the wise to do good, and which is called *moral*, even existing in relation to God, and that blind necessity . . . (H *Reflections on Hobbes* §3; G VI 390)<sup>5</sup>

All the natural forces of bodies are subject to *mechanical laws*, and all the natural forces of mind are subject to *moral laws*. The former follow the order of efficient causes, and the latter follow the order of *final causes*. The former operate without liberty, like a watch, the latter are exercised with liberty. (emphasis mine) (LC V 124; G VII 419)

What distinction did Leibniz mean to make in those passages where he endorses “moral necessity” and “moral laws” in choice but not “physical necessity” nor “mechanical laws”?

Elsewhere I have argued that Leibniz’s use of the phrase “moral necessity” in the context of the psychology of choice was meant to signify an alliance with one well-established tradition in faculty psychology (Murray 1996: 25-60). This connection is important, in part because one of the distinctive features of this tradition is that it endorses sufficient reasons for choice while denying that psychological antecedents physically necessitate choices. Why think Leibniz appropriated this tradition? I turn to that question presently.

Those in the faculty psychology tradition agreed that free action was to be explained ultimately in terms of the activity of intellect and will. Without going into details, those in this tradition held that the intellect carries on the task of deliberating about alternative courses of action and issuing practical judgments, while the will chooses one course of action judged to be good. But even the most compatibilist-friendly participants in this tradition would firmly reject the claim that practical judgments could physically necessitate the will (with one exception: the case in which the course of action under consideration is loving God ‘understood in his essence’). Courses of action judged to be good, they argued, could “incline” the will but necessitate it. All of them took this to entail that consideration of any such course of action failed physically and metaphysically to necessitate choice.<sup>6</sup>

There are a dizzying variety of variations on this basic theme. Some--Scotus and Molina for example--held that even after all the evidence was in from practical deliberation, the will maintained an utter indifference, remaining free to choose the object judged best, some lesser object, or no object at all.<sup>7</sup> Others found nothing unsettling about the will infallibly choosing the single course of action judged best, as long as metaphysical and physical contingency were maintained (Bellarmine for example, see Bellarmine 1619, Book III, c.7).<sup>8</sup> Of course, exactly how the 'infallibility' was to be understood was far from clear.

At the end of the sixteenth century there are roughly two classes of views held by those within the scholastic faculty psychology tradition: intellectualists and voluntarists.<sup>9</sup> Intellectualists were wedded to the metaphysical impossibility of 'self-moved movers.' As a result, they held that the will could only form a volition when it was moved to do so by some, we might say, sufficient reason--in this case, a practical judgment that such-and-such course of action should be chosen here and now.

Critics of this view argued that it involved a vicious intellectual determinism since it appeared to make the will determined by the practical intellect. This, they argued, would undercut the freedom of the will since the operation of the intellect, even in practical deliberation, was regarded as determined. Some tried to thwart this objection by arguing that the will exercises control over the process of practical deliberation, rendering the activity of the intellect free, albeit in a derivative sense. However, critics argued that this view falls prey to an equally vicious infinite regress, since the intellectualists required that each act of will in turn required a judgment of the intellect to move it.

Voluntarists held that the aim of practical deliberation was rather to determine a slate of acceptable possible courses of action, from which the will was then able to select one. Critics contended, among other things, that the view was metaphysically impossible since it required that the will be reduced from potency to act by itself, making it a "self-moved mover."

The voluntarist view is not strictly relevant here since Leibniz makes it no part of his own intellectual heritage. On the other hand, the developments within the intellectualist tradition are critical. Any plausible defense of intellectualism would have to show how one could avoid determinism on the one hand, and the vicious infinite

regress on the other. How might this be done? One way perhaps is to press hard on the 'inclination without necessitation' claim. One could then argue that if the intellect judges a certain course of action to be best, such a judgment might not suffice to physically determine the choice of the will, and yet the will might find all other courses of action correspondingly less attractive, and thus would never in fact choose these other courses.

Is this view coherent? That is, is it open to the intellectualist i) to affirm that the will does infallibly follow the last practical judgment but also ii) to deny that the last practical judgment *causally determines* the choice of the will? One notable school of Spanish Jesuits, the "moral necessitarians," thought so. The two originators of this third main variant, Diego Ruiz de Montoya and Diego Granado, argued that this pair of positions could be maintained, and viewed this as an alternative to voluntarism and the prevailing intellectualist model. They claimed that while the choice of the will follows infallibly given the last practical judgment, this relationship fell short of physical necessitation, and they described the modality governing the relationship between last practical judgment and choice as having *necessitas moralis*, moral necessity.<sup>10</sup>

The moral necessitarian view itself spawned a host of variants in the seventeenth century. A central point of contention among critics and defenders was whether or not moral necessity was in fact distinguishable from physical necessity. Moral necessitarians argued that it was, and expended a good deal of effort, especially after 1650, trying to tease out a distinction. Thus we find numerous passages like these:

Thus, a subject has a metaphysical necessity to act when . . . if it failed to happen, two contradictories would be given, which is certainly repugnant. Something is physically necessary, however, when it could not fail to happen naturally and without a miracle, even if it could happen miraculously. Thus, finally, something is morally necessary when, by way of inclination, that which usually, or always, or almost always is accustomed to occur, cannot fail to happen, even if it can fail absolutely or in light of a law of nature.<sup>11</sup>

In things and in objects there exist many necessities concerning existence or essence. The first is called Moral, and this occurs when a thing occurs always or almost always in the same manner. But this necessity does not exclude Physical and Metaphysical contingency: not Physical because the thing is able to happen otherwise Physically; not Metaphysically because of the fact that if some other thing would happen, a contradiction does not follow. The second necessity is Physical, which excludes Moral contingency because out of the nature of the thing it exists as it does, since it cannot naturally happen otherwise since the thing does not have the Physical power to the opposite

effect; for example, when fire is applied to a combustible patient and it does not burn, it is a miracle, and thus it cannot happen otherwise naturally. But this necessity does not exclude Metaphysical contingency because if combustion did not occur a contradiction would not follow. The third necessity is Metaphysical, which excludes all contingency, Moral and Physical, because it is impossible that a contradiction ever occur, and the Physical power for this to occur cannot be given, and this is the highest of all necessities.<sup>12</sup>

Early advocates of moral necessity were unwilling to regard the will as morally necessitated in every act of choice. However, as defenders began to see ways of pressing the view into theological service (explaining foreknowledge, providence, and election), some began to argue that every volition was morally necessitated. This view seems to have been the majority view, for example, among Franciscans at the Sorbonne during the 1670's, the period when coincidentally Leibniz was in Paris. The following derives from a definitive defense of the position from the Parisian Franciscan Jeronimo de Sousa in 1680:

You ask . . . whether the will, whenever it acts, always acts in a morally necessitated way. . . . I respond affirmatively, for this necessarily agrees with the will; just as it is necessary that the will have the good for its motive object when it operates, for this good both lures and moves and, and also predetermines and necessitates it.<sup>13</sup>

The affinities between this moral necessitarian view and Leibniz's own views on the psychology of freedom are striking. Compare the following text, for example:

From this it can be understood what is that 'indifference' which accompanies freedom. Just as contingency is opposed to metaphysical necessity, so indifference excludes not only metaphysical but also physical necessity. It is in a way (*quodammodo*) a matter of physical necessity that God should do everything in the best possible way. . . . It is also a matter of physical necessity that those confirmed in the good . . . should act in accordance with virtue . . . . Again, it is a matter of physical necessity that something heavy tends downwards . . . . But it is not a matter of physical necessity that men should choose something in this life, however specious and apparent a good may be; though there is sometimes a very strong presumption to that effect. It indeed may never be possible for there to be an absolute metaphysical indifference, such that the mind is in exactly the same state with respect to each contradictory, and that anything should be in a state of equilibrium with, so to speak, its whole nature. . . . Yet the mind has this much physical indifference, that it is not even subject to physical necessity, far less metaphysical; that is, no universal reason or law of nature is assignable from which any creature, no matter how perfect and well-informed about the state of the mind, can infer with certainty what the mind will choose—at any rate naturally, without the extraordinary concurrence of God. (MP 101-2; C 21-2)<sup>14</sup>

One might think that Leibniz could not have been a partisan of Moral Necessity since he sometimes denies one of his central claims, namely that the will does or must infallibly

follow the last practical judgment of the intellect. For example, in one place Leibniz remarks, “we do not always follow the latest judgment of the practical understanding when we resolve to will.”(H §51; G VI 130) Careful examination makes it clear, however, that Leibniz’s motives for denying this maxim are not libertarian. Instead the denial springs from his account of the role of passions in choice.

According to most variants of the intellectualist tradition, passions affect choice by influencing the way in which deliberation itself takes place. We can see this at work in Aquinas’ account of *akrasia*. On his view, passions affect choice by changing the premises that the intellect employs in deducing the last practical judgment. I know that sweet things are good to taste and I know that high fat foods are bad for me. So, as I examine the piece of chocolate cake, my practical intellect must come to regard it either as a sweet thing (to be enjoyed) or as an unhealthy (to be avoided). I might well have some understanding of the fact that the thing before me is both. But when it comes to the termination of practical deliberation, only one of these renderings becomes salient. The role of passions for Aquinas is to influence which of the two judgments will become effective.<sup>15</sup>

Leibniz’s own account of the role of passions has to be somewhat more direct since, for him, passions are themselves appetitions resulting from unconscious or confused perceptions or apprehensions. In keeping with the fundamental metaphysical claim that all properties of monads are either perceptions or appetitions, Leibniz counts passions among the latter. As such, passions compete with the *conatus* induced by practical judgment.

Thus, when we see Leibniz holding that the last practical judgment of the intellect is not always effective in moving the will to choice, it is not because he is departing from the moral necessitarian tradition in thinking that the will can choose something judged less good. Instead, Leibniz is merely admitting that, in addition to the appetites generated by the conscious process of practical deliberation, confused perceptions unconsciously generate competing unconscious appetites. As a result, although choice is not determined by the deliverances of practical reason, it *is* determined by the deliverances of perception *tout court* including adequate ideas, which figure into practical deliberation, and confused

imperceptible ideas, which give rise to competing passions (AG 194; G III 401). Thus, the full text of the passage cited above, reads as follows:

Besides, we do not always follow the latest judgment of the practical understanding when we resolve to will; but we always follow, in our willing, the result of all the inclinations that come from the direction both of reasons and passions, and this often happens without an express judgment of the understanding. (H §51: G VI 130)

Of course, even when the practical intellect does issue in a final judgment, the inclinations induced by this judgment can still be overridden by desires induced by inadequate ideas. As a result, only those rational agents who are free from passions altogether or who have their passions thoroughly harnessed are capable of choosing in accord with the deliverances of practical reason alone:

I think it is only God's will that will always follow the judgments of the understanding: all creatures are subject to some passions, or to perceptions at least, that are not composed entirely of what I call *adequate ideas*. . . . As for us, in addition to judgments of the understanding, of which we have an express knowledge, there are mingled therewith confused perceptions of the senses, and these beget passions and even imperceptible inclinations, of which we are not always aware. These movements often thwart the judgment of the practical understanding. (H §310: G VI 300)<sup>16</sup>

Thus, while Leibniz does not hold that willing is subject simply to the deliverances of the practical intellect, he does hold that willing is the result of a 'vector sum' desires for those things that the are apprehended as good, whether by way of adequate or inadequate ideas.

I have argued that Leibniz deploys moral necessity in much the way that the Jesuit moral necessitarian tradition did. Does this mean that Leibniz, in fact, appropriated this tradition for himself? It is worth noting that Leibniz explicitly indicates his agreement with this tradition in the correspondence with DesBosses. It is also notable that some early critics of the *Theodicy* criticized it because (they claimed) it appropriated this Jesuit tradition. Furthermore, defenders of Leibniz replied to these critics by defending this Jesuit tradition.<sup>17</sup>

Others have expressed doubts about the similarity between Jesuit and Leibnizian moral necessitation. Those who have commented on the matter and its relevance for the issue at hand have said that Leibniz means to distinguish moral necessity from:

- (1) Only metaphysical necessity (Spinozistic necessity)
- (2) “Blind necessitation”
- (3) Both metaphysical and physical necessitation.

Robert Sleight (Sleight 1998: 1264-9) says (1), Robert Adams (2),<sup>18</sup> while I have argued for (3).

By “blind necessitation” Adams means necessitation by factors that are, as he says “value-free.” Adams points us towards a passage in which Leibniz explains at least one problem he has with Spinozist necessitarianism.<sup>19</sup> In the *Theodicy* (H §173) Leibniz mentions that Spinoza “appears to have explicitly taught a blind necessity, having denied to the author of things understanding and will, and imagining that good and perfection relate only to us and not to him.” Adams claims that Leibniz here objects not so much to the necessitarianism, but to the *blindness* of the necessity, i.e., that the necessitation takes place without reference to “good and perfection.” According to Adams, Leibniz rejects metaphysical and physical necessity in free choice, human and divine, not because they are necessitating, but because they do not necessitate by way of “good and perfection.”<sup>20</sup> Moral necessity, then, is necessitation-via-value.

I find Adam’s interpretation interesting and plausible. It is not clear to me what sorts of textual evidence might come to the surface which would suffice for deciding between his interpretation and my own. We both agree that freedom and physical necessity are incompatible but for different reasons. Resolution will require that we turn to the question of what it is about physical and metaphysical necessity that is problematic for Leibniz. I think the resources in the faculty psychology texts will not help us here. However, I think that certain theological texts give us good reason for thinking, at least, that it is the necessity, in addition to the blindness that is troubling for Leibniz. I will thus return to this point in the next section.

What of Sleight’s claim that, for Leibniz, even physical necessity is no threat to freedom? There are two sorts of evidence in Sleight’s favor. First, Leibniz sometimes says that metaphysical necessity is the only threat to freedom: “It will be shown that absolute necessity, which is also called logical and metaphysical . . .and which alone is to be feared, does not exist in free actions. . . .”(H: Preface; G VI 37)<sup>21</sup> Of course, such arguments must be handled with care. Perhaps Leibniz simply spoke incautiously. More likely, Leibniz here mentions only those threats that are relevant or salient in context. As

even Sleigh admits, there were few defenders of efficient causal determinism in this period. Necessitarians like Spinoza represented the most salient threat for Leibniz. Perhaps efficient causal compatibilists were simply not worth resisting here.<sup>22</sup>

Second, in at least in one place Leibniz writes as if moral and physical necessity are modally equivalent:

For it must be admitted that when one thing follows from another in the contingent realm, the kind of determining that is involved is not the same as when one thing follows from another in the realm of the necessary. Geometrical and metaphysical ‘following’ necessitate, but physical and moral ones incline without necessitating. (NE II.xxi.178)

This is a complex text. But what is important here is that Leibniz seems to assert that physical and moral “followings” are modally equivalent. Whatever holds for one seems to hold for the other. Thus, they are not distinct modalities after all, as they are for the Jesuit moral necessitarians.<sup>23</sup>

It is hard to know how to weigh this text against others cited above. Leibniz sometimes makes incompatible claims and we are left to judge on systematic grounds how to best understand his intentions, all things considered. It seems to me the preponderance of texts weighs against the Sleigh interpretation in this case. Nonetheless, I think theological grounds, to which we will turn next, are the deciding element.

Let me add that it seems to me that many feel obliged to equate moral and physical necessity because of our own contemporary suspicions about final causality. Moral necessity is, as I have characterized it, intrinsically teleological. And since, some seem to suppose, final causes must ultimately be cashed out in terms of efficient causes, they must be similarly reducible for Leibniz. But contemporary work in the metaphysics of freedom might perhaps persuade us to be more accommodating. Recent libertarians take final causes to play an important role in the explanation of action, a role not reducible to talk about efficient causes.<sup>24</sup> These libertarians regard free actions to be entirely causally undetermined. Still, they contend, a complete explanation of free action will make reference to the fact that the agent chooses with the aim of satisfying one of the agent’s desires. In this way, having desires is a necessary condition of an agent acting freely. And we might even imagine that in some case such desires are sufficient as well. For nothing seems to prevent its being the case that I am at some point positioned in such

a way that I desire only a single course of action, including refraining from acting altogether. In such a case we might say that though an action is uncaused, nonetheless, the fact that there is only one course of action (including refraining) which is desirable, might necessitate that this course of action be chosen.<sup>25</sup> I suspect this is the sort of the thing that the moral necessitarian Sousa had in mind in his own account. Given that the will cannot help but incline most strongly towards that course of action judged best, it acts in such a way that the action brought forth is aimed at the satisfaction of that desire.

Of course, whether or not one is willing to admit this sort of account will depend on exactly what account of causation one adopts. If causation is to be cashed out simply in terms of the ability to support certain sorts of counterfactuals, this account will not fare well. But if we think of causation as instead a real relation between states of affairs or events, as Leibniz surely would when thinking of causal relations between temporally adjacent states of a substance, then an account like this seems to preserve the integrity of final causes which are not ultimately reducible to efficient causes.

So, perhaps this is the sort of account we should favor when thinking about Leibniz. It is fair to say that many of his intellectual predecessors held such a view of final causes in this context. And it seems to fit well with his own talk about moral necessity as distinct from physical necessity and metaphysical necessity. This gives us a way of conceiving of what Leibniz is up to when it comes to the faculty psychology of freedom, and this is the place where moral necessity is primarily put to work.

What did Leibniz hope to gain from such spontaneity? On the one hand, this is hard to answer because I know of no text in which Leibniz directly speaks to question. On the other hand, such an absence should lead us to believe that he hoped to secure here what everyone hoped to secure by denying intellectual determinism, namely, the sort of independence that allows the will to count as genuinely *active* in the act of election. From the thirteenth century onward, critics of intellectual determinism argued that it made the will passive and thus not possibly free.<sup>26</sup> There is no reason to think Leibniz's own account would have demanded less.

## **V. Freedom from divine necessitation**

Unlike his Reformed counterparts, Leibniz also held that spontaneity required independence from divine determination. Here the motivation was as much to preserve the will's freedom, as it was to preserve God from culpability for human sin:

For who would call into doubt that the mind thinks and wills, that we elicit in ourselves many thoughts and volitions, and that there is a spontaneity that belongs to us? If this were called into doubt, then not only would human liberty be denied and the cause of evil things be thrust into God, but it would also fly in the face of the testimony of our innermost experience and consciousness, testimony by which we ourselves sense that the things my opponents have transferred to God, without even a pretense of reason, are ours.(AG 160)

There were many respects in which Leibniz believed free human action must maintain independence from divine determination. In various texts, Leibniz considers the threat to freedom proposed by God's activities of creating, conserving, and concurring in human activity. Here I will focus on one controversial part of Leibniz's worries. The worry can be stated in brief as follows. God, when considering the possible creature Adam, say, knows that Adam will choose to eat the forbidden fruit. Given this, how can it be the case that God will that Adam be actual, without thereby coming to be the cause of Adam's sin? If God were the cause of Adam's sin, this would undermine Adam's freedom and make God the "author of sin." Leibniz argued that God avoids being the author of sin by not causing but merely *permitting* the sin of Adam. But how is Leibniz going to make this distinction between causing and permitting? As we will see, he does so by arguing that the creature has a variety of spontaneity sufficient to make it author of its own acts.

One of Leibniz's earliest attempts grapple with the independence of human free actions from God occurs in the *Confessio Philosophi* where he attempts to deflect responsibility for evil from God by arguing that God does not cause, but merely permits, evil. Early in the dialogue he provides an account of permission that can be summarized as follows:

- P permits E iff:
- 1) P fails to will that E
  - 2) P fails to will that not-E
  - 3) P brings it about that state of affairs S obtains by willing that S obtains
  - 4) If S obtains then E obtains
  - 5) P knows that 4)

6) P believes that the good entailed by S's obtaining outweighs the evil entailed by E's obtaining.<sup>27</sup>

Although Leibniz appears content with this view in the *Confessio*, concerns with the view as described seem to arise in a series of texts from the mid-1680's. The most critical one is "De Libertate, Fato, Gratia Dei et Connexis."<sup>28</sup> Among other things, Leibniz is, in this piece, looking to solve a knotty theological problem in which he had a keen interest, namely, the truthmaker for propositions of the form:

If person, S, were in circumstances, C, then S would freely do action, A.

In the discussion concerning divine providence there were two widely endorsed scholastic views on the truthmakers for such propositions, called conditional future contingents, or CFC's, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The first view was primarily defended by Dominicans. The second view was defended primarily by Jesuits. For the Dominicans, CFC's have as their truthmaker a divine decree. It is, on their view, up to God whether or not Peter denies or performs some other act in circumstances C. As a result, the truth value of CFC's is said to be determined "post-volitionally." The Jesuits held, on the contrary, that the truth values of CFC's must be determined pre-volitionally (i.e., independently of any act of the divine will). The reason for this is the obvious one: if it is up to God what I choose under particular circumstances, then, they argued, the choice could not truly be free. Further, in those cases where what I choose is evil, God, it seems, is the direct cause of my performing the evil act since it was due to his decree that I choose to sin in those circumstances.

Surprisingly, even though Leibniz is aware that there is an issue concerning what grounds the truth of CFC's, and he is aware of the competing solutions, it is not something that he considers in any detail in his early career.<sup>29</sup> However, when we come to the period of 1685 through 1687, there is a flurry of activity on Leibniz's part concerning this issue.

In "De Libertate, Fato, Gratia Dei et Connexis," Leibniz deals with a wide range of topics concerning human freedom and divine providence. After a brief discussion of the problem of foreknowledge, Leibniz turns to the more complex problem described above, namely, the truthmaker for CFC's. He introduces the problem by citing the stock

example in discussions of this topic, an example springing from the biblical narrative in I Samuel chapter 23. In the passage, David is hiding from King Saul in the city of Keilah. David fears that Saul will besiege the city and that the residents of the city will fail to protect him. Thus, David, wondering whether or not he should flee, inquires of God concerning whether the residents of Keilah will, in fact, turn him over if Saul takes the city. God tells him that they will, and David then flees. Obviously, the knowledge that God has revealed to David is not an item of simple divine foreknowledge, and for obvious reasons: the events described by David do not occur in the actual future. The question here is what the Keilites would do, were some circumstances to arise that do not in fact arise. In other words, God is herein displaying that he has knowledge of conditional future contingents in a case where the antecedent of the conditional is not satisfied. The question then is, in virtue of what does God know what the Keilites will do, or, alternatively, in virtue of what is it the case that,

7) If the Keilites were in circumstances C (where Saul takes the city), they would deliver David to Saul.

Leibniz then undertakes a defense of the Dominican view that the truthmaker for 7) is the divine will. In the course of his defense, Leibniz reiterates the claim that God is not the author of sin because rather than *willing* the sin, God merely *permits* it.

Since Leibniz is defending the postvolitional, Dominican view, it is not at all surprising that the series of criticisms he raises are the stock objections of the prevolitionalist Jesuits. The first two criticisms he raises pose the natural questions: if CFC's have a decree of the divine will as their truthmaker, then it seems that human freedom is precluded and, in light of this, it appears that sins ought to be ascribed to God and not to the creature. In response to the second criticism Leibniz sets forth a view much like the one we find in the *Confessio*: God is not the author of sin because he merely permits rather than wills the sin, and further such permitting is excusable since the evil permitted results in a greater good. Thus, it cannot be said that God wills sin since, on this view, "properly speaking, God does not decree that Peter sin."

However, Leibniz was clearly dissatisfied with the view he lays out in this paragraph since he subsequently struck the entire paragraph and replaced it with a

paragraph which goes in a quite different direction. What did Leibniz find unsatisfactory about the postvolitional view? Recall that in the *Confessio* Leibniz not only tells us that God's relationship to sin in the world is one of mere permission, but he goes on to give us a detailed account of the nature of permission. In that account, the second condition was:

2) P fails to will not-E

This second condition is necessary since, if God were to will that E not occur, E would not occur. So, to make this account of permission work, Leibniz must be able to hold that with respect to a token evil, Peter's denial of Christ, that:

3') It is not the case that God wills that Peter denies.

But in light of the account we have above it looks like Leibniz is committed to the following claims:

- 8) God wills that if Peter is in C, then Peter denies
- 9) God wills that Peter exist
- 10) God wills that C obtain
- 11) God wills that Peter be in C

It is hard to see, however, how Leibniz can coherently hold 8), 11), and 3') since it is reasonable to assume 8) and 11) entail the denial of 3'). But what is it that Leibniz should surrender here? If he surrenders 3'), then he must also surrender his account of permission since surrendering 3') would violate the first condition of his account of permission (i.e., that God *does not* will E where E is Peter's denial). Surrendering 11) appears to carry a price too high to pay since 11) seems to be required by any orthodox account of divine creation. If Leibniz wants to give up 8), then he will have to surrender the claim that the divine will is the truthmaker for CFC's. This might not seem to be a very high price to pay. After all, the view that something other than a divine decree acts as truthmaker for CFC's was a view widely held by Jesuits, as I noted above. But the Jesuit view also required holding a libertarian view of freedom which Leibniz could not accept. Thus, giving up 8) would leave Leibniz in need of finding something else that could act as the truthmaker of CFC's.

If the truth of the key conditional,

12) If Peter is in C, then Peter denies.

is not grounded in the divine will, what are the options? Perhaps Leibniz could hold it to be a necessary truth. This would solve the problem of directly implicating God in Peter's sin. Peter sins because Peter must. It is essential to Peter that he sin. However, Leibniz utterly rejects this move. Whatever the truthmaker for 8), Leibniz is committed to the claim that it is not the divine will, *and* it is not that Peter sins in C necessarily.<sup>30</sup>

Recall that if, as I claim, Leibniz is giving up the postvolitional view while attempting to retain the Principle of Sufficient Reason, he is now forced to look for something which can act as the truthmaker for CFC's. In another text from the same period, Leibniz begins to construct such an account by developing a view of the relationship that God and the creaturely free act. He then employs this view to answer the key question concerning the truthmaker for CFC's: Does God determine what the creature would do under specified circumstance, and if so, in what respect? To this end he says:

It must be replied that the first cause [God] is determined by the second cause [the creature] taken ideally, i.e., the idea of the second perceived in the divine intellect determines the will of the first one, and the choosing of the second taken actually is determined by the first, or everything takes its being from him.(Grua 386)

In other words, we have an account quite akin to the prevolitional account. God does not, by an act of will, determine what the creature would do under given circumstances. But God, seeing what the creature would do, decides which possible creature to create and in virtue of that creative decree, they come into being.

But now the question becomes, what is the truthmaker for the CFC, if it is not the divine decree? In other words, one might ask, when we abstract away considerations of the divine contributions toward the creaturely act, what is left that acts as the "sufficient reason" for the truth of the CFC? One of the issues that Leibniz was clearly concerned about in this period is one that likewise occupied other prevolitionalists, viz., exactly what can be abstracted away from the creature's circumstances when God is considering what the creature will freely do? Or, to put it another way, what elements of C (the

circumstances) are necessary for the CFC's having a determinate truth value? For example, it would appear that God cannot abstract away from C considerations of all divine causal contribution at the time of choice. Among God's causal contributions would be his activity of sustaining the creature in existence; but if necessary conditions for creaturely existence are not preserved, neither is that creature's existence or any action whatever—leaving the corresponding CFC without a determinate truth value. In addition, since orthodox metaphysicians held almost without exception that no causal power of a creature could be exercised without some (concurring) act of the divine will, it appears that determining what the creature would do in given circumstances would require consideration of whatever was necessary for the act to occur, and thus to consider not only God's *sustaining* causal contribution, but some measure of God's *concurring* contribution as well.<sup>31</sup>

In the next two paragraphs, he takes up just this question when he asks: "It is sought what it is in the human will that God attends to such that he chooses to concur with one action rather than another" (Grua 386-7). He then proposes his answer to the sufficient reason question, taking up a position which, to my knowledge, he holds for the remainder of his career:

But when rightly considered we must hold that the certainty of God arises from the fact that He foresees that the mind will assent. It can be asked, whence he has foreseen this connection? Entirely from the considerations of minds as much as of graces, he knows both that which is the future state of mind and what grace will superadd to it. . . . Because it is an impossible condition that a creature operate without divine concurrence, it is impossible that God foresee what the creature, per se, would do by the power of free will alone. *So God can only foresee that to which the creature is inclined. And so the matter is reduced to the doctrine of inclination but not necessitation.* (Grua 387-8 emphasis mine)

The answer then, is that it is the inclination of the creature prior to choice that acts as a) the truthmaker for the proposition, and further b) that on which God bases the nature of his concurrence with the free act. This view, I believe, was suggested to Leibniz by a work he was reading at this time, and which he cites in another connection slightly later in the same essay. The work is Louis of Dole's *Concerning the Manner of the Concursus of God and Creatures*.<sup>32</sup> In the work, Dole describes a view very much like the one mentioned by Leibniz. Dole writes:

God explores through the dictates of his middle knowledge the way in which the created will is bending itself by way of its own liberty on such and such an occasion and at such and such a moment in time so that as a result of this prevision and foreknowledge, God determines himself and makes a resolve such that he will manifest his concursus in this way rather than that at this particular moment in time, and in such a manner that his concursus is toward willing rather than nilling and toward willing this rather than that object.<sup>33</sup>

And Leibniz comments favorably on this view.<sup>34</sup> Thus, God first foresees how it is that the creature inclines, and from this knows how he will concur with the act of the creature. These together suffice to give God knowledge of the truth of the relevant CFC and thus, as Leibniz says in the passage I quoted above,

“And so the matter is reduced to the doctrine of inclination but not necessitation.”(Grua 388)

We find here the coming together of the two species of spontaneity. What makes the free action genuinely the creature’s own, is the fact that it has an active will, which is not psychologically determined, and which is not necessitated by divine action on creatures.

I urged in section IV that theological consideration seemed relevant, if not decisive, when considering Leibniz’s case against the consistency of physical necessity and freedom. The reason should now be clear. Leibniz expends a great deal of effort making the case that causal determination of creaturely acts (by God in this case) is sufficient to deflect moral responsibility away from the creature (and towards the ultimate cause, in this case God). If Leibniz were satisfied with the compatibility of freedom and causal determinism, such worries would simply never arise. And yet they do. This is, it seems to me, very powerful evidence of anti-compatibilist sympathies in Leibniz’s thought. What is more, whatever case can be pressed against divine determinism can be equally forcefully made against garden variety efficient causal determinism in choice. To block this, one would need a buffer analogous to the one Leibniz installs between God and creatures. Jesuit Moral Necessity provides just such a buffer.

## **VI. Conclusion**

In the Introduction I noted that compatibilists and libertarians have appealed to distinct pairs of reasons or guiding intuitions in defending their views on freedom. In both cases, one member of the pair is strictly metaphysical, while the other is theological. In light of the varieties of spontaneity that Leibniz aims to defend, we can now ask: where do his overall sympathies lie here? The answer is, as is typical for Leibniz, a mixed one. Surely, Leibniz has no sympathy at all with the first libertarian intuition, i.e., that freedom is incompatible with sufficient conditions for choice. Rather, his sympathies here run in parallel with the compatibilist intuition that free actions require that the act be generated by certain internal states of the agent. In Leibniz's case, these internal states are deliverances of practical reason which are in turn a species of clear perception. Still, while endorsing this intuition, Leibniz also seems to want to argue that the act generated by practical reason is not, strictly speaking, efficient causally determined by it.

On the theological side, however, Leibniz comes down squarely on the libertarian side. Seventeenth century theologians were well aware of the implications of straightforward compatibilism for the problem of evil. If God wills that certain events occur by means of deterministic processes which he implements, God is the author of those events. And thus, if the sinful acts of creatures are causally determined, God is the author of sin. Leibniz distances himself from this objection by first arguing that the actions of free creatures under specified circumstances are not under the control of the divine will. Thus, transitions between states within freely willing rational substances are not under immediate divine control. Rather, the transition from state to state in such substances is fixed by morally necessitated final causality. Since this sort of relation between intellect and will, and correspondingly, between successive states of the substance, is sufficient to secure spontaneity (or so Leibniz believes), and since it is on such grounds that God governs his own concurrence with the actions of substances, divine causal involvement in creaturely free acts neither destroys freedom nor implicates God in sin.

As a result, the texts indicate a Leibniz who is not as sympathetic with full blown compatibilism as he is sometimes held to be. Does mitigated Leibnizian compatibilism succeed in doing what Leibniz proposes for it? The answer to this question depends on whether or not tolerably good sense can be made of Leibniz's appropriation of moral

necessity. If, as some of Leibniz's contemporaries claimed, there is no logical space for a modality that is weaker than physical necessity, then physical and moral necessity will collapse, as will Leibniz's view. But if moral necessity as described is defensible, the view merits closer scrutiny.

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<sup>1</sup> See also, H §§59, 65, 290, 302, *King* §20 (respectively G VI 135, 138, 289, 296, 421-2); Leibniz 1965: 137 (G VI 455); G III 364; AG 143 (G IV 483-4), *et alia*.

<sup>2</sup> This account also seems to be in play at G VII 109; G II 69; AG 195 (G III 402); NE II.xxi.12; Woolhouse and Francks 1997: 131. The reader should take note of the fact that I have altered the translation of Woolhouse and Francks at a key point. They render "Mais on a raison dans un autre sens d'appeller *perturbations* . . . ce qui consiste dans les pensées confuses, où il y a de l'involontaire de et l'inconnu" as "In another sense, however, it is reasonable to call those things which consist in confused thoughts, and in which there is involuntariness and incomprehension, perturbations."

<sup>3</sup> This account also seems to be in play in the Arnauld correspondence, G II 47. See also H §66 (G VI 138-9).

<sup>4</sup> Leibniz sometimes even appears willing to talk about deliverances of the practical intellect causing volitions. See, e.g., NE II.xxi.13.

<sup>5</sup> See also G VI 300. I should note that some might charge that I have unfairly truncated the quotation above. I deny the charge. Leibniz later in the passage goes on to deny metaphysically necessitating conditions for choice. But in this first part it is clear that physically necessitating conditions are in view.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* IaIIae Q.10 a.1 ad2um and *De Malo* Q.16 a.7 ad18um.

<sup>7</sup> See Scotus 1950: II Q.39, a.2, n.5 and Molina 1953: Disputation 2, n.9.

<sup>8</sup> For more details on these various views, see Murray 1996: 31-37.

<sup>9</sup> For more detailed renderings of these views one can consult Murray, 1996:27-37.

<sup>10</sup> One might wonder how this view differs substantially from the earlier intellectualist view. The answer I that it is rather more of a bold development. The intellectualists endorsed the sufficiency of practical judgment for choice, and also denied that practical judgment could necessitate the will. But there was no unified strategy for making sense of this non-efficient-causal sufficiency. As mentioned earlier, the most widely endorsed strategy was to hold that practical judgments were not causally sufficient in an efficient sense since the will was a proximate cause of the intellect forming the last judgment. This was unsatisfying for reasons already described. There were other minority strategies attempted as well. But this represents the first explicit attempt to address the intellectualist worries by forging an attenuated sense of

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necessitation. For a more detailed treatment of this movement see Murray 1996: 37-43 and Knebel 1991a: 3-24.

<sup>11</sup> Izquierdo 1670: Volume 2, Tractatus X, disp.32, Q.3, 454.

<sup>12</sup> de Peñafiel 1663: 522a.

<sup>13</sup> de Sousa 1680: 29. Note, that Sousa makes it clear that the necessity in play here is strictly *necessitas moralis*.

<sup>14</sup> The claims that Leibniz make concerning God and the beatified do not undercut the interpretation offered here. Note that Leibniz only likens (*quodammodo*) God's choosing cases of physical necessitation. As for the blessed, the standard view was that since they were in the presence of God, and thus could see God "in his essence" that they were physically necessitated in choosing since "loving God as seen in his essence" is the one practical activity that necessitates the will in this way.

<sup>15</sup> *Summa Theologica*. IaIIae, Q.10, a.3.

<sup>16</sup> NE II.xxi.13; H §51 (G VI 130); and Grua 253, 272, 276, 301.

<sup>17</sup> For a defense of these claims see Murray 1996: 51-3.

<sup>18</sup> Adams, "Moral Necessity" unpublished.

<sup>19</sup> H§173; G VI 217.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p.5.

<sup>21</sup> Sleigh also points to H §§44, 302, 367 (respectively G VI 127, 296, 333); G III 401; and Grua 480-1.

<sup>22</sup> Though, as we saw earlier, Leibniz does, in an appendix to the same work, distance himself from Hobbesian compatibilism. In addition, there are notable cases in which Leibniz has the opportunity to endorse this form of compatibilism and does not. For example, Francois Lamy challenges Leibniz with the remark that the sort of full blown causal determinism that he takes Leibniz to endorse is not compatible with freedom (Woolhouse and Francks 1997: 147, from the original *De la Connoissance de soi-même*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Paris: 1699. p.235). Leibniz replies by denying that the sort of connection between states of a substance is causally determined in the way Lamy claims (Woolhouse and Francks 1997: 154-5 and 167).

<sup>23</sup> Many understand Leibniz in this way, e.g., Grua 1985: 234 and Vailati 1997: Introduction.

<sup>24</sup> See for example: O'Connor 1995: 173-200 and Ginet 1995: pp.69-94.

<sup>25</sup> Peter van Inwagen defends such a possibility in van Inwagen 1989.

<sup>26</sup> William de la Mere is widely known for directing the Franciscan attack on Thomism on this point in the Fourteenth century. Voluntarist critics of the intellectualist view sustained the charge at least through the sixteenth century. For more on this one can consult Kent 1995: 106.

<sup>27</sup> This summary derives from the portion of the text at A.6.3.129-31.

<sup>28</sup> Grua 306-22 and A.6.4.1595-1612. This piece carries a date of 1686-7. Other important pieces treating the topic in the period are: "Aus Ludovicus a Dola, De Modo Conjunctionis Concursum Dei et Creaturum" (A.6.4.1789-1792), and "De Libertate et Gratia" (Grua 384-8. A.6.4.1455-1459).

<sup>29</sup> It is discussed in brief on a few occasions, however. For example, see C 26-7. Leibniz says things which suggest that he holds the view I claim he held prior to 1685. Here he seems to adopt the postvolitional view concerning CFC's when he says, "God knows future absolute things because He knows what He decreed; and future conditionals because He knows what He would have decreed." In A.6.1.545-6, a piece dating from 1670, Leibniz seems to lean in the opposite direction (towards the prevolitional view). But here Leibniz only makes a brief mention of the prevolitional view without giving any endorsement of it.

<sup>30</sup> The first portion of this section (V) was previously published in Murray 2000: 81-84. Cover and Hawthorne have replied to the claim I make here by arguing that regarding (12) as a necessary truth would not commit Leibniz to the necessity of the consequent.

Why then does Leibniz strike the post-volitionalist language in the first draft? Cover and Hawthorne contend that what Leibniz found troublesome was merely (8). Closure under *willed* material implication does seem to invite the judgment that God is culpable for human sin. However, (12) can be necessary and known true by God, without inviting the same judgment since willing under *known* material implication is (one might hold) not similarly closed. Thus, Leibniz's denial of the necessity of the consequent does not settle the modal status of the conditional.

The position Cover and Hawthorne defend here merits a longer reply than I can provide here. To assess the plausibility of their reply one needs to consider just what it is in virtue of which the conditional is necessarily true. Here are a couple of sources of the necessity that might suggest themselves: (a) the nature of complete concepts (if, for example, Leibniz were a superessentialist), and (b) facts about which world is

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best and the necessity of God's willing to actualize the best world. Both of these would raise obvious problems. But then what does ground the necessity? I think that ultimately there are no grounds to be found that would do the work Leibniz needs done, and that this explains why he does not (here) avail himself of this answer. Still, it is fair to note that the sort of strategy Cover and Hawthorne ascribe to Leibniz looks very much like the "hypothetical necessity" strategy endorsed in other texts in this period.

<sup>31</sup>The most detailed contemporary treatment of the discussion of this issue among sixteenth and seventeenth century figures is found in Knebel 1991b: 262-294.

<sup>32</sup> a Dola 1634: Part II, c.1, page 107.

<sup>34</sup>A.6.4.1791