Philosophica 2

Theodicy and Reason
Logic, Metaphysics, and Theology in Leibniz's *Essais de Théodicée* (1710)

edited by
Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero,
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Luigi Perissinotto
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PART III. CHALLENGING REASON: REVELATION AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Abbreviations

Works by Descartes

AT	*Oeuvres de Descartes*. 11 vols. Ed. Charles Adam, Paul Tannery. Paris: Vrin; CNRS, 1964-1976.
CSM	*The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. 2 vols. Transl. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Works by Leibniz

A	*Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1923 ss.
C	*Opuscules et fragments inédits de Leibniz. Extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque royale de Hanovre*. Ed. Louis Couturat. Paris: Alcan, 1903.
Dutens	*Opera omnia, nunc primum collecta*. 6 vols. Ed. Louis Dutens. Genevae: Tournes, 1768.
GP	*Die philosophischen Schriften von Leibniz*. 7 vols. Ed. Carl Immanuel Gerhardt. Berlin: Weidemann, 1875-1890.
Grua	*Textes inédits d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque provinciale de Hanovre*. 2 vols. Ed. Gaston Grua. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948.
Guhrauer	*Leibnitz's Deutsche Schriften*. 2 vols. Ed. Gottschalk Eduard Guhrauer. Berlin: Veit und Comp., 1838-1840.
Théodicée	*Essais de Théodicée sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal*. Amsterdam: Troyel, 1710 (now in GP VI).
Theodicy	*Theodicy. Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*. Trans. E.M. Huggard. La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1985.

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Introduction

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(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

Since their first appearance in 1710, Leibniz's *Essais de théodicée* have rapidly become one of the most influential and resounding fruits of early modern philosophy. Quite a well-known work, one might think. However, after three centuries of controversies and debates, this work still appears in need of careful scrutiny and clarification. Although the main tenets of Leibniz's vindication of the goodness of God are familiar to every scholar, the arguments Leibniz employs for that purpose, as well as their historical and conceptual background, are by no means common knowledge. Nor is the philosophical depth of the theodicean doctrines always easy to appreciate. Due to its apparent simplicity, Leibniz's *Theodicy* has sometimes suffered from a sort of trivialization. The book we propose is an attempt to restore *Theodicy* to a more balanced assessment of its complexity.

The title we chose for this volume hints at one of the key terms in Leibniz's book, namely the word 'reason'. This word is taken by Leibniz in all its different, though not unrelated meanings: reason as rational ground or argument; reason as universal order of the world; reason as human cognitive faculty, always in quest for reasons... In fact, each meaning of 'reason' offers a different perspective on *Theodicy* itself. Such plurality of views is reflected by the internal structure of this volume: the ten contributions collected are distributed in three sections encompassing the domains of logic and language, metaphysics, and rational theology.

The first section – *Constructing Reasons: Logic and Rhetoric* – contains papers devoted to some characteristic features of Leibniz's style and argumentation in the *Theodicy*. Close attention is paid to the fact that, in this work, reasons are given not only by developing demonstrative arguments, but also by exploiting rhetoric devices such as metaphors, similes, and fables. Stefano Di Bella focuses on two short stories used by Leibniz to address theodicean issues: the famous fable of Sextus in the concluding paragraphs of the *Theodicy* and the far less known, but even more literarily sophisticated tale of Deucalion and Pyrrha, which appears at the end of *De libertate, fato, gratia Dei*. In both cases, the use of the mythological veil consists in providing a fictional context where the divine intervention can fit into the juridical framework of theodicy. Di Bella's paper offers a

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comparative analysis of these two texts in order to show that under the surface of their brilliant narrative and imaginative solutions lies, in fact, a specimen of Leibniz's clear insight into the metaphysics of creation and theodicy.

The various rhetorical and stylistic features that characterize Leibniz's use of language in the *Theodicy* are investigated by Cristina Marras as essential parts of the philosophical discourse developed in this work. Highlighting the deep connection between certain philosophical claims and the specific rhetorical devices used to formulate them, Marras advocates the general view that the metaphorical discourse plays a crucial role in the exposition of Leibniz's most fundamental doctrines, so that some basic metaphors are, in fact, never to be 'cashed out' in non-metaphorical language. To appreciate the fact that most Leibnizian metaphors are irreducible to literal paraphrases, Marras suggests considering these single rhetorical items not in isolation but as forming a network of metaphors, which together illuminate different facets of Leibniz's philosophy and their mutual relations.

Further light on the metaphorical machinery of *Theodicy* is thrown by Enrico Pasini, whose contribution has a dual focus: it considers, on the one hand, explicit metaphors, or similes in which the relation of comparison is made evident by the presence of typically comparative expressions such as 'like', 'similar to', etc.; on the other hand, the specific kind of metaphors in which the term of comparison is a mathematical entity or procedure. Pasini's analysis makes it possible to appreciate the metaphorical character of several Leibnizian expressions and phrases, such as the repeated claim that the essences of things are like numbers, erroneously considered as a Pythagorean-Platonic saying, but in fact a traditional tenet of Aristotelianism; the family of comparisons related to the *calculus de maximis et minimis*; various references to geometry in extra-mathematical contexts; and the famous comparison of possible worlds and their ramifications to the *loci geometrici* of points.

Pleading the cause of God offered Leibniz the chance to disseminate and elucidate not only his rational-theological and moral views, but also his general metaphysical tenets. The contributions included in the second section – *A World of Reasons: Metaphysics* – share a focus on the metaphysical structure that underlies Leibniz's theodicy. In this section, special attention is paid to the following topics: the precise extent of the creatures' dependence on God; the ontological status of past and future events; the modal status of the actual world; the conceptual foundations of pre-established harmony.

As is shown by Francesco Piro, an outstanding instance of the strenuous theoretical engagement and conceptual refinement that characterizes Leibniz's *Theodicy* is provided by paragraphs 381-404 of this work, for they include one of the most systematic and subtle discussions of the creatures'

agency ever sketched by Leibniz. While overtly addressed against Bayle's denial that creatures are the real efficient causes of their own states, Leibniz's remarks in these paragraphs target, in fact, a wider philosophical group, including post-Cartesian thinkers such as Malebranche as well as Descartes's own version of the continuous creation doctrine. Piro's reconstruction focuses, first, on Leibniz's views on the relation between substances and accidents; second, it raises the question whether such views are consistent with the traditional theological doctrine of God's concurrence with the actions performed by creatures. Leibniz's way out of these difficulties, Piro argues, consists in developing a robust conception of dispositional properties to defend a traditional 'endurantist' view on individual persistence.

Actions, events, persistence, creation, individuals' and worlds' stories: many of the metaphysical concepts used or discussed in Leibniz's *Theodicy* involve a common reference to the temporal dimension. In spite of this relevance, Leibniz's ideas about time are still somewhat neglected by scholars. Of course, his rejection of the Newtonian concept of absolute time in favour of a relational conception is a quite popular topic in the history of philosophy. Far less studied, however, is the ontology of time that is suggested by several passages in Leibniz's works and first of all in the *Theodicy*. This is the subject investigated by Federico Perelda, who takes inspiration from present-day debates in the analytic philosophy of time and asks whether Leibniz was an A-theorist or a B-theorist, or an advocate of a hybrid form of an A/B theory; and whether he was a presentist thinking that only present things exist, or an eternalist convinced that past, present and future states of affairs are equally real. After considering some deep analogies between modality and time in the light of Leibniz's theory of possible worlds, Perelda concludes that Leibniz endorsed a form of dynamic eternalism.

Possible worlds are, indeed, the fundamental tool of Leibniz's theodicean strategy. Both his claim that this is the best of all possible worlds and his most popular defence of contingency rest on the principle that more than one world is possible. But how exactly can we know that our world is not the only possible one? Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero reconstructs Leibniz's arguments for possible worlds and contingency, as they appear in the *Theodicy* and as they were reformulated by Christian Wolff and Georg B. Bilfinger, who were the first to point out that the 'pluralist' assumption about possible worlds cannot be simply taken for granted but requires an argument. Their strenuous, albeit ultimately failed, attempts to establish that other worlds are possible reveal some intriguing and mostly neglected facets of Leibniz's modal metaphysics.

The best of all possible worlds is, needless to say, a world of perfect harmony. Occurrences of the expressions 'harmony' and 'pre-established harmony' are scattered throughout the *Theodicy*, where they serve to describe

a general relation holding among objects of very different kinds. Leibniz mentions the pre-established harmony of all things, of nature and grace, of past and future, of substances, of spirits, of soul and body, etc. Thus, it is no surprise that the wide circulation of this work also influenced the post-Leibnizian reception of the doctrine of pre-established harmony, which became – in Germany at least – one of the most discussed philosophical issues in the first half of the eighteenth century and beyond. The complex history of this reception is investigated by Gualtiero Lorini, who contrasts Wolff's exclusive focus on the soul-body relationship with Baumgarten's attempt to restore Leibniz's authentic conception of a universal harmony in its fundamental connection with monadology. This comparison also reveals that some relevant features of Wolff's account of pre-established harmony were primarily inspired by his early reading of the *Theodicy*.

The third section – *Challenging Reason: Revelation and the Problem of Evil* – takes seriously Leibniz's notorious confidence in human reason and offers new insights into his treatment of one of the most difficult challenges that human reason has to face: the existence of evil.

In the first chapter of this section, Mattia Geretto asks whether and to what extent Leibniz's *Theodicy* allows us to consider philosophy and revelation separately from each other. Three specific issues are considered in order to answer this general question: first, Leibniz's attitude towards the biblical concept of creation; second, his account of the persistence of the soul *post mortem*; and finally, his statements about the dogma of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Leibniz accepts or even justifies these revealed doctrines because he deems them non incompatible with reason. This typically Leibnizian position is rooted in the philosophical-theological doctrine that states the sanctity of reason, which is investigated by Geretto in the light of the relation between reason and the image of the divinity. Crucial support for this reading is provided by some passages in the *Theodicy* in which Leibniz maintains that reason has somehow eluded the corrupting effect of original sin. The origins of this theory can be traced back to the medieval concept of *synderesis*, which is also the source of the description of reason as the 'candle of the Lord', later adopted by the Cambridge Platonists.

The originality of Leibniz's compatibilism between reason and revelation stands out most clearly in his confrontation with Bayle, whose fideism – be it fake or sincere – he correctly perceived as a threat to his own theodicean project. Stefano Brogi reconstructs the background and motivations of this intellectual contrast. Bayle regarded the inability to answer satisfactorily the question of evil as the ultimate bankruptcy of any rational theology. In his view, the faithful should accept that religious belief has no real cognitive content but reduces to mere empty faith. As a consequence, Christian theology resulted incapable of rationally arguing its reasons or even its very distinction from deism or atheism, for all the difference among these

positions eventually reduced to a *dispute de mots*. As Brogi shows, Leibniz was especially concerned about Bayle's denial of any human ability to grasp the moral attributes of God; and this was precisely the challenge that Leibniz took on, by recasting the arguments offered by both the theological and metaphysical traditions.

Already in the eighteenth century, the core doctrine of Leibniz's *Theodicy*, that this is the best of all possible worlds, was trivialized and rejected by some as a naively optimistic solution to the problem of evil. In contrast to this longstanding dismissive attitude, Gian Luigi Paltrinieri provides a reading of *Theodicy* that avoids any trivial or cheap metaphysical optimism. Drawing on Gilles Deleuze's concept of fold, Paltrinieri considers that the Leibizian reason, too, is baroquely pervaded by infinite folds within folds. This interpretive stance is contrasted with Martin Heidegger's, who indicts Leibniz's metaphysical rationalism for being responsible for his optimism. Since every event must have a sufficient cause – argues the Leibniz of Heidegger – that cause can also be adduced to justify the presence of evil and sorrow in this world. Paltrinieri's conclusion is twofold: he suggests, first, that Leibniz's perspective is a powerful antidote for any childish humanistic anthropomorphism; second, that Leibniz's teleology can dispense with progress because the best of all possible worlds is precisely the world in which we already live.

Beside some new contributions, most of the following essays are revised versions of papers originally presented at the Italian conference *Le ragioni della Teodicea*, commemorating the 300 years of the first edition of the *Essais de théodicée*. The conference took place in Venice in February 3-4, 2011, and was organised by the Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage of the Ca' Foscari University of Venice under the aegis of the Sodalitas Leibnitiana.

Part I
Constructing Reasons: Logic and Rhetoric

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Tales of Destiny
Logic and Rhetoric in Leibniz's Myths for Theodicy

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Abstract Leibniz's theodicean arguments also make room for narrative structures such as stories or fables. Does this move simply meet the rhetorical needs of a popular exposition, or does it express some deeper constraint to illustrate through a narrative structure what cannot be wholly captured by the resources of demonstrative reason? A comparative analysis of two relevant texts – the fable of Sextus at the end of *Theodicy* and the less-known tale in *De libertate, fato, gratia Dei* – reveals the variety of images (music, books, buildings etc.) used by Leibniz to represent the original choice among different series of things, or worlds. These narrative texts actually provide valuable indications about Leibniz's view on such crucial topics as counterfactuals, world-bound individuals, the structure of individual and universal history, and its representation.

Keywords Fables. Possible Worlds. Divine Choice.

The history of philosophy presents us with several examples of thinkers who did not refrain from relying on sophisticated rhetorical tools when confronted with the problems of communication, all the while claiming to pursue the austere ideal of a scientific style in philosophizing, inspired by logical or geometrical rigour.

In Leibniz this move is overtly pursued without any embarrassment, especially in his exoteric and popular writings, of course. Together with other stylistic means – like inserting anecdotes, or digressions into a doctrinal exposition – he sometimes resorts to true narrative pieces, be they called apologues or fables or tales. It is thus no surprise that a 'popular' work like the *Theodicy*, which arose in the context of court conversation at the request of a princess, written in French and addressed to a wide and educated public, concludes its brilliant exposition with a refined literary tale (cf. *Théodicée*, § 405-17, GP VI, pp. 357-365). Leibniz himself is eager to justify this choice:

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> I thought to stop here, after satisfying […] all objections by Mr. Bayle […] but Valla's dialogue on free will against Boethius came to my mind […] and I thought that it was worth summarizing it, by preserving its dialogical form, and then continuing from where it left off, continuing with his fiction. And this much less with the mere aim of making the topic more pleasant, than of explaining myself, at the very end of my discourse, in the clearest and most popular way. (*Théodicée*, § 405, GP VI, p. 357)

According to him, therefore, the aim of the 'fable' is not only entertainment, but clarification. Moreover, it would be a mistake to think that such 'little stories' (*historiettes*) can be only found in the context of Leibniz's popular expositions. Indeed we can even find a kindred tale – more developed and literarily embellished – in the final part of one of the most extensive and engaged private drafts on theodicean topics from the Eighties, the *De libertate fato gratia Dei*.[1] In this Latin text, after discussing the classic difficulties of the topic in a highly technical manner, he concludes with an 'apologue', which appears as a free variation on the mythological story of Deucalion and Pyrrha, from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

In both types of texts, then, Leibniz somehow unpredictably passes to the narrative mode just after the peak of his argumentative effort. I wish to advance the hypothesis that this stylistic shift, far from being only a mere rhetorical device modelled on the different persuasive and communicative needs of different audiences, somehow responds to some internal requirements of the matter, as it is perceived by Leibniz. Perhaps, the comparison with Plato's philosophical usage of myth might be illuminating.[2] Similar to the author of *Phaedo*, Leibniz's shift from the argumentative to the narrative mode might highlight that the resources of argumentation have been fully exploited, and human reason is not able to further elucidate by its purely conceptual means the last mysteries of both the world and life; or at least, there is the need of somehow making the truths that are established by way of abstract reasoning, yet far from our experience, more concrete and plastic. Hence, the recourse to the 'myth' – a kind of 'tale of reason', that is to say, a product of imagination full of rational sense, leading us beyond the boundaries of finite intellect. I will try to prove this hypothesis by a comparative study of the two paradigmatic texts I have referred to here. While the *Theodicy* tale is well known, the other one is less available. This is why I provide a translation of it below.

1 First published by Grua, I, pp. 318-322, now in A VI, 4, pp. 1607-1612.

2 The literature on the significance of myth in Plato's philosophy is, of course, very large. See also, for the eschatological imaginery in classical and Christian sources, Singleton's (1954) comparative remarks on Plato and Dante.

1 Two Tales

First of all, I give a brief summary of the two tales. At the end of the *De libertate fato gratia Dei* Leibniz freely recreates the myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha – the married couple who survived the deluge and were charged by the Gods with the task of repopulating the earth by changing stones into human beings. Leibniz imagines that the stones do not immediately become living beings, but only statues with a human form. Moreover, they turn out to be partitioned into different groups, each one being in competition with the others in the hopes of being chosen by Deucalion and Pyrrha to be able to live. With this aim, each group, animated by music, represents its future existence as a dancing and singing choir, to entice Deucalion to choose it. After a laborious deliberation, Deucalion and his wife make their choice. Many years later, they die and are sent to the Elysium, as honest and pious persons. But an immense protest explodes among the damned souls in hell, who attribute the responsibility for their present misery to Deucalion and Pyrrha's choice. A judgment is organized; the pros and cons of the earlier deliberation are weighed by Themis' infallible balance, which in the end confirms the rightfulness of Deucalion's and Pyrrha's choice, and then acquits them of any accusation. The damned, however, continue accusing the gods themselves for having submitted to Deucalion certain alternatives to choose from, instead of having provided better ones. At this point, the blessed are allowed by the gods to see the 'archives' of all possible stories and grasp their internal and mutual connections. Finally, all must admit that the arrangement of our world is the best one could desire.

The *Theodicy* tale, as we have seen, presents itself as the continuation of Valla's *Dialogue* on free will (1934). Valla imagined that Sextus Tarquinius – the man who would rape Lucretia and provoke the fall of Roman monarchy – is told by Apollo's oracle about what he will go on to do. To counter Sextus' remonstrance for his unfortunate destiny, Apollo shows him that the foreknowledge does not determine his future deeds. Sextus, however, still laments with Jupiter for having created him with such an evil will. And Valla's tale left off there, without providing any answer to the last complaint. Now this is where Leibniz picks up, imagining that Sextus goes to Jupiter's temple. Invited by Jupiter to give up his claim to Rome's crown, he refuses and moves towards his destiny. Theodorus the priest, however, is still perplexed about Jupiter's goodness. Thus he is sent to Pallas, who introduces him into the Palace of Destinies, where each apartment represents a world. In each of them Theodorus can see a different Sextus with his different story – one with this destiny, one with another destiny, happy or unhappy. The apartments are organized into a pyramidal structure, and their perfection increases as one approaches the top. The harvest apartment turns out to be the most perfect of all. But precisely in that very apartment – which is nothing but our actual world – Theodorus

sees *our* Sextus, on his way to Rome to become guilty and forced to exile. Theodorus is therefore persuaded that Jupiter's choice, determined by Pallas' wisdom, was the best possible one.

2 The Judgement: taking God(s) to Court

2.1 Humans Accused: Being Responsible for Her/His World

As is well known, the term 'theodicy' is a neologism coined by Leibniz himself, its proper meaning being 'justification of God'. The linguistic form brings with it the typically modern form of the problem, which the ending of the biblical book of Job held as unacceptable: meaning, the act of taking God to court. The first tale makes this epoch-making move fully explicit. We are faced with a true trial, indeed, described by the juridical language Leibniz was familiar with. One can hear here also the echo of some extraordinary trial of ancient myth and tragedy, which involved the gods. Needless to say, the recourse to ancient mythology – hence, the transfer from Christian God to classical gods – helps to veil or attenuate the impact of this audacious move.

Interestingly enough, however, in the *De libertate* the accused are not the gods directly, but two humans, Deucalion and Pyrrha. They are taken as responsible for the original choice of this human world and history. Admittedly, they try to share their responsibility with the gods, calling them as witnesses for their own defence; and underneath the attack directed against the two consorts emerges a deeper layer of the accusation, which is directed toward the Heaven. At least in a first stage, however, the gods, far from imposing their presence or will, seem eager to remain in the background as much as possible, as interested but impartial spectators. On closer inspection, the choice of focusing attention on the two human figures emphasizes the fact that the judgment takes place within a common field, which is the same for humans and gods. Also the judges are not properly gods, but other men, or at most the heroes who already played that role in ancient mythology (like Minos or Rhadamanthys). All this matches well with Leibniz's firm persuasion of a common right valid for all rational beings – the *jurisprudence universelle* – that univocally rules both divine and human actions.

But the central role assigned to the mortals even for the originary choice may express another element: the moral responsibility of man with respect to creation. For Leibniz, the good and pious person is called to give her assent to the world created by God – this assent being the true key for the good life and happiness. Thus, at least since the *Confessio philosophi*, Leibniz's constant intuition has been that a discontented creature can-

not be a good and faithful subject of God (see *Confessio philosophi*, A VI, 3, pp. 140-141). But then, the good person becomes, by this very fact, responsible for creation itself, and ideally called, in the name of God, to give an account of her judgment. The situation is tricky, insofar as in this case there is no easy way to take himself outside the scope of his own judgement. Thus Deucalion is called to respond for his own choice, and is unexpectedly transformed from a wise judge into an accused, for whom punishment is invoked.

2.2 The Image of Balance: a Justice Without Judges

More generally, it is difficult to find judges who are not engaged in the litigation; even the human champions of wisdom and justice, Lycurgus and Solon, who rushed to Deucalion's aid, have been moved by their gratefulness towards the accused, whom they owe their happy destiny. But then we can understand why «the judges themselves, who were inclined to agree with the happy souls, were hesitating to pronounce their sentence, in order not to appear to favour themselves» (A VI, 4, p. 1610). In Leibniz's tale the need is already present, which will be expressed by the Kantian requirement of disinterestedness, and represented by Rawls' thought experiment of the 'veil' of ignorance.

But here, it seems that we are in a deadlock: neither gods nor just men seem able to arbitrate, being suspected of partiality. The solution is looked for in some impersonal standard, expressed by the image of balance. Justice is an objective measure, ruling gods as well as men. To symbolize this, Leibniz clearly makes usage here of a classical image – the weighing of destinies which even imposes itself on Jupiter's will. Besides and before this mythological antecedent, however, the image was rooted in two seminal fields of his reflection, I mean the juridical and the physical one. Therefore this has not simply to do with a rhetorical figure, but rather with a true explanatory model, taken from the statical-mechanical context to offer an important key for the understanding of Leibniz's view on the principle of reason and several of its different applications. Consider, for instance, the usage of this model of balance in his criticism of the alleged freedom of indifference in the problem of free will, with the treatment of psychological motives on the model of mechanical impulses.[3] The same complex of ideas, with its characteristic blurring of causes and reasons, is efficaciously expressed in our story by the description of Themis' balance as a tool which is apt to measure «not bodies, but the causal factors

3 See e.g. the discussion with Clarke, GP VII, pp. 381, 389, 391-392. For a thoroughgoing analysis of Leibniz's usage of the balance model, see Dascal 2005.

[*momenta*]» – these *momenta* should be ideal factors, reasons or motives, rather than proper causes.

The same model, inspired by the study of statics, lies also at the core of the 'metaphysical mechanism', represented by a system of falling bodies. As is well known, even this mechanism was nothing but a scientific simile for the divine choice among possible things. But this is the same idea, again, which is dramatically expressed by the mythological simile of the *De libertate* tale. Needless to say, each choir represents a set of possibles; their competing supplications to Deucalion in order to be permitted to live is the narrative counterpart of the famous 'striving' of possibles towards existence.[4] And finally, the decisive recourse to the balance suggests that the creative decree is infallibly or mechanically determined by the objective calculus of the respective 'weights', that is to say of the respective quantity of perfection of the different sets.

It is worth noting that the weighing by the divine balance, which is applied here to the actual world, is then exported to the comparative consideration of all possible worlds: they are also 'weighed' by the 'balance' (*statera*).

2.3 The Accusers and Their Charges

A few words are in order concerning the role of the accusers. They are icastically characterized by the hendiadys 'miserable and bad' – a true equivalence for Leibniz, for whom the bad person is ultimately the one who does not accept the actual order of the universe.[5] In the *De libertate* the accusation is raised by a collective subject – the damned. In the dramatic fiction of the *Theodicy*, instead, an individual destiny is in the fore, with Sextus's protest against his own fate. As we shall see, this difference will reflect a slightly different approach to the problem. In order to see this, let me better consider the object of judgment, and the charges which are successively levelled.

There are different stages, or layers of judgment in our two stories. In general, the judgement which is officially displayed in Deucalion's trial, or in Pallas' apology for Jupiter, turns out to be nothing but the dramatic repetition of an earlier original judgment which has been taken by gods or humans at the beginning – or better, in an atemporal prologue of creation – and which they are now called to justify. Both judgments present

4 I consider the idea of the 'striving possibles', in its turn, as nothing more than a metaphysical metaphor of the deliberation that takes place within the divine intellect. In this sense, the balance is a metaphor of a metaphor – or, if we prefer, an alternative metaphor, more literary while the other being more physical.

5 As is well known, the biblical devil plays this role of accuser also in the story of Job.

the typical form of a deliberative procedure – the second one simply makes explicit and verifies the first one. The levels of justification, however, are multiple. In the *Theodicy* tale, where gods are directly challenged, we are faced with the progressive revelation of the one divine choice, in the more complex structure of the *De libertate* the split into a human and a divine trial implies a more marked distinction of two levels of judgement. Interestingly, Deucalion and Pyrrha are not actually accused for having chosen this 'series of things' *rather than* another one. Certainly we know that they have comparatively considered the alternative possibilities (the many choruses). The damned, for their own part, seem also ready to admit that their adversaries have chosen the 'best' world, relatively speaking. Only, they claim that the price paid – namely, their own unhappiness – was too high. The true issue at stake, therefore, is the opportunity of whether to create or not: «The whole issue debated and submitted to the judges was about whether it is better that wicked and unhappy persons do not exist, or that the blessed do exist, and whether it is preferable to avoid evils or to obtain goods» (A VI, 4, p. 1610). This sounds like a moral/existential version of the celebrated radical question: «Why is there something rather than nothing?», which we could reformulate as: «Why *should* anything exist…?».[6] In equilibrium there is the unhappiness of the damned on the one hand, and the happiness of the blessed on the other – both being part of the world that has been finally chosen; the goods and evils weighed seem to be precisely those of the actual world. It is worth noting that in the dispute some standard theodicean arguments, abundantly exploited by Leibniz himself, are intensively questioned: such is the case with the emphasis on the role of dissonances in harmony – which is directly inspired by musical theory. The argument is vigorously challenged by the damned through the same shift from an objective, holistic approach to their own, typically subjective and intentionally 'partial': the objective compensation of evils and goods cannot be appreciated or justified from the point of view of all subjects, just insofar as they are unequally distributed among different subjects (cf. *De libertate*, A VI, 4, p. 1611).

In Leibniz's remake of Deucalion's tale, the (provisory) solution of this dialectic emphasizes a properly Christian theme, i.e. the idea that the crucial circumstance for both the evaluation of the alternative stories or worlds, and the relative amount of good within our world is God's incarnation. It is this unique and incomparable fact that makes the actual world and actual mankind the most desirable ones; and this fact is tightly bound to the original sin, hence to what makes the actual world so awful in many

6 For a questioning as much radical of the concept of existence and its value, see Leibniz's discussion with Eckard: «Although it is doubtful, whether it is worthier not to exist, than to exist in the state of greatest misery» (*Leibniz to Eckard*, GP I, p. 221).

respects. In doing this Leibniz is connecting to the venerable Patristic theme of the *felix culpa*.[7]

Still, the answer seems to be unsatisfying from the point of view of the complaint of the damned. It is, in fact, an objective answer (the outcome of the objective calculus of goods and evils in the world) which seems to elude their subjective query: why should I serve the happiness of another at the cost of one's unhappiness? We can suppose from his other works that Leibniz's final answer would have been in terms of his radical view concerning personal identity: you cannot complain about what you are, because were you been different, you would not have existed at all. But this strategy is not made explicit here. In any event, the complaint of the damned in Deucalion's trial was somehow already beyond this possible line of defence. What they seemed to prefer, in fact, was having never existed at all.

Their second query, however, goes in another direction. Once Deucalion's choice had been justified, indeed, they proceed to charge the gods with having submitted only certain objects to be chosen. Why do not offer also a world where the same degree of happiness would not be accompanied by any misery? The question does not solely oblige to take into account the plurality of alternative worlds; it puts into discussion the 'givenness' of the worlds that are presupposed, as well as their internal structure. Accordingly, the reply will consist in conceding a closer look into the holistic internal connection of all things belonging to the same world. Within this context, this or that wicked person is taken or left *en bloc* with the whole 'series of things' to which it belongs. Leibniz reproduces here a key principle for his theodicean strategy in his writings from the Eighties, usually illustrated there by the Scriptural example of Judas, and here instead by a mythological character: God does not decree that Busiris kills his guests; He only decrees that this series of things (namely, the best one) does exist, to which Busiris the bandit and killer belongs.

The same idea will be at the core of Theodore's vision in the *Theodicy* tale. But the question is posed there from a counterfactual point of view: what would have happened, had Sextus not rejected Jupiter's advice, and had he not raped Lucretia? Thus, the worlds will be construed – or at least, explored – on the basis of a determinate counterfactual question. I will consider closer this view of possible worlds below; for now, I pass to briefly consider the gods in the role of accused.

7 Leibniz refers explicitly to the occurrence of this *dictum* in the Easter liturgy in *Théodicée*, § 10 (GP VI, p. 108).

2.4 Divine Accuseds: the Benefits of Polytheism

When gods are directly challenged, they are not properly convened before the court, because there is no court able to judge their case, as we have seen. What the gods can do, however, is to permit men to contemplate to the arcanum of their decisions; differently than Job's God, they are ready to provide a reason for them. And the reason is not to be found in their pure will, but in the contemplation of the object of this will. This is the case in both tales; in the *De libertate*, however, the exhibition of divine wisdom leaves the divine characters entirely concealed, also in this phase of the story; in the *Theodicy* fable, instead, Apollo, Jupiter, Pallas appear as the dramatic actors.

Descartes had also referred to mythological gods in a polemical way, in order to represent the view of theological univocity from which he was eager to distance himself dramatically. In his famous letter to Mersenne of April, 1630,[8] where he introduces his thesis of the divine creation of the eternal truths, he compares the Scholastic God – who cannot help finding these truths as something 'already made' in His own intellect, independently of His will – to the ancient Jupiter, bound to the 'Styx and destinies'. Interestingly enough, Pierre Gassendi, ignoring the true stance of his interlocutor on this topic and impressed by the apparently Platonist theory of essences of the *Fifth Meditation*, reproaches Descartes himself for assimilating God the Allpowerful to a pagan divinity. And Descartes, when replying to this objection, does not refrain from referring, this time positively, to Jupiter's self-compelling promises in order to express the hypothetical necessity by which the true God Himself is bound to His own decrees, once having established them.[9]

In a sense, Leibniz's imagery is a development of this theme. In general he has no problem in relying on that mythological world. He might easily subscribe to Valla's explanation regarding his choice of employing such characters. According to Valla, the polytheistic imagination, by distributing the different powers and aspects of divine nature into different subjects and characters, can help to express (if not to make more easily conceivable), in a mythical way, the distinction among the divine attrib-

8 «Indeed to say that these truths are independent of God is to talk of hi mas it were Jupiter or Saturn and to subject him to the Styx and the Fates» (AT I, p. 145; CSM III, p. 23; cf. Marion 1996).

9 «Just as the poets suppose that the Fates were originally established by Jupiter, but that after they were established he bound himself to abide by them, so I do not think that the essences of things, and the mathematical truths which we can know concerning them, are independent of God. Nevertheless I do think that they are immutable and eternal, since the will and decree of God willed and decreed that they should be so» (*Fifth Replies*, AT VII, p. 380; CSM, p. 261).

utes, which is far more difficult to conceive within the absolute simplicity of the unique God:

> The virtue of this tale is the following: given that God's wisdom cannot be really separated from His will and power, I would separate them through this simile of Apollo and Jupiter; and what one could not conceive in one and the same God, would become conceivable in two gods, each one having his determinate nature. (Valla 1934, p. 38; transl. mine)

In a theological view like Valla's, or Decartes', however, which emphasizes divine simplicity and relativizes the distinction among divine attributes to our way of conceiving, the merely fictional and heuristical character of the simile should be stressed. In Leibniz's approach, on the contrary, the image can be taken more seriously, insofar as his theology allows for a far more robust distinction among divine attributes, and for their consequent hierarchical order. Thus the polytheistic view of divinity can with no harm provide an imaginative aid in conceiving of the plurality of divine attributes.

This is the sense of the personal intervention of the different gods in the *Theodicy* tale. Leibniz makes the philosophical-theological interpretation of these figures explicit. As far as the characters of Valla's *Dialogue* are concerned, their reading is quite simple and clear: Apollo does symbolize the divine intellect or knowledge – better, its specification as foreknowledge, whereas Jupiter represents the divine will, or God's providence. In Leibniz's prosecution of the story, a third actor – namely, Pallas – appears, and this corresponds to a more complex theological framework. The divine (fore)knowledge, in fact, thus far represented by Apollo alone, is now split into two divinities, i.e. Apollo himself and Pallas.

Now, according to Leibniz's explanation, the former represents God's 'knowledge of vision' (*scientia visionis*), whereas the latter represents His 'knowledge of simple intelligence' (*scientia simplicis intelligentiae*).[10] Reference is made, of course, to some technical concepts of the sophisticated theory of divine knowledge which had been elaborated by Scholastics, especially in connection with the arduous problem of the divine foreknowledge of contingent futures. Within this tradition, the objects of the science of vision are all actually existing things, i.e. the things that are part of the actual world – be they present, past or future ones. The science of simple intelligence, instead, embraces the pure possibles as such, even those which are never actualized: hence the plurality of possible worlds falls within its scope.

10 «If Apollo has represented aright God's knowledge of vision, I hope that Pallas will have not discreditably filled the role of what is called knowledge of simple intelligence (that which embraces all that is possible), wherein at last the source of things must to be sought'» (*Théodicée*, § 417, GP VI, p. 365).

Keeping this reading in mind, let me briefly consider the relationship between the corresponding characters in the tale. As we may expect, the prominent role in explaining Jupiter's choice is given to Pallas. She holds the key for both her father's decrees and her brother's consequent predictions, because she offers the preliminary vision of all possible worlds, infallibly determining the former's choice and all its consequences. She actually is, therefore, the last instance to which people looking for the definitive reason of things can appeal. In this way, a fundamental principle of Leibniz's theodicy – that is to say, the ideal priority, within God Himself, of rational wisdom over the will – is firmly restated. Each deviation from the plan of the most perfect world would have provoked an outrage in Pallas.

Incidentally, in Christian Trinitarian theology, the issue did not reduce itself to a metaphysical dialectic between different divine attributes, insofar as the divine wisdom, which contains the plan for creation, was ultimately identified with a divine Person – the Son, playing the role of the divine Word. Thus, in Malebranche's rational theology, each violation of wisdom in the rational plan for the universe would have resulted in an offense to the divine Word.[11]

In Leibniz, instead, the transcription of the ancient myth remains within the limits of a metaphysics of divine attributes. In any event, the important fact is that the determination of divine will is still conceived as internal to God, Pallas being nothing but Jupiter's intellect. But Leibniz's usage of mythical images sometimes goes even further in the earlier tale of the *De libertate*, where he seems to recognize even some constraint on the creative decree, which would depend on the 'Parcae'. When detailing there the interesting image of the musical scores (more on this below), in fact, he points out that some elements of the music are written by the Parcae in diamond, while others are given by Jupiter himself in golden letters. Now, the image of the Parcae clearly belongs to the same family of the 'Styx and destinies', which had been vehemently rejected by Descartes: that is to say, to those well-known figures and episodes in ancient mythology which adumbrated the invincible power of a fate external to Jupiter's will (or to divine will in general) and capable of imposing itself on it. Leibniz does not hesitate in bringing back and legitimating some aspects of this view, insofar as he depicts the contribution of the Parcae, shaped by necessity, as complementary to the one that is due to Jupiter's free will.[12] Admittedly, this necessity cannot be located, according to Leibniz, anywhere except in the divine intellect; but certainly it is

11 See for this topic the *Traité de la nature et de la grâce* (1680).

12 «The notes on the score were written in part in diamond by the Parcaes' hands, part in gold by Jupiter. And from the Parcae some necessary and unchangeable properties of the harmonic numbers came, whereas Jupiter seemed to have chosen at will the key and a few other elements of the song» (A VI, 4, p. 1608).

an image that aims to suggest a necessary element somehow limiting the space of divine freedom.[13] In any event, the details of the image clearly suggest a precise stratification within the structure of a single world, to which I will return below.

So far we have considered the 'actors' responsible for the divine choice. In order to understand better this choice, it is time to analyse in more detail its objects – that is to say, the images by which our tales try to capture the idea of alternative series of things, or equivalently of possible worlds – according to the slightly different terminologies employed, respectively, in the *De libertate* and in the *Theodicy*.

3 Possible Worlds: a Gallery of Images

3.1 The Scene of World Theatre: Statues, Choirs and Music

A rich variety of images for possible worlds is mobilized in the two tales – some rather traditional, others more original. In each case, we are invited to contemplate one central vision: the review of choruses in the *De libertate*, the Palace of destinies with its apartments in the *Theodicy*. Moreover, in each case a directly sensible element (something one can see or hear, without any further description or explanation) is doubled by a linguistic component made of words, be they spoken or written, which accompanies the perceived content with an explicit description. This element practically provides an explicit narration that is itself still part of the dramatic representation.

Within this common framework, the two representations exhibit a partially different register, insofar as in Deucalion's story (at least in its first half) the auditory metaphors are prevailing (even if they are far from exclusive), whereas in Theodorus' tale the central aspects are decidedly visual. In the first tale different choruses represented the possible courses of human history, each identified by its characteristical musical style and melody. Also resorting to words, or to explicit narration, was bound to the oral dimension: Deucalion and Pyrrha can hear the choruses singing and telling their respective future or possible histories.

Already in this context, however, the descriptive/narrative element makes reference also to a form of inscription, which is fully coherent, however, with the general musical metaphor. The 'tables' which appear

13 This image of the *De libertate* tale – alluding to the necessity of some harmonic proportion – seems directly reminiscent of the view expressed in the letter to Magnus Wedderkopf (May 1671), where the necessity of the harmony as the object of divine intellect was emphasized. See A II, 1, pp. 117-118.

to accompany the performances of choruses are, in fact, musical scores. Two remarks are in order concerning this interesting image.

Firstly, the fact that each chorus has its own musical style expresses its internal coherence. The statues of each chorus are not merely juxtaposed, but they belong together in forming a perfect whole, where no element can be subtracted or arbitrarily changed. Thus, the image suggests that a Leibnizian world is not the more or less arbitrary outcome of a piecemeal arrangement, but it possesses the admirable unity of a work of art. To this effect in a letter to Arnauld we find the simile of choruses used to illustrate the pre-established harmony.[14]

Secondly, I have already hinted above to the stratification, or to the different layers Leibniz individuates in them. Now, they seem to find precise correspondences within the musical theory, so that the mythological duality (Parcae-Jupiter) is doubled by a comparison between different musical elements. It is no surprise, in the great age of baroque polyphony and in a philosophy largely inspired by an all-embracing concept of harmony, to find a developed musical metaphor of the structure of the world order. In the first (deleted) occurrence of this theme, the necessary rules dictated by the Parcae are likened to the 'harmonic numbers' – we could say, to the mathematical laws of harmony that constitute the necessary underpinning of every creative development. They are written 'in diamond' and explicitly qualified by immutability and unshakeable necessity. Beyond the metaphorical, they designate a logically necessary framework, presumably valid for all possible worlds.[15] The contribution of divine will and wisdom ('Jupiter's golden finger') to the world order, instead, is represented by the choice of a key and (maybe) of a tonality, or even of a melodic theme. It is a contingent and wise element: the text qualifies it as 'arbitrary' – which should be taken, of course, not in the sense of arbitrariness, but of the artistic freedom, always bound by inner constraints and by a kind of axiological necessity.

14 «Finally, using a comparison, I would like to say that the harmony between the body and the soul is similar to different orchestras or choirs that – separated one from another – play their part or sing and that they are disposed in such a manner that they cannot hear or see each other, but nevertheless perfectly harmonize if everyone is just following its part. Whoever hears them all at once will detect a miraculous harmony that is even more astonishing as if they had some connection one to another» (GP II, p. 95). When used as a simile for pre-established harmony, however, the choruses are thought of as included within a unique world; whereas in the *De libertate* each chorus represents a closed world. In the example made to Arnauld, indeed, all choruses are supposed to sing according to the same music, while in the *De libertate* each one sings its own music.

15 Actually, the metaphor refers to an element (the 'harmonic numbers') whose necessity is at most an aesthetical one. Still, one should remember the mathematical nature of musical harmony, which was much more commonly emphasized in the tradition. See also note 13, for the necessity of the ideal relations in God's intellect.

It is worth observing, thirdly, that the image of musical scores appeared in a first draft within the description of choirs themselves, in the scenography of the first judgement; but it was then deleted by Leibniz and moved to the second judgment, where the gods come directly to the fore and allow access to the supreme vision.[16] While the choirs are taken again into account and reanimated, the new, properly focused, element is precisely the vision of the 'tables'. Only when reading – or somehow 'seeing' – the deep structure of the music of each chorus, inscripted in them, one is able to grasp the internal connections that determine the coherence and compactness of each world. Leibniz seems here to contrast an initial level in the perception of harmony – a more superficial or sensible one, hence still confused – with a second level, where we have a look into the intelligible texture underpinning of the melody we hear. This representation of two levels in our understanding of the world and in the perception of its beauty parallels the traditional aspects of musical experience, insofar as music was conceived as the aesthetical reverberation of an underlying rational structure.[17]

The auditory aspect, however, should not conceal the fact that the image of choruses also has a powerful visual significance. Before being animated, the choruses offer to the reader's phantasy the vivid vision of a huge multitude of statues, subdivided into innumerable groups, each one representing all the individuals of a world. When the sculptures are animated, the spectacle assumes a dynamical dimension. Now we are able to understand that the different aspects – visual, musical, narrative – should be considered all together. Dance, music, and dramatic story co-operate exactly as they do in the art of theatre. As we know, the idea of the 'mundane theatre' was an ancient one, well represented at the very heart of the Baroque culture. God is the great Author, who contemplates this majestic scenography and the dramatic unfolding of the infinitely complex plot. We know that elsewhere Leibniz compares God's knowledge of a world to an 'ichnographic view',[18] surpassing and including every perspectival approach to the same scene. One can imagine that

16 For the first occurrence of this idea, see note 12 above. In the final version, it is embodied with the image of the tables: «a golden score hovered upon each chorus, and the rules written by the Parcae in eternal diamond were contained by it; and these rules, few in number, predetermined all future movements and actions of their chorus, as soon as the supreme god had added the golden key by his own hand» (A VI, 4, pp. 1611-1612).

17 It is needless to mention the ancient Pythagorean-Platonic tradition of the 'harmony', still very influential in Renaissance and early modern, nor to many religious traditions and mythologies, where divine creation is described as operated through a song. For Leibniz's relation to these traditions, see Haase [1965] 1982. On Leibniz's reflections on musical theory, see Biller 1990; Erle 2005.

18 Study for a letter to des Bosses, GP II, p. 438.

the choruses and tables of the tale provide the men with a *raccourci* of this synoptic vision.

In any event, the dynamical-historical aspect of these mythical cosmological views should remind us that the narrative and fictional dimension is a constitutive one for Leibniz's modal intuitions. The well-known 'novel argument'[19] for unrealized possibilities shows that the idea of a story, or better of a fiction, is – from both the chronological and conceptual point of view – the original matrix for his idea of possible worlds.

3.2 Palaces, Books and Libraries

The contemplation of the 'music scores' introduces to another kind of image, where the visual aspect is finally prevailing. The appearance of the tables, in fact, is accompanied by an extraordinary splendour – an image reminiscent of Dante's *Paradiso* – where the stories corresponding to the inscriptions become somehow visible 'like in a mirror'. Also the comparison of the divine intellect to a mirror was codified by a long tradition. It was something more than a literary metaphor; at least, as a metaphor it was embodied with the technical descriptions of divine knowledge, and therefore commonly adopted by middle knowledge theorists.

The *Theodicy* tale, for its own part, all takes place within the register of seeing, insofar as it presents us with a true 'vision', which is disclosed to Theodorus. Pallas, we remember, represents the science of simple intelligence, or more widely the divine intellect as such. As is well known, this is for Leibniz the *pays des possibles*, that is to say the true seat of the framework of possible worlds. In the tale, all of this is fundamentally represented by architectonic models: the majestic palace of destinies, whose apartments represent the worlds. In the unfolding of this vision, the palace reveals its pyramidal shape. As we know, the pyramid symbolizes the organization of worlds into a hierarchical scale of perfection, implying that there is *the* best possible world, hence a maximum point in the hierarchy, whereas, on the other hand, the scale descends without any end (cf. *Théodicée*, § 416, GP VI, p. 364).

Just as in the *De libertate*, the sensorial component is paralleled by a linguistic element, this time a true inscription: we are faced, in fact, with writings. Each apartment contains a library – i.e. the description of its story. The dependence of this image on a rich heritage stemming from the religious tradition hardly needs to be stressed; there is nothing especially original here, except a numerical aspect: each inhabitant of each apartment is marked by a number, which corresponds to a book in the library.

19 See e.g. *De libertate, contingentia et serie causarum*, A VI, 4, pp. 1653-1654.

An immense codification is adumbrated, evoking the Leibnizian dream of a quasi-mathematical 'science of the individuals'.[20] More interestingly, Leibniz says that Theodorus, by pointing to a certain page and a certain line in each book can successively expand in a progressively detailed manner a moment in the life of Sextus – or better, of each of the several 'Sextuses'.[21] Of course, the reading of the book is always paralleled by a tridimensional vision of the corresponding story, expressing the perfect correspondence between fact and description.

The same image can be found in a quite peculiar Leibnizian text of a few years later: the *Apokatastasis* fragment, where the correspondence between the factual history and its description is expressed by the image of an enormous library containing the whole history of the human kind.[22] As is well known, in the *Apokatastasis* fragment, the idea of library serves to illustrate the problem of the limits of combinatorial possibility (how to construe all possible discourses or stories) and – via the presupposed correspondence with reality – the possible closure of human history. In this context, the possibility of successive levels of finer-grained description does not only express the different levels of abstraction typical of our knowledge, but is also very relevant for the final solution of the combinatorial problem. Only the infinite detail of reality, in fact, prevents it from being captured by the finite resources of our descriptive devices, thus leaving a new room that is always open beyond the apparent closure of our knowledge. Thus, despite surface appearances, the same (qualitatively indiscernible) individual cannot reappear in any other state of the world. The same intuition, as we shall see, is at work in the synchronical consideration of possible Sextuses in the *Theodicy* tale.

The image of the 'archives' – that is, of a kind of 'library of libraries' – already appeared as the object of the final contemplation in the *De libertate* (cf. A VI, 4, p. 1612).

Leibniz's metaphysics of possible worlds, captured by the image of the library, availed itself of the reality of divine intellect to assign to the worlds

20 «You have seen a number on the forehead of Sextus. Look in this book for the place it indicates. Theodorus looked for it, and found there the history of Sextus in a form more ample than the outline he had seen» (*Théodicée*, § 415, GP VI, p. 363). The association of an individual's face with a number reminds the suggestive passage of *Discourse of Metaphysics*, § 6, alluding to the possibility of capturing the contour of every human face by a corresponding geometric curve and its generating rule (see A VI, 4, p. 1538).

21 «Put your finger on any line you please, Pallas said to him, and you will see represented actually in all its detail that which the line broadly indicates. He obeyed, and he saw coming into view all the characteristics of a portion of the life of that Sextus» (*Théodicée*, § 415, GP VI, p. 363).

22 See Leibniz 1991, with Fichant's very useful introduction. Here too we find the idea of different (progressively more detailed) levels of description of the same individual (or world) history. On the library metaphor of this Leibnizian text, see Blumenberg 1979, pp. 121-149.

their ontological status. As we know, some versions of present-day possible worlds metaphysics – which want to avoid a Lewisian-style commitment to the reality of possible worlds, without relying on the theological foundation – treat the worlds as sets of abstract beings, like propositions. And they find quite naturally the image of 'stories' or 'books' to express their intuitions. In general, the consideration of the rich stock of Leibnizian images, together with their correspondences in present-day literature on possible worlds, brings forth an invitation to reflect: maybe some images – far from being the subsequent clothing of some well-defined preexistent conceptual contents – turn out to be the true sources of those contents themselves; moreover, they continue to substantiate the core of such theories,[23] especially when their conceptual articulation is more elusive. I wish to consider a bit more closely some details of this complex relationship between inspiring image and conceptual theory, which we can find in our tales.

3.3 The Ambiguities of 'vision'

The complex, sometimes slippery relationship in the Leibnizian stories between imagining and conceptualizing about possible worlds turns out to be double-edged. On the one hand, we can see in Leibniz's images a case of the smoothing of conceptual tensions, ultimately a surreptitious masking of them; on the other hand, one can verify that the images in their detail exhibit an extremely precise expression of the relevant doctrinal aspects.

An example of the first case is the ambiguous role of visual metaphors, and in particular of the very notion of vision. This is another case like that of mirror, where an image or an experience, before being handled exactly as a poetic image with its suggestive or rhetorical power, is already incorporated in the (technical) language of the theory itself, as if it were a properly conceptual tool. 'Vision', in fact, was the technical label for a specific type of divine knowledge: as I have said above, the knowledge whose object is constituted by all actually existing things. Of course, the label of 'vision' was directly connected to the intuitive concept of divine knowledge as an all-embracing overview on the whole of things. This intuitive comparison with our act of vision had already been exploited in the ancient debates on foreknowledge in order to express and emphasize the purely contemplative dimension of foreknowledge itself, hence its noninterference into the things and events that are 'seen'. Nevertheless, the unfolding of the discussion within Christian theology had further clarified

23 I am not thinking, of course, of the mathematical modelizing of possible worlds, but of its metaphysical interpretations.

that, actually, the divine vision could not be taken as an analogy of our 'empirical' knowledge, nor could it be in any way dependent on its object. Thus ultimately, exactly the science of vision had been typically qualified as 'volitional knowledge', having its root in the divine will: God 'sees' all actual events only because He knows His own acts of will.

In contrast with this, the 'science of simple intelligence', having possibles as its objects, was considered a 'pre-volitional' one, i.e. one independent of divine will in principle, and rooted only in the eternal content of His intellect. Leibniz for his own part was explicit in indicating that Pallas with his Palace stands for this type of knowledge. In this case, the intuitive significance of the vision metaphor functions implicitly to reinforce the intention of the theory of the 'science of simple intelligence'. But then the notion of 'vision' conceals a subtle dyscrasia between the metaphorical significance intuitively suggested by the corresponding image (and experience) on the one hand, and the conceptual/technical significance of the theological 'science of vision' on the other: the former being independent of will, the latter dependent on it.

Moreover, the metaphorical significance, associated to the 'simple intelligence', and its generalization, corresponds to Leibniz's theodicean concern: namely, to show God as choosing among sets of possibilities somehow already constituted in His intellect. But here the point of difficulty is concealed: the possibilities considered, in fact, are contingent: possible stories, whose internal links are not necessary. As is well known, this was the typical field of the controversial 'middle knowledge': the divine knowledge of counterfactual conditionals, based on His knowledge of all possible stories. Now, the aim of middle-knowledge theorists was to recognize this type of knowledge as a pre-volitional one (with respect to God), but including the reference to human (possible) will. Therefore, God really turns out here to be a kind of 'looker-on', observing human decisions. And not accidentally, these theorists made large use of the *metaphor* of the divine mirror and of the vision of a multiplicity of possible worlds. As we have seen, Leibniz himself in the *Theodicy* employs the same imaginary (cf. *Théodicée*, § 42). We know, however, that ultimately he firmly rejects middle knowledge as an intermediate autonomous space between the two other types of divine knowledge. He does not accept the alleged dependence of God's knowledge on a possible act of human free will, in his view a blatant violation of the principle of reason. As a consequence, he aims at reducing the alleged middle knowledge to one of the two other types, to that of simple intelligence, as a matter of fact. This is the case in our tale, where Pallas is explicitly associated with 'simple intelligence'.

Behind the ambiguity of 'vision' we can detect Leibniz's permanent oscillation between, on the one hand, the emphasis on the compactness of a story or a world (with the aim of making God not directly responsible of all is contained in it), and, on the other hand, the need of recognizing

a role for His will (at least in the form of 'possible decrees') also for what concerns the inner structure of those stories and worlds. Focusing on the image of vision assures, in a way, the theodicean pay-off by concealing these unsolved conceptual tensions.

In the *De libertate* tale, already the first presentation of choruses clearly alluded to the impossibility of partial rearrangements of the given worlds (choruses), or of any piecemeal framing of them for the sake of their improvement: «there was always something missing in each chorus, *and had the oracle allowed it* [which was not the case] one would have taken that missing element from other choruses» (A VI, 4, pp. 1608-1609). The second stage in the revelation/evaluation of possible stories – namely, the stage expressed by the vision of the divine 'archives' – implies the possibility for humans of somehow intuiting the mutual interconnections that give the internal compactness to a world, and thus of having an account of that impossibility. We know, however, that the task of giving an account, by purely logical means, of the relations of compossibility/incompossibility needed by theodicean requirements, turns out to be a quasi desperate one. In this sense, the 'vision' does not provide any further explanation, but rather presents itself as an anticipation of the beatific vision of the *altitudo* of divine wisdom.

In any event, the recourse to visual images turns out to play a relevant rhetorical role which conceals the true tensions and the ambiguity of the model of possible worlds adopted by Leibniz. Also in the present-day metaphysics of possible worlds the incidence of the imaginative package is considerable. A closer recognition of the development of the images for possible worlds in the two tales can help us explore this aspect.

3.4 A Tale of World-Bound Individuals

I have said that visual metaphors tend to support the impression of a theodicean strategy based on a view of worlds as 'discovered', and how this could be partially misleading. One should not think, however, that the narrative illustration is only a rhetorical embellishment aimed at smoothing or concealing conceptual tensions. On the contrary, Leibniz's imaginative effort is very controlled from the point of view of theory. An attentive reading can confirm the precision by which some details of the myth reflect the subtlest aspects of his theory, sometimes even express them in a clearer way than doctrinal expositions. Thus, the indications of both tales leave no doubt concerning the vexed issue of trans-world identity. In full agreement with Leibniz's explicit indications in other contexts, the firm rejection of trans-world identity is clearly alluded to in both tales. Thus, the *De libertate* is eager to stress that each statue belongs to one chorus,

and no more.[24] The holistic interconnection revealed by the final contemplation of the divine Archive should implicitly account for this impossibility of belonging to more than one chorus.

In the *Theodicy* tale, then, Leibniz, while using the ambiguous (or better, loose) language of the 'Sextuses', clearly indicates that a mere relation of similarity connects them. Not surprisingly, this culminating part of the tale is a privileged *locus* for those interpreters who are eager to assimilate the Leibnizian view to David Lewis' counterpart theory.[25] Moreover, Leibniz seems to suggest a true Lewisian-style interpretation of counterfactual claims. In the fable, Theodore explores the palace from the point of view of a determinate question concerning Sextus' destiny. And this implies the need for a selection of the relevant 'apartments' (worlds) in which he has to look. Although the worlds are 'discovered', and not stipulated, one needs to individuate the set of relevant worlds in order to give a truth value to the counterfactual statements concerning Sextus. And this is possible through the application of a controlled method of variation. As is well known, Pallas appeals to the concept of a geometric *locus*, to designate the subset of worlds which are identified by a certain condition. The more precise the condition becomes, the more the subset reduces, until the limit case of an antecedent condition so determined to capture a uniquely determined consequent is reached.[26] By this way – i.e., by reinforcing and making more precise the poetic image through the geometric comparison – Leibniz gives a very efficacious illustration of that blend of a semi-realistic view of worlds as holistic, already constituted wholes on the one hand, and of an operative procedure by methodical variation, which may be compared to D. Lewis' work on counterfactuals.

The difference from a Kripkean-style stipulative view is maintained, to the extent that Leibniz is always eager to stress that there is no counterfactual identity: the happy Sextus is only similar to our Sextus (presumably, the mate most similar to him in a certain world); the city of Corynth where

24 «Not one of them [of the statues] belonged to more than one chorus» (A VI, 4, p. 1608).

25 The most important parallel, as we know, van be found in the discussion on the 'possible Adams' in the correspondence with Arnauld. The literature on these topics (denial of counterfactual identity, counterpart-theoretical interpretation) is wide. I recall here only some seminal works: Mates 1971, 1986; Mondadori 1973, 1975.

26 «You learnt geometry in your youth, like all well-instructed Greeks. You know therefore that when the conditions of a required point do not sufficiently determine it, and there is an infinite number of them, they all fall into what the geometricians call a locus, and this locus at least (which is often a line) will be determinate. Thus you can picture to yourself an ordered succession of worlds, which shall contain each and every one the case that is in question, and shall vary its circumstances and its consequences. *But if you put a case that differs from the actual world only in one single definite thing and its results, a certain one of those determinate worlds will answer you. These worlds are all here, that is, in ideas*» (*Théodicée*, § 414, GP VI, pp. 362-363; italics mine).

he lives is only 'very similar' to 'our' Corynth.[27] This, incidentally, indicates that the variation, in metaphysical rigour, cannot be taken as purely local, as we are bound to assume for the sake of our epistemic interests: every change in one detail of a world involves a corresponding rearrangement of every other particular thing.

Moreover, Leibniz gives a valuable clue toward understanding the profound reason of this controversial (and counterintuitive) denial of counterfactual identity. He does not simply advance a question-begging inference from discernibility to numerical difference, but rather alludes to some constraint rooted in the causal structure of each story. Thus he stresses that, in the metaphysical rigour, different stories cannot share any common trait. A happy Sextus can be similar to – and, at least epistemically, indistinguishable from – ours for a trait of his story only with respect to finite knowledge; it will be already different, however, in some aspects that are hidden from us, but will unfold in the course of time. Two of the most powerful principles of Leibniz's metaphysics – Identity of Indiscernibles, Sufficient Reason – require that two divergent causal chains cannot perfectly overlap in any segment, otherwise they would not be able to explain their successive divergence. Therefore, two divergent stories will be different at least in some detail from their origin; and up to a certain point even if their difference were assumed to be imperceptible, it will unfold and emerge:

> I will show you some [of the apartments/worlds], wherein shall be found, not absolutely the same Sextus as you have seen (*that is not possible, he carries with him always that which he shall be*) but several Sextuses resembling him, possessing all you know already of the true Sextus, but *not all that is already in him imperceptibly, nor in consequence all that shall yet happen to him*.[28]

And this intuition corresponds exactly to what is assumed in the *Apokatastasis* fragment,[29] which simply shifts the focus of its application from the 'simultaneous' comparison of worlds to their cyclical repetition.

Therefore, the narrative exemplification preserves each important aspect of Leibniz's metaphysics of individuality. From Leibniz's myths we

27 «He goes to a city between two seas, *resembling* Corinth» (*Théodicée*, § 415, GP VI, p. 363; italics mine).

28 *Théodicée*, § 414, GP VI, p. 363 (italics mine).

29 «Although a previous period of world history could come back identical as regards its perceivable aspects, i.e. those which can be described by books, nevertheless it will not come back according to all of its aspects. There will always be some differences, in fact, although they are imperceptible and cannot be exhaustively described by any book» (Leibniz 1991, p. 72).

cannot certainly claim a rational solution to the conceptual aporias with which his metaphysical theory is faced. After all, the role of myth is also to trace a path where the resources of conceptual analysis can no longer be of assistance. Still, as a matter of fact much of the material from which interpreters try to reconstruct the details of Leibniz's theory of possible worlds is taken from a text like the *Theodicy* tale. Is it only an accident? Or maybe not, given that even the metaphysical arguments in the present-day theories of possible worlds and identity seem to share some 'family air' with science-fiction? Certainly, Leibniz's example still gives matter to reflect on the complex relationship between imagination, fiction and philosophical theory.

Appendix
From *De Libertate fato gratia Dei* (A VI, 4, pp. 1607-1612)

[…] And thus I reflected, looking for a better simile… Let us then imagine the following apologue: when Deucalion and Pyrrha, upon command of the oracle, had thrown the stones over their shoulders, men did not immediately arise, as poets claim, but instead statues in a human form emerged. And once Deucalion consulted the oracle again, the response was that the gods had granted him the power to give life to those statues of his choosing, provided only that he selects a whole group of statues who reacted to and were animated by the same type of music. It was thus to him to decide to which chorus of statues he would give life. Deucalion ordered for music to be sung in the Lydian style. Immediately some statues began to move, and when Deucalion's lyre stopped playing, they continued dancing to their own music and through their song they expressed all that they would do and accomplish should they be chosen to become human beings; and this is the way they incited Deucalion to choose them. Then music in the Phrigius style was played, and another group of statues danced, illustrating in a similar way their future life, if indeed they would to be chosen to live. And now a third chorus began, and a fourth and many others, until all statues had danced; *not one of them belonging to more than one chorus*.

[Most interesting was that while each chorus was dancing a unique musical score for each individual chorus appeared to Deucalion, each of which ruled the movements of the corresponding chorus. The notes on the score were written in part in diamond by the Parcaes' hands, part in gold by Jupiter. And from the Parcae some necessary and unchangeable properties of the harmonic numbers came, whereas Jupiter seemed to have chosen at will the key and a few other elements of the song. From the gold of magnanimous Jupiter, together with the gems of inexorable fate, a wonderful splendour shined, as if in a mirror, where all of the future events and experiences were represented of that chorus, and the whole aspect that human things would have, if it were chosen. Because of the tremendous variety of future events, all of which so admirably displayed, both visually and musically, Deucalion and his wife were equally as anxious as perplexed by the difficulty posed by their choice].[30]

One of the choruses prefigured a world of absolute innocence, but also deprived of great actions, being a bit weak due to its modesty and the simple life of its inhabitants; other ones were going to offer many examples either of force, or of intelligence, or of other virtues. But there was always something missing in each chorus, *and had the oracle allowed it*, one would have taken that missing element from other choruses. Among all

30 The text in brackets was deleted by Leibniz.

these choruses, there was one, in which big evils were predicted, namely a pollution extended to all human kind because of poisoned food, and then Thyestes' dinners, Edipus' marriage, Ixion's and Tantalus' tortures in hell. All these terrible things, however, were more than compensated for by the arrival of much better events, that is to say the descent to Earth of the supreme Jupiter himself, compassionate of the human conditions, and His conversation under human face, and the forgiveness of all crimes which brought forth a golden age and eternal peace, as well as the assimilation of the blessed souls to God, as big as possible.

After a long deliberation, the husband and wife arrived at an agreement in the choosing of the chorus that promised all this, because it seemed that this would be the way the humans would have enjoyed of the closest relationship with the gods. Immediately all other statues, *as if they were resentful*, were broken down and reduced to the previous form of simple stones. But those who were elected – all that won this competition – received the full gamut of human nature. And thus mankind was propagated in the whole world, and the damages of deluge were rectified. Deucalion seemed to have fulfilled in the best possible way his task of restorer of human kind, and he enjoyed a good life on the earth, until death came to take both consorts together, now very aged and tired. And they had already passed the fatal Styges in Charon's boat, and went straight to the Elysian Fields, where the happy souls anticipate the heavenly goods. But then a grand disturbance exploded in the reign of Hades. You would have believed that the earth had been shaken by Enceladus, who fractured it and allowed it to be penetrated by the light of day, hated by the inhabitants of Hades; or you would have thought that someone was about to abduct Proserpine a second time from Dytes' thalamus, or that someone was attempting to remove the chained Cerberus. The vulture ceased to torment Titius, Ixion's wheel stopped for a while. Then, when all is silent, you were able to understand that the unhappy damned souls are complaining about Deucalion and Pyrrha as if they were the authors of all their ills, and they demand that the two be punished. They lament that having been transformed from stones into human beings was a sort of cruel gift, only leading to eternal torture, and thus seemed dissatisfied, unless Deucalion and Pyrrha were also damned. Pluto deferred such a significant issue to the three capital judges, Aecus, Minos and Rhadamantus. The married couple, struck by such a considerable and unforeseen threat, tried to defend themselves and cried, and protested that the gods were responsible for the oracle, first of all the saintly Themis, whose commands they obeyed; and they called Ovide and a Greek author of Metamorphoses as witness. But Deucalion could hardly utter these few words, and they were immediately overwhelmed by a confused clamour, as if he was trying to assign his own culpability to the gods, while instead they had given to him the power to choose, without indicting him what to choose.

While the judges were hesitating and they trying to adjourn the case, Lycurgus and Solon came – the former celebrated for his justice, the latter for his wisdom – having been sent by the souls of Elysium. When they received from the blessed the news concerning the judgment, in fact, they found it shameful that the memory of the wicked ones turned out to be sharper than the gratefulness of the good persons. Here a new and astonishing battle between the pious and the impious, the crimes and the virtues arose; part of this battle was described by our Prudentius in his *Psychomachia*, whose knowledge of it came from I do not know from where. Now, the whole issue before the judges was about whether it was preferable that wicked and unhappy persons do not exist, or that the happy and blessed exist, and whether it was worthier to avoid ills or to obtain goods. It would be impossible to embrace all that was said by the wisest and most eloquent men on behalf of both parties; maybe someone else will be able to better explain this all. Finally Jupiter, asked by Pluto, sent Themis' scale made from stars down from the Zodiac, so that the reasons and destinies of both sides could be weighed by it. The judges themselves, indeed, inclined toward the blessed, did not dare to pronounce their sentence, in order not to seem to favour themselves. The wonderful nature of that balance, however, is such that it does not evaluate the heaviness of bodies, but the relative force of the different arguments and reasons; words are the matter here, and once the reasons are stated, the pans of the scale are inclined proportionally with respect to their force. All were waiting in suspense; while the clerk of the court exposed the arguments of both sides, the balance inclined now in this direction, now in the other one, as if uncertain. On one side it was argued that, if pleasure is equal to pain, then it is better not to suffer than to take pleasure. On the other they replied that in music the dissonances corrected and compensated by art are preferable to a dull monotony of sound. To this it was countered that a mixture of perturbation and restoration can be justified if it concerns one and the same person, but not if the benefits are assigned to some persons, and the ills to others. It was answered that misery and happiness could not be combined in one and the same person. They replied again, however, that one could experience enough variety, without going to such extreme good and evil. And the dispute continued like so through several replies, until finally it was said that the happy condition that had been chosen [by Deucalion] was not just any, but it was precisely the one by which the Gods were united to humans, with respect to which every misery counts as nothing. And Deucalion had chosen this series of human events moved by this very consideration. These words had hardly been pronounced, when immediately the balance lowered to that side, as if a heavy weight had been placed on that pan. Thus Deucalion and Pyrrha, acquitted by Themis' infallible verdict, fulfilled their vows to the gods. But a loud murmur of the unhappy souls arose in the all of Hades, as if they

had only just now been damned; and blasphemies clearly echoed, directed toward the Gods, as if their greatness and joy, or Glory, were increased and rejoiced by the perpetual woe of the damned, so that their happiness stood out more conspicuously and were felt more acutely, by way of contrast. And they protested that it had been within the power of the gods to present to Deucalion, besides those series of human events that had been presented – and from which it should be admitted that he had chosen the best – other ones, where humans would have been no less, but even more happy, without the joy of the blessed being diminished by the misery of anyone else. While addressing their complaints to the gods, the anger of the impious became increasingly inflamed; but then a wonderful and unheard-of spectacle was offered to the blessed while they were enjoying in the Elysian fields, but they were also astonished by these tremendous questions. All sorts of statues that had danced before Deucalion returned. But now a golden score hovered upon each chorus, and the rules written by the Parcae in eternal diamond were contained by it; and these rules, few in number, predetermined all future movements and actions of their chorus, as soon as the supreme god had added the golden key by his own hand. And the force of the wonderful connection and linkage of so many songs arisen from so few musical notes – a force and connection that remains concealed in these notes, inscrutable by humans as long as they live on the earth, now clearly appears to those purified souls. Finally their minds are ravished into the depth of divinity and the archives of the Eternal Reason revealed themselves. Once admitted there, all of the musical scores, or all of the conceivable choruses that can be, that is to say all of the possible worlds – an infinite number – appeared, and the extramundane light of this secret region shined over; and by this light the inexpressible harmony not only of that which had happened and will happen, but also of all possible things, could be understood, so that finally they were able to understand – as if they had weighed the infinite worlds on the balance – that nothing better than what has actually been could have been found by the eternal and infinite wisdom. And they understood that it had not been decreed that some people were wicked and unhappy; but only that, once presented with the best series to choose, they were also allowed to exist, according to what followed from the rule of this series; nor was the issue debated in the Providential council, whether Busiris were going to kill his guests, but rather the issue was, whether this series of possible things was preferable or not, even if Busiris the killer were part of the series. The happy souls, being enlightened to these arcane secrets, and having penetrated the harvest things and intimately known the beauty and justice of their author, now confessed to be blessed. For us, however, is good to recognize in this earthy life, as if from from afar, those things whose overt contemplation will be counted, in the afterlife, among the supreme goods of eternity.

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Theodicy and Reason
Logic, Metaphysics, and Theology in Leibniz's *Essais de Théodicée* (1710)
edited by Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero, Mattia Geretto, and Luigi Perissinotto

«Mes papiers sont assez en désordre» Some Notes on the Philosophical Language and Metaphors of the *Essais de Théodicée*

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Abstract Leibniz's use of language in the *Essais de théodicée* follows the tendency of his time, viewing precise definitions of all terms as a *sine qua non* condition for rigorous scientific and philosophical discourse, thereby considering tropes as ornamental devices. At the same time, however, he employs metaphors, analogies, and similes to express his philosophical views. How to solve this apparent inconsistency? My analysis of the language of the *Théodicée* aims to corroborate the general assumption that metaphorical discourse plays a crucial role in the exposition of Leibniz's most fundamental theses, and that the basic metaphors are never actually cashed out in non-metaphorical language. The motivation for it lies in the fact that different metaphors are certainly connected but at the same time irreducible to literal paraphrases, so that they illuminate together the nature of the relations between different facets of Leibniz's philosophy.

Keywords Metaphor. Analysis of Language. Philosophical Discourse.

1 Introduction

The *Théodicée*, published in 1710, was addressed to a large public. It was written in French in plain language and contained essays, dialogues and fables. Leibniz expressly wished to present difficult concepts in an easy and familiar manner, as he stated, «et je me flatte que le petite Dialogue qui finit les Essais opposés à M. Bayle, donnera quelque contentement à ceux qui sont bien aises de voir des verités difficiles, mais importantes, exposées d'une maniere aisée et familiere» (*Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 48).

The German philosopher published the *Essais de Théodicée* in a difficult time of his life. He had lost his protectors (Sophie Charlotte died in 1705) and had been recalled to his duties several times by Ernst August Braunschweig-Lüneburg until the *Reiseverbot* made in 1704 by Georg

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Ludwig (George I).[1] It was therefore important for him to present a summa of his philosophy to the scientific community, in order to raise his prestige as a member of the *République des lettres*.

Despite the fact that this was one of the few works published by Leibniz in his lifetime, the *Théodicée* is far from being a systematic publication and it underwent a lengthy editorial process. Leibniz was aware of the 'composite' structure of the work, which is completed by the collection of *échantillons* and of articles already published in the principal European scientific journals.[2] All these aspects render the *Théodicée* particularly interesting from the point of view of its structure and text organization. Its multiplicity of themes is reflected in the multiplicity of stylistic scenarios employed by Leibniz as well as in the different linguistic registers. This plurality has been confirmed by Leibniz himself. The *Théodicée* is, in fact, entitled *Essais* (using the plural) *de Théodicée*. The apparent, fragmented articulation of this philosophical discourse has been often considered as an element of weakness and not as a positive complexity. In this paper, I would like to remedy the 'injustice' of the *Théodicée* being considered a 'populaire', superficial text, without scientific dimension. These considerations mostly derive from its style and its 'disordered', non-systematic character, as mentioned above.[3] No doubt, it is difficult to develop a composite view of the various subjects and domains treated in the *Théodicée*. The work is, in fact, a compendium of themes and styles. As Fontenelle observed: «La Théodicée seule suffirait pour répresenter Leibnitz. Une lecture immense, des anecdotes curieuses sur les livres ou les personnes, […] un style où la force domine, et où cependant sont admis les agreements d'une imagination hereuse» (Fontenelle 1825, p. 392).

I therefore propose to approach these difficulties by using the language and style of the *Théodicée*, namely, by focussing on metaphors as a way to access this 'diversity'.[4] A close look at the metaphors used in the *Essais*

1 For a reconstruction of the context in which Leibniz wrote the *Essais de Théodicée* see Tognon 1987. On the *Reiseverbot* cf. A I, 5, p. 60.

2 «Selon la veritable Philosophie, dont je me flatte d'avoir donné des enchantillons dans ma Theodicée» says Leibniz in his *Remarques* on the three volumes of Shaftesbury's *Characteristiks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (GP III, p. 426); see also the letter to Remond of July 1714: «ma Theodicéé ne suffit pas pour donner un corps entier de mon Systeme, mais en y joignant ce que j'ay mis en divers Journaux» (GP III, p. 618). See Stein-Karnbach 1983, pp. 1311-1322; Ravier [1937] 1966.

3 For an interesting discussion of this issue see Rateau 2011, pp. 7-9.

4 I will not deal here with the fable. On this topic see, e.g., Robinet 1982. «La 'fabula', di cui è ammessa tutta la fluidità (*versatilis materia*), viene riabilitata in età moderna per il suo potere di trasmettere significati nascosti, talvolta non immediatamente spiegabili col puro raziocinio, ma non è ridotta a mera occupazione ludica. Semmai, essa è stimata depositaria di una *docendi ratio* speciale, per la sua accessibilità, e viene reputata utile alle scienze, soprattutto nel caso di scoperte nuove» (Varani 1999, p. 80).

will facilitate the creating of a grid for reading the text where different concerns converge without subordinating each other in a strictly hierarchical systematic structure, or in dichotomic alternatives. A grid, or *reseau* of metaphors, based on a preliminary exam of the main metaphors present in the text, is used to view the textual structure and the different argumentative forms used by the philosopher in managing the apparently heterogeneous domains he discusses.[5] To this aim, I first distinguish the different rhetorical and stylistic elements of the *Théodicée*. I thus discuss a 'grid' that plots some of the most recurring metaphors, which I consider to be among the most representative and significant, such as the labyrinth (which I will examine in more detail), the war, and the ocean.[6]

Of course, this paper does not aim to provide a comprehensive account of all the metaphors implicitly and explicitly used in the *Théodicée*, as this is only a first attempt of a more extensive and analytic work. In fact, it is scarcely feasible to list all the metaphors present in the text in a short paper. What I would like to do is to show how metaphors are constitutive of the philosophical discourse in the *Théodicée* and to relate the metaphors and text in a way that clearly highlights how these metaphors, within the organization of the text, play the role of a link between different problems and concepts.

2 The Philosophical Discourse

I will not discuss the different approaches to metaphors, analogies and allegories as proposed by rhetoric, philosophy and linguistics, but I would like to recognize how metaphors act within the philosophical discourse designed by Leibniz in his *Théodicée*.

Looking closely at the different uses of analogy and allegory, we can trace several lines of separation between them as well as between them and metaphors. In some parts, Leibniz, who was a refined writer, uses different linguistic 'resources' in the same paragraph. Whatever the use of these different contexts, the principle of analogy is central to Leibniz's philosophy. It dominates, for example, his entire conception of the uni-

5 «Quoniam vero constat, viros varia doctrina et singulari veritatis amore praestantes, multa habere solere cogitata vel experimenta praeclara, sparsa licet et varia, nec in unius scientiae corpus coeuntia, quae plerumque magna reipublicae jactura interire solent, ea si in chartam conjiciant communicentque, utcunque inelaborata, atque incohaerentia, mirifice totum hoc institutum juvabunt, suaeque simul gloriae velificabuntur, quam cuique ex inventis suis societas summa fide sartam tectamque praestabit» (*Consilium de Encyclopaedia nova conscribenda methodo inventoria*, 1679, A VI, 4, p. 349).

6 I tried to show the metaphorical network of Leibniz's philosophy in one of the first monographies entirely dedicated to Leibniz's metaphors: Marras 2010. The present paper pulls together some of the threads discussed in the book.

verse: the phenomenal order of things represents the metaphysical order of spiritual substances. These spiritual units in turn reflect one another analogically, so that in each and every one of these monads, we can find an echo of the entire universe.[7]

The use and the consideration of analogies in Leibniz is generally a traditional approach, and it is regulated by the principle of *ressemblance*. As Leibniz said, «*Il faut s'accoustumer aux analogies*, sçavoir deux ou plusieurs choses fortes differentes estant données, trouver leur ressemblances» (GP VII, p. 85). Analogy should also be considered as a form of comparison based on *proportionalitas* and 'predictability'. Analogy and metaphors are strictly related in Leibniz.[8] In the *Théodicée* he uses analogy to explore the correspondences between concepts and the correlation among different domains, and metaphor is used to establish new relations.[9] The line between analogy and metaphor is subtle:

> C'est comme dans ces inventions de perspective, où certains beaux dessins ne paraissent que confusion, jusqu'à ce qu'on les rapporte à leur vrai point de vue, ou qu'on les regarde par le moyen d'un certain verre ou miroir. C'est en les plaçant et s'en servant comme il faut qu'on les fait devenir l'ornement d'un cabinet. (*Théodicée*, § 147, GP VI, p. 197)

> Le meilleur système de corps, c'est-à-dire de choses ranges selon les lieux et les temps et d'ames qui representent et apercoivent les corps et suivants lesquelles les corps sont gouvernés en bonne partie. (*Théodicée*, § 200, GP VI, p. 235)

Allegory, defined by Leibniz as *metaphora continuata*, is clearly used in the text and is different from metaphor.[10] We can say that if metaphor is somehow founded in an analogy (according to some statements made by Leibniz), allegory derives from metaphor. Leibniz explicitly mentions the term 'metaphor' in the *Théodicée* only one time, attributing to the term a sort of 'negative' implication: «il leur avoit caché la verité sous le voile des metaphores» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 10, GP VI, p. 56). In comparison,

7 Cf. Orio de Miguel 1988. There is a large literature on analogy in Leibniz, for a bibliography see Marras 1996.

8 «Il sera bon cependant de considérer cette analogie de choses sensibles et insensibles qui a servi de fondement aux tropes» (A VI, 6, p. 277).

9 An example of this use can be retraced in the discussion on body and liberty, see for example Rey 2011.

10 In this paper I will not discuss the use of allegory, but on this regard I would like just to refer to an interesting explicit use made by Leibniz in the *Théodicée*, § 76 (GP VI, p. 95), when referring to Bayle, he said: «pour payer allegorie par allegorie, je diray que».

the term 'analogy' is used two times, the verb 'to compare' is used eight times, and the term 'allegory' is used three times.

Since the *Préface*, which is addressed as a *captatio benevolentiae* to the reader, Leibniz employs some of the recurrent conceptual metaphors of his work: architectonic metaphors (labyrinth), optic metaphors (light), aquatic metaphors (torrent), and movement metaphors (*chemin*). The entire *Theodicée* is disseminated by analogies and by several other metaphors that play different roles in the text: all these together contribute considerably to the construction of the philosophical discourse.

The language and the stylistic choice made by Leibniz in the *Théodicée* establish a direct link between concepts and forms of expression. Leibniz employs different stylistic registers: formal, polemic and ironical, as well as different genres: dialogic, narrative, fable, descriptive, autobiographic and many others. These different stylistic choices are the modality Leibniz uses to fulfil the text organization of the *Théodicée*, which includes: the 'Préface'; the preliminary discourse 'Discours preliminaire sur la conformité de la Foy avec la Raison'; the body of the work, 'Essais sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal', which is divided into three parts; the Index. The work is completed by the *Appendices*: 'Abregé de la Controverse reduite à des Argumens en forme'; Reflexions on Hobbes' work: *Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity and Chance*; remarks on a work on the Origin of Evil, (*Causa Dei*) and a more extended abridgment of the work in Latin.[11]

This composite organization required different language resources, and Leibniz could cope with the multiplicity of themes and arguments using different text organization with specific linguistic registers. The language has therefore played the crucial role of guaranteeing the cohesion and coherence of the entire text. Figures of speech, in particular, metaphors, can accomplish this role at best. I am thinking for example of metaphors such as that of the light or that of the labyrinth as connecting elements throughout the text.[12]

The different metaphors used in the *Théodicée* in the different parts of the text show the so-called *double aspect de la constitution discursive*, namely 'institution' and 'instauration'. The first mediates the relation between text and context, and the second, the relation between the speculative schemes and the form of expression. In the following two paragraphs, I will closely examine these two aspects.

11 I refer here to Gerhardt's edition. For the genesis of the *Théodicée* see Tognon 1987.

12 An interesting point of view in which the metaphor of the labyrinth is the thread in the texture of the *Théodicée* is proposed by Diodato 1996.

3 Text and Context

The text contains several 'kinds' of metaphors, and we can start the analysis by selecting those metaphors that are already part of the 'discourse'. These metaphors are difficult to distinguish because they are 'worn-out' or 'frozen' metaphors, as for example in the following two quotations: «Ce qui arrive fort aisement aux personnes les plus spirituelles et les plus penetrantes, lorsqu'on donne carriere à son esprit, sans se donner toute la patience necessaire pour creuser jusqu'aux fondemens de son systeme» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 77, GP VI, p. 95). «Je ne suis pas encor à la moitié des dix neuf maximes» (*Théodicée*, § 124, GP VI, p. 178). The metaphors used in the two sentences metaphors embedded in the language, somehow they are part of the ordinary use of language (in the second sentence for example the metaphor of the way/travel). This use of metaphors is sometimes considered 'level zero' of the conceptualization and, most often, we do not have linguistic markers that help us to recognize them, as for example: «J'ay voulu prendre la peine de faire l'anatomie de ce long passage» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 77, GP VI, p. 95).

In another case, metaphors are announced or marked by Leibniz, mostly when he resorts to comparisons and analogies. There are linguistic markers used in the text, for example '*pour ainsi dire* (used 17 times), *à peu pres comme* (17), *comme si* (46) or *c'est-à-dire*: *la solide pieté*, c'est à dire la lumiere et la vertu, n'a jamais esté le partage du grand nombre. Il ne faut point s'en etonner, rien n'est si conforme à la foiblesse humaine' (*Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 25). Alternatively, in order to establish a comparison, Leibniz uses the more explicit *comme*: «les formulaires sont comme des ombres de la verité, et approchent plus ou moins de la pure lumiere» (*Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 25).

The *Théodicée* can certainly be mapped using these markers to detect and collect metaphors and analogies. This, however, even if it helps us to recognize the metaphors, does not explain their role in the text. We also have metaphors that are clearly positioned in the text: «Mais d'autres […] alloient jusqu'à une ame universelle qui fût l'Ocean de toutes les ames particulieres» (*Théodicée*, Discours § 8, GP VI, p. 54). Or metaphors, articulated and complex, that are clearly delineated within the text:

> l'autorité de la S. Ecriture devant le Tribunal de la Raison, afin que la Raison luy cede dans la suite, comme à une nouvelle lumière, et luy sacrifice toutes ses vraisemblances. C'est à peu près comme un nouveaux Chef envoyé par le Prince doit faire voir ses Lettres Patentes dans l'Assemblée où il doit presider par apres. (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 29, GP VI, p. 67)

All these metaphors create the metaphorical texture of the text and are interesting indicators of its metaphorical 'density'. A clear example of the relation between text and context is offered by the metaphor of the war: «C'est parler comme si le soutenant et l'opposant devoient étre egalement à decouvert: mais le soutenant est comme un Commandant assiegé, couvert par ses ouvrages, et c'est à l'attaquant de les ruiner» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 75, GP VI, p. 94; cf. Varani 1995, pp. 185-195; *Théodicée*, § 95, § 145, § 115 and § 127). This metaphor creates a model for describing Leibniz's conception of dispute or debate and the way he proposes to manage the disagreement. This metaphor is often correlated to the metaphor of balance used by Leibniz as a decision-making process in a solution to controversies: the balance is a tool in which reason is applied (*trutina rationis*), as we can see in the following two quotations: «car il n'y a rien de plus imparfait que nostre Logique, lorsqu'on va au delà des argumens necessaires; et les plus excellens philosophes de nostre temps [...] ont été fort éloignés de nous marquer les vrais moyens propres à aider cette faculté qui nous doit faire peser les apparences du vray et du faux», and «qui doit regler le poids des vraisemblances, et qui seroit si necessaire dans les déliberations d'importance» (*Théodicée*, Discours § 31, GP VI, pp. 57-58).

In the *Théodicée*, this model is applied, in particular, in the *Reflexions sur l'ouvrage que M. Hobbes a publié en Anglois, de la Liberté, de la Necessité et du Hazard*, where Leibniz comments on the controversy between Thomas Hobbes and the Bishop Bramhall (the controversy took place from 1645 to 1657). The argumentation is built under the scheme of the metaphor of the balance and the *mais* (but) is the linguistic marker that helps us view the metaphorical model (cf. Marras 2002; 2010, pp. 129-147).

4 Text and Expression

In the language of the *Théodicée*, metaphor (as well as analogy and allegory) offers a level of signification equivalent to that of philosophical analysis. This operation is not external to the language, nor is it an ornamental function or a use of language with didactic purposes in order to render the discourse more accessible or pleasant. However, it is a way to reconceptualize at a metaphorical level what is difficult to keep unified and organized at the literal level of analysis. This is particularly evident in the use of the metaphor of labyrinth. I will shortly discuss how Leibniz uses this metaphor, and I will provide all the elements I consider significant in order to reflect on the relation between a concept and its metaphorization.

Leibniz makes «un abondant usage de l'image du labyrinthe et de ses protagonistes victorieux Thésée et Ariane» (Robinet 1999, p. 657). In one of his many auto-biographical digressions (1705), Leibniz points out that,

as a young man, he had already noticed that an analogous thread could help lead us through the labyrinths of contingency, predestination, freedom and the geometrical nature of the incommensurables. The two target domains, contingency and freedom and the incommensurables, are analogous in that they each can, as far as their pragmatic aspects are concerned, dissociate themselves from their metaphysical and theological counterparts.[13] Not surprisingly the 'Préface' of the *Essais de Théodicée* opens with the well-known metaphor of the labyrinth. For Leibniz, there are two «famous labyrinths» that have led astray «the human mind»: the one concerning «the composition of the continuum» and the other about «the nature of freedom». Both have the same origin: «eodem infiniti fonte oriuntur» (*De libertate, contingentia et serie causarum, providentia*, 1689, A VI, 4, p. 1654).

> Il y a deux Labyrinthes fameux, où nostre raison s'égare bien souvent: l'un regarde la grande Question *du Libre et du Necessaire*, sur-tout dans la production et dans l'origine du *Mal*; l'autre consiste dans la discussion *de la continuité, et des indivisibles*, qui en paroissent les Elémens, et où doit entrer la considération de *l'infini*. Le premier embarasse presque tout le genre humain, l'autre n'exerce que le Philosophes. J'auray peutestre une fois l'occasion de m'expliquer sur le second, et de faire remarquer, que faute de bien concevoir la nature de la substance et de la matiere, on a fait de fausses positions, qui menent à des difficultés insurmontables, dont les veritable usage devroit estre le renversement de ces positions mêmes. Mais si la connoissance de la continuité est importante pour la speculation, celle de la necessité ne l'est pas moins pour la practique. (*Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 29; cf. Grua I, p. 42, 371; II, p. 457; A VI, 4, p. 1528)

This characterization of the two problems immediately upgrades the conventional reading of the labyrinth metaphor to that of a highly complex, convoluted situation or problem, where a solution is difficult to find. Leibniz makes clear that the two problems targeted by the metaphor are fundamental philosophical problems that lie at the core of his concerns, problems for which he must find – and believes to have found – a solution. The use of 'labyrinth' by Leibniz takes into account the fact that the two problems that it conceptualizes are, on the face of it, radically different. The one belongs to ethics and the philosophy of action; the other, to mathematics – both, however, have their roots in metaphysics.

13 «Materiam de libertate, contingentia, Fato, ac praedestinatione inde ab adolescentia versavi, visusque sum mihi filum aliquod reperisse in hoc labyrintho, detecta contingentiae radice, cuius notio in metaphysicis aliquam cum incommensurabilium natura Geometrica Analogiam habet» (*Brouillon de Preface to G. Burnet*, 1705, Grua II, p. 457).

> Il [sc. Bayle] croit que la doctrine de la Predestination est de cette nature dans la Theologie, et celle de la composition du Continuum dans la Philosophie. Ce sont en effect les deux Labyrinthes qui ont exercé de tout temps les Theologiens et les Philosophes. Libertus Fromondus, Théologien de Louvain [...] qui a fort travaillé sur la Grace, et qui a aussi fait un livre exprès intitulé Labyrithus de compositione continui, a bien expérimenté les difficultés de l'un et de l'autre: et le fameux Ochin a fort bien representé ce qu'il appelle les labyrinthes de la predestination. (*Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 29)

I will present here how the two problems are conceptualized by means of a metaphor.[14]

Human freedom seems to be, on all accounts, incompatible with any conception that constrains human action through necessary laws, be they physical, theological, or other – a conception that implies determinism. The problem for Leibniz is how to preserve both, i.e. how to overcome an incompatibility that is, for him, only apparent. To achieve this requires a thorough re-conceptualization of the dichotomy in question, involving a re-definition of human and divine freedom, so that both are no longer viewed as opposing each other. It also involves the re-definition of contingent and necessary truth, in such a way that the realms of contingency (the created world) and necessity (the set of possible worlds) are neither denied their separate jurisdictions nor seen as being in insurmountable conflict with each other. These requirements, within the parameters of Leibniz's time (and also today) are extremely difficult to fulfil. Hence their character of a 'labyrinth', according to Leibniz, led his predecessors, who accepted without questioning the parameters of the problem, to an endless wandering in its meanders without finding a way out: «On a cherché d'autres moyens de sortir de ce labyrinthe, et les Cartesiens mêmes ont eté embarrassés au sujet du libre arbitre» (Théodicée, § 292, GP VI, p. 290). Leibniz defines the free will problem as 'une des plus anciennes et des plus agitées dans le monde', embarassing his predecessors and contemporary scholars (A VI, 4, p. 1406).

14 The question is whether Leibniz refers, regarding both problems, to the same kind of labyrinth or whether one should rather correlate with each of the problems a different type of labyrinth. If the latter is the case, a further question arises, what relations – if any – exist between the two problems as conceptualized in terms of the two metaphorical labyrinths. I already discussed different models of labyrinth applied to the way Leibniz uses this metaphor, providing a typology of labyrinths (most of which familiar to Leibniz). The result of the analysis showed that the target 'freedom' is correlated with the manneristic (many entrances and many exits) type of labyrinth, whereas the target 'continuum' is correlated with the *unicursale* (one way out) type of labyrinth (Marras 2010, pp. 101-128).

> Par cette fausse idée d'une indifference d'equilibre, les Molinistes ont été fort embarrassés. On leur demandoit non seulement comment il étoit possible de connoitre à quoy se determineroit une cause absolument indeterminée, mais aussi comment il étoit possible qu'il en resultât enfin une determination, dont il n'y a aucune source: car de dire avec Molina, que c'est le privilege de la cause libre, ce n'est rien dire, c'est luy donner le privilege d'être chimerique. C'est un plaisir de voir comment ils se tourmentent pour sortir d'un labyrinthe, où il n'y a absolument aucune issue. Quelques uns enseignent qu'avant que la volonté se determine formellement, il faut qu'elle se determine virtuellement pour sortir de son état d'equilibre. […] Ils ne sortiront donc jamais d'affaire, sans avouer qu'il y a une predetermination dans l'état precedent de la creature libre, qui l'incline à se determiner. (*Théodicée*, § 48, GP VI, p. 129)

As a 'rational believer' intent on reconciling faith with reason, Leibniz seeks to preserve, as much as possible, the principles of both Catholic and Lutheran theology and the new scientific vision of the world as ruled by non-arbitrary laws, i.e. laws that neither require nor admit miracles or other forms of supernatural intervention, whose admission would imply some sort of imperfection of the divine creator of those very laws. Leibniz believes that it is possible to avoid determinism if one makes the appropriate distinction between necessity and certainty, the former based on the logical principle of contradiction, the latter, on the principle of perfection or of sufficient reason. The latter comprises the idea that humans will always choose a course of action by virtue of the reasons that, from their perspective, favour such a choice. Although they are created as rational beings that will strive to make their choices in this way, in so doing they exercise their freedom, for, unlike what happens with necessary truths, it is beyond their capacity to know a priori through demonstration what these reasons turn out to be:

> on sache bien distinguer entre la necessité et entre la determination ou certitude, entre la necessité metaphysique, qui ne laisse lieu à aucun choix, ne presentant qu'un seul object possible, et entre la necessité morale, qui oblige le plus sage à choisir le meilleur: enfin pourveu qu'on se defasse de la chimere de la pleine indifference, qui ne se sauroit trouver que dans les livres des Philosophes, et sur le papier […] on sortira aisement du labyrinthe, dont l'esprit humain a été le Dedale malhereux, et qui a causé une infinité de desordres, tant chés les anciens que chés les modernes. (*Théodicée*, § 367, GP VI, p. 333)

According to Leibniz, the articulation of the problem of freedom in a rational universe fits a number of properties of a kind of labyrinth in which it is important to create a trajectory for walking, rather than find 'the' exit,

for they have many exits as well as many entrance points. The structure of the labyrinth is extremely complex, comprising a multiplicity of possible trajectories. Each trajectory provides, to be sure, an 'orientation' within the labyrinth, but it involves a series of free choices in the crossings and bifurcations, none of which is obligatory for 'successfully' threading the labyrinth.

The exercise of freedom, conceptualized in terms of the labyrinth, consists of facing this complexity and the multiple choices in a reasoned way, without assuming that there is only one 'correct' solution, i.e. without assuming that one has to 'discover' or 'match' an ideal course of action preestablished by God, the labyrinth's designer. In such a labyrinth, one passes from one crossing or bifurcation to another, and can become confused as the way one finds or creates is not absolutely certain, for it is reasonable to follow one path as well as other possible ones, since there is no single formula leading to a single solution.

At the meta-level, the labyrinth may also be seen as the implicit model for the method Leibniz employs for handling the problem it conceptualizes. For, in fact, he is suggesting a 'trajectory', which amounts to an alternative to those available in the traditional debate on this problem. This concept takes for granted an irreducible polarity between necessity and indifference, and between full determination and mere chance. Leibniz rejects both, the 'freedom of indifference' of voluntaryism and the predetermination of necessitarianism. To be sure, freedom comprises an element of spontaneity, which is for him, however, very distant from 'impulsive action', i.e. action not guided by reason. Yet, to be 'guided by reason' is equally far away, in his view, from reducing one's actions to necessity, i.e. to the result of logical deduction or to a perfect planning of one's actions. What the Leibnizian definition strives to convey is the idea that an action is properly called free insofar as its spontaneity is guided or 'oriented' by intelligence (or rationality), *spontaneitas intelligentis*, i.e. as it is combined with, albeit not determined by, a reflective process of deliberation – much in the same way as, in the labyrinth, one's spontaneous tendency to choose one path is always coupled with some deliberation about the adequacy of such a choice.

The other labyrinth addressed by Leibniz is that of the infinite and the continuum. Leibniz's first, best-known, and perhaps most important achievement as a mathematician was the creation of the infinitesimal calculus, and one can say that Leibniz discovered a solution for a long-standing mathematical problem, a way out of a labyrinth that had bogged the minds of his predecessors and contemporaries.

The labyrinth in question turns out to be a rather simple one, and one wonders why it was so difficult for other bright mathematicians to find the way out. According to Leibniz, the difficulty stemmed from the fact that his colleagues worked within the framework of metaphysical dichotomies that

were taken for granted, which prevented them from 'seeing' the solution. In particular, they were entangled in an endless debate, framed in terms of traditional Aristotelian concepts, about whether the infinite was 'actual' or 'virtual', 'real' or 'ideal'. The natural solution for such a confusion should be to establish more clearly for one pole or the other, rather than mixing them up. Leibniz's way out, however, consists rather of providing a 'mix up' alternative, a sort of *tertium* that treats the infinitessimal as both actual and virtual. In the calculus, this is done through a 'dynamization' of this notion, in terms of such concepts as 'as small as one wishes', and through the 'endless continuation' of operations performed for a finite series, assuming that such a continuation permits the extrapolation of finite results to infinite ones. Infinitessimal, thus, acquire an 'ideal' character. Yet, as far as considerations other than mathematical are taken into account, Leibniz does not hesitate to declare the infinite 'real' or 'actual' where theological and metaphysical considerations are involved or are matched by earlier statements also involving physical considerations, in which it is clear that the mathematical achievement does not completely 'solve' the problems of the infinite and the continuum. The problem is that, if analysed in this way, motion is not in fact explained: how the body, so to speak, 'jumps' from one spatial position to another? We are clearly facing another level of the (mathematical) labyrinth, and the solution proposed by Leibniz is quite different from the solution to the 'confusion' above, which was at least mathematically plausible and pragmatically functional.

Such appeals to metaphysics or theology, however, do not always prove to be satisfactory for Leibniz. At one point, he seems to have reached the conclusion that he was unable to provide a metaphysical foundation for the calculus. «There is no need to make mathematical analysis depend upon metaphysical controversies», he writes in 1701 to Varignon, one of his faithful mathematical followers. This is, in fact, Leibniz's reply to Varignon's request for an unequivocal pronouncement about the foundations of the calculus in order to quell the criticism of 'the enemies of the calculus'. Instead of providing the requested «precise definitions of the infinitely big and small magnitudes», Leibniz even withdraws from his earlier emphatic commitment to the 'actual' character of the infinite. The truth is, thus, that Leibniz oscillates between seeing the mathematical solution as 'the' solution for the labyrinth, seeing it as insufficient and therefore in need of a metaphysical complementation and seeing the metaphysical-theological and the mathematical issues as completely independent of each other.

> Les difficultés sur la composition du Continuum entrent aussi dans cette matiere. Car ce dogme paroit resoudre le temps en momens: au lieu que d'autres regardent les momens et les points comme des simples modalité du continu, c'est à dire comme d'extremités des parties qu'on

> y peut assigner, et non pas comme des parties constitutives. C'est ne pas le lieu icy d'entrer dans ce Labyrinthe. (*Théodicée*, § 384, GP VI, p. 343)

What is worth emphasizing here is that, at the meta-level, the issues of the infinite, the continuum, and continuity turn out to be, for Leibniz, a network of related but not identical issues of sufficient complexity to be mappable only by an equally complex network, such as that of a labyrinth, and the possibility to go until the limits: «Mais ces auteurs n'ont point nié qu'il soit possible de trouver un fil dans le labyrinthe, et ils auront reconnu la difficulté, mais ils ne seront point allés du difficile jusqu'à l'impossible» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 25, GP VI, p. 65).

5 Conclusion

There are different criteria to be used to establish the role and function of metaphor in a philosophical text, and, in our case, in the *Essais de Théodicée*.[15] One is the quantitative criterion: we can in fact analyse how many metaphors Leibniz uses in the text. For this purpose, I made a preliminary search in the *Théodicée* of some terms, of different domains, usually employed by Leibniz metaphorically: the term *lumiere* occurs 52 times, *miroir*, 2, *obscure*, 7, *obscurité*, 4, *océan*, 7, *vaisseaux*, 1, *ruisseaux*, 1, *riviere,* 7, *eau*, 13, *mer*, 6, *poisson*, 1, *balance*, 11, *poid*, 7, *chaîne/enchaînement,* 21, *machine*, 8, *labyrinthe*, 10, *palais*, 6, *bâtiment*, 4, *chambre*, 3, *ville,* 17, *cité*, 8, *pays*, 17, *chemin*, 29, *rue*, 2, *oiseaux*, 7 and *chien*, 3. It should be stressed that the 'quantity' of metaphors in a text is not representative of their role. As we saw, metaphors can be of different kind, such as 'frozen' or conceptual, and we can consequently say that the number of metaphors, considered in isolation and not in relation to a large portion of text, is insufficient to explain their correlations with philosophical concepts: at this point, qualitative criteria are needed. This second criterion (qualitative) is crucial in distinguishing the different role of metaphors *vis-à-vis* their position in the text. If we apply a qualitative criterion, we can usefully recognize the different roles that metaphor assume in a text, i.e. didactic or rhetorical, and then we can analyse them in a more efficient way. Although qualitative criteria bring the risk that everything is (or could be) metaphorized, which is, in part, true, in the sense that an 'image' can substitute every 'literal' expression. However, I hope that I have shown that the conceptual analysis of the text, focussing on the labyrinth metaphor, demonstrates that not everything is metaphorized, and that there is a clear correlation between some concepts and some recurrent key metaphors in Leibniz's philosophy and, in particular, in the *Théodicée*.

15 I borrow these criteria from Cossutta 1989.

Another criterion to determine the role and function of a metaphor in a text is that of 'integration'. The *Théodicée* is a text full of metaphors (quantitative criteria), most of which are key and recurrent metaphors in Leibniz's philosophy (such as ocean, war, balance, etc.). The third criterion shows how some of these metaphors are 'dominant' in the text, or how they support the text and assume an 'integrative' role. This is the case, for example, of the metaphor of the ocean, which structures the relationship between God and soul, as we can see for example from the following quotations:

> Les perfections de Dieu sont celles de nos ames, mais il les possede sans bornes: il est un Ocean, dont nous n'avons receu que des gouttes: il y a en nous quelque puissance, quelque connoissance, quelque bonté, mais elles sont tout entieres en Dieu. (*Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 27)

> Mais d'autres [...] alloient jusqu'à une ame universelle, qui fût l'Ocean de toutes les ames particulieres [...] Suivant ce sentiment les ames des animaux naissent en se détachant comme des gouttes de leur Ocean, lors qu'elles trouvent un corps qu'elles peuvent animer: et elles périssent en se rejoignant a l'Ocean des Ames quand le corps est defait, comme les ruisseaux se perdent dans la mer. (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 8, GP VI, p. 54)

The fourth criterion, more problematic, is the 'philosophical status'. To look at the *Théodicée* from the point of view of the language of the text implies a description strictly related to some considerations on Leibniz's use of language. Leibniz follows the predominant tendency of his time, which viewed precise definitions of all terms as a *sine qua non* for rigorous scientific and philosophical discourse, thereby minimizing the use of tropes therein as mere ornamental or 'eloquence' devices. At the same time, however, he employs a wealth of metaphors, analogies, similes, and, in the specific case of the *Theodicée*, also allegories and fables, to express his philosophical views.

This use of tropes and rhetorical devices is only apparently in contrast with his repeated statements in his writings to the effect that metaphors and other figures of speech should be avoided as much as possible in serious philosophical discourse, or at most, tolerated for their rhetorical purposes.[16] Since the *Discours préliminaire*, Leibniz mentioned linguistic analysis as a tool against fallacies and lies. At the same time, it is also evident that the metaphorical character of the philosophical discourse in the

16 My discussion on Leibniz's use of language is far from considering the language and style of the *Théodicée* as a way to participate in the *enchantement* of God's perfection or as an 'estasi appagante e meravigliata', as has been claimed for example by Zingari 1988.

Théodicée (as well as in Leibniz's writings) is not mere chance and that it plays a crucial role in the exposition of Leibniz's most fundamental theses. Different metaphors are connected (for instance, the ocean) and are irreducible to literal paraphrases (for instance, the labyrinth). These basic conceptual metaphors are never actually 'cashed out' in non-metaphorical language, and they illuminate the nature of the relations between the different facets of Leibniz's philosophy.

In the *Théodicée*, more than in Leibniz's other writings, we can observe the necessity to free the thought from the binding dichotomies embedded in language: freedom vs. necessity, unity vs. multiplicity, identity vs. difference and theory vs. practice. Consequently, this required a flexible organization of the text and a flexibility, openness and innovativeness in the use of language, complementary to the use of a 'demonstrative language', technical terminology and homogeneous text organization.

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Theodicy and Reason
Logic, Metaphysics, and Theology in Leibniz's *Essais de Théodicée* (1710)
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Mathematical Similes in Leibniz's *Theodicy*

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Abstract Two kinds of metaphors used by Leibniz in *Theodicy* are of particular philosophical interest: explicit metaphors introduced by 'like', 'similar to', etc., and metaphors featuring mathematical entities or procedures as terms of comparison. Both kinds are relevant to our understanding of the relation between metaphoric reasoning and more formal argumentations. I argue that they should be distinguished, for practical reasons, from allegories, which are also present but have different structure and functions. My focus is especially on the following Leibnizian metaphors: the recurring declaration that *essentiae rerum sunt sicut numeri*, erroneously considered as a Pythagorean or Platonic saying, whereas it is a traditional tenet of Aristotelianism; the *calculus de maximis et minimis*, a family of comparisons recurring in Leibniz's works; geometry, variously declined; and the famous comparison of possible worlds and their ramifications to the *loci geometrici* of points.

Keywords Mathematical Similes. Metaphors. Aristotelianism.

> Qual è 'l geomètra che tutto s'affige
> per misurar lo cerchio, e non ritrova,
> pensando, quel principio ond'elli indige
> (*Par*. XXXIII, 133-135)

Everybody in the trade should be aware of Leibniz's peculiar proclivity for scouting Platonic horizons with Aristotelian spyglasses, that is, with instruments taken from the Aristotelian philosophy. It might seem worthwhile, therefore, to scrutinize his use of the genuine *Aristotelian spyglass*, as the title of Tesauro's treatise on rhetoric goes ([1670] 2000): the object of which is witty eloquence pivoting on the metaphor, the mother of sagacity that teaches the truth under the guise of the false.[1] Max Black observed in a famous essay of his: «To draw attention to a philosopher's metaphors is to belittle him – like praising a logician for his beautiful handwriting» (1954-55, p. 273). Leibniz was a fine logician indeed; but, although nobody conversant with his manuscripts would ever eulogize his scrawls, he posi-

1 Cf. Tesauro [1670] 2000, p. 478: «la gran madre di ogni Argutezza»; p. 495: «sotto imagine di falso t'insegna il vero».

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tively had a liking for metaphors[2] and he was quite proud of the style of his exoteric writings.

«The simile (εἰκὼν) also is a metaphor», Aristotle taught in his *Rhetoric*: «for there is very little difference» (*Rhet.*, III, 4, 1406b 20; [1926] 2000, 367). As our title promises, we are going to inspect the kinds and scopes of some mathematical similes that can be found in Leibniz's *Theodicy* – that is, our analysis will concentrate on explicit metaphors, or similes, in which the relation is declared by the use of 'like', 'similar to', ὡς, *sicut*, and the like; and on such ones where the term of comparison is a mathematical entity, kind, procedure, etc. There are plenty of such tropes in the *Theodicy*, where they play an important role, not only in the economy of the work as an explanatory device, but for a general comprehension of the relation between metaphoric reasoning and more formal argumentations in Leibniz's writings as well.

It is true that Leibniz seems to share the negative view of metaphors, which, according to him, are empty if they are not grounded in a higher truth, just like everlasting fame is no more than a figurative surrogate of eternal life: «Ovidius ait *parte tamen meliore mei super alta perennis astra ferar*: quid nisi metaphoricum est, cum, nisi subsit altius quiddam, inane» (A II, 1, p. 178).[3] He does not allow much leniency: «quand on a de l'indulgence pour les metaphores, il faut se bien garder de ne pas donner dans les illusions» (A VI, 4, p. 1473). Nevertheless Leibniz really has some partiality for 'proportional' or 'analogical' metaphors – the fourth type in Aristotle's *Poetics*[4] – for instance, the famous 'labyrinths', or even better, his 'metaphysical points', which could be considered a sort of 'shield of Dyonisus' on Leibnizian premises. He also seems rather fond of metaphors that cross disciplinary boundaries.[5]

Thus, on the one hand, truth must first of all be contemplated in unerring thought; tropes have but a delayed function and their purpose is to communicate and inculcate: «quand on a une fois pensé juste, les expressions figurées sont utiles pour gagner ceux à qui les méditations abstraites font

2 See Andrea Costa's recent work on Leibnizian stylistics 2010. See also Rutherford 2005; Marras 2010.

3 See Ovid, *Met.*, XV, 875-876. In the *Theodicy*, Leibniz affirms to be confident that the truth «l'emportera toute nue sur tous les ornemens de l'eloquence et de l'erudition» (*Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 38).

4 Metaphors of analogy or proportion occur in «cases where *b* is to *a* as *d* is to *c*: one will then speak of *d* instead of *b*, or *b* instead of *d*»; sometimes the metaphor is qualified by adding «that to which the replaced term is related. Thus the wine bowl is to Dionysus as the shield to Ares: so one will call the wine bowl *Dionysus' shield* and the shield *Ares' wine bowl*» (Aristotle, *Poet.* 21, 1457a, 16-22; [1927] 1995, pp. 105-107).

5 Not to mention mathematics, Fichant 1998, pp. 247ff., 252, has commented on the use of juridical similes in the field of natural science.

peine» (A VI, 4, p. 1473). Don Rutherford sums up this aspect of Leibniz's relation to metaphors as follows:

> When interlocutors failed to see the truth of Leibniz's conclusions, he could only attempt to convey that truth by appeal to what was more familiar to them. In doing so, he inevitably fell back on the heuristic function of metaphor to convey the purely intelligible in terms of the sensory of imaginable. (Rutherford 2005, p. 284)

On the other hand, metaphors are based on similarity, a concept of indubitable Leibnizian renown, which in his view has a cognitive potential both for description and for invention. In a writing of 1677-1678 titled *Post tot logicas nondum logica qualem desidero scripta est*, we can read that *similitudo*, which is here the relation of similarity, «est locus praedicationis, nam cum rem aliquam expono, inter alia possum similia ejus exhibere»; at the same time, «similitudo est locus ideationis, possum enim formare ideam talem: *Cutis similis lacti*» (A VI, 4, pp. 10-11).

To have a command of metaphor, declared Aristotle, is «a sign of natural gift: because to use metaphor well is to discern similarities» (*Poet*., 22, 1459a 5-8; [1927] 1995, p. 115). Metaphors «should be drawn from objects which are proper to the object, but not too obvious; just as, for instance, in philosophy it needs sagacity to grasp the similarity in things that are apart» (*Rhet*., III, 11, 1412a 9-12; [1926] 2000, p. 407). All this reminds one immediately of the traits of combinatory minds so often drawn by Leibniz:

> Ingenia ad inveniendum apta vel Combinatoria vel magis Analytica sunt. Combinatoria sunt quibus oblata quadam re statim alia res licet longe dissita occurrit, quae cum hac utiliter componi possit. Hi ergo datae rei facile inveniunt usum in vita, ac datae regulae exemplum vel instantiam, narrataeque historiolae mox similem aliam in promtu habent. (A VI, 4, p. 323)

Resemblance and comparisons are obviously entwined, and so are, *a fortiori*, similarity and similes. But mind: a real resemblance is required, a similarity *in rebus*, or we shall not have a proper comparison, but a mere fiction.[6] On this condition, although similes are often recommended for

6 See how this dyad is instantiated in the «Eclaircissement des difficultés que M. Bayle a trouvées»: on the one hand, «lorsque j'ay dit que l'ame, quand il n'y auroit que Dieu et Elle au monde, sentiroit tout ce qu'elle sent maintenant, je n'ay fait qu'employer une fiction, en supposant ce qui ne sçauroit arriver naturellement» (GP IV, p. 517); on the other hand, «j'ay expliqué l'accord qui est entre l'ame et le corps par une comparaison qui seroit entre l'accord

poetical text in preference to prose,[7] Leibniz has always made use of more or less elaborate similes in philosophical texts, as we can see already in this passage of 1671: «Omne enim sentiens tum repraesentat objectum instar speculi, tum regulariter agit ordinateque ad finem, instar horologii» (A VI, 1, p. 482).

The use of mathematical similes amounts to an innovation, if any, not from the point of view of general rhetoric, but rather in the topic. Leibniz is aware that the rhetoric tradition does not favour mathematics as a source of tropes (with a few and quite simplistic exceptions like 'ex diametro', or 'sesquipedalia verba'). Mathematics are a fount of obscurity, a means to obfuscate rather than to clarify. As Erasmus of Rotterdam writes in his comment to the fitting adage *Rudius ac planius*,

> antiquitus illi σοφοί, quos vocant, soleant mysteria sapientiae quibusdam aenigmatum involucris data opera obtegere, videlicet ne prophana turba ac nondum philosophiae sacris initiata posset assequi. […] Sic Plato numeris suis obscuravit suam philosophiam. Sic Aristoteles multa mathematicis collationibus reddidit obscuriora.[8]

In fact Leibniz himself famously states: «Je n'écris jamais rien en philosophie que je ne le traite par définitions et par axiomes, quoyque je ne lui donne pas tousjours cet air mathematique qui rebute les gens» (GP III, p. 302). If a 'mathematical air' repels ordinary people, then mathematics might offer no suitable ground for the production of metaphors, as far as the latter are for Leibniz a properly heuristic embellishment. Nevertheless, mathematical similes are often used by Leibniz, lightheartedly and explicitly; and by preference – which is even more outré, and yet so typical of him – he looks for similes in the highest regions of state-of-the-art mathematics, as he does in this text of 1686, with the notion that it will shed light on a difficult subject, rather than obscuring it, as anybody else would expect: «Infiniti possunt gradus esse inter animas, idque similitudine petita a nostra Geometria sublimiore videtur illustrari posse» (A VI, 4, p. 1524).

Mathematical language, the repelling effect notwithstanding, is abundant in the *Theodicy*, in a variety of uses. There are many implicit or explicit numbers in the *Theodicy*, that allude to computations of all sorts. Does the number of the damned exceed that of the saved? Moreover, does this supposition, «qui n'est pourtant pas absolument certaine» (*Théodi-*

de ces deux Etres et celuy de deux pendules de differente structure qui se rencontreroient tousjours exactement pour marquer la même heure au même temps» (GP IV, p. 530).

7 E.g. by Aristotle himself (*Rhet.*, III, 4, 1406b, 24-25).

8 Erasmus, *Adag.*, 39, 1993, p. 154.

cée, § 363, GP VI, p. 373),[9] entail that vice and misery exceed virtue and happiness in the world? Note that the second balance is again a matter of calculation, since the world, in Leibniz's view, is apparently saved by the cumulated moral weight of amoebas and platyhelminths:

> Mais pourquoy ne se pourroit il pas que le surplus du bien dans les creatures non intelligentes, qui remplissent le monde, recompensât et surpassât même incomparablement le surplus du mal dans les creatures raisonnables? Il est vray que le prix des dernieres est plus grand, mais en recompense les autres sont en plus grand nombre sans comparaison; et il se peut que la proportion du nombre et de la quantité surpasse celle du prix et de la qualité. (*Théodicée*, Abrégé, II, GP VI, p. 378)

These are but strictly quantitative argumentations that have nothing to do with comparisons and similarities – even the allusion to incomparability refers to real-life mathematical practices of the time. Besides, Leibniz sometimes deals with mathematical entities directly, for instance, when he is discussing whether it can be admitted, «avec quelques Scotistes», that the eternal verities would exist even though there were no understanding, not even that of God, and he concludes in the negative: «Il est vray qu'un Athée peut être Geometre. Mais s'il n'y avoit point de Dieu, il n'y auroit point d'objet de la Geometrie» (*Théodicée*, § 184, GP VI, p. 226). In such cases, mathematical terms appear to speak for and of themselves.

There are reasonings in the *Theodicy* that are based on mathematical comparisons or similes that Leibniz did not originate: for example, the distinction between principal and subsidiary causes illustrated by Chrysippus' cylinder,[10] a simile concerning which Leibniz remarks essentially that he boasts an equivalent, maybe better one. «Cette comparaison de Chrysippe n'est pas fort differente de la nostre, qui étoit prise d'un bateau chargé, que le courant de la riviere fait aller, mais d'autant plus lentement que la charge est plus grande» (*Théodicée*, § 335, GP VI, p. 314). Actually he introduced it at § 30 as the best possible analogy: «comparons, dis-je, l'inertie de la matiere, avec l'imperfection naturelle des creatures, et la lenteur du bateau chargé, avec le defaut qui se trouve dans les qualités et dans l'action de la creature: et nous trouverons qu'il n'y a rien de si juste que cette comparaison» (*Théodicée*, § 30, GP VI, p. 120).[11] That being the case, it would seem that physical metaphors and similes can be, in the eye

9 In paraphrasing the text, I shall tacitly follow Huggard's translation.

10 «Chrysippe […] se sert de la comparaison d'un cylindre, dont la volubilité et la vistesse ou la facilite dans le mouvement vient principalement de sa figure, au lieu qu'il seroit retardé, s'il etoit raboteux» (*Théodicée*, § 332, GP VI, p. 312).

11 The moving boat, a seventeenth century hit, appears many times in the *Theodicy*.

of our author, not worse and perhaps even better than mathematical ones, and the main reason why mathematical comparisons are much spoken of might be, therefore, the inebriating effect they have on present-time interpreters. Still we must not disregard them.

In the classic view, a comparison should easily become a simile, while similes should be convertible with regular metaphors. Nonetheless, the distinctions between comparisons, similes, metaphors, and similar tropes, ought not to be completely overlooked. Let us consider a well-known example of a mathematical argument by analogy, which, by the way, does not appear in the *Theodicy*:

> Essentiale est discrimen inter Veritates necessarias sive aeternas, et veritates facti sive contingentes differuntque inter se propemodum ut numeri rationales et surdi. Nam veritates necessariae resolvi possunt in identicas, ut quantitates commensurabiles in communem mensuram, sed in veritatibus contingentibus, ut in numeris surdis, resolutio procedit in infinitum, nec unquam terminatur. (A VI, 4, p. 1616)

This one is not expressed in form of a simile, but it would be easily transformed into one. It is not, nor can it become an acceptable metaphor: it would not seem appropriate for Leibniz to employ directly the relation in order to devise a name, and say e.g. *veritates surdae*, or *numeri contingentes*, or to proclaim that contingent truths are the irrational numbers of epistemology.

It could be ventured, provocatively and not without some proviso, that the *Theodicy* makes sparse or no use of original mathematical metaphors: which is to say that most or all of the instances of mathematical language that Leibniz intentionally put inside it, even if they are transposed from their usual field of application, do not really bring about denominations based on the transferred sense. As a follower of Michel Serres[12] might put it, they are rather models than metaphors. Examples thereof can be the use of 'finite' and 'infinite' at § 118, or the pyramid of the worlds increasing to 'infinity' (*Théodicée*, § 416, GP VI, p. 364); division to infinity and the inexistence of a last half at § 70 of the Preliminary Dissertation; the transformation of geometric figures at § 202; or the argument about poor objections that will not trouble able geometricians (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 26 GP VI, p. 66). When Leibniz introduces some notions of projective geometry to rectify what he considers a clever but erroneous analysis of perception proposed by Bayle («C'est ainsi […] que»: *Théodicée*, Discours, § 64, GP VI, p. 87), rather than a reasoning based on analogy, the reader sights a mathematical argument with a direct explicative function.

12 It is, of course, a reference to Serres 1968.

The numbers on each Sextus' forehead is not a metaphor: on the one hand, it is an instrumental use of numbers as such (as an index that should differentiate similar Sextuses, «des Sextus approchans» (*Théodicée*, § 414, GP VI, p. 363), after some pruning of the tree of possible worlds has been done). On the other hand, if the Sextuses are numbered, it is presumably on account of a conceptual approximation, since the infinite possible Sextuses are not numerable as such.[13] We might consequently suggest that, with that particular, Leibniz is only sweetening the pill for the average reader and the number has at best a symbolic function; it may conceivably symbolize that everything is numbered, i.e. known to God, even, as it is said in the Gospel, to the hairs of our head (cf. *Lc* 12,7, quoted in *Théodicée*, § 174, GP VI, p. 128).

We find ourselves on a more productive ground with certain terms that have both a literal and a metaphorical use. At § 351, Leibniz discusses whether the number of the dimensions of matter depends upon God's choice and, against Bayle's suggestion that it might be so, he declares that the number of the physical dimensions is determined by a 'geometrical' necessity.[14] This particular use is rather literal and self-referential: the matter is in truth geometrical, since it is from geometry that comes the demonstration of which Leibniz is thinking.[15] Other uses of the expression 'geometrical necessity', instead, present us with a barefaced trope,[16] in which the name of a particular kind of 'absolute' necessity is transferred to the genus: this would be indeed a metaphor conforming to Aristotle's second type. Yet it is a feeble and veiled metaphor; in our posterior view it is a synecdoche of the type *species pro genere*. In fact, absolute necessity is called *proprio nomine* logical, metaphysical or geometrical, when it belongs to one or the other specific sphere, whereas it is called 'blind' when Leibniz is metaphorizing more expressively (*Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, pp. 37; cf. § 349, p. 321). So in this case, on the one hand, we are seemingly confronted with the simple application of that mechanism by which metaphors are considered the motor of linguistic expansion, or of language itself: something similar to calling individual substances 'monads',

13 No infinite set has a number, since according to Leibniz it is not a whole: «l'infini, c'est à dire l'amas d'un nombre infini de substances, à proprement parler, n'est pas un tout non plus que le nombre infini luy même, duquel on ne sauroit dire s'il est pair ou impair» (*Théodicée*, § 195, GP VI, p. 232).

14 «Le nombre ternaire y est determiné, non pas par la raison du meilleur, mais par une necessité Geometrique: c'est parce que les Geometres ont pu demontrer qu'il n'y a que trois lignes droites perpendiculaires entre elles, qui se puissent couper dans un même point» (*Théodicée*, § 351, GP VI, p. 226).

15 It is the same that is presented in the First Day of Galilei's *Dialogue* 1898, pp. 36-38.

16 Cf. *Théodicée*, Préface (GP VI, pp. 43-44); Discours, § 2 (p. 50); § 345, § 347, § 350 (pp. 319-320, 322).

a metaphor, from our point of view, of negligible mathematical content. On the other hand, this trope conveys at least the reciprocity between the various species of absolute necessity. The same characters of 'geometric' necessity can in fact be attributed to 'metaphysical' necessity, which in the *Theodicy* is even explained, when needed, with a geometrical simile:

> Aussi Spinosa cherchoit il une necessité metaphysique dans les evenemens, il ne croyoit pas que Dieu fût determiné par sa bonté et par sa perfection (que cet auteur traitoit de chimeres par rapport à l'univers), mais par la necessité de sa nature: comme le demicercle est obligé de ne comprendre que des angles droits, sans en avoir ny la connoissance ny la volonté. Car Euclide a montré que tous les angles compris par deux lignes droites, tirées des extremités du diametre vers un point du cercle, sont necessairement droits, et que le contraire implique contradiction. (*Théodicée*, § 174, GP VI, p. 218)

The boundaries between similes and regular metaphors are undeniably blurred, and the same also happens, perhaps as a consequence, between the simile and the allegory. For sure Leibniz, in the *Theodicy*, makes also use of mathematical comparisons that take the form of allegories. An experiment can elucidate this. At § 214 of the *Theodicy* there is a well-known passage concerning 'a kind of geometry which Mr. Jungius of Hamburg, one of the most eminent men of his time, called *empiric*', which in the original is formulated so:

> Il y a une espece de Géometrie que M. Jungius de Hambourg, un des plus excellens hommes de son temps, appelloit Empirique. Elle se sert d'experiences demonstratives, et prouve plusieurs propositions d'Euclide, mais particulierement celles qui regardent l'egalité de deux figures, en coupant l'une en pieces, et en rejoignant ces pieces pour en faire l'autre. De cette maniere, en coupant, comme il faut, en parties les quarrés des deux côtés du triangle rectangle, et en arrangeant ces parties comme il faut, on en fait le quarré de l'hypotenuse […]. Or supposé que quelques unes de ces pieces prises des deux moindres quarrés se perdent, il manquera quelque chose au grand quarré, qu'on en doit former; et ce composé defectueux, bien loin de plaire, sera d'une laideur choquante. Et si les pieces qui sont restées, et qui composent le composé fautif, étoient prises detachées sans aucun egard au grand quarré qu'elles doivent contribuer à former, on les rangeroit tout autrement entr'elles pour faire un composé passable. Mais dès que les pieces egarées se retrouveront, et qu'on remplira le vuide du composé fautif, il en proviendra une chose belle et reguliere, qui est le grand quarré entier, et ce composé accompli sera bien plus beau que le composé passable, qui avoit eté fait des seules pieces qu'on n'avoit point egarées. (*Théodicée*, § 214, GP VI, p. 246)

This paragraph can be easily re-written as a more recognizable form of allegory, for instance, in that well-known, scantier kind of allegory that is the parable:

> Verily I say unto you, The universe is like to the squares on the two sides of the right-angled triangle, which a man cut in pieces, and arranged them carefully to make from them the square on the hypotenuse: for he was a geometer in the empiric way of Jungius. And, behold, there were some pieces taken from the two smaller squares, that fell and were lost, and the people said unto that man: 'What manner of figure hath he done? Lo, it is faulty and ugly'. And while he yet sought to make a tolerably good combination with the pieces that remained, they all were much perplexed thereabout. But as soon as the lost pieces were retrieved and the gap in the faulty combination was filled, behold, there ensued a beautiful and regular thing. For all they that saw the complete large square witnessed that this perfect combination was far more beautiful than the tolerably good one which had been made from the pieces that remained. And straightway all the people rejoiced and were exceedingly glad. Do not ye yet understand, that the perfect combination is the universe in its entirety? Wherefore the faulty combination is a part of the universe, where ye find defects which your heavenly Father has allowed, because otherwise the whole would not then have been so beautiful.

This parabolic version of § 214 should be enough faithful to make clear beyond question that Leibniz's ratiocination on the empirical demonstration of the Pythagorean theorem is an allegory – who hath ears to hear, let her hear – and in fact, as an allegory, it mimics in detail, with that kind of explicative coherence that is typical of this trope,[17] the way human beings, according to Leibniz, find defects in particular parts of the created world without being able to see the harmony and the beauty of the whole:

> Le composé accompli repond à l'univers tout entier, et le composé fautif qui est une partie de l'accompli, repond à quelque partie de l'univers, où nous trouvons des defauts que l'auteur des choses y a soufferts, parce qu'autrement, s'il avoit voulu reformer cette partie fautive, et en faire un composé passable, le tout n'auroit pas eté si beau. (*Théodicée*, § 214, GP VI, p. 246)

Similes occupy a sort of middle ground between the useful and pleasant enthymemy of the metaphor and the insistent and didactic openness of

17 And that differentiates it from the 'riddle', that Aristotle (*Poet.*, 22) sees as the typical diction wholly composed of metaphors; instead, according to Quintilian, the extended (*continuus*) use of metaphors 'vero in allegorian et aenigmata exit' (*Inst.*, VIII, 6, 14).

the allegory. Perhaps because of this declaredness, in Leibniz the simile is an argumentative device: that is, it appears mainly inside argumentative rather than literary discourse (whereas, in such texts as his numerous prefaces to unwritten works, plain metaphors, anecdotage, etc. prevail). Argumentation can be either demonstrative or persuasive – mathematical similes in the *Theodicy* have both functions.

Most mathematical metaphors, actually, appear in the *Theodicy* in the form of similes, which have, as we may expect, a primarily explanatory function: a mathematical concept provides a rigorous 'example', by means of analogy, for a concept that has been introduced in a different and less rigorous domain. In relation to the prayers that ask for the abatement of the torments of the damned on account of God's benevolence, Augustine maintained that it would be possible that their pains may be mitigated, and that they nevertheless last eternally, «quia nec Psalmus ait[18] 'ad finiendam iram suam' vel 'post iram suam', sed *in ira sua*» (*Ench*., § 112). Leibniz writes that if such were the meaning of the biblical text, «la diminution iroit à l'infini quant à la durée; et neantmoins elle auroit un *non plus ultra*, quant à la grandeur de la diminution». A simile explains it: «comme il y a des figures asymptotes dans la Geometrie, où une longueur infinie ne fait qu'un espace fini» (*Théodicée*, § 272, GP VI, p. 279). In the simile a comparison is drawn with asymptote figures, insofar as they are an exact concept: a concept, that is, that does not make the reasoning more emphatic or more vivid, but more precise relative to a different and less rigorous reasoning of another kind. Likewise, Leibniz explains elsewhere in the *Theodicy* that one must think of the creation of the best, and only the best, of all possible universes, as similar to God's hypothetic decree to draw, from a given point, one straight line to another given straight line, «sans qu'il y eût aucune détermination de l'angle, ny dans le decret, ny dans ses circonstances»; it would be determined anyway, «car en ce cas, la détermination viendroit de la nature de la chose, la ligne seroit perpendiculaire, et l'angle seroit droit, puisqu'il n'y a que cela qui soit determiné, et qui se distingue» (*Théodicée*, § 196, GP VI, p. 233).[19]

Among such mathematical similes, incidentally, there is in the *Theodicy* at least one instance on the negative side, at § 49, where Leibniz, discussing indifference of equipoise and the case of Buridan's ass, explains that from his point of view neither the ass nor the universe could be halved by a plane drawn through the middle, so that all be equal and alike on both sides, «comme une Ellipse et toute figure dans le plan, du nombre de celles

18 «Non obliviscetur misereri Deus, aut continebit in ira sua miserationes suas» as quoted by Augustine, *Ench*., § 112 (*Ps*. 76,10).

19 Gerhardt's text has «la Creature du meilleur de tous les univers possibles», but it should obviously read «Creation».

que j'appelle amphidextres, peut être mipartie ainsi», because the parts of the universe, just as the entrails of the animal, «ne sont pas semblables, ny également situés de deux côtés de ce plan vertical» (*Théodicée*, § 49, GP VI, p. 130).

It is not surprising that at a certain point Leibniz feels the need to give a theoretical justification of his use in the *Theodicy* of mathematical similes and comparisons in reasoning, that is, to clarify the main function they perform. It happens at the boundary between the second and the third part. At § 211 Leibniz writes:

> Je crois donc que Dieu peut suivre un plan simple, fécond, régulier; mais je ne crois pas que celui qui est le meilleur et le plus régulier soit toujours commode en même temps à toutes les créatures, et je le juge *a posteriori*; car celui que Dieu a choisi ne l'est pas. Je l'ai pourtant encore montré a priori dans des exemples pris des mathématiques, et j'en donnerai un tantôt. (*Théodicée*, § 211, GP VI, pp. 244-245)

Leibniz is asserting that, with examples and similes taken from mathematics, he can provide his readers with the *a priori* reasons of certain general concepts, neither obvious nor trivial, impacting on the best of all possible worlds. It is a general assumption of the *Theodicy*, that «les loix qu'il a plû a Dieu de donner à la nature, […] nous les apprenons, ou par l'experience, c'est à dire a posteriori, ou par la raison, et a priori, c'est à dire par des considerations de la convenance, qui les ont fait choisir» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 2, GP VI, p. 49). In this case, from the features of the one and only plan that can be known by experience to have been chosen by God – the existing universe – it is possible for us to judge *a posteriori* that the universe in question is not perfectly comfortable for every creature everywhere; this implies, in turn, that there is no necessity that it be so. But this experiential fact, concerning this single instance of universe, incorporates and at the same time responds to a general law that concerns orders. This law can be shown *a priori* in examples taken from mathematics. He promises one, boasts many, and a couple of them truly arrive at § 212-214 and § 242-243.

It would seem natural to partition these mathematical similes into geometric and arithmetic, if arithmetic ones were not so rare. One reason is that similes with arithmetic content are quite primitive, as for the properties and entities involved, whereas geometric ones are more complex and seemingly more interesting for Leibniz himself. Although he mentions infinite series, if only to correct a mistake in reasoning, he mostly alludes to his methods when they can be referred to geometrical objects that are studied by their means. So his own mathematical discoveries offer examples that pertain more to geometry than to algebra, that is, the object and not the methods seem to be decisive, perhaps because the methods are

considered by him too difficult for the reader, while the reference to geometry always offers food for the imagination. Moreover, in the 17th century the idea of the superiority of geometrical analysis and synthetic methods, over symbolic techniques, is still alive and, chiefly because of Huygens' influence, Leibniz shares this view even in contrast to his own algebraic and infinitesimal methods (cf. Panza, Roero 1995). Likely because of this epistemology of mathematics, as we may call it, at § 212-213 the variation calculus is not considered from the point of view of the analytic instrument: «On raisonne ainsi en Geometrie, quand il s'agit *de maximis et minimis*» (*Théodicée*, § 212, GP VI, p. 245), says Leibniz to introduce what is another partly negative simile: while any part of the shortest way between two extreme points is also the shortest way between its own extremes, a part of the best whole is not necessarily the best that can be made of it, nor is the part of a beautiful thing always beautiful.

Nevertheless, while admitting that arithmetic is a secondary source of metaphors and similes, we should not circumvent a very particular arithmetic simile that is so important for Leibniz, and so tricky for Leibniz scholars. It is quoted incidentally at the beginning of the first part of the *Theodicy*, at § 9, but it appeared already in Leibniz's first official philosophical writing, the *Dissertatio de principio individui*, among the supplementary theses that might have been discussed at the request of the committee: it reads «essentiae rerum sunt sicut numeri» (GP IV, p. 26), the essences of things are like numbers. It is considered by many interpreters a Pythagorean-Platonic utterance, and is found more than once in Weigel's works.[20] Curiously it concerns numbers only marginally and, moreover, its origins are all except Pythagorean, and only remotely Platonic. It belongs in fact to the Aristotelian tradition: «dicendum est quod formae substantiales se habent ad invicem sicut numeri, ut dicitur in Octavo Metaphysicae» (Thomas Aquinas, *Quodl.* I, q. 4 art. 1 co.). This originally anti-Pythagorean dictum[21] is disparately interpreted: most often Aquinas and other scholastics have in mind that the nearer a form is to unity, the simpler it is, just as it happens with numbers; that a more perfect form contains a less perfect one, just as higher numbers contain lower numbers, or conversely that, being piled in a Porphyrean tree, general essences can be said to be contained in more specific essences. But in Plato's *Cratylus* (432 b 1) Socrates had stated that there is no true name of things and consequently names are not like numbers, which at once become different numbers if a unit be added or subtracted. And Aristotle declares

20 «Essentiae rerum sicut numeros esse, i.e. eodem modo ut numeros cognosci, supponi, quaeri, tandem inveniri posse, vere dixeris» (Weigel 1673b, p. 34; cf. 1673a, p. 25).

21 See Aristotle, *Met*., VIII, 3, 1043b 36-1044 a 2; he is criticizing the reduction of things to numbers, while mainly discussing, in a section that is so often echoed by Leibniz, what a true unity is.

in fact that just like numbers mutate by addition or subtraction, even of a single unity, so any definition or essence is changed into another when whichever single predicate is added or removed. This version is equally reproduced by Aquinas, who is liable to extend it to species and forms in general.[22] It is also Leibniz's prevailing notion of the similarity between numbers and essences: «Essentiae rerum sunt ut numeri. Duo numeri non sunt aequales inter se, ita duae essentiae non sunt aeque perfectae» (A VI, 4, p. 1352).[23] It correlates aptly with his mature idea that individual essences *in mente Dei* (e.g. a certain Alexander's, or a certain Sextus' complete notion) compose possible worlds, or possible sequences of the universe, that are weighed one against the other to estimate their suitability for creation. Truly individual essences are the essences of complete beings (in contrast to partial entities as those corresponding to abstracts terms: rationality, animality, or any combination of general essences that does not comprise the individual circumstances of a particular individual history or notion). Alexander is a complete being to whom an individual essence corresponds, and in truth, when God's intellect modifies anything in it, that particular Alexander becomes another individual – like it is for numbers. It is in this case a change in the perfections, or realities, that compose the essence of an individual thing: «Ponamus ergo nunquam duas res aeque caeteris praestantes reperiri, sed semper unam aliis esse perfectiorem: quae Hypothesis certe nihil habet impossibile vel absurdum. Imo valde probabilis est, quia Essentiae rerum sunt ut numeri et non dantur duo Numeri aequales» (A VI, 4, p. 1389).

All this to say that the same concept is applied to possible universes in the *Theodicy*: «De sorte que rien ne peut être changé dans l'univers (non plus que dans un nombre) sauf son essence, ou si vous voulés, sauf son individualité numerique» (*Théodicée*, § 9, GP VI, p. 108). Nothing can be changed in the universe without the loss of its essence or individuality – not any more than (i.e. just like) in a number. The simile rests on a very basic property of numbers; it might be considered, in the end, only apparently or superficially mathematical, but, as we said, this is a characteristic of most arithmetical comparisons. It is also a very essential and unadorned simile, and this raises a point that might deserve pondering.

22 «Unde philosophus dicit, in VIII Metaphys., quod species rerum sunt sicut numeri, in quibus additio vel diminutio variat speciem», *Summa*, I Sec., q. 52 art. 1 co. See it also discussed by Francisco Suárez, *Index locupletissimus in Metaphysicam Aristotelis* (*Opera Omnia*, ed. Vivès, vol. XXV), VIII, 3, q. 9.

23 There is a most peculiar reading in Leibniz's «Von der Wahren Theologia Mystica: Alle Geschöpfe sind von Gott und Nichts; ihr Selbstwesen von Gott, ihr Unwesen von Nichts (Solches weisen auch die Zahlen auf eine wunderbare Weise, und die Wesen der Dinge sind gleich den Zahlen). Kein Geschöpf kann ohne Unwesen sein; sonst wäre es Gott. Die Engel und Heiligen müssens haben» (Guhrauer I, p. 411).

At the beginning of the third part, at § 241, Leibniz admits that it would be better to admit sufferings, defects and monstrosities than to violate general laws, «comme raisonne quelques fois le R. Pp. Malebranche». But it is also well to bear in mind «que ces monstres mêmes sont dans les regles, et se trouvent conformes à des volontés generales, quoique nous ne soyons point capables de demêler cette conformité». Then comes a mathematical explanatory integrant:

> C'est comme il y a quelques fois des apparences d'irregularité dans les mathématiques, qui se terminent enfin dans un grand ordre, quand on a achevé de les approfondir; c'est pourquoy j'ai déja remarqué cy dessus, que dans mes principes tous les evenement individuels, sans exception, sont des suites des volontés generales. (*Théodicée*, § 241, GP VI, p. 261)

This is, somewhat belated, the 'example' derived from mathematics that Leibniz had promised at § 211, except that it is not introduced as an example: rather it comes out as a simile, given that *c'est comme*, 'just as', is the usual formula for the enunciation of the trope. Yet this might not be enough for a good simile. Consider how Dante Alighieri, that professional of similes, seldom contents himself with the enunciation: as a rule, he does not tell solely that Virgil acted suddenly, «just as a mother who is wakened by a roar»; he patiently describes how she, catching sight of the blaze next to her, takes her son, and flies, having more care of him than of herself, so that she does not even pause to throw on a robe[24] – an elongation from which we grasp not only the swiftness of the action, but its being done for the protection of the poet as well. So we might say that Leibniz's simile lacks only a modicum of development, since, in the first place, a simile is in itself an amplification, and secondly, as we have seen, some further specification may be convenient to clarify the meaning of the simile itself. Anyway, the concept at issue is often explained by Leibniz with much more precision, whenever he says that any collection of points randomly drawn on a page, or the contours of anyone's face, can be described by a continuous geometric line, or a regular movement of some sort, ruled by a mathematical function. And, as we shall see, in the *Theodicy* a similar reasoning is exhibited in the ensuing paragraph. On this basis, will not another practical corroboration that such examples are utterly equivalent to canonical similes – some rough Dantean imitation, based on Leibniz's «Just as sometimes there are appearances of irregularity in mathematics» – be easily confected? Like this:

24 «Come la madre ch'al romore è desta | e vede presso a sé le fiamme accese, | che prende il figlio e fugge e non s'arresta, | avendo più di lui che di sé cura, | tanto che solo una camiscia vesta» (*Inf.* 23, 38-42).

> Come tal volta al geomètra appare
> Che la regola si perda, e tuttavia
> Maggior si puote un ordine trovare,
> Né pur viso pintor dipigneria,
> O casual punto e punto sovra'l foglio,
> Che una linea descritto non avria.

It seems to work, somehow. And so we shall feel free to treat these comparisons as similes without further justification. But, literary jests and experiments apart, even for Leibniz it is not beyond question that such complicated philosophical matters be explained with complicated mathematical similes, as a new sort of *obscurum per obscurius*. Accordingly, the following paragraph begins so: «On ne doit point s'étonner que je tâche d'éclaircir ces choses par des comparaisons prises des mathématiques pures, où tout va dans l'ordre, et où il y a moyen de les démêler par une méditation exacte, qui nous fait jouir, pour ainsi dire, de la vue des idées de Dieu» (*Théodicée*, § 242, GP VI, pp. 261-262). How much this mention of the vision of God's ideas might be a scorning allusion to Malebranche, who appeared as the polemic object of the preceding paragraph, is difficult to say. It could be just a little malice of Leibniz's, or it could be something spontaneous he came out with, because he is deeply convinced that mathematical similes and examples are a reason, or an indication and a side-effect of the reasons, for his superiority over Malebranche. And then, as we already mentioned, he completes the simile:

> On peut proposer une suite ou série de nombres tout à fait irrégulière en apparence, où les nombres croissent et diminuent variablement sans qu'il y paraisse aucun ordre; et cependant celui qui saura la clef du chiffre, et qui entendra l'origine et la construction de cette suite de nombres, pourra donner une règle, laquelle étant bien entendue, fera voir que la série est tout à fait régulière, et qu'elle a même de belles propriétés. (*Théodicée*, § 242, GP VI, p. 262)

In the same way, a curve can apparently develop without rhyme or reason, «et cependant il se peut qu'on en puisse donner l'équation et la construction, dans laquelle un géomètre trouverait la raison et la convenance de toutes ces prétendues irrégularités» (*Théodicée*, § 242, GP VI, p. 262). That is, he concludes, how we must look upon irregularities, monstrosities, and other alleged defects in the universe – pace Malebranche.

To summarize, these all are arguments by analogy, that have been made more or less explicit. Having pure mathematics as the object of comparison, they are mathematical similes, the use of which has been openly rationalized at the beginning of the Third Part of the *Theodicy*, on the ground that mathematical disciplines are an image of order. As such, they offer *a*

priori reasons, that have a divine sort of validity – which is of no little value.

The theme of maxima and minima has a pivotal role in this strategy of similes, by reason of a central feature of Leibniz's thought that he himself calls 'anagogy' in his eponym writing, the *Tentamen anagogicum* (GP VI, 270-279). It concerns the nexus between the Creator's wisdom, the rationality of the universe and the finalism that is detectable in the laws of nature and in the organization of the world. To convey with *a priori* arguments, or *a priori* schemes of arguments, one or the other part of this constellation of concepts, is the most salient function that mathematical similes perform in the *Theodicy*. Leibniz derives from this a sort of general simile at the beginning of the First Part:

> comme dans les Mathematiques, quand il n'y a point de maximum ni de minimum, rien enfin de distingué, tout se fait egalement; ou quand cela ne se peut, il ne se fait rien du tout: on peut dire de même en matiere de parfaite sagesse, qui n'est pas moins reglée que les Mathematiques, que s'il n'y avoit pas le meilleur (*optimum*) parmy tous les mondes possibles, Dieu n'en auroit produit aucun. (*Théodicée*, § 8, GP VI, p. 107)

In this role, mathematical similes do not perform a foundational task: it is rather heuristic, since the knowledge of geometry is a human need, of which things do not partake. As Leibniz writes at § 403: «Faut il qu'une goutte d'huile ou de graisse entende la Geometrie, pour s'arrondir sur la surface de l'eau?» (*Théodicée*, § 403, GP VI, p. 356). Obviously not: geometry is part of the meta-properties of the universe and is commingled, so to speak, with natural processes; humans, on the contrary, need to take the way of geometry to get at a certain kind of knowledge of the relationship of general order and particular phenomena – it also means that we do not get there by illumination or by merely intellectual contemplation. There are more evident cases, as the properties of certain geometric figures, that illuminate less evident ones, as the monsters, whose rules of order are more difficult to get than those of the circle; and it is around the rules that such similes revolve.

The question of what is the exact fulcrum of a simile can be a delicate matter and is sometimes addressed by Leibniz himself, as he does in 1698 to counter an objection raised by Bayle: «Je n'ay comparé l'ame avec une pendule qu'à l'egard de l'exactitude reglée des changemens» (GP IV, p. 522). That brings us to yet another Leibnizian simile, this one quite famous, concerning geometric loci and possible worlds, which will conclude this assay of mathematical similes in the *Theodicy*. It turns up at § 414, within Leibniz's continuation of Valla's fable, that is, inside the allegory of Theodorus and Pallas, about which Leibniz writes: «je me flatte que le petit Dialogue qui finit les Essais opposés à M. Bayle, donnera quelque contentement à ceux qui sont bien aises de voir des verités difficiles, mais

importantes, exposées d'une maniere aisée et familiere» (*Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 48). Thus the text has a really elaborate fabric: we have an allegory concerning «la science de simple intelligence» (*Théodicée*, § 417, GP VI, p. 365), which contains the simile; and all around the simile, of course, metaphors abound (the palace of the fates, the source of happiness, etc.) to enrich the allegory. Quintilian pronounced this the best of styles: «Illud vero longe speciosissimum genus orationis in quo trium permixta est gratia, similitudinis allegoriae tralationis» (*Inst*. VIII, 6, 49).

As we know, Theodorus journeys to Athens and is asked to sleep over in the temple of Pallas Athena. He dreams of being transported into an unknown country, where the goddess shows him a most splendid palace: «Vous voyés ici le palais des destinées, dont j'ai la garde. Il y a des representations, non seulement de ce qui arrive, mais encor de tout ce qui est possible». Her father Jupiter, she says, arranged them into worlds and chose the best one of them; he even comes sometimes back to visit the place and takes pleasure in recapitulating things and renewing his choice – *obiter dictum*, her father seems not in his right mind. She adds that all those possible worlds can be retrieved and inspected:

> Je n'ai qu'à parler, et nous allons voir tout un monde, que mon Pere pouvoit produire, où se trouvera representé tout ce qu'on en peut demander; et par ce moyen on peut savoir encore ce qui arriveroit, si telle ou telle possibilité devait exister. Et quand les conditions ne seront pas assés determinées, il y aura autant qu'on voudra de tels mondes differens entre eux, qui repondront differemment à la même question, en autant de manieres qu'il est possible. (*Théodicée*, § 414, GP VI, p. 362)

Here the simile begins. These worlds are all there before him, in ideas. The goddess reminds Theodorus that he learnt geometry in his youth:

> Vous savés donc que lorsque les conditions d'un point qu'on demande, ne le determinent pas assés, et qu'il y en a une infinité, ils tombent tous dans ce que les Geometres appellent un lieu, et ce lieu au moins (qui est souvent une Ligne) sera determiné. Ainsi vous pouvés vous figurer une suite reglée de Mondes, qui contiendront tous et seuls le cas dont il s'agit, et en varieront les circonstances et les consequences. Mais si vous posés un cas qui ne differe du monde actuel que dans une seule chose definie et dans ses suites, un certain monde determiné vous repondra. (*Théodicée*, § 414, GP VI, pp. 362-363)

It remains somewhat undecided what it means to be «une seule chose definie», or, which level of definition is required to have one single definite thing in a Leibnizian universe. Millions of little animated beings compose, on Leibnizian terms, every microscopic portion of Sextus' liver, that might

some morning be a little bigger, or a little smaller, with minimal influence on his placing the right foot before the left, or on his violating or not the wife of his friend. But it does involve a lot of individuals – strictly speaking, an infinity. Anyway, according to Leibniz the choice of the order of the universe, that depends upon the distinct knowledge of an infinity of things at once, is a truth above reason,[25] a mystery, and we certainly shall not and need not solve it here. Moreover, in the end, any understanding of mysteries is in itself, as Leibniz argues at § 54-55 of the Preliminary Dissertation, based on analogy and comparison.[26]

In the simile in question here, points have the same explanatory function that we have seen ascribed to asymptote figures: a mathematical comparison provides a rigorous concept, by means of which another concept can be explained. But they do something more: not only they explain the possibility of a proximity query on the database of possible worlds, but they suggest as well how to imagine («vous figurer») the result. Max Black, to demonstrate that every metaphor «organizes our view», introduced a very Leibnizian analogy:

> Suppose I look at the night sky through a piece of heavily smoked glass on which certain lines have been left clear.[27] Then I shall see only the stars that can be made to lie on the lines previously prepared upon the screen, and the stars I do see will be seen as organised by the screen's structure. We can think of a metaphor as such a screen, and […] say that the principal subject is 'seen through' the metaphorical expression. (Black 1954-55, p. 288)

25 «Une verité est au dessus de la raison, quand nostre esprit (ou même tout esprit creé) ne la sauroit comprendre: et telle est, à mon avis, la Sainte Trinité; tels sont les miracles reservés à Dieu seul, comme par exemple, la Création; tel est le choix de l'ordre de l'Univers, qui depend de l'Harmonie Universelle, et de la connoissance distincte d'une infinité de choses à la fois» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 23, GP VI, p. 64).

26 Thus it is from the union of the soul with the body that a simile for the Incarnation would be fashioned, although Leibniz limits himself to writing that, when we speak of the union of the divine Logos with human nature, «nous devons nous contenter d'une connoissance analogique, telle que la comparaison de l'union de l'Ame avec le corps est capable de nous donner» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 55, GP VI, p. 81).

27 Compare this screen with Leibniz's creased canvas in the *Nouveaux essais*: «il faudroit supposer que dans la chambre obscure [de l'entendement] il y eut une toile pour recevoir les especes, qui ne fut pas unie, mais diversifiée par des plis representant les connoissances innées; que de plus cette toile ou membrane étant tendue, eût une maniere de ressort ou force d'agir, et même une action ou reaction accommodée tant aux plis passés qu'aux nouveaux venus des impressions des especes. […] Car non seulement nous recevons des images ou traces dans le cerveau, mais nous en formons encore de nouvelles, quand nous envisageons des idées complexes» (NE II, 12, § 1; A VI, 6, pp. 144-145).

Of course the screen can also blur, or confuse, our vision. Thus it is of some importance to remark that Leibniz, in the simile we are investigating, is not weaving directly worlds and points together: he does not assert that possible worlds are like the points in the line. If it were so, and if Quintilian had been right in defining metaphor as a *similitudo brevior*,[28] then this simile could be synthesized in a suggestive denomination, speaking boldly of something like the geometric locus of possible worlds. But this would certainly be too bold for Leibniz, not to say of little help for his readers. Yet this very boldness, in its insufferable excessiveness, provides a hint: «When a metaphor seems bold, convert it into a simile (εἰκασία) for greater safety. A simile is an expanded metaphor […] a less risky form of expression» – this very pertinent suggestion is offered by Demetrius' *De elocutione*, a compact handbook that exerted not a little influence on early modern rhetoric.[29] In more recent times, Leezenberg has conjectured that in similes «the explicit term of comparison ὡς ('like') merely functions as a hedge, i.e., as a particle that weakens the assertive power of a sentence. Thus, the speaker can avoid a commitment to the assertion that Achilles *actually* is member of the class of lions» (Leezenberg 2001, p. 42).

In this case, Leibniz definitely does not claim that worlds are like points, in fact he does not even suggest that they resemble in the least: worlds do not belong to a continuum, while points do not exist side by side. Nevertheless that seems – from experience – to be an easy misinterpretation, basing on which many readers will in fact conclude from that passage that possible worlds are points in a line just as Achilles is a lion, some of them even taking it, not only metaphorically, but literally.[30] But in spite of

28 «In totum autem metaphora brevior est similitudo, eoque distat quod illa comparatur rei quam volumus exprimere, haec pro ipsa re dicitur» (Quintilian, *Inst.*, VIII, 6, 8-9).

29 Demetrius, *De elocutione*, § 80 (in Aristotle [1927] 1995, p. 401). In Vettori's widespread Latin translation, it reads: «Postquam igitur periculosa translatio visa fuerit, convertatur in imaginem: sic enim tutior erit: imago autem est translatio exuperans […] et tutior est oratio» (Vettori 1594, pp. 77). For a long time *imago*, as a more literal translation from the Greek, coexisted with *similis* and *similitudo*, as *tralatio* and *metaphora* did; for a systematization of *imago* and *parabola* as species of *similitudo* in post-Erasmian rhetoric and in the German school of Melanchthon and his followers, see Margolin's *Préface* to Erasmus' *Parabolae sive similia* (Margolin 1975).

30 And the difference between adjacent worlds will obviously have to be the differential, given that Leibniz invented the differential calculus. A more sophisticated comparison between God's vision of infinitely small *minutiae* inside the general order in which they are arranged by Him, and the way infinitely small or unassignable quantities are used in the new analysis to determine assignable quantities, is found in the 'Causa Dei', introduced anyway by a prudent *quodammodo*: «121. Et licet prae ipso Deo infinito nos nihili videamur, hoc ipsum tamen infinitae ejus sapientiae Privilegium est, infinite minora perfectissime curare posse: quae etsi nulla assignabili ipsum proportione respiciant, servant tamen inter se proportionalitatem exiguntque ordinem, quem Deus ipsis indit. 122. Eaque in re quodam modo Deum imitantur Geometrae per novam infinitesimorum analysin ex infinite parvorum

this perhaps well-intentioned reading, the simile revolves around *conditions* for the determination of worlds, that are similar to the conditions for the determination of points, while also the result of the one (a subset, an extraction from the total set of the worlds) and of the other (a locus) are similar, since the respective relations between determination and result are similar: that is, there exists an analogy that can be set, as we can see, in a very precise way. And it is this combination of uncommitment and precision that, in conclusion, we might take as a plausible explanation of Leibniz's favour to explicit comparisons and similes.

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atque inassignabilium comparatione inter se, majora atque utiliora quam quis crederet in ipsis magnitudinibus assignabilibus inferentes» (GP VI, p. 457).

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Part II
A World of Reasons: Metaphysics

Theodicy and Reason
Logic, Metaphysics, and Theology in Leibniz's *Essais de Théodicée* (1710)
edited by Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero, Mattia Geretto, and Luigi Perissinotto

Creaturely Action in Leibniz's *Theodicy*

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Abstract Paragraphs 381-404 of *Theodicy* contain one of the most systematic discussions of the action of creatures ever provided by Leibniz. Although they expressly reject Bayle's view that creatures are not truly efficient causes of their states, they also have a wider target, namely the 'new Cartesian' tenets such as the continuous creation doctrine. A close scrutiny of these paragraphs casts new light on two main issues in Leibniz's defence of the active power of creatures: first, the relation between the substances and their accidents; second, the consistency of Leibniz's view with the traditional theological doctrine of God's concurrence. Leibniz's solution of these difficulties is philosophically interesting, for it offers both a very refined version of a traditional 'endurantist' view on individual persistence and a robust metaphysics of dispositions and dispositional properties. This metaphysics is also the ground of Leibniz's final doctrine of the relations Nature/Miracle and Nature/Grace.

Keywords Occasionalism. Philosophy of Action. Continuous Creation.

1 Polemizing with Bayle and the 'new Cartesians'

The 'action of the creatures' (from now on: CA) is a fundamental issue of Leibniz's *Theodicy*. Leibniz's basic insights on this topic can be already found in the First Part of the work. Here, the doctrine that creatures can perform their own acts without God's direct co-operation is already rejected (§ 27), as well as the doctrine that God is the only actor (§ 32), and a first definition of creaturely actions is sketched (§ 32).[1] These same topics, however, are widely re-discussed in the Third Part of the *Theodicy*,

1 Cf. *Théodicée*, § 32: «L'*action de la creature* est une modification de la substance qui en coule naturellement, et qui renferme une variation non seulement dans les perfections que Dieu a communiqué à la creature, mais encore dans les limitations qu'elle y apporte d'elle même […]» (GP VI, p. 121).

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through a polemical confrontation with Pierre Bayle's views which occupies more than twenty paragraphs (§ 381-404). One could also say that this discussion is the real conclusion of the work, since what follows – the summary of Laurent Valla's dialogue on free will and its prosecution by Leibniz through the fable with the Palace of the Possible Worlds – can be better seen as its recapitulation.

The Third Part's resumption of the CA issue does not depend exclusively on Leibniz's choice of dedicating a large part of his book to an analytic confutation of Bayle's arguments. In fact, in the context of paragraphs 381-403, Bayle is representative of a wider circulating view, since he claims – as other 'modern authors' had done (§ 381) – that creatures have no causal power and that God is the only real actor. Now, even if such a view (we will call it 'Causal Monism') had been shared by several theologians and philosophers – as Leibniz knows[2] – it is evident that Bayle's 'modern authors' are the 'new Cartesians', i. e. Malebranche and the other upholders of what we usually call 'Occasionalism'.

In relation to those authors, Bayle plays a dual role. He starts from premises which the 'new Cartesians' share, but he draws from them radical and paradoxical conclusions, which even those authors rejected. For instance, he hypothesizes a philosopher who, starting from the 'new Cartesian' doctrines, argues that even our will's acts must depend completely on God as the physical states of affairs do – a conclusion that Malebranche and the other 'new Cartesians' avoided drawing (cf. *Théodicée*, § 399, GP VI, p. 353). This allows Leibniz to occupy a rather comfortable position. He simply rejects Bayle's views, never polemizing directly with Bayle's 'authors'. He makes even room for a paragraph dedicated to praising a passage by Malebranche on creation, with the evident intention of attenuating the possible polemical impact of the previous paragraphs (§ 398). At the same time, the whole discussion is built up to show that Causal Monism leads to intolerable paradoxes, so that one has to admit those views on substances, substantial forms, causal powers, which distinguish Leibniz's metaphysics from the Occasionalists'.

I will dedicate this paper to resume Leibniz's discussion with Bayle in *Theodicy* (§ 381-404), by comparing his replies with the views exposed elsewhere in the book and in his other works. This will allow an interpretation of some hard issues of Leibniz's metaphysics of action. The main points of the discussion are the following:

2 So far as I know, the classical Scholastic upholders of Causal Monism, namely Pierre d'Ailly and Gabriel Biel, are never mentioned by Leibniz. His favourite pre-Occasionalist source of Causal Monism is the Hermetic tradition and, more particularly, Robert Fludd's 'Mosaic Philosophy' (cf. GP IV, p. 509; GP III, p. 532; GP III, p. 581; GP VII, p. 340). This *reductio ad Fluddum* of the Occasionalists is usually joined with the claim that Causal Monism is logically equivalent to Spinoza's Substance Monism.

1. As good scholars usually do, Leibniz starts from a point of agreement between him and Bayle (i.e. and the Occasionalists). As they did, Leibniz rejects the claim that, after the Creation, all that God does (putting miracles aside) is to 'preserve' the created individuals and to let them perform their acts by their own forces. This doctrine had been proposed by Durand de Saint-Pourçain and Pierre Aureoli in the fourteenth Century, with the intention of lessening God's causal involvement in human sins, and still had several upholders at Leibniz's times.[3] Leibniz's objection is that, since the relation existing between a total cause and its immediate effect never changes, it is impossible that creatures become in time more independent from God (§ 385). Therefore, preserving the creatures' existence and action is causally equivalent to creating them anew, as the traditional scholastic doctrine of the 'continued creation' (hereafter CC) had already established.
2. Thereafter, Leibniz begins to confront the consequences that Bayle draws from CC, consequences which would establish the incompatibility between CC and CA. From Bayle's point of view, since creatures cannot act before existing, they could act only 'after' their creation (§ 386). But, since the CC doctrine entails that creation never ceases – Bayle argues – creatures must always remain mere passive instruments of God (§ 387). Leibniz rejects this argument by introducing a distinction between *temporal* and *logical* priority (priority *in ordine rationis*). Since God's acts follow a logical scheme and since *substances* (as individual actors are) must precede their *accidents* (as actions are) in this scheme, the former are produced by God 'before' the latter, even if this happens in a same instant of time (§ 388-391).
3. But Bayle claims also that the created substances can produce none of their accidents. He grounds this claim by considering two alternatives. If there is no 'real distinction' between a substance and its own accidents – a view widely shared among the 'new Cartesians' – then no accident can be produced by a substance, because a substance cannot 'produce' something which is a part of its own being (§ 392). Alternatively, admitting a 'real distinction' between the substances and their accidents, accidents would be quite different things from their substances. Therefore, substances would have to 'create' them, a job which a finite substance cannot do (§ 393). Leibniz replies that there is a 'real distinction' between substances

3 Among the contemporary followers of Durand and Aureoli, Leibniz cites the capuchin Louis Béreur de Dole, the German philosopher Nicholas Taurellus, the French philosopher François Bernier and the Calvinist theologian David Derodon (cf. *Théodicée*, § 27, § 381, § 382). On his relations with these neo-Durandian authors, see Piro 2011a.

and their accidents (§ 391, § 393), but this doesn't mean that substances have to 'create' their accidents, since accidents are only 'changes of the limits' inhering to their substances (§ 394-5). Another argument by Bayle gives Leibniz the occasion of resuming his doctrine of substantial forms, which helps him to clear up the whole issue (§ 396-397). After quoting favourably Malebranche (§ 398) and examining also Bayle's doubts on free will (§ 399), Leibniz concludes that «simple substances are the true immediate cause of all their internal actions and passions […] They have any others if not which they produce» (§ 400).

4. Finally, Bayle observes that men are unable to know the causes of their psychological inner states – both 'ideas' and 'volitions' – and are therefore unable to rule them (§ 401-402). Leibniz replies that there are not only conscious actions, but also actions led by an unconscious program, as animals' instinctual behaviours show (§ 403). However, he also insists that it is possible for a human being to acquire control of her/his own will, at least in the long run and through indirect ways (§ 404).

Point 4 shows how deep the differences are between the notion of 'action' as conceived by a Cartesian author as Bayle and as conceived by Leibniz. From Bayle's point of view, action requires the actor's awareness and knowledge. On the contrary, Leibniz sees action as a general property of all his 'individual substances' or 'monads', including those which are not self-conscious. However, this is a point of minor metaphysical importance with regard to those touched in the former paragraphs. Therefore, I will only comment on points 1, 2 and 3.

2 The Compatibility Between Continued Creation and Creaturely Action (points 1 and 2)

As we have seen, Leibniz leaves no room for a distinction between 'creation' and 'conservation' as kinds of divine actions. Does this conclusion involve that God literally 'creates' the individual creatures at each instant, 'reproducing' them through time?

Some scholars suggest that words such as 'reproduction' or 'new creation' should be taken in a metaphorical sense, since a literal interpretation of them would seem inconsistent with Leibniz's usual anti-Occasionalist claims (cf. Jalabert 1947, pp. 167-171). And indeed, in the *Theodicy*, Leibniz seems to accept this interpretation of CC just for the sake of the argument (see § 388: «Let us assume that the creature is produced anew at each instant […]»). Nevertheless, there are many other passages representing our world as a succession of states of affairs which are *separately*

created by God.[4] Therefore, a 'strong' reading of CC must have at least some elements of truth on its side.

I would suggest that this element of truth is the fact that different temporal states may be only *contingently* connected. It is not metaphysically necessary that the temporal state of affairs *b* follows the temporal state of affairs *a* and, therefore, one can claim that the existence of *b* is the effect of a *particular* act of will by God. Of course, from Leibniz's point of view, even this particular act of will was already included in God's eternal choice of letting exist our world, a choice which extends to all the facts which were and will be instantiated. But since such choice is grounded on God's intellect and this intellect necessitates only 'morally' God's will, *not-b* remains metaphysically possible. So to say, the succession of states of affairs in our world can be seen as the execution of a fully planned but complex performance. Every phase of the performance follows the previous ones according to a rule, but the execution of a single phase depends on the actor's actual will of continuing the whole performance.

Now, Leibniz's adherence to such a strong version of CC seems to generate just the two main difficulties highlighted by Bayle. On one hand, it becomes hard to establish the dependence of actions on their agents, if everything is produced by God. Moreover, it becomes hard also to trace a real difference between substances and their accidents, if it is not literally true that the former are permanent and the latter change. How could Leibniz reject these consequences starting from his interpretation of CC?

First of all, one should note that it is hard to establish whether, from Leibniz's point of view, these difficulties are two different issues or simply one. Leibniz's 'individual substances' or 'monads' have no other accidents (or 'modifications', as Leibniz usually says) than their own 'perceptions' and 'appetites'. On the other hand, perceptions and appetites are even the only 'operations' performed by them, since Leibniz's metaphysics forbids any external action by an individual substance on another one. Therefore, one can easily conclude that, as Leibniz himself claims, 'substantiality' and 'activity' are to be seen as quite *reciprocal* metaphysical properties, so that one cannot have the former without having the latter and vice versa (*De ipsa natura, sive de vi insita actionibusque Creaturarum*, 1698, § 9, GP IV, p. 509). If substances are permanent (in some sense), it is just because they are able to rule their own modifications (in some way).

However, I would suggest prudence here, since there are cases in which the equivalence between substantiality and activity fails. Such a case is

4 See Leibniz's letter to Princess Sophie 1705: «[…] la multitude des états momentanés est l'amas d'une infinité d'éclats de la Divinité, dont chacun à chaque instant est une création ou reproduction des toutes choses» (GP VII, p. 564); and *Monadologie*, § 47: «[...] les monades créés ou derivatives sont des productions et naissent, pour ainsi dire, par des Fulgurations continuelles de la Divinité de moment à moment» (GP VI, p. 614) .

that of the 'extraordinary aids' (*concours extraordinaires*) given by God to some human beings who did not deserve them (St. Paul being the typical example of this possibility). Now, let us suppose that an individual substance *S* receives an extraordinary aid by God. This aid (through the resulting *S*'s accidents) must be contained in *S*'s complete concept, otherwise *S* could not be a substance. But, on the other side, this does not mean that such *S*'s accidents flow from *S*'s 'nature' or 'power' and, therefore, it would be hard to classify them as 'actions' performed by *S*.[5] Therefore, even if this case is a rather problematical one – as we will see later – it suggests that 'substantiality' and 'activity' are not *necessarily* equivalent even if they are surely equivalent in the bounds of the 'Kingdom of Nature'.

This can help us understand why Leibniz, in his first reply to Bayle (§ 388), grounds his attempted accommodation between CC and CA on *two* different conditions. A first condition is that (a) the accidents of a substance must always express the basic properties of their substance.[6] This would seem already enough in order to establish what Leibniz needs, that is, that substances come before their accidents '*in ordine rationis*' and that the latter cannot be instantiated without re-instantiating the former (*Théodicée*, § 388-389, GP VI, p. 346).[7] What Leibniz claims is that God never instantiates a bare state of affairs *m*, but always states of affairs including a substance *S* and an accident *m* (I will call such states of affairs: *S*/*m*). Of course, more complex states of affairs will need a multitude of substances S_1, S_2, S_3..., and of modifications m_1, m_2, m_3... (and all the created substances and the related accidents if we consider the world's state at a given time *t*).

But there is another condition introduced by Leibniz, namely: (b) that God instantiates the state of affairs *S*/*m* just because the former state of *S* (*S*/*l*) «demanded» that God create *S*/*m*. As Leibniz writes, «God produces the creature in conformity with the exigency of the preceding instants, according to the laws of his wisdom».[8] Reserving the enigmatic concept of 'exigency' for a later discussion, this condition seems to be more helpful for establishing what kinds of accidents can also be actions. In the case of some 'supernatural aid', such a condition could not be satisfied, since the instantiation of *S*/*m* would include some discontinuities with regard to *S*/*l*.

5 This case is widely discussed in Leibniz's *Discourse of Metaphysics*, 1686, § 16 (A VI, 4, p. 1555).

6 «[...] la creature prise en elle même, avec sa nature et ses proprietés necessaires, est anterieure à ses affections accidentelles et à ses actions» (*Théodicée*, § 388, GP VI, p. 346) .

7 'Natural priority' is a typical Aristotelian and Scholastic notion which Leibniz often discusses in his logical papers, for instance *Quid sit prius natura*, 1679 (A VI, 4, p. 180).

8 *Théodicée*, § 388: «[...] Dieu produit la creature conformement à l'exigence des instans precedens, suivant les loix de sa sagesse» (GP VI, p. 346). I adopt the English translation by E.M. Huggard now available at: `http:\\www.gutenberg.org` (2016-05-29).

What Leibniz is proposing here is what we could call a 'syntactic' criterion of action, a concept which sums up his views on substances' immanent causality: *l*, *m*, *n*, are actions performed by *S*, if and only if they can be seen as phases or moments of a logically consistent development which we could call *SA* («substance's state of activity»).[9] This criterion excludes the possibility of purely episodic actions.

Leibniz's conclusion is clear. Adopting the syntactic view of action, there is no inconsistency between CC and CA. It is quite possible and even morally necessary that God creates successively *S/l*, *S/m*, *S/n*, letting *S* always preserve its *SA* state. On the other side, *SA*'s inner consistency is a formal property which cannot empower *l* to produce *m* or *m* to produce *n*, without God's concurrence.

This way of conciliating CC and CA eliminates not only the distinction between creation and conservation (against Durand and Aureoli), but also the distinction between creation, conservation and «God's physical concurrence» to His creatures' actions.[10] This economy of God's interventions is evidently an additional advantage, from Leibniz's point of view.[11] Considering what he writes on this topic, one could formulate the relations between these three concepts as follows:

> For each natural (non miraculous) modification *m* of an individual substance *S*, only one intervention by God is required, but this intervention supports all the following accounts: (i) *m* is the effect of the act through which God 'reproduces' the whole substance *S*, instantiating *S/m* after *S/l* (and before *S/n*) [= reproduction]; (ii) *m* is a moment or a phase of *S*'s substantial activity (*SA*) and God instantiates *S/m* in order to preserve *S* in its state *SA* [= conservation]; (iii) *m* is the effect of *S*'s effort of performing *m* after *l* and God only helps *S* to achieve this effort [= concurrence].

9 As we will see, the state of activity of a substance (SA) is due to the presence of a substantial form or entelechy (SF). But Leibniz sometimes introduces the former independently from the latter: «J'accorde en quelque façon le premier point, que Dieu produit continuellement tout ce qui est reel dans les creatures. Mais je tiens qu'en le faisant, il produit aussi continuellement ou conserve en nous cette energie ou activité qui selon moy fait la nature de la substance et la source de ses modifications [...]» (GP IV, p. 588).

10 This is an original view, since Schoolmen usually distinguished God's concurrence by creation and conservation. See for instance, Suarez 1866, disp. XXII, p. 801: «De prima causa et alia ejus actione, quae est cooperatio, seu concursus in causis secundis». This unification of God's interventions has been correctly highlighted by McDonough 2007, even if through an interpretation of Leibniz's doctrine of continued creation perhaps less literal than mine.

11 This is a constant element in Leibniz's philosophical theology: «In hac porro productione rerum continua consistit concursus Dei in creaturis» (A VI, 4, p. 2319); «Dieu, concourant à nos actions ordinairement ne fait que suivre les loix qu'il a establies, c'est à dire il conserve et produit naturellement notre estre» (*Discours de métaphysique*, § 30, A VI, 4, p. 1575).

Let's come now to the difficulties coming from this accommodation CC/CA.

First of all, it is not clear whether and how a) the basic condition that *S*'s accidents must express *S*'s essence and b) the other condition that there must be a consistent succession between the accidents *l*, *m*, *n*..., are related. One can suppose that they must be connected in some way, since the bare presence of a consistent development would not be meaningful for the solution of the CA issue, if the *development itself* would not express something which is intrinsic to *S*'s nature. But this claim cannot be properly grounded neither through the instantiation-relation subsisting between *S*'s basic properties and *S*'s single accidents nor through the 'exigential' relations subsisting between the accidents *l*, *m*, *n* themselves. Something more is needed, as we will see in later paragraphs.

The second and major difficulty arises from the fact that Leibniz's reply seems to modify substantially the conditions posed by Bayle for creatures' action. From Bayle's point of view, action has an *existential* dependence on its agent. The agent must exist *before* he acts, since causation implies that the existence of the effect depends on the existence of the cause. According to Leibniz, *S/m* depends on *S/l*, but *S/l* cannot exist anymore at the appearance of *S/m*. Therefore, there can be no existential dependence here and – as suggested by a recent scholar, Sukjae Lee – we would have to conclude that *S/l* could be better seen as the *reason* for God's production of *S/m* than as its *cause*. Consequently, what Leibniz ought to affirm is that Causal Monism is true, but – nevertheless – the concepts of the individual substances give to God the reasons for His acts or, if one prefers to use a more classical language, the individual substances are the formal and final causes of their individual stories but God is the only efficient cause of everything (cf. Lee 2004, 2011).

Sukjae Lee's account is clearly consistent with many of Leibniz's views on God as 'First Cause' and the creatures as 'secondary causes'. But it diminishes too much Leibniz's opposition to Occasionalism and might end up making this opposition philosophically weak. The central point of Leibniz's anti-Occasionalism is the claim that our world is not a mere succession of states of affairs ruled by general laws and that such a world would be a 'perpetual miracle'. From Leibniz's point of view, a true account of our world needs individuals with inner forces and real actions. But, if Leibniz shared a causal monistic view with his adversaries, his alternative to them would be contentless. There would be no truthmakers for our statements on creaturely actions and the whole controversy on CA would become merely theological. Leibniz's assumptions on CA would become a mere way of *interpreting* the world, grounded on theological persuasions, and not a tool for the *explanation* of some facts of the world itself.

Moreover, Leibniz's replies to Bayle show that he had in mind a more robust view of CA. These replies claim explicitly that individual substances are the «true immediate causes of all their actions and inner passions»

(§ 400) and that they *produce* their modifications (§ 395, § 399, § 400). Now, 'production' is exactly what an efficient cause does. It is quite possible that Leibniz uses here this word, rather uncommon in his writings, just because Bayle does. But the question is whether he is entitled to do it or not.

In order to simplify the whole issue, I propose here a definition of CA summing up § 388-390:

> [CA_1] if God creates *S/m* at time *t*, *m* is an action by *S*, if and only if both these conditions are met: (a) *m* is an instantiation of *S*'s basic properties and (b) God was motivated to create *m* because *S*'s previous state *l* demanded *m*'s creation.

And I propose here a definition of CA summing up what Leibniz claims in § 395 and § 399-400:

> [CA_2] God creates *S* and *S* produces the accident *m*, so that *S* is the 'immediate cause' of *m*.

To be precise, there are even other paragraphs that only claim that *S* 'co-operates' with God to the production of its own state *m* (cf. *Théodicée*, § 391-2, GP VI, p. 347).[12] But even this 'moderate' version of CA_2 gives to *S* a real causal role which could not seem inferable from CA_1. Therefore, we must ask ourselves on which grounds CA_2 is established. Let us see whether the rest of Leibniz's replies helps us clarify this point.

3 Substances and Accidents (point 3)

The strongest points maintained by Bayle are those which reject that substances can 'produce' their accidents. They force Leibniz to claim that:

1. There is a real distinction between an individual substance *S* and its accidents *l*, *m*, *n*... Therefore *S* can 'produce' them.
2. Nevertheless, *S* does not 'create' *l*, *m*, *n*, because those accidents are not complete entities, but only 'changes of its own limits' by the substance *S*.

It is not clear whether these two claims are mutally consistent, nor whether they give a real contribution to justify Leibniz's use of the word 'production'. Let us consider them separately.

12 Both paragraphs insist that there is a *co-production* of the substance's states by God and the substance itself («I see nothing to prevent the creature's co-operation with God for the production of any other thing; the second causes co-operate in the production of that which is limited»).

3.1 Real Distinction

Most of the 'new Cartesians' rejected the Scholastic doctrine that there is a 'real distinction' between a substance and its accidents. According to them, accidents are no more than *modes*, that is, particular aspects of their substance, having no independent conditions of existence and explanation with respect to their substance(s). Starting from these premises, Bayle argues that no created substance can produce its own accidents, since creatures do not have the power of producing themselves.

Leibniz's reply focuses on the consequences that the no-real-distinction assumption involves (§ 393). Let us suppose that there is no real distinction between *S* and *m* (we could represent this possibility by writing *Sm* instead of *S/m*). It becomes necessary that *Sl*, *Sm*, *Sn* are different individuals. Therefore, even if *Sl*, *Sm*, *Sn*, are instantiated the one after the other in time, we have no reason to establish that they are the same individual and not several ephemeral individuals. Briefly, if substances and accidents have no real distinction between them, the re-identification of individuals through time fails and, therefore, there will be no created *substances* in the world. And this is obviously a kind of 'Spinozism'.

Leibniz has good reasons to raise this objection. His claim that anti-realism concerning accidents leads to eliminate enduring substances was shared (but with an enthusiastic support to this consequence) by a recent upholder of Causal Monism, namely by Georges Villiers, duke of Buckingham, cited and discussed in *Theodicy*, § 32. Starting from a nominalistic account of accidents («Accident […] is only a Word, whereby we express the several ways of what is in a Body, or matter, that is before us»), Buckingham argued: «I conceive that nothing can be properly said to endure, any longer that it remains just the same; for in the instant any part of it is changed, that thing as it was before, is no more in being […]» (Villiers [1685] 1985, p. 115).

This is not Spinozism, but rather a kind of 'presentism', as contemporary philosophers would call it (cf. Benovsky 2006, chs. 1-2). Nevertheless, it is clear that the principle that «individuals are not enduring things (that is, are not substances)» could not be approved by Leibniz. But how could he reject Buckingham's argument?

It is hard to suppose that Leibniz could admit any kind of realism about accidents. In a note composed by him in 1688-89 on Buckingham's *Discourse*, he came to the opposite conclusion that one must be a nominalist with regard to accidents «at least for prudence (*saltem per provisionem*)» (A VI, 4, pp. 994-996). It is hard to imagine Leibniz's system with the accidents moving from a substance to another or with individual substances having different accidents from those they have.

Therefore, what could save Leibniz from Buckingham's conclusions is not realism about accidents, but another kind of realism, namely realism

about substantial forms. Besides, it is not accidental that Leibniz, taking the opportunity from another passage by Bayle, introduces his substantial forms in the course of his reply (§ 396-397).

Leibniz's substantial forms or 'entelechies' or 'active virtues' (let's call them plainly *SF*) could seem to be only reifications of what, in the former paragraph, I called *SA*, that is, the substance's condition of activity.[13] And, indeed, *SF*s seem to be nothing more than a physical embodiment of the developmental law (*lex seriei*) ruling *S*'s modifications. One can doubt whether such metamorphosis of a complex property into a physical object is a philosophically correct step, but Leibniz had some reasons for this. If one wishes to avoid Buckingham's conclusion, one must find some information-preserving device which grants the continuity between *S/l* and *S/m*. Therefore, a 'simple substance' *S* must be also an *organized* individual and *S*'s organization must be *physically* instantiated at each phase of *S*'s existence.

In other words, substances can be re-identified through time by the persistence of the same organization. More exactly, being their *SF*s co-instantiated with them, Leibniz's individual substances are always present as *wholes* and this is what makes the difference from the accidents they have. This is an original way of seeing the difference between substances and accidents. To Leibniz, *S* is a true 'enduring' substance, if and *only* if the rule of connection subsisting between *S*'s 'temporal parts' (as contemporary philosophers would call them) *S/l*, *S/m*, *S/n*, is always co-instantiated with *S* itself. This condition respected, *S* will always be present as a *whole*, even being intrinsically connected to its accidents *l*, *m*, *n*.

This is enough for Buckingham. But, in my opinion, insofar as it reduces Bayle to Buckingham, Leibniz's reply does not really face Bayle's particular objection. In fact, the French philosopher argued that substances cannot 'produce' their accidents, if the existence of these latter is a necessary consequence of the existence of the former. Leibniz's replies do not touch this subject.

I do not mean that Leibniz had no possible answer and that he really saw *m* or *n* as *necessarily* flowing from *S*'s existence or as *necessarily* entailed in *S*'s concept. But – I would suggest – Leibniz's reasons for excluding such a necessity depend on his assumptions concerning God's CC and not on those concerning creatures' CA. If *m* is not a *necessary* consequence of *S*'s *SF*, it is just because a Leibnitian *SF* does not cause the *states* but only the

13 Leibniz sometimes admits that his entelechy is nothing more than a condition or a state, namely what we called SA: «L'Entelechie d'Aristote, qui a fait tant de bruit, n'est autre chose que la force ou activité, c'est à dire un Etat dont l'action suit naturellement si rien l'empeche» (*Letter to Remond*, 1715, GP III, p. 657).

tendencies of its substance.[14] As a letter to Des Bosses clearly shows, this latter concept is quite synonymous with that of 'exigency' and therefore the *SF*s' doctrine does not change Leibniz's account of causation and is not enough to justify the shift from CA_1 to CA_2.[15]

What we can conclude is that the 'exigencies' inherent to *S/l* or *S/m* always arise from *S* taken as an organized whole and not from some particular feature of *l* or *m*. This is an important element, but we have no way of using it, without focusing on what 'exigencies' or 'tendencies' can be from a metaphysical point of view.

3.2 'Changing one's own limits': Leibniz's Dispositionalism

One of the most original aspects of Leibniz's philosophy is its account of virtual states. According to Leibniz, already the *possibilia* subsisting in God's intellect have a tendency to exist (*exigentia*, *conatus*), and – for each of them – this tendency is proportional to its simplicity and ability of co-existing with the other *possibilia*. This doctrine is usually interpreted as a way of establishing the rationality of God's choice, with the 'effort of existing' by the *possibilia* taken as a metaphor expressing the motivational force that those *possibilia* have in God's mind. This is probably the easiest way of giving an account of this issue.[16]

But it would be harder to give a similar account for Leibniz's doctrine of dispositional properties, i.e. of what we commonly call 'powers'. As it is well known, Occasionalists claimed that creatures' causal powers can be reduced to non-dispositional properties joined with the contingent laws that God gave to Nature.[17] If an individual *S* has a (non-dispositional) property *m* and there is a general law which makes *m* the 'occasional cause' of *n*, then *S* has also the 'power' of doing *n*.

14 An interpretation correctly highlighting the importance of substantial forms in Leibniz's account of causality, but goes a bit too far, is: Bobro, Clatterbaugh 1996.

15 See Leibniz's letter to Des Bosses, February 2, 1706: «[...] in virtute activae arbitror esse quondam actionis atque adeo concursus ad actionem divini *exigentiam* (ut vestri loquuntur) quamvis resistibilem» (GP II, p. 295). The incidental remark «ut vestri loquuntur» reveals that Leibniz considered the word 'exigency' as typical of Jesuit theologians, as confirmed by Ramelow 1997 and Knebel 2000.

16 See at least *De veritatibus primis* (A VI, 4, pp. 1442-1443), *De ratione cur haec existant potius quam alia* (A VI, 4, pp. 1634-1636), *De rerum originatione radicali* (GP VII, pp. 302-308), *Twenty-four Metaphysical Propositions* (GP VII, pp. 289-291). But this 'striving possibles' doctrine is widely repeated by Leibniz.

17 See Malebranche's analysis of powers in the *XV Eclaircissement* added to his *Recherche de la Vérité*, now in Malebranche 1976, pp. 215ff.

Leibniz's account of powers is quite different. First of all, basic dispositions do not depend on laws, but directly on their substances' 'natures'. A nature is not a mere sum of essential predicates. It includes also the 'natural predicates', as Leibniz calls them. A 'natural predicate' is that predicate that one may legitimately expect that a thing has if it is not impeded to. For instance, it is natural for light 'to proceed in straight line', if (and only if) light always behaves in this way when nothing interferes with this behaviour.[18]

Consider that, if these natural properties supervene on the essential properties (I suppose mainly on their combination), they must be the same in all possible worlds. There are possible worlds in which light *never* proceeds in a straight line: for instance, worlds in which all spaces through which light passes have very thick atmospheres. But, even in these particular worlds, light will *tend* to go in a straight line.

Briefly, natural properties are independent from God's will. Probably, there are even dispositions which depend on the particular arrangement of our world and, therefore, on 'God's decrees'. However, the independence of the basic natural properties with respect to God's will is clearly stated by *Theodicy*, § 383. Quoting Descartes who claims that a creature existing in this moment cannot cause its own existence in the following moment, Leibniz remarks that creatures have at least a 'natural' propensity to last:

> The Cartesians […] say that «the moments of time having no necessary connection with one another, it does not follow that because I am at this moment I shall exist at the moment which shall follow, if the same cause which gives me being for this moment does not also give it to me for the instant following». One may answer that in fact it does not follow *of necessity* that, because I am, I shall be; but this follows *naturally*, nevertheless, that is, of itself, *per se*, if nothing prevents it. It is the distinction that can be drawn between the essential and the natural. For the same movement endures naturally unless some new cause prevents it or changes it, because the reason which makes it cease at this instant, if it is no new reason, would have already made it cease sooner. (*Théodicée*, § 383, GP VI, p. 342)[19]

In other words, there is a kind of 'existential inertia' which makes more easily explainable – and therefore more naturally probable – that individual substances last.

18 The most important passage on this topic is *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain*, IV, 9, § 1 (A VI, 6, pp. 433-434), but it appears also in the debates with the Occasionalists (GP IV, pp. 582, 592), in *Théodicée*, § 355 (GP VI, p. 326 and § 383, GP VI, p. 342). See Piro 2011b.

19 The argument of the Cartesians is a paraphrase of that introduced by Descartes in his *Principes de philosophie*, I, § 21 (AT IX/b, p. 34).

The claim that the manifestation of a natural property is more probable than its contrary explains Leibniz's attitude to see tendencies at work even when they are not fully manifested. A compressed elastic body cannot extend because of an external cause, but its tendency to do so is quite real and has effects on the surrounding bodies. In fact, in Leibniz's system, it is even necessary that there are no completely un-manifested tendencies, since the Principle of Sufficient Reason would not admit a matter of fact with no consequences. Therefore, statements about tendencies are grounded on some real facts of our world, that is, these facts are the truth-makers for Leibniz's concept of creaturely action. One has to admit that such statements have a complex way of referring to our world, since the claim that a given body *x* 'tends to *y*' at the instant *t* mentions a state of affairs *y* which is not instantiated in our world (at least at the moment *t*), but only in some other possible world. But Leibniz admits this complexity by his usual statement that tendencies are something in-between potency and act.

One must also remark that Leibniz is not a radical Dispositionalist. He is clearly persuaded that dispositional properties arise from non-dispositional properties. This applies also to the individual substances' modifications. For each *state* (= perception), there must be a connected *tendency* (= appetite). A simple monad's appetite can be even called *percepturitio*, since its only content is a next perception.[20] All this makes it hard to attribute a precise metaphysical concept of Leibniz's 'tendencies'. They cannot be complete states of affairs, otherwise they would be 'states'. But they cannot be mere ideas or notions. Therefore, they must have some kind of adverbial reality: *S* is in the state *m* 'tendentially to *n*'. However, what is important is the fact that the tendency to *n* arising on the state *m* depends on the whole nature and story of the individual substance *S*. So to say, Leibniz's individual substances not only *have* modifications but *react* to their own modifications.

Since no created substance has a causal power towards others, *S*'s dispositions can be directed only to *S*'s internal development. *S*'s 'active' powers are just those dispositions which allow *S* to become more 'perfect' in its own way of being. At the contrary, *S*'s 'passive' dispositions are those who derive from the metaphysical 'limitations' of the creatures and from their necessity to 'harmonize' reciprocally. The sum of these passive dispositions is what Leibniz calls 'Primary Matter' (= *PM*). The 'Primary

20 See Leibniz's letter to Christian Wolff of Summer 1706: «quaecumque in Anima universim concipere licet, ad duo possint revocari: expressionem praesentis externorum status, Animae convenientem secundum corpus suum; et tendentiam ad novam expressionem quae tendentiam corporum (seu rerum externarum) ad statum futurum repraesentat, verbo *perceptionem* et *percepturitionem*. Nam ut in externis, ita et in anima duo sunt: *status* et *tendentia* ad alium statum» (Leibniz, Wolff 1860, pp. 56-57).

Matter' of the substance *S* contributes with *S*'s *SF* to explain *S*'s actual modifications. At a first sight, it is hard to understand how non-extended beings, as Leibniz's simple individual substances are, can have a 'matter'. In fact, Leibniz's notion of 'matter' depends quite on his metaphysics of immanent activity and refers only to these passive dispositions which individual substances receive by their own nature and which explain their mutual dependence. Of course, *PM* is also an important part of Leibniz's account of organic bodies (cf. Phemister 2005, pp. 31-56). But, in a general way, *each* action performed by an individual substance arises both by its *SF* and its *PM*. Individual substances cannot manifest their own active powers without manifesting their own passive powers and *vice versa*.

All this allows, in my opinion, to give an account of the central passage of Leibniz's replies to Bayle:

> As for the so-called creation of the accidents, who does not see that one needs no creative power in order to change place or shape, to form a square or a column, or some other parade-ground figure, by the movement of the soldiers who are drilling; or again to fashion a statue by removing a few pieces from a block of marble; or to make some figure in relief, by changing, decreasing or increasing a piece of wax? The production of modifications has never been called *creation*, and it is an abuse of terms to scare the world thus. God produces substances from nothing, and the substances produce accidents by the changes of their limits. (*Théodicée* § 395, GP VI, p. 351)

This is the most extended explanation of his CA_2 offered by Leibniz in his replies to Bayle. But what does it exactly mean?

I would suggest to decompose this paragraph into three claims: (i) individual substances' modifications are nothing else than manifestations of their substances' power(s), needing therefore no *creation*; (ii) substances' powers have structural limitations and this determines a range of possible 'limits', i.e. of combinations between one substance's active and passive dispositions; (iii) single modifications arise through the shift from one possible combination to another. My interpretation of the word 'limit' is hypothetical, but I ground it on Leibniz's passages using the word 'limits' for the particular determinations that the acting substances receive through the external obstacles and aids.[21]

21 See *De primae philosophiae emendatione et de notione substantiae* 1694, GP IV, p. 470: «[…] substantiam creatam ab alia substantia creata non ipsam vim agendi, sed praeexistentis jam nisus sui, sive virtutis agendi, limites tantummodo ac determinationem accipere», but even a previous letter to Seckendorf 1693, A I, 9, p. 233: «numquam creaturam a creatura perfectionem producere, sed tantum efficere aliquid circa limites perfectionis a Deo datae in creaturae positos, auctis vel minutis impedimentis».

Let's come again now to the fundamental question: can Leibniz reasonably argue that the individual substances 'produce' their own modifications? At his point, we can try to give an answer to it. *Insofar as* one can see the relation subsisting between an individual with particular powers and these powers' manifestations as a producer/produced relation, Leibniz's metaphysics holds this claim. I would suggest therefore that Leibniz's CA_2 is mainly grounded on a dispositionalist interpretation of the word 'production'. From this dispositionalist point of view, it is quite correct to state that each substance is the 'immediate cause' of its modifications. But, considering these same modifications as states of affairs of our world, the perspective changes and CA's 'moderate' formulation is to be preferred: substances cause directly only substances' *tendencies*, substances' tendencies give God the reasons for His production of their next *states*.[22]

This could seem too complicated for a good metaphysics. But one must remark that Leibniz had good reasons for his attempt of combining a nomic and a dispositional account of substances' immanent activity. If immanent activity means immanent *causation*, i.e. causal links between different phases of a same individual, one cannot give an account of it without starting from Nature's laws and from God's commitment to their observance. But, if immanent activity means also individuals expressing themselves and their own 'nature' by their own modifications, we need evidently even a dispositional account of it. In few words, without the dispositional account, we would have no bridge between Leibniz's metaphysical view of immanent activity and the traditional meanings of the words deriving from the Latin *agere*. One must add that the traditional meanings that Leibniz's dispositional account allows him to recover are not just those which we associate with the word 'production'.

4 Conclusions: Action and Sin

The main issue in the discussion between Leibniz and Bayle is – obviously – that of sin. According to Bayle, it is rationally impossible to deny God's causal involvement in human sins. How could Leibniz avoid the same conclusion?

In my opinion, Leibniz wished to avoid *two* possible conclusions. One is that God is the cause of sin. In this case, Leibniz could easily appeal to the Neoplatonist and Augustinian principle that Evil is a lack of perfection and

22 Lee remarks that Leibniz sees «creaturely causation [...] as a type of causation that is radically different from efficient, productive causation» (2011, p. 600). I would suggest that powers supervening on formal and material properties give us a kind of causality which is robust enough to justify Leibniz's use of the word 'production' even for creaturely action.

has its source in creatures' limitations. But a second possible wrong conclusion would have been that *nobody* is the 'author of sin', since limitations cannot explain any positive state of affairs and there is no need of finding an author for what is not real.[23] This double commitment is reflected by the following passage:

> The limitations and imperfections arise therein through the nature of the subject, which sets bounds to God's production; this is the consequence of the original imperfection of creatures. Vice and crime, on the other hand, arise there through the free inward operation of the creature, in so far as this can occur within the instant, repetition afterwards rendering it discernible. (*Théodicée*, § 388, GP VI, p. 346)

But is it possible to justify this conclusion? Accepting the sinner's productive role, one comes to difficulties with the CC doctrine. Starting from the CC doctrine, it is hard to justify the sinner's productive role.[24] I suggest that a dispositional account can avoid both these risks.

First of all, we must eliminate some false problems. Leibniz usually affirms that individual substances have their inner forces and can acquire by themselves some kind of natural perfection. Nevertheless, Leibniz's theological account of sin assumes that all 'being, perfection, force' we have comes *directly* from God (*Théodicée*, § 30, GP VI, p. 130). Are these two claims consistent with one another? They are, if one considers more carefully Leibniz's *SF* doctrine. As we have seen, the *SF*s arise from their substances' 'active' dispositions but (i) there would be no creaturely active disposition at all, without an *original* 'communication of perfection' by God to his creatures;[25] (ii) furthermore, as we have seen, the *SF*s produce only tendencies which become efficacious through God's concurrence. It is therefore possible that, when speaking as theologians and not as natural philosophers, we consider the *SF*s as they were only tools of the divine self-communication, confirming in this way the traditional doctrine that all perfection is produced by God.

Therefore, when Leibniz points out that only creatures' 'limitations' arise directly by their nature and that creatures' perfections are produced directly by God, we are not obliged to see these theological insights as

23 This risk is clearly seen by the young Leibniz. See *Von der Allmacht und Allwissenheit Gottes*, 1671 (A VI, 1, pp. 544-545) and *L'auteur du peché*, 1673 (A VI, 3, pp. 150-151).

24 Favourable to the causal role of the sinner are – with different reasons – Sleigh 1990, pp. 183-185 and Rateau 2008, pp. 564-570. My interpretation is closer to Rateau's, whose account of sin is consistent with Concurrentism even preserving creatures' causal role.

25 Leibniz's definition of creaturely action in *Théodicée*, § 32, confirms this point, claiming that the action of the creature is a modification of the substance «containing a variation [...] in the perfections that God has communicated to the creature» (GP VI, p. 121).

inconsistent with Leibniz's ordinary view of immanent activity as always ruled by the substances' *SF*s and *PM*.

Let's come at the other basic element of Leibniz's scenario, namely creatures' 'limitations'. It is evident that, if 'limitation' means only an absence of properties, a limitation cannot explain much. But imperfect dispositions supervening on the whole essence of a limited substance do explain something. If I affirm that, even if endowed with reason, many human beings are not able to use reason correctly and constantly, this statement establishes only a 'limitation'. But, if we combine this statement with other statements on human properties and dispositions, we can infer that such people are likely inclined to give their consent to superstitious or irrational beliefs.

Of course, sin is more than a propensity. From Leibniz's Augustinian point of view, sin is a constant *tendency* to do what is morally wrong. But it is rather easy to explain the rise of such tendencies from our natural dispositions in the light of the doctrine of the continuous increase of minimal variations sketched by Leibniz in *Théodicée*, § 388. God creates *S/m* and *S/m*'s instantiation involves necessarily – in virtue of *S*'s natural and acquired dispositions – a tendency which is less perfect with regard to other possible ones (let's say: a tendency to n_0 rather than n_1). Since God cannot change this tendency without a miracle, S/n_0 will be instantiated by Him and – if nothing changes – S/n_0 will let arise another and more remarkable imperfect tendency and so on.

Leibniz usually represents this possibility through an analogy between creatures' 'limitations' and some material properties of a body – the weight of a ship or the physical form of a feather – which can lessen the speed of such body, when pushed by an external force (cf. *Théodicée*, § 30, GP VI, p. 40).[26] The analogy is clear: the external force is God, the degree of speed is the degree of perfection, the material property means those non-dispositional properties (or those combinations of basic properties) which give reason of the dispositional ones. In the case of the example with the ship, we have also the dispositional property itself: that is, the 'natural inertia' of the mass, discovered – in Leibniz's opinion – by Kepler. The manifestation of this dispositional property is 'resistance'. A heavier body resists to an external force more than a lighter body and therefore the same external force will confer to the two bodies two different degrees of speed.

This example is used by Leibniz with the intention of clarifying the relation between passive dispositions and causality. 'Inertia' is a dispositional property and it causes real effects. On the other side, this is still not enough for claiming that this disposition is an active one. In Leibniz's

26 The example of the feather is in *De libertate, fato, gratia Dei* (A VI, 4, p. 1605): «Si magna vi plumulam ego percutiam, etsi valde perfecta sit actio mea, plumulae tamen actio orta ex percussione erit valde imperfecta et debilis, quoniam ex ipsius natura, quae magni impetus capax non est, limitatio procedit».

account, mass has not the power «to lessen this speed, having once received it, since that would be action, but to moderate by its receptivity the effect of the impression» (*Théodicée*, § 30, GP VI, p. 40). In other words, inertia is not a real force and the 'resistance' is not the action of an efficient cause. Of course, one can say that «the quantity of mass lessens the body's speed», but it is only a way of speaking, not the description of a 'lessening action' existing as such.

Of course, Leibniz is not claiming that inertia has no effect at all, but he is clearly pointing out that such effects are not just the kind of effects that we usually associate to an efficient cause. 'Inertia' – according to Leibniz's physical views – really influences the body's reactions to the external impulsion of motion. And this is all Leibniz needs in order to give a causal role to passive dispositions. If we apply this same logic to the case of the author of sin we must see this passage of Leibniz's *Theodicy* as implicitly polemical towards those theologians who saw human resistance to God's grace as a positive act performed by our will: Molinists, for instance. From Leibniz's point of view, resistance to God's grace cannot be a real act, but only a tendency. Since the increasing of this tendency is made possible just by those endowments which allow men to organize their activity, namely by the 'free operations' such as deliberation and choice, Leibniz argues that there is an author of the sin, namely the sinner himself. But this conclusion cannot hide the deep determinism of this explanation of sin. Once given the 'limitations' due to one's nature and biography, all follows as a natural consequence. Leibniz can discharge God only at the price of considering the sin as a direct consequence of individuals' 'natures'. Probably, he saw this solution as the least costly.

Let's come to some conclusions. Historically considered, Leibniz's metaphysics of action can be seen as an imposing attempt of interpreting action from a purely 'syntactic' point of view. All the episodic features of action are sacrificed to the assumption that one is always in a 'condition of activity' and this condition is expressed at its best when its single phases are ruled by a simple law. This is a rather uncommon perspective on action, having its model in *performances* more than in *production*. Aristotle's ethics of habits and the Stoic doctrine of 'constance' anticipated some features of this concept of action, but Leibniz was the first philosopher to give it an essential metaphysical role and, furthermore, the first to try to connect it with natural sciences, for instance with biology.

As an approach to human agency, Leibniz's doctrine is clearly alternative to the doctrine of free will as a faculty of producing episodic decisions, as his continuous blames against the contemporary 'Molinists' prove. It is less easy to classify his point of view in relation to the present-day ones. It would seem to lie somewhere between 'soft determinism' and 'agent's causality', a philosophical position Leibniz could have been attracted to by his view of action as expressing an agent taken as a whole. If a present-

day philosopher wanted to explore this kind of territory, Leibniz could be a good Vergil to her/him.

Finally, Leibniz's metaphysics of action is clearly dependent on his theology and this dependence is structural. This does not mean, however, that Leibniz's doctrine of action always reproduces traditional theological views. At the contrary, Leibniz's interpretation of the Christian dogmas is often creative, as we have seen. There are even cases in which we notice his difficulty to make sense of them. For instance, as we have already seen, Leibniz's *Discourse of metaphysics* (1686) admitted the possibility of 'extraordinary aids' (or 'private miracles') given by God to some individual sinners. But, in the philosopher's later writings, we do not find any attempt to clarify this possibility. One may suppose that, once stated the mutual implication between substantiality and autonomy, it became harder and harder to give a philosophical justification of the usual view of the efficacious grace as a gift that completely changes the mind of its receiver.

In a general way, Leibniz's philosophical theology is an attempt to balance two different principles: (i) Nature depends completely on God's omnipotent will; (ii) Natural facts have to be explained through Nature itself. There are some cases in which we find no accommodation between these two exigencies. For instance, there are two quite different Leibnitian accounts concerning the ways by which the 'sensitive soul' that we have before our birth becomes later a 'rational soul'. One of these accounts includes a direct intervention by God: since a 'sensitive soul' cannot become rational without receiving quite new properties, this change needs a true 'trans-creation' of our soul. This account is clearly preferred in *Théodicée*, § 91 (GP VI, p. 153; cf. the contemporary letters to Des Bosses, GP II, pp. 371, 389). However, some pages later (*Théodicée*, § 397, GP VI, p. 361), Leibniz affirms plainly that it is better not to introduce unnecessary miracles in the course of nature and comes to the conclusion that the 'seeds' of our organic bodies can also explain our later intellectual growth.[27]

In a similar way, it is hard to see whether the philosopher had a consistent doctrine of the relations between Grace and Nature. As we have seen, he admitted that God may furnish 'extraordinary' helps to some individuals, i. e. that there are some laws of the Kingdom of Grace which are quite independent from those of the Kingdom of Nature. But Leibniz's more mature works insist that there must be also some kind of «harmony between the Kingdom of Nature and the Kingdom of Grace». This means that God's Grace works mainly through natural ways, for instance

27 Leibniz starts by affirming his wish of «dispense with miracles in the generating of man, as in that of the other animals».

through those 'mechanical devices' (*voies machinales*) which connect virtue with happiness and vice with punishment (*Monadology*, § 88-9). The two views are not incompatible, but the second one involves a strong propensity to reduce the number of God's public or private miracles.

These obscure points of Leibniz's philosophical theology let us see how hard it could be for him to find a balanced account of the relations between God and the world. But this does not mean that his main *metaphysical* doctrines are inconsistent. On the contrary, what I have tried to show in this paper is just that Leibniz's metaphysical attempt to conciliate CC and CA, even if based on very refined and particular philosophical assumptions, is consistent and even interesting. In my opinion, Leibniz attributes to the creatures a metaphysically grounded autonomy, i.e. something more than that conceptual or explanatory autonomy that his doctrine of the 'complete concepts' explicitly grants. On the contrary, the consistence of Leibniz's doctrine of action with his intention of preserving the traditional Augustinian 'orthodox' theological doctrines can be doubted. But this is another issue.

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On What There Already Is
Leibniz's Theory of Time

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Abstract This paper contains an investigation of Leibniz's ontology of time. Standard debates on Leibniz's theory of time hinge upon the question whether the nature of time is relative or absolute and focus mainly on the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence. Focusing instead on *Theodicy* and referring to the contemporary frame and debate, I address some different questions: whether Leibniz is an A-theorist or a B-theorist, or an advocate of a hybrid form of an A/B theory; and whether he is a presentist (who thinks that only present things and states of affairs exist) or an eternalist (who claims that past, present and future things and states of affairs are equally real). After careful analysis of several passages that seemingly support a presentist interpretation, I conclude that under the most charitable interpretation Leibniz should be considered as an eternalist, and precisely as a *dynamical* one. I further argue that Leibniz's peculiar views on modality mirror this hybrid theory of time.

Keywords Metaphysics of Time. Spotlight View. Eternalism.

Those who mention Leibniz's theory of time seldom go beyond contrasting his relational account with Newton's absolute or substantive one – the one Clarke advocated in his correspondence with Leibniz. My analysis, however, is devoted to another issue: how does Leibniz account for time and change in general? In particular, my aim is to apply the conceptual repertoire of contemporary analytic philosophy to Leibniz's metaphysics and so cast new light on it. So a) I will first outline the main positions in the contemporary philosophy of time, sketching their analogies as I go with the main positions in the contemporary philosophy of modality. Then b)

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I will tackle Leibniz's metaphysics and show that, oddly, it violates these very analogies between time and modality by joining positions that are normally considered separated and dividing positions that are frequently considered associated. Next c) I will pose the question of whether, to use the contemporary jargon, Leibniz should be considered an eternalist or a presentist. I am aware, of course, that each option can be supported by a reasonable interpretation of the relevant texts; there are probably no knockdown arguments for disentangling this question. Nonetheless, at the end of my analysis d) I will propose to assimilate Leibniz's complex theory of time to what is today called the 'moving spotlight view,' a position that has been sketched as a conceptual possibility but scarcely ever endorsed – not, at least, in the context of analytic philosophy.[1]

1 The Deepest Metaphysical Disagreement on Time

Before considering Leibniz's thought, it is necessary to define some of the concepts and to sketch some of the theories of contemporary metaphysics.[2] (Those who are already familiar with the contemporary debate on time may skip the next two paragraphs.) The contemporary debate can be summarized, according to one leading scholar, as follows: «the following questions go to the heart of the deepest metaphysical disagreement about the nature of time: 1. Are there objective differences between what is past, present and future? 2. Are present events and things somehow more 'real' than those wholly in the past or future?» (Zimmerman 2008, p. 211). The first question concerns the ontological status of the three temporal dimensions, whereas the second question concerns their phenomenological features. In a certain sense in what follows I want to forward these questions to Leibniz. According to another scholar, «the following theories exhaust the options: presentism, static eternalism, and dynamic eternalism» (Crisp 2003, p. 218). «Presentism is the view, roughly speaking, that only presently existing things exist» (Hinchcliff 1998, p. 576), whereas past things and future things do not exist at all. The opposite view is eternalism, which comes in static and dynamic varieties. Static eternalism holds that change itself is an illusion: 'becoming' is nothing more than the outcome

1 An exception among analytic philosophy are Skow 2009, who has re-examinated the doctrine in Skow 2015, Cameron 2015 and Deasy 2015. Moreover Emanuele Severino's entire philosophical oeuvre is another notable and isolated exception (see for instance Severino 1972).

2 Due to lack of space references are reduced to a minimum. Anyway in almost every survey of contemporary metaphysics, the reader can find one or more chapters outlining the contemporary debate in the philosophy of time (and in related questions, such as that of modality), sometimes with great skill.

of a comparison between two incompatible states of affairs that take place at different times. Dynamic eternalism, on the other hand, makes room for some form of genuine change.

To tell the truth, the taxonomy offered by Crisp can be expanded, since there are hybrid positions other than that of dynamic eternalism as it is conceived by him. He alludes to what is called the «growing block universe theory»[3] which combines some aspects of eternalism with some features of presentism. This theory shares with eternalism the view that present and past things alike exist; however, it shares with presentism the view that future things do not exist at all. On the contrary, new things continuously come into existence and 'pile up' subsequently to those things that already exist. The result is that, as the leading edge of reality shifts progressively toward the future, the universe increases in size: what is no longer present, rather than fading into nothing, continues to exist.

However, I want to consider a second form of dynamic eternalism – one that preserves aspects of both presentism and eternalism by looking at time on two different levels. There are reasons to think that this position can fruitfully account for the complexities of Leibniz's theory of time. I will sketch this form of dynamic eternalism at the end of my paper.

2 Three- and Four-dimensionalism

Another fundamental question is that of which objects are the proper subjects of predication. In answering this question, philosophers of time have felt compelled to choose between *three-dimensionalism* (or *endurantism*) and *four-dimensionalism* (which comes in two varieties). According to three-dimensionalism, objects are wholly present at each moment of their existence: they *endure* through time. According to four-dimensionalism, on the contrary, objects possess *temporal parts* (or *counterparts*) spread out over time. According to three-dimensionalism, if I existed yesterday and I still exist today, I have been enduring over time by remaining numerically identical: I am substantially the same person I was yesterday. According to one version of four-dimensionalism, on the contrary, I am an entity that has not only spatial parts – my head, my hands, and so on – but also temporal parts, and the part located yesterday does not extend into today.

To complete the survey, I must mention another version of four-dimensionalism, the stage *view* also called *exdurantism*.[4] According to exdurantism, what existed yesterday is not a part of me but is, rather, one of my

3 This peculiar position was advocated by Broad 1923 and, more recently, Tooley 1997.

4 As far as I know, this label was introduced by Haslanger 2003, p. 319. On the stage view see also Sider 2001.

counterparts, 'another me'. Because of the enormous similarity between that object and me, the I of today and the 'I' of yesterday are gathered together in a set the unity of which is almost the unity of a single object.

3 Analogies Between Time and Modality

There exist some analogies between these ontologies of persistence, on the one hand, and the ontologies of modal logic, on the other hand. In the field of modality, one of the main distinctions is that between *actualism* and *possibilism* (or *modal realism*).[5] Underlying these doctrines is a deceptively simple question: what makes it true that things could have been different than they actually are? What makes it true, for example, that I could have failed to be born, or that I could have had a twin? According to some philosophers, the actualists, what makes any modal proposition true are merely actually existent things and their combinatory properties. So non-existent things and possible states of affairs that failed to exist – in sum, possible worlds – are merely *abstract* entities. These entities, of course, exist: they are possible rearrangements of concretely existing objects. But the *ways* in which these things might be rearranged does not concretely exist. So possible circumstances, possible worlds, are part of the ultimate furniture of the unique world – but, unlike me and the fact that I am now sitting, they are not concrete. There are many versions of actualism, but this is roughly the tenet that they all have in common.

Modal realism, or possibilism, provides a different explanation of what makes any modal proposition true. The disagreement concerns the ontological status of possible worlds. According to a modal realist, possible worlds exist no less than does the actual world. For example, according to the theory articulated by David Lewis – perhaps the most extreme version of modal realism – there is a plurality of possible worlds, and to say that I could have been in the mountains and skiing is tantamount to saying that there is another world in which a certain counterpart of me is actually in the mountains and skiing. This possible world is no less real (concrete) than the actual one. Does this mean that it is *somewhere*, albeit indefinitely far from here? No, it does not: other possible worlds are spatially and temporally *discontinuous* with our world such that, however far I travel in space and even in time, I will never meet the other *me* who is now skiing. What is actual rather than possible and vice versa is merely a matter of where – that is, in which world – we are. It is an indexical question: the inhabitants of a given world think of their world as actual and the other

5 The spectrum of positions in the semantics of modality is much wider than I have indicated.

worlds as merely possible, and vice versa. But all the worlds have the same ontological status: they are all equally real from an absolute point of view. Everything is actual somewhere – that is, in some world.

Analogies between modality and time are deep. Roughly speaking, actualism corresponds to the presentist brand of three-dimensionalism. According to the former, only actual things are real, whereas possible states of affairs are abstract entities – to be explained, perhaps, in terms of concrete things and their combinatory properties. According to the latter, only things that exist in the present are real – though among these things are, again, abstract entities.

The challenge for presentism is accounting for truths about the past and future. In general, every proposition is grounded on reality – is, in other words, made true (or false) by reality. If a proposition concerns the past, however, there is no concrete reality which can now make that proposition true (or false): in presentist ontology, past entities do not exist. This is considered a master argument against presentism. A presentist, however, contends that she can avail herself of abstract entities – specifically, those that were instantiated in the past – in order to account for the truth-value of past truths. These entities can be characterized in various ways (possible worlds, Carnap's 'state descriptions', sets of propositions). However they serve as *simulacra* of past reality whose explanatory role is to *replace* the reality that has become past in making true (or false) the corresponding propositions.

The analogy with actualism is pretty clear: according to actualism, only actually existing entities exist, and possible circumstances are merely abstract entities that belong to the actual world – just as, according to presentism, only presently existing entities exist, and propositions about the past are made true (or false) merely by abstract entities that belong to the present world. But there is an equally strong analogy between eternalism, especially in its variant of exdurantism, and possibilism. According to an eternalist, past and future entities and states of affairs are, despite their temporal distance from us, as real as those of the present: dinosaurs exist not as abstract entities – as a presentist would claim – but rather as concrete things located elsewhere in time. Just so, according to the possibilist, merely possible entities and states of affairs exist as concretely as do actual entities and states of affairs – albeit in other possible worlds.

According to exdurantism, moreover, for an entity to persist is for there to be many counterparts of it spread out over time. Analogously, according to modal realism – at least as articulated by Lewis – we would find, in those possible worlds that account for the ways a thing could have been, the counterparts of that thing. Put roughly, modal realism and eternalism, especially in its version of exdurantism, can be mapped onto each other: one need only exchange worlds and times.

4 Leibniz's Positions on Temporality and Modality

Let's come back to Leibniz. He somehow merges these positions, though only by creating some asymmetries. Leibniz's notion of an individual substance is such that each one instantiates a *complete concept* – one that includes all that is true of that substance. Although Leibniz articulates several slightly different versions of this idea, it is of all of them true, or at least according to Leibniz's correspondence with Antoine Arnauld, that one of its consequences is that the *variation* of any property of an object whatsoever, even of the most contingent and irrelevant feature, implies a variation of its very substance, a replacement of it. According to Leibniz, innumerable properties are contingent, of course, and so it should not be necessary for a substance to possess them. But this fact does not mean that a substance could have failed to possess one or more of its properties: at most, it implies that there could have existed another substance identical to the given substance except for those properties. In other words, suppose that it is possible for me to be in the mountains. Of course, if I am in a city, then I am not in the mountains – and whoever is now in the mountains is not me. Moreover, it is not the same for me to be in a city rather than to be in the mountains. This is beyond any doubt. The question, however, is whether I, who am in a city, would have been the same person had I gone to the mountains, or if, on the contrary, the one who would have gone to the mountains would have been another person, numerically different from me.

Leibniz, supported by his theory of the complete concept, argues resolutely in favor of the second option. Suppose that I am in a city, as indeed I am. According to Leibniz, this fact is contingent, for I could have been in the mountains; but this is true only in the sense that a counterpart to me would be now in the mountains. There is, in other words, a real and irreducible numerical difference between him and me. As a consequence, to say that one of my properties is contingent and thus that something else could have been the case is tantamount to saying that there could have existed another individual, very similar to me, of whom what is actually false of me – such as my being in the mountains – would have been true.

An individual, indeed, is determined by the exhaustion of every predicative possibility, negative or positive, concerning every property. In other words, Leibniz identifies the *principle of determination* of a substance with respect to a predication – a principle that can be assimilated to the principle of the excluded middle – with the *principle of individuation*: an individual substance is given only by means of the fullest predicative determination – one that exhausts the infinite set of properties compatible with it (the *requisita rerum*). Granted this identification, which depends on Leibniz's account of truth as *inherence*, it is necessary that *the variation of any property whatsoever implies the variation of the complete notion*

of a substance (and so the replacement of that substance with another extremely similar one) rather than the variation of merely accidental characteristics of that same substance.

5 Modal Counterparts and Diachronic Identity

This theory, well known to Leibniz scholars, is closely akin to modal realism's counterpart theory. Oddly, however, Leibniz does not embrace possibilism – does not embrace, in other words, a realistic theory of possible worlds. However, Leibniz is well known as the one who introduced the very idea of possible worlds:[6] in his *Theodicy*, for instance, he defines a *world* as «the whole succession and the whole agglomeration of all existent things' such that 'there is an infinitude of possible worlds» (*Théodicée*, § 8, GP VI, p. 107).[7] Moreover, Leibniz claims that, since «all is connected in each sequence» (*Théodicée*, § 84, GP VI, p. 148), God did not decree this or that thing in particular: rather, he issued «only one total decree, which is to create such a world. This total decree comprises equally all the particular decrees» (*Théodicée*, § 84, GP VI, p. 148). There are no local variations, but only global variations, among possible worlds.

Possible worlds are infinite in number – a result of the infinite possible combinations of things (cf. *Théodicée*, § 225, GP VI, p. 252). Nonetheless Leibniz's possible worlds are *abstract*, *logical* entities. As opposed to real, concrete things, possibles exist only in God's mind as objects of his thought:

> [W]ithout God, not only would there be nothing existent, but there would be nothing possible… In the region of the eternal verities are found all the possibles… Moreover these very truths can have no existence without an understanding to take cognizance of them; for they would not exist if there were no divine understanding wherein they are realized, so to speak. (*Théodicée*, § 184, § 189, GP VI, pp. 226-227, 229)

What is then the ontological status of possible worlds for Leibniz? Only one of them is real, the actual one, and this is due to its intrinsic characteristic of being the best. The other worlds are not real at all (unlike it would be the case for a modal realist like Lewis). So, in this sense, Leibniz's theory is akin to actualism. The «land of possible realities» (Letter to Arnauld, 4/14

6 The idea of possible worlds seems to derive from the metaphor suggested by the Church fathers that compares God to an architect who designs creation. Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, and Duns Scotus suggested a similar idea.

7 I follow Huggard's translation (cf. Leibniz 1952).

July 1686, GP II, p. 55, Leibniz 1988, p. 111) is something existent only in God's *mind*: the possibles «have no other reality than what they have in the divine understanding and in God's active power» (to Arnauld, 4/14 July 1686, GP II, pp. 54-55; Leibniz 1988, pp. 110-111). God does not *create* the possibles, of course, since what is possible is such only inasmuch as it is non-contradictory and it is conceivable. Thus the possibles depend only on eternal truths – specifically, on the principle of identity – and never on the divine will.

Which of the infinite possible worlds is actual, on the other hand, depends on both the features of that world and the divine will: God, in accordance with his wise goodness, creates the best of all possible worlds. One might ask to what extent this act is really free rather than necessary since God is omnibenevolent. Leibniz maintains that it is a question of *moral* and never of *metaphysical* necessity, since the opposite, the possibility that God not act in that way, remains logically possible. This is, at any rate, what Leibniz claimed, though several scholars showed remarkable difficulties in Leibniz's account of contingency (in a nutshell: if God is omnibenevolent, he *must* create the best of the possible worlds) – so much as Leibniz's position runs the risk of relapsing into a strict necessitarism – indeed, into a form of Spinozism.[8]

6 Complete Concepts and Temporal Truths

According to the principle of sufficient reason – according, that is, to the conception of truth as inherence – «the concept of an individual substance includes once for all everything which can ever happen to it» (Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, § 13).[9] This means that, supposing that we are talking about someone, «as the individual concept of each person includes once for all everything which can ever happen to him, in it can be seen, a priori the evidences or the reasons for the reality of each event» (Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, section heading). The complete notion is like a 'predicative selector' in the following sense. Given the set P of all the possible predicates $p_1 \ldots p_n$ (the *requisita rerum*), one can build a set S whose elements are the sets s_1, $s_2 \ldots s_n$, each of which contains nothing but one of the predicates belonging to the set P and its negation.[10] So, for

8 See, for instance, Adams 1994, especially the first chapter.

9 Here and below, the *Discourse on Metaphysics* is quoted from Leibniz 1988, pp. 53-93; GP IV, pp. 427-463 and, for the section headings, GP II, pp. 12-14.

10 Probably in Leibniz's framework the ascription of a negative predicate (S is not-P) does not exactly amount to a negative predication (S is not P). Anyway this is a subtle distinction from which I can set aside (cf. Bernini 2002, p. 25 *passim*).

instance: $s_1\{p_1, \sim p_1\}$, $s_2\{p_2, \sim p_2\}$... $s_n\{p_n, \sim p_n\}$, and $s_x \epsilon S$. The complete notion picks up in each set s_x (belonging to S) at least and at most one of its elements – that is, either a predicate *p* or its negation – thereby exhausting the set S. The notion is not only complete, since it exhausts the entire pool of predicates, but also coherent. On the one hand, if it lacks an element, then it is not complete: for a certain predicate it possesses neither that predicate nor the negation of it, and so it does not individuate a substance. On the other hand, if it is *over*saturated, it contains a contradiction: for a certain predicate *p* the complete notion contains both its affirmation and its negation, and so it does not individuate a substance – since, after all, there are no impossible individuals. In this way, the complete notion encompasses *all what is ever true* of something, so that God «seeing the individual concept, or hæcceity, of Alexander, sees there at the same time the basis and the reason of all the predicates which can be truly uttered regarding him; for instance that he will conquer Darius and Porus» (*Discourse on Metaphysics*, § 18). In a work contemporary to the *Discourse*, we can read that «all propositions into which existence and time enter have as an ingredient the whole series of things, nor can 'now' or 'here' be understood except in relation to other things» (A VI, 4, p. 1517; Leibniz 1973, pp. 98-99). Some pages later, Leibniz states that «a predicate, even if future, is already truly in the notion of the subject, and [...] God already perceives all its future accidents from the perfect notion he has of it» (A VI, 4, p. 1520; Leibniz 1973, p. 102).

This account of individuals, at first glance, raises some problems. For instance, Alexander will conquer Darius and Porus; but before this happens, it is false to state that he has conquered them. In fact, «the state of something is given if some contingent proposition having as subject that thing is true» (A VI, 4, p. 569). In this sense, while it is always true to say that Alexander is a rational animal – which is indeed an essential property, one belonging to the *ratio generalititatis* of Alexander – it is *not* always true that Alexander is a king or that he has conquered certain enemies. These statements are true at certain times, which reveals that these truths are contingent – even though, on the other hand, «nothing accidentally inheres to a complete term since all its predicates can be derived from its nature» (A VI, 4, p. 306).

So two difficulties are looming. For one thing, the complete notion seems to prohibit any *change over time*, since a predicate is either contained in the complete notion 'once and for all' or it is not; for another thing, it seems that there are no *contingent attributes*, given the role that every predicate or its negation plays in defining a substance. In short, to put the issue as a question: if the accidental properties are part of the complete concept of a certain substance, how could it not be always true that, for instance, Alexander is a king rather than not? Leibniz poses this question to himself after he has sketched his notion of the complete concept:

> It is common to every true affirmative proposition – universal and particular, necessary or contingent – that the predicate is in the subject, or that the notion of the predicate is in some way involved in the notion of the subject, and that this is the principle of infallibility in every kind of truth for him who knows everything *a priori*. But this seemed to increase the difficulty. For if, at a given time, the notion of the predicate is in the notion of the subject, then how, without contradiction and impossibility, can the predicate not be in the subject at that time, without destroying the notion of the subject? (A VI, 4, p. 1654; Leibniz 1973, p. 107)

A solution to this problem, at least as it has been formulated here, has been given by certain versions of contemporary eternalism: predicates – or, better, properties – are disguised *relations* to times. In other words, the difference concerns the adicity (the number of saturable places, roughly speaking) of a contingent predicate. One and the same banana can be and be not yellow at different times while remaining the same banana (in virtue of the Leibnizian principle of the *indiscernibility of identicals*)[11] since *being-yellow* is not a monadic property (directly possessed by bananas), but rather a two-place relation (as *being a friend of* is often assumed to be): one place is saturable by an object, the other by a time. So, just as one and the same person can without any contradiction be a friend of one person but not of someone else, so the very same banana can be yellow for a certain time and not yellow at another time. Thus the banana *always* bears two predicates – *being yellow-at-*t_1 and *not being yellow-at-*t_2 – since the two predicates differ from each other more or less as *being yellow* does from *being bright*. This solution, seminally advocated by Russell and criticized both by McTaggart and, more recently, by Lewis – albeit for different reasons[12] – can, however, hardly be endorsed by Leibniz: time itself is, according to Leibniz, a *relation* rather than a substance – as he claims in many passages, most polemically in his correspondence with Clarke. And *relations* are not things in themselves: they supervene on their *relata*, substances, and the monadic properties thereof, according to Leibniz. So it seems that there is no room in Leibniz's theoretical framework for conceiving of predicates as disguised relations to times (cf. Cover, O'Leary-Hawthorne 1999, p. 216 *passim*).

To tell the truth, though, one can find in Leibniz's theory of time clues in favor of such a theory. In his correspondence with Clarke, for instance,

11 This principle is weaker than the more famous principle of the *identity of indiscernibles*. According to the former, if two things are one and the same thing, they must share all their properties. According to the latter, if two things share all the same properties, they are one and the same thing.

12 This is the contemporary dispute concerning what are called *temporary intrinsics* (or *temporary intrinsic properties*).

Leibniz sketches a relational theory of space in which he makes room for a notion of 'place' as what can be individuated by means of replacing one object by another, provided that the relations with other objects borne by both the object and its substitute persist unchanged (Fifth Letter to Clarke, § 47; GP VII, p. 400; Leibniz, Clarke 2000, pp. 45-47). It has been claimed that Leibniz defines 'place' in terms of 'same place' which does not presuppose any independently defined notion of 'place' (Winterbourne [1982] 1994, p. 64). On the basis of the analogy between space and time, it could be argued that Leibniz accounts for times as he accounts for places – that is, in terms of 'same times' in the order of temporal succession; this order of temporal succession, abstracted from the objects located within it, would then be time proper. This account of times as 'places' in the order of temporal succession is, however, probably too weak to play the required explanatory role in Russell's aforementioned eternalistic theory.

Nonetheless, several scholars have, despite the many difficulties, moved down this road. According to Benson Mates, every predicate of a substance inheres in the complete notion of that substance, albeit not in a simple way. Rather, the complete notion contains 'stages' of the substance, and only these are the proper subjects of the inherence of predicates. Mates, though aware of the many exegetical and theoretical difficulties, introduces the phrase «'the *t* stage of M' as short for 'the state of the monad M at the time *t*'» (Mates 1986, p. 88; cf. pp. 141ff.). Thus it is only the '335 B.C. stage of the monad *Alexander*' which properly contains the attribute 'king', whereas this attribute is contained in the complete concept of the entire monad solely in a derivative sense. In such a manner, the complete concept is a collection of *temporalized* (or *temporally indexed*) stages. This account seems to be plausible and palatable as it solves several problems; on the other hand, however, it makes the Leibnizian notion of substance very akin to a four-dimensional object made up of stages and extended over time – which Leibnizian substances seem not to be.

In this regard, one might consider the Leibnizian thesis of the *continuous creation* of a substance.[13] According to Leibniz «a substance will be able to commence only through creation and perish only through annihilation» (*Discourse on Metaphysics*, § 9), whereas «God alone is the primary unity or original simple substance, of which all created or derivative Monads are products and have their birth, so to speak, through continual fulgurations of the Divinity from moment to moment» (*Monadology*, § 47; GP VI, p. 614; Leibniz 1969, p. 647). A *fulguration*, an outflashing (or burst, as Leibniz says elsewhere) is a creation from nothingness. But a creature needs to be maintained in existence at each moment that it persists, since

13 This is a tenet of medieval philosophy (see for instance Aquinas, *Contra Gent.* III, 65; *S.Th.* I, 104; *De Potentia*, q. 5); it is endorsed by Leibniz and incorporated into his metaphysics.

the reason for its existence at a given moment does not extend to the succeeding moment. So the creature must be continuously *re*created if it is to persist over time. The passages where Leibniz articulates this doctrine are striking. The question is «*whether conservation is a continued creation*» (*Théodicée*, § 383) or not, and the answer is «that the creature depends continually upon divine operation, and that it depends upon that no less after the time of its beginning than when it first begins. This dependence implies that it would not continue to exist if God did not continue to act» (§ 385).[14] One passage from his letters is especially striking:

> The duration of things, or the multitude of momentary states, is an accumulation of an infinity of bursts ['*éclats*'] from the divinity [...] which strictly speaking do not have any continuous passage from one state to the next. This proves precisely that [...] the conservation of things is a continual creation. (Leibniz to Sophie, October 31, 1705; GP VII, pp. 564-565; Leibniz 2011, p. 339)

But what does this doctrine – that of the duration of things depending upon an infinite *accumulation* of bursts – actually mean? Does Leibniz have what one might call a *pointillist* conception of persistence? To what extent should this ontological pointillism be taken seriously? Perhaps it is merely a response to certain paradoxes concerning motion, space, and continuity: Zeno's old paradoxes of motion are lurking in the background, and Leibniz tackles them. But – however fascinating this doctrine is – I prefer to stand apart from the question. For whatever the doctrine of continuous creation might mean, exactly, I do not think that it implies that, at every moment, a *new* substance *numerically different* from the previous one is created – even one qualitatively identical or extremely similar to it.[15] Roughly speaking, two considerations tell against this interpretation: first, the idea that individuals have temporal counterparts goes against several important Leibnizian claims that I will consider soon, and second, the view that a substance has temporal parts is incompatible with the fundamental Leibnizian doctrine of the *simplicity* of every substance, which can be considered one of the cornerstones of his metaphysics. After all, if a substance is metaphysically simple, then it has no parts, and *a fortiori*

14 As I said, Leibniz insists upon this thesis in various texts, repeating again and again with little variation that 'conservation is the same as continuous creation': see A VI, 4, pp. 1382, 2311, and esp. 2319; GP III, p. 566; *Discourse on Metaphysics*, § 14 and § 30. «*God is the conservator of everything*, i.e. things are not simply produced by God when they begin existing, but moreover they would not continue existing unless a certain continuous action of God terminated in them, on the cessation of which they would cease» (*De libertate, fato, gratia Dei*, A VI, 4, p. 1596).

15 For similar concerns, see Cover, O'Leary-Hawthorne 1999, chap. 6, p. 251 *passim*.

it has no *temporal* parts; therefore, no Leibnizian substance can be assimilated to a 'temporal worm', as perduring entities (those that persist through time by having temporal parts) are sometimes called. In fact, if an entity is a temporal worm, the proper subject of any predication is only a certain temporal part of that entity, whereas the entity as a whole is the subject of predication only in a mediate and derivative sense[16] – but all this is incompatible with Leibniz's account of true predication as inherence (i.e. as total or partial identity between subject and predicate). Anyway, it is not my task here to analyse the doctrine of continuous creation; I think, at any rate, that a good reading of it would require that God continuously keeps *the very same individual* in existence over time – that, in other words, God bestows extended existence over time to a substance rather than creating a new substance at every moment.

Robert Adams, in reconsidering Mates' thesis, suggests a remarkable variant of it and claims that «replacing enduring substances with their momentary stages as the primary subjects of properties is as contrary to Leibniz's way of speaking as imposing a temporal qualification on the properties» (Adams 1994, p. 73). He suggests, therefore, that what must be temporally indexed is neither the properties nor the bearers thereof but rather the *copula*, i.e. what joints them together in forming a state of affairs: «Neither '*A* is B_t' nor 'A_t is *B*', but '*A* is_t *B*', would express the deep structure of a typical Leibnizian predication» (Adams 1994, p. 73). This option is nowadays discussed under the label of 'copula-tensing';[17] it would probably be worth considering – together with the variant of it called 'adverbialism', which avoids some of the difficulties of the copula-tensing strategy – as a viable way to represent in contemporary terms Leibniz's account of how things persist over time.

7 Leibniz the Three-dimensionalist

As I have noted, there are analogies between temporal ontology and the ontology of modality. Roughly speaking, eternalism – especially in its exdurantist variant – matches modal realism and its counterparts theory, whereas actualism and its cross-world identity thesis fits ersatz presentism and endurantism. This is true even if it requires further qualification: there are several versions of the aforementioned doctrines. In Leibniz's theory, though, there seem to be salient *disanalogies* between time and modality. On the one hand, he embraces a modal theory that employs counterparts,

16 See Haslanger 2003, p. 331: «the perdurantist tells us that the candle (namely, the candle-worm) is itself never the proper subject of *being-bent* or *being straight*».

17 See Haslanger 2003, pp. 341ff. This theory was criticized by Lewis 2002.

yet he does not seem to espouse any form of temporal parts. On the other hand, he seems to be an actualist in modality but nonetheless not a presentist in the ontology of time – as one might expect an actualist to be.

In this regard, there is a passage, well-known to scholars, wherein Leibniz takes into consideration a theoretical option that we nowadays would consider the exdurantist variant of four-dimensionalism. Only he rejects it. The passage is contained both in a preliminary draft (the '*Remarques*') of a rejoinder to Arnauld and in the definitive version of the letter. Initially, Leibniz tackles the question of predicative variation within modality. He writes that, given an individual substance and its complete concept, the variation of any predicate whatsoever implies the replacement of the very individual – leading to both the thesis that there are infinite possible Adams and the consequence that, «if in the life of some person, or even in all of this universe, something went differently than it does, nothing would stop us from saying that it would be another person or another possible universe, which God had chosen. So it truly would be another individual» (to Arnauld, July 4/14, 1686, GP II, p. 53; Leibniz 1988, p. 109).

The related question of the identity of individuals across time is lurking in background. Leibniz seems to be inclined to believe that substances *endure* over time: one and the same individual persists in different, incompatible circumstances instead of being replaced by substances much like it – its temporal counterparts. In order to claim that substances are thus identical across time, «it must needs be that there should be some reason why we can veritably say that I perdure, or, to say, that the me which was at Paris is now in Germany, for, if there were no reason, it would be quite right to say that it was another» (*Remarks upon Mr. Arnauld's Letter*, GP II, p. 43; Leibniz 1908, p. 112). It is interesting to notice that, on the one hand, Leibniz embraces counterparts theory in modality but that, on the other hand, he refuses to apply such a theory to the question of identity over time. Leibniz, in other words, rejects the analogy that, just as an Adam who had done something differently from what he really did 'truly would be another individual', so also the Leibniz who previously was in Paris was another Leibniz different from the Leibniz who was later in Germany. I want to emphasize this asymmetry between time and modality: while the Leibniz who *could have remained* in Paris would have been different from the Leibniz who actually came back to Germany, the two Leibnizes, the earlier Parisian Leibniz and the later German Leibniz, are one and the same Leibniz, capable of *enduring* through time while remaining numerically identical with himself. Indeed Leibniz states that «there must be an a priori reason […] which makes true that it is I who was in Paris and that it is still I, and not another, who am now in Germany. Consequently, that notion of myself must connect or comprehend the two different states. Otherwise it could be said that

it is not the same individual, even though it appears to be» (GP II, p. 53; Leibniz 1988, p. 109). Leibniz is an *endurantist* (insofar as this label can be applied) after all.[18]

8 Leibniz the Eternalist

Leibniz's ontology, as Russell already pointed out in his seminal essay of 1900, seems to be *dynamic*. Associated with the complete concept of a substance is its *function* such that the various predicates of a substance progressively 'come out'. Leibniz wrote to De Volder «that there is a persisting law, implying the future states of a substance, that – if what I claim is right – constitutes the very persistence of that substance» (GP II, p. 264; translation mine). In other words, the persistence of a substance is the very law of its development. A substance is a subject enduring over time, while its states succeed over time. What this means is not completely clear. Of course, Leibniz does not think that, at different times, there are numerically different substances, or counterparts: he is not an eternalist four-dimensionalist – he is not, in other words, an exdurantist. Might he be a presentist three-dimensionalist? Well, the complete concept of an individual substance – and, derivatively, of an entire world, given the entanglement of each substance with every other substance – encompasses all of the stages or phases of that substance, enclosing both past and future truths: «we see also the possibility of saying that there was always in the soul of Alexander marks of all that had happened to him and evidences of all that would happen to him» (*Discourse on Metaphysics*, § 8). Leibniz speaks of 'marks' and 'evidences' ('*restes*', '*marques*') of the past and of the future, which seem to correspond, respectively, to what 'remains' of a reality once it has become past and to what 'anticipates' what will be the case before it comes into existence.[19]

A presentist, as I noted, can avail himself of abstract entities, of some sort of simulacrum of the past or future – a possible world or something similar – in order to explain how a proposition concerning the past or the future can be true *now*. Such a presentist endorses *ersatz* presentism (or one of its variants having the same explicative power). That there exist 'marks' and 'traces' of the past and that the future can be anticipated by means of 'evidences' and 'signs' is a position compatible with presentism. In support of this interpretation one can put forward another passage from

18 Anfray 2003, esp. § 5, p. 99 seems to arrive at the same conclusion. This article is remarkable also for the analysis that it provides of some of Leibniz's little-known textual passages.

19 For another analysis of the 'marks' of the past and the 'evidences' of the future, see Cover, O'Leary-Hawthorne 1999, chap. 6, pp. 242ff.

the *Discourse* wherein Leibniz mentions the case of Caesar, in whose complete concept was contained from the beginning all of his subsequent acts, including his becoming «perpetual Dictator and master of the Republic and [overthrowing] the liberty of Rome» (*Discourse on Metaphysics*, § 13). This could induce one to think that, since it is already true that all these things will happen, they will *necessarily* happen. Leibniz's first answer, designed to thwart metaphysical necessitarianism, refers to future contingents: he remarks that they «have no reality save in the understanding and will of God» (*Discourse on Metaphysics*, § 13). This claim is interesting because it affirms that future things and circumstances are not real in themselves but only insofar as they are in God's mind – the 'land of the possibles', as we saw before. This could induce one to accept at face value Leibniz's endorsement of presentism, according to which past and future things have the ontological status of possible things, of possible worlds – as conceived, that is, within the actualist framework endorsed by Leibniz. Indeed, of the past and of the future we have 'marks' and 'signs', respectively, just as the typical presentist maintains in his substitutive or simulacra theory, which is usually called *ersatzism*. Of course, the divine will distinguishes a certain possible world, better than all of the others, since this is the one that ought to be created.

There are, however, other reasons – both theoretical and textual – not to consider Leibniz a presentist. For instance, in the *Theodicy* he claims that «for God's knowledge causes the future to be for him as the present, and prevents him from rescinding the resolutions made» (*Théodicée*, § 28, GP VI, p. 119). Frequent statements of the same tone can be found in both the early and the late works of Leibniz. For instance, in a passage of a text presumably of 1670-1671 – one that discusses the relationship between human freedom conceived as mere *libertas indifferentiae* and divine foreknowledge – Leibniz claims with regard to God that «future things stand before him just like present things» (*On the Omnipotence and Omniscience of God and the Freedom of Man*, A VI, 1, p. 545; Leibniz 2005, p. 25).

This view seems to be in keeping with the fact that, for Leibniz, the issue of future contingents does not at all contradict the principle of bivalence (unlike some interpretations of Aristotle's position): future-tensed propositions have truth values just as much as past- or present-tensed propositions – as Leibniz repeatedly says in the *Theodicy*. Moreover, in this work he wonders «whether the past is more necessary than the future» or not (*Théodicée*, § 170, p. 233; GP VI, p. 215). This question touches upon the so-called temporal or historical necessity of the past, since the past, though not necessary from a logical point of view – since the opposite of a past state of affairs is not self-contradictory – seems nonetheless to be unchangeable: Aristotle, for example, notes that «what is past is not capable of not having taken place» (*Eth. Nic.*, VI, 2, 1039b 5), while the scholastics insist that *factum infectum fieri nequit*, a thing done cannot be

undone. The future, on the contrary, has not come into existence yet and so is, in a sense, nothing at all. Of course, if the past *is* more necessary than the future – regardless of any determinism – any eternalism is ruled out. But this is not Leibniz's answer. He is a determinist and a compatibilist and so, according to him, the future is both certain and metaphysically contingent. Moreover, past and future share the same kind or degree of necessity: «yet the hypothetical necessity of both is the same: the one cannot be changed, the other will not be; and once that is past, it will not be possible for it to be changed either» (*Théodicée*, § 170, p. 233; GP VI, p. 215). So, since the past is not more necessary that the future, it seems that a presentist interpretation of Leibniz must be rejected.[20]

The fact, however, that *for God* future things are like present ones leads one to wonder whether there are different points of view on time. On the one hand, there is the point of view of human consciousness: it is perspectival since it is located in the present and can watch reality only from then. On the other hand, there is the absolute point of view, located in the nowhen beyond time: God, occupying it, sees things *sub specie aeternitatis*, from the perspective of the eternal. From this perspective – though it is odd to call it a perspective, since it is not properly a *point* of view – the past and the future are *real* just as the present is real.

On the one hand, then, there are clues in favor of a dynamic account of change and a presentist ontology of time. These clues are supported also by analogy with the actualist account of modality endorsed by Leibniz. On the other hand, in favour of the eternalist interpretation of Leibniz, there is the very idea of the complete concept – which encompasses all truths about a substance, even those that are temporally determined – and divine foreknowledge.[21]

9 Time Without *Kronos*

In some texts, Leibniz maintains that time is a derivate notion rather than a primitive one. The only authentically primitive concepts are, he writes, those of *reality*, *variety*, *consequence*, and *order*. Without going into the very complex details,[22] it can be stated that Leibniz establishes a concep-

20 It could be objected that, even though the concept of historical necessity is incompatible with eternalism, the opposite – that historical necessity and dynamic conceptions of time stand or fall together – is not inevitable. This is correct provided that the very notion of historical necessity is not dismissed for other reasons. But this is not the move that Leibniz makes here – or, to my knowledge, anywhere else.

21 Among the wide literature, see for instance Murray 1995.

22 Futch 2002 provides an analysis, focused on the notion of time, of a text that he calls a «spectacular and quintessentially Leibnizian attempt to identify the most fundamental

tual hierarchy. Most primitively, there are different entities; moreover, if they are incompatible with one another, they differ in time (see, for instance, A VI, 4, p. 390). However, the notion of *time* is even derivative: the text argues that from the notions of *consequence* and *order* derive the notions of *cause* and *effect*, and from these derive the notion of *change* and finally that of *time* (cf. A VI, 4, p. 397; pp. 398ff.). There is no time without change, so Leibniz argues repeatedly;[23] change, however, logically precedes time, and change in turn is constituted or explained by cause and effect and these by *succession* (or *order*) and *consequence* considered together. Leibniz's theses on the relative logical priority of these notions are rather complex;[24] according to Futch (2002, pp. 130-131), they indicate that Leibniz's account of time is grounded not primarily on the distinction between *tensed* and *non-tensed* statements (or propositions), but rather on only «the logically prior relations of consequence, order, and causality. In fact, Leibniz himself explicitly draws this inference, writing, 'It is obvious that [temporal] priority and posteriority do not enter into [*ingredi*] the definition of change' (VE 168)».[25]

Elsewhere, in another text pointed out by Futch,[26] Leibniz defines time as the «continuous order of existing things according to change», adding that «a past state is one from which the present arises [*oritur*], and which is incompatible with the present» (C, pp. 479-480). Moreover, it is worth noting that «what the present is really, is indefinable and is knowable only by perception» (C, pp. 479-480), whereas the notion of arising is defined as follows: «something is said to arise [*oriri*] from another thing, if the latter is [...] a primary cause» (C, p. 471). Once more, then, Leibniz's theory of time is rooted in the notions of change and cause – and thus ultimately in the notions of consequence, order, variety, and reality. Futch emphasizes that «these definitions are remarkable, for they represent an obvious attempt to define tensed temporal properties in non-tensed terms» (Futch 2002, p. 135).

categories of thought and being» (Futch 2002, p. 130). He comes back to that passage in Futch 2008, pp. 134-135; 2012, p. 94.

23 This is almost tautological given a relational account of time – and, anyway, Leibniz claims this explicitly, for instance at A VI, 4, p. 1399, where he states that there is 'no time without change'.

24 Futch 2012, pp. 94-95, claims that the more primitive notions enter into the definitions of the derivative notions and explain them, but the latter are not reducible to the former.

25 The passage quoted by Futch from the *Vorausedition* corresponds to A VI, 4, p. 569.

26 In the following quotations, I avail myself of Futch's translation of Leibniz's texts.

10 Dynamic Eternalism: Two Perspectives on Time

Leibniz explains the notion of time in terms of the notion of change that is thought of as «an aggregate formed from two contradictory states» (Grua, p. 512)[27] – one formed, in other words, from states that are not jointly possible. It may well be that such an approach is pretty different from the contemporary one, which accounts for the notion of time in terms of the famous *A*- and *B-series* introduced by McTaggart's seminal article ([1908] 1993).[28] In spite of the differences, however, there are some remarkable similarities that I would like to point out – similarities that will help me to construct a new interpretation of Leibniz's ontology of time. In doing this, I am aware of the many exegetical and theoretical difficulties. Thus I confine myself to suggesting a *possible* reading of Leibniz's theory of time, one that seems to me promising and that (at least to my knowledge) has never previously been put forward. Before illustrating this attempt, let me outline McTaggart's terminology; the reader competent in the contemporary philosophy of time can skill this paragraph too.

11 McTaggart's A-, B- (and C-) series

In reconstructing McTaggart's theses, it can be said that there are two ways in which one might account for time. The first is a deflationist view according to which all there is to say about time is merely its *chronology*. A calendar is an example. There are different events (and maybe times, over and above events) that are linked by the relations of *earlier than*, *later then*, and *simultaneous with*. Maybe not all these relations are fundamental: *earlier* and *later* are reciprocally converse, so maybe only one of them need be considered indispensable, while *simultaneous* amounts to being neither earlier nor later. With these relations, we can order events: for example, I woke up, *then* I drank a coffee *while* listening to the news on the radio, *subsequently* I went out in a hurry.[29] This is a report of my early morning according to the so-called B-series. The other account of time is *dynamic*. This can be explained with an example: suppose you look in your organizer and notice that you have different commitments at different days. Their sequence is perfectly established: on Monday you have to do a certain thing, on Tuesday another thing, and on Wednesday yet a third. The

27 «*Change* is a complex of two immediately contradictory states» (A VI, 4, p. 869).

28 In this article, McTaggart implicitly rejected the theory of time exposed by Russell 2010, § 442ff.

29 To be correct, I ought to avoid the tense. So the report must be: waking up precedes drinking a coffee which is simultaneous with listening to the news, etc.

problem, though, is that you do not know which day is *today*. This makes a big difference! And this information is not given by your agenda. Maybe today is Monday, but maybe today is Tuesday and Monday is already over.

According to Russell and a large group of his followers, a chronology is sufficient for accounting for time, since every proposition referring to time can be *reduced* to one or more propositions involving only a B-series. If this is true, there is ultimately no need to use *tensed* proposition in the most fundamental description or reality. Obviously the *dynamic* experience of time does not match reality and is merely an illusion, a matter of psychology. McTaggart contends that all this cannot be true. His argument runs as follows. On the one hand, a B-series ought to explain what time is. On the other hand, it is presupposed there is no time without change: though questionable, this is the mainstream position from Aristotle through Hegel and including Leibniz, as we have seen. Now the last step – fatal if sound: in a calendar there is no room for change since, after all, the relations of *preceding* and *following* are fixed, unchangeable. In other words, if the event of my submitting a paper *precedes* the event of my going to ski, this temporal relation, this segment of B-series, is established once and for all and never changes. One might say that it is eternal. So, if time requires change, *but* the merely chronological approach to time does not make any room for change, then chronology (the B-series *alone*) is neither semantically nor conceptually sufficient for accounting for time. What now? Another series is required: the dynamic A-series of the properties of being *present*, *past* and *future*. Unlike merely chronological relations, these properties genuinely change: no event is always present rather than future or past. On the contrary, a present event *is* present, *was* future, and *will be* past. So the B-series, instead of being primitive, is *established* by the A properties; so the temporal relations of *earlier* than, *later than*, and *simultaneous to* can be reduced to the verbal *tenses* of propositions, which are indispensable. The story, however, is not ended, according to McTaggart. In fact, the A-series leads to an inescapable *contradiction*: each event possesses all three of the incompatible properties of being *present*, *past*, and *future*, and there is no escape from this paradox. Indeed, it is totally useless to invoke time differences by pointing out that, of course, each event possesses all of the incompatible properties, but only at different times and never simultaneously. McTaggart argues that this move relapses into a merely chronological account of the very same dynamic properties, and thus reduces the A-series to a second-order B-series. But since the B-series has been recognized as conceptually insufficient, the whole problem starts again and a third-order A-series is required to account for time, leading to an unacceptable regress. McTaggart's conclusion is drastic: neither the chronological approach nor the dynamic approach can account for time in a consistent way. So time is *unreal* and what exists is merely the so-called C-series – that is, an order of events that cannot be considered a temporal

order (as the order of the natural numbers cannot, since it possesses no intrinsic direction).

McTaggart's reasoning is far from being uncontroversial. In general, the astonishing conclusion that time is *unreal* has been rejected and the overall argument has been split into two parts, and each of them is marshaled against the other by a different group of philosophers. On the one side there are the advocates of a static, chronological account of time; they claim that a B-series alone is sufficient for accounting for time just *because* the A-series is inconsistent, as McTaggart showed. On the other side there are the defenders of a dynamic conception of time. They uphold McTaggart's criticism of the immobility and insufficiency of the B-series alone, but they deny that the A-series is inconsistent with itself.

12 Absolute and Perspectival Views on Time

However different the Leibnizian and the contemporary explanations of time might be, some remarkable connections can be detected. As previously noted, future contingents are real only in God's intellect and because of his will – whereas, in the actual world, they are *now* not real at all. A future event does not exist yet. But what *exactly* does this mean? Does a future event exist *now* in the sense that it exists *somewhen*, in what Augustine called a 'secret refuge' (Augustine, *Confessions*, XI.18) far from the present moment, where it has always existed? It might even be so: after all, God faces the present as the future and as the past. Every temporal dimension seems to possess, in the eyes of God, the very same ontological status.

Or instead is the future event real in God's mind in the sense that it has, up to now and probably for a while longer, only the reality of the merely possible, the reality of a simulacrum. Future contingents are already *certain* because of the infinite but determinate connections of things, and this is the reason why God can have foreknowledge of them. Nevertheless, a future contingent does not *exist* yet; it will exist once it becomes real, after having left the region of possibility and come into existence. If Leibniz believes this, he is a presentist. I do not rule out this possibility completely, especially since it is supported by the claim that time is relational rather than substantive, and by the statement that «all things that are no longer have returned into nothingness» (Leibniz 1989, p. 113),[30] which seems to presuppose time to be a genuine coming into existence and going out of existence, from nothing and into nothing. Yet, the thesis that Leibniz is a

30 It might be that this expression should not be taken at face value since Leibniz sometimes adjusts his words to suit his interlocutor.

presentist contradicts Leibniz's idea that truth consists not only in inherence but also in a *correspondence* with things.[31] Indeed, if propositions about future contingents and divine foreknowledge already have truth values, then they must already correspond to something and so future states of affairs must already exist – which is incompatible with presentism. It could be objected that the truth values of propositions about future contingents and divine foreknowledge are grounded merely in complete notions as they contain marks of the past and evidences of the future. If this were the case, when an abstract representation of the future became concrete, it would not change its truth value – but the *reason* for its being true would change, since it would become grounded by a state of affairs rather than by a simulacrum. This, however, seems to be a weird theory – one in favor of which I do not see any evidence in Leibniz's texts.

These two theories, the eternalist and the dynamic, seem to belong to two different points of view. The latter is located in the present; the former is *sub specie aeternitatis*, related to a non-temporal (or *tenseless*) present. In the terms of the contemporary debate, it seems that we have the C- or B-series on the one hand and the A-series on the other. Indeed, the resemblances are remarkable. On the one side there is an ontology of time which allows us to endorse a C- or, better, a B-series in which the present, past, and future are equally real and their distinction depends on only a comparison: an event is future for me now, but it is present if considered from another time. So nothing enjoys any metaphysical priority when it is present, since everything is present in the time when it is located. This is true *sub specie aeternitatis* and in such view only *tenseless* propositions are ontologically appropriate.

On the other side there is the perspectival, human, and temporally located point of view (*quoad nos*) in which *tensed* propositions are suitable. So there is room for an A-series. This, however, does not necessarily imply a metaphysical privilege of one time over another – as it would in the presentist framework. It is also worth noticing that, in the contemporary debate, both eternalists and presentists have recognized that, though *tensed* propositions cannot be reduced to tenseless propositions, this fact *alone* is not an argument in favour of presentism. Indeed, for the eternalist, tensed propositions merely offer a specific perspective on reality without bestow-

31 See Leibniz 1989, p. 270; A VI, 4, pp. 21-22: «A. But since there must be a reason [*causa*] why a given thought is going to be true or false, where, I ask, shall we look for it? B. In the nature of things, I think». In another text, Leibniz relates the notion of truth with that of 'expression', which seems akin to that of *correspondence* conceived as isomorphism: «That is said to express a thing in which there are relations [*habitudines*] which correspond to the relation of the thing expressed» (Leibniz 1969, p. 207, A VI, 4, p. 1370). This passage continues by generalizing the notion of correspondence as expression; this view is reconsidered and fully explained in a passage, well-known to scholars, contained in a letter to Arnauld of October 6, 1687 (GP II, p. 112).

ing any metaphysical privilege on the present. Rather, presentness is a matter of indexicality – just as is actuality in the context of modal realism (cf. Zimmerman 2005, pp. 412-413).

Anyway, even though tensed propositions can be admitted (in a deflationist way) into the framework of the B-series, presentism (the ontology of the A-series taken by itself) and eternalism (the ontology of the B-series by itself) remain *incompatible*. So it remains pretty *obscure* what it means that, on the one hand, the future is as the present for God but also that, on the other hand, it exists only in his mind. Does the future concretely exist – can God, that is, look at it as I look at the present – or, on the contrary, is it merely a simulacrum envisaged in the divine mind, chosen from among the other possible worlds by the divine will? Russell was already perfectly aware of this question with regard to Leibniz:

> A substance, we have seen, is essentially a subject persisting in time. But by the doctrine that all the states of a substance are eternally its predicates, Leibniz endeavours to eliminate the dependence upon time. There is, however, no possible way, so far as I can discover, in which such an elimination can be ultimately effected. For we must distinguish between the state of the substance at a given moment, and the fact that such is its state at the given moment. The latter only is eternal, and therefore the latter only is what Leibniz must take as the predicate of the substance. The present state exists now, and does not exist the next moment; it cannot itself, therefore, be eternally a predicate of its substance. The eternal predicate is that the substance has such and such a state at such and such a moment. (Russell 1992, pp. 50-51)

The point is that, on the one hand, a substance has its temporally indexed predicates eternally. On the other hand, however, it seems that, at a given moment, only some of these temporally indexed predicates are instantiated: 'The present state exists now, and does not exist the next moment'. Of course, this statement has different meanings depending on the meaning of the 'now,' which can be interpreted in a relative or in an absolute sense. If the 'now' is interpreted in a merely relative sense, as indicating simultaneity with another event (according to Reichenbach's so-called token-reflexive analysis or to the equivalent date-analysis of tensed sentences), then the B-series is a sufficient framework for accounting for time. But if this is true, then the tensed propositions imply a form of perspectivism that does not constrain ontology at all, since presentness does not bestow any metaphysical privilege on what is *now*. On the contrary, if things are not so, we are forced to adopt a more robust A-theory of time which nonetheless must somehow be reconciled with Leibniz's ontological eternalism – with, that is, his ontological commitment to a view of things *sub specie eternitatis*.

13 The Spotlight View

A reconciliation between eternalism[32] and dynamism is made possible by *dynamic eternalism*. The settlement suitable for the Leibnizian seems to me to be the so-called *spotlight view*. This theory is eternalist in its ontology (described by the B-series) but presentist in its phenomenology (described by the A-series). So dynamic eternalism purports to get the best out of both presentism (its dynamism) and static eternalism (its ontology), while neutralizing their respective difficulties. A canonical exposition of the *spotlight view* can be read in a text of C.D. Broad, who sketched this theory without endorsing it:

> We are naturally tempted to regard the history of the world as existing eternally in a certain order of events. Along this, and in a fixed direction, we imagine the characteristic of presentness as moving, somewhat like the spot of light from a policeman's bull's-eye traversing the fronts of the houses in a street. What is illuminated is the present, what has been illuminated is the past, and what has not yet been illuminated is the future. (Broad 1923, p. 59)

Metaphor aside, the present, the past, and the future are equally real: they share the very same ontological status. *Therefore* the future is for God as the present and as the past, and *therefore* it is possible that both the future and the past share the same mere hypothetical necessity, as Leibniz claims. Time is therefore thoroughly akin to the space; time, indeed, is nothing but 'an Order of Successions' as Leibniz states in many places, chiefly in his third rejoinder to Clarke. This, however, does not exhaust the experience of the temporality, since the *present* has a privilege that the past and the future do not have. This privilege is the phenomenological one of 'flashing out', of 'being present', of 'being illuminated by the light of the present'. Despite this, the present does not enjoy a degree of *existence* greater than that of the future and of the past.

This theory, however, presents some intrinsic difficulties against which Broad warns: «in the first place, the lighting of the characteristic of presentness now on one event and now on another is itself an event, and ought therefore to be itself a part of the series of events, and not simply something that happens to the latter from outside» (1923, p. 60).

All in all, this is the same ambiguity pointed out by Russell, which now is given in *phenomenological* rather than ontological terms. An eternal

32 I do not consider the growing block universe theory to truly be a form of eternalism since, according to this theory, things come into existence by springing out of the future *ex nihilo*. Things do not already exist somewhere in the future but are, rather, nothing at all until their coming into existence.

predicate determines that a substance is at a given moment in a given state – for example, that *Alexander is king in 335BC*. This proposition is *always* true in the sense that, at each time, whatever thing Alexander is doing at that moment, it is true to say that he is king in 335BC. This is what Russell calls 'the state of the substance at a given moment'; but it is not implied that *that given moment* is 'given' *right now* – in the light of the moving present. *Sub specie aeternitatis*, under the sight of eternity, all facts encompassed in a complete notion, including merely temporary features of the relevant substance, are given *timelessly* (or *tenselessly*). In other words, all facts at any given moment *coexist* within the framework of the B-series – and so God is acquainted with all of them equally. From a limited point of view, *quoad nos*, a substance can be in a certain state now but not yet in the succeeding state – but two incompatible states can coexist in the B-series so long as they are not simultaneously instantiated.

The two perspectives, the eternalist and the dynamic, are as incompatible as Russell claimed only if they are put on the same ontological level. On the contrary, if they represent different aspects of time, then they are compatible. End of story? Unfortunately not: some problems are here to stay, within and outside of Leibniz's philosophy. One can ask: which view mirrors reality *as it is in itself*? The perspective of eternity, which faces past, present, and future indifferently, or the perspective of the moving present? If the view *sub specie aeternitatis* is overarching, all-encompassing, then the moving present is due only to a limitation upon how our human understanding knows reality. Dynamic time would be an illusion after all, since it does not characterize reality as it is in itself. Whether or not this is Leibniz's position, there is a problem here: if the dynamic is not a deep feature of reality and is therefore not included in the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*, there cannot exist even a genuinely dynamic illusion. After all, illusions, albeit not reliable, are part of reality and so cannot represent what is impossible. On the contrary, if the moving present is a deep feature of reality and does characterize reality as it is in itself, then even God must experience the real difference between the past, the present, and the future – even if this difference is merely phenomenological. If not, the perspective from the eternity lacks something and is not so all-encompassing after all:[33] the sight from the eternity is, so to speak, too high, for it misses the flow of the time.

33 In a different context, this is, in a nutshell, one of the arguments of Michael Dummett in defense of McTaggart. Dummett 1960, p. 503 claims that «clearly, even if the world is really static, our apprehension of it changes. It does not help to say that we are even mistaken about what we think we see, because the fact would remain that we still make different such mistakes at different times» and this leads to the fact that «we must abandon our prejudice that there must be a complete description of reality (p. 504), i.e. the prejudice that the sight from eternity, *sub specie aeternitatis*, is the highest, most veracious point of view on reality.

This difficulty reconciling two different points of view of time seems to be analogous to Leibniz's difficulty accounting for contingent truths and freedom. I would like to sketch this analogy because it probably reveals a deeper connection between the two problems. In accounting for contingency, Leibniz distinguishes the following concepts of truth: (1) analyticity, (2) necessity, and (3) demonstrability. They are connected as follows: whatever is true is analytic, whatever is demonstrable in a *finite* number of steps is necessary (and vice versa), whatever is necessary is analytic, but not everything that is analytic is also necessary.[34] The infiniteness of some demonstrations – that is, the fact that contingent truths cannot be demonstrated in a finite number of steps – ought to prevent contingent truths from collapsing into necessary truths. The problem, however, is whether contingency is merely an illusion due to the inadequate consideration of reality – whether it is, in Spinoza's words, merely the ignorance of causes (*Ethics* 2P35 S). This is a thorny question in the framework of Leibniz's philosophy. However, it has been argued that the indemonstrability of contingent truths is rooted in their *logical form* rather than in the limits of our epistemic access to reality (cf. Adams 1994, p. 29 *passim*). If so, not even God can prove a contingent truth – and there is evidence from the text that Leibniz admits this (cf. A VI, 4, p. 1656). Is it sufficient to avoid necessitarism? I do not think so. Indeed, even if the indemonstrability of contingent truths depends on their logical form, there is no doubt that «in all true affirmative propositions, necessary or contingent, universal or singular, the notion of the predicate is always in some way included in that of the subject – *praedicatum inest subjecto* – or I do not know what truth is» (GP II, p. 56; Leibniz 1988, pp. 111-112).[35] Moreover, God can immediately *see* the inherence:[36] he does not need to *demonstrate* anything. So every contingent truth is seen in its analyticity, in its essence,[37] by God. It is worth remembering that nothing that is analytic can be contingent. In other words, if each truth appears to God to have the structure of the proposition *A–B is B* – if, that is, the canonical form of *any* true proposition is that of a part-whole relation – how can such predication be considered deniable without contradiction – that is, contingent? It cannot. So contingency is merely a semblance that disappears if things are considered as

34 For this schematic taxonomy, see Blumenfeld 1985.

35 This thesis is nearly a refrain; for a short list of passages, see Blumenfeld 1985, p. 485, note 6.

36 God, «seeing [...] the connection of terms or the inclusion of the predicate in the subject [...] sees whatever is in the series» (A VI, 4, p. 1656; Leibniz 1973, p. 109). God's knowledge is 'an infallible vision' (p. 111).

37 A contingent truth is, of course, not demonstrable; but «the reason of the truth, however, always exists, even though it can be perfectly understood only by God who alone scans an infinite succession by a sole mind's glance» (*De Contingentia*, A VI, 4, p. 1650).

they really are in themselves (or *a parte rei*), if truth is considered *quoad se*, as God considers it.

Analogously, if the perspective from eternity mirrors reality as it is in itself, dynamism disappears: it must be an illusion caused by the limits of our perspectival point of view, which is located within the time itself. On the contrary, if dynamic time is an absolute, undeniable given – and there are several reasons for considering it such – the point of view *sub specie aeternitatis*, which freezes reality into the B-series, misses an essential feature of this reality, its dynamism. As a consequence of this dynamism, even for God the future cannot really be as the present, since the future, though it already exists, is not manifested *now*. Similarly, if contingency must be real even for God, then even the divine sight, which immediately sees without demonstration the inherence of every predicate in its subject, must miss something: whatever God sees in a complete notion, it is not the *fully perfect* inherence of temporary predicates in their subject. Though this imperfection prevents the collapse of contingency into necessity, it ensures that God's perspective is not the highest.

In spite of this cobweb of problems (rooted, ultimately, in Leibniz's philosophy) and of the numerous lexical, exegetical, and theoretical difficulties that my interpretative endeavor might have to face (which are no bigger than those of other approaches), I see some encouraging reasons for considering the spotlight view as a model for Leibniz's theory of time.

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Theodicy and Reason
Logic, Metaphysics, and Theology in Leibniz's *Essais de Théodicée* (1710)
edited by Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero, Mattia Geretto, and Luigi Perissinotto

Counterfactual Hypotheses, Fictions, and the Laws of Nature
The Arguments for Contingency in Leibniz, Wolff, and Bilfinger

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Abstract How can we know that our world is not the only possible one? Leibniz's claim that this world is the best of all possible worlds obviously presupposes the modal thesis that more than one world is possible. Moreover, the possibility of alternative worlds is also the crucial premise for Leibniz's most popular defence of contingency. Even if this commitment to possible worlds may appear unproblematic to us, Leibniz's immediate followers felt that the pluralist assumption about possible worlds required some justification. Aim of this paper is to reconstruct Leibniz's arguments for possible worlds and contingentism, as they are stated in the *Theodicy*, by taking into consideration Wolff's and Bilfinger's critical (albeit sympathetic) discussion. Following Bilfinger's classification, three main arguments are explored: the argument from the conceivability of counterfactual situations, the argument from fiction, and the argument from the contingency of natural laws.

Keywords Wolff. Contingency. Possible Worlds.

The contemporary debate on Leibniz's solution to the problem of contingency did not pay much attention to the *Theodicy*, perhaps because scholars have tended to focus predominantly on texts concerning the infinite analysis of contingent propositions. By contrast, Leibniz's followers in the eighteenth century, who could not read some of Leibniz's texts that we regard as fundamental for this topic, searched in the *Theodicy* for arguments to bolster the view that the world is contingent. This paper gives an account of what they found and traces their reactions to Leibniz's arguments. My aim is to show that the efforts made in the early eighteenth century to clarify Leibniz's thought were by no means superficial or vain; on the contrary, they may still provide some insights into the grounds and consequences of Leibniz's doctrines.

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1 Theodicy's First Assumption

In 1717, shortly after Leibniz's death, a dissertation discussed at Halle describes the *Theodicy* as based on an unproved assumption: Leibniz «adsumit, non probat, plures mundos esse possibiles» (Wolff 1717, § 26). The author – plausibly Christian Wolff[1] – sees the plurality of possible worlds as the unproved assumption of *Theodicy*; he engages, then, in giving a proof of it (which we will see below). Of course, this stance conforms to an attitude Wolff often takes towards his former protector: he gives Leibniz credit for the authorship of a thesis, while crediting himself with demonstratively justifying it.[2] Nevertheless, such a criticism is surprising, for the *Theodicy* does actually display some arguments for the 'pluralist' assumption; and Wolff himself, in his subsequent works, will make use of them. At any rate, what is clear is that the possibility of other worlds is regarded as a particularly tricky point in Leibnizian theodicy, and as a thesis requiring some supporting argument.

The same concern is shared by Georg Bernhard Bilfinger, who in 1724 published a treatise *De origine et permissione mali*, a sort of eclectic-systematic reworking of Leibniz's justification of evil (cf. de Buzon 2009). Introducing the doctrine of the permission of evil – that is, the very core of theodicy – Bilfinger points out that the cornerstone of the whole undertaking consists in showing that this world is the best one, but in order to establish the Principle of the Best World, the premise is required that more worlds are possible, and that they differ from each other in their degree of perfection (cf. Bilfinger [1724] 2002, § 357). The pattern of Bilfinger's reasoning must have been as follows: were the actual world the only possible one, then the claim that it is the best of all possible worlds would be trivial and would not allow any inference concerning the Creator's goodness.

Now, in virtue of the modal concepts Bilfinger has borrowed from Leibniz, the possibility of other worlds is logically equivalent to the contingency of this world.[3] Indeed, besides stating that «ut plures [mundi] sint possibiles, necesse est, mundum esse contingentem, non necessarium», Bilfinger also allows the following inference: «Mundus hic est contingens:

1 The dissertation was submitted by S.F. Weissmüller to a board chaired by Wolff, but there is some evidence that Wolff was in fact its author (see Favaretti Camposampiero 2009, p. 332n).

2 In the preface to the fourth edition (1729) of his *German Metaphysics*, after stating that Leibniz's *Theodicy* draws on the Augustinian argument that God has chosen the best possible world, Wolff points out his own contribution in the following terms: «Ich habe aber diese Lehre, die Augustinus für so wichtig gehalten, auf eine demonstrativische Art ausgeführet» (Wolff [1720] 1983, «Vorbericht, so zu der vierten Auflage hinzu kommen», § 10).

3 On Leibniz's account of contingency in terms of alternative possibilities, see Adams 1994, pp. 12-22.

igitur et alii possibiles» ([1724] 2002, § 357). In Bilfinger's arrangement of Leibniz's theses, the proposition that this world is contingent constitutes the first proposition (§ 358); that is, the premise underpinning the entire reasoning developed in the *Theodicy*. Indeed, if this world were necessary, if it were the only possible one, it would not make sense to talk of a divine choice; far from it, the issue of the divine permission of evil would not even arise.

Thus, the first step to take is to justify the premise. Yet how is the task to be accomplished? Bilfinger reports that various arguments are usually displayed to prove the contingency of the world, adding that he does not endorse, nor reject, nor present all of them (§ 359). Before reviewing Bilfinger's selection, let us introduce an overall distinction. Granting the equivalence between the proposition that this world is contingent and the proposition that other worlds are possible, one may infer the latter from the former, or vice versa. Thus, the arguments for contingency that were available to Leibniz's followers may be categorised into two main groups:

1. arguments showing, first, the possibility of other worlds, and concluding, then, that this world is contingent. I shall call them *heterocosmic arguments*; and
2. arguments showing directly that this world is contingent (and then inferring, if needed, that other worlds are possible). I shall call them *direct arguments*.

As we will see, each of these strategies has its pros and cons. However, direct arguments may appear to be more promising, for unlike heterocosmic ones, they could dispense with the inferential step from conceivability to possibility, which was regarded as highly problematic by Leibnizian philosophers. Indeed, in the eyes of an eighteenth-century philosopher, the only immediate evidence available for the plurality of possible worlds was the conceivability of non-actual worlds; that is, of events and states of affairs that were an alternative to those constituting the real world. Therefore, heterocosmic arguments can be considered as different versions of a single argument: the argument from conceivability.

2 Heterocosmic Arguments

2.1 Conceivable Alternatives

Among the *Theodicy*'s arguments for contingency, the argument from the conceivability of events that never occur is probably the most intuitive one. A clear formulation of it lies in the following passage: it is false that everything that never happens is absolutely impossible, «puisqu'il y a bien des choses qui ne sont jamais arrivées et n'arriveront jamais, et qui cependant

sont concevables distinctement, et n'impliquent aucune contradiction» (*Théodicée*, § 234, GP VI, p. 257). We may expose the argument as follows.

> Argument ***C***:
>
> Be *E* an event that never occurs in the story of the world. If I can distinctly conceive of *E*, then *E* is not contradictory in itself; hence, *E* is possible (by Leibniz's definition of 'possible'); hence, there is at least one possibility that is not part of the actual course of events (i.e., of this world). Now, if it is true that things could have gone otherwise, it follows that this world is contingent (by Leibniz's definition of 'contingent').

An initial objection to this argument was raised in 1698 by Gabriel Wagner. In the course of his exchange with Wagner, Leibniz had drawn the metaphysical possibility (i.e., the non-contradictoriness) of other worlds from an epistemic possibility; namely, from their being imaginable in a distinct way.[4] Our fictions, if only they are consistent, represent to us some genuine metaphysical possibilities. Wagner objected that this 'metaphysical or mental' possibility, consisting in the conceivability or imaginability of alternative states of affairs, is by no means a 'true possibility'; it is just a figment, a spurious being, which may exist in the mind, but not in reality.[5] What follows from the conceivability of alternative courses in the world's story is nothing more than a 'feigned' or fictitious possibility, which is totally mind-dependent: «Aliae possibiles rerum series in mente haerent, non in rerum natura. et non est vera, sed ficta possibilitas» (Grua, 1, p. 393). In Wagner's view, counterfactual hypotheses are plain impossibilities. Thus, Charles V could have impossibly become the Pope: it is only in our deceitful thought that he had this possibility.[6]

Leibniz replied that those alternative possible series subsist ('haerent') in God's mind, which precedes nature. In order for something to be meta-

4 «Quot series rerum fingi possunt non implicantes contradictionem, tot mundi possibiles sunt». As Leibniz clarifies, his claim that the states of the world could have been different must be taken as expressing a metaphysical possibility, «ut scilicet alii fingi distincte possint, seu non implicent» (Grua, 1, p. 390).

5 «Possibilitate metaphysica seu mentali, id est posse concipi seu fingi alium statum, concedo. Sed possibilitas ista non est vera possibilitas». And shortly after: «Possibilitas metaphysica, praeter physicam aliquid ponens, nudum est figmentum, quod conceptu, non actu sive realiter, existere potest» (Grua, 1, p. 392).

6 «Sic Carolus V impossibiliter potuit papa esse, licet mente frustranea potuerit» (Grua, 1, p. 392). Notice that the aim of Wagner's denial of alternative possibilities is not to promote necessitarianism: his claim is just that the possibilities *we imagine* are not genuine, because they only come after reality. The deepest root of his disagreement with Leibniz seems to concern the latter's doctrine that essences (viz. possibilities) are prior to existence. Wagner regards essences as concepts abstracted from already existing things (Grua, 1, p. 392).

physically possible, it is sufficient that it can be imagined «sine absurditate» (Grua, 1, p. 393); but this metaphysical possibility is not fictitious. Although the existence of Charles V being the Pope is a figment, the possibility of this fact is not. Of course, metaphysical possibility would be fictitious, if it was not founded in a real existent; but, in fact, it is founded in God. Counterfactual situations are metaphysically possible to the extent that, being non-contradictory, they correspond to genuine possibilities conceived by the divine intellect.

However, as is evident from the above formulation, the conclusion of Argument *C* depends not only on the conceivability of event *E*, but also on a further premise, which is the eternal non-actuality of *E*; that is, on the assumption that *E* is merely possible and will never cease to be so.

If Argument *C* is built by using counterfactual hypotheses, the assumption of mere possibility seems to be justified. Consider again the case of Charles V's possible ascent to the papal throne; or the case of Spinoza's possible death in Leiden, as in the example Leibniz draws from Bayle. In both cases, the event is certainly ruled out from the actual world by history. Hence, if the event is possible, it must be merely possible. Of course, a consistent Spinozist would hold that it was as impossible for Spinoza not to die in The Hague, as it is impossible that two plus two equals six (cf. *Théodicée*, § 173, GP VI, p. 217: here Leibniz is quoting Bayle's words). Against this claim, one can stress the evidence that «il n'y auroit point eu de contradiction dans la supposition que Spinosa fût mort à Leide, et non pas à la Haye» (§ 174, p. 218). Hence, such an event was possible, even if it did not happen, and the Spinozist is wrong. Nor could she seriously challenge the assumption that the fact described as possible neither did, nor will ever occur. In the case of possible events, counterfactuality is the best guarantee of non-actuality.

The 'counterfactualist' version of Argument *C* has, thus, the merit of making safe the assumption of mere possibility. However, it lays open to criticism the other basic assumption concerning the possibility of the event, as is stressed by Bilfinger, who for this reason does not recommend the argument. Counterfactual hypotheses are, to him, scarcely effective against Spinoza's followers, who can object that, although we do not see any contradiction in supposing that Spinoza had died in Leiden, this is not sufficient to rule out the presence of some hidden contradiction, which would come out if we could only understand the whole affair that we are imagining. Spinoza's death in Leiden seems to involve no contradiction as long as we consider it «*abstracte* a caussis suis et circumstantiis» (Bilfinger [1724] 2002, § 359); but nothing assures that, were the event considered as part of the entire story of the world, that part would not

turn out to be incompatible with some other parts.[7] Hence, the Spinozist, concludes Bilfinger, may feel entitled to maintain that it was absolutely impossible for Spinoza to die in Leiden.

2.2 Conceivable Stories

Yet, we can conceive of unreal worlds not only by introducing small changes in the story of our world, but also by imagining entirely different stories, featuring entirely fictional characters. Indeed, in exposing Argument *C*, Leibniz does not always resort to counterfactual hypotheses. In the most popular version of the argument, he refers instead to characters and stories from literary fiction, in order to adduce a paradigmatic case of mere possibility. This so-called argument from novel (cf. Schepers 1988, p. 222), already featured in the *Confessio philosophi*, is the first argument for contingency developed by Leibniz. Although eighteenth-century philosophers could not read this earliest version of the argument, they were familiar with the following passage from the *Theodicy*:

> Je ne crois point qu'un Spinosiste dise que tous les Romans qu'on peut imaginer, existent reellement à present, ou ont existé, ou existeront encor dans quelque endroit de l'Univers. Cependant on ne sauroit nier que des Romans, comme ceux de Mademoiselle de Scudery, ou comme l'Octavia, ne soyent possibles. (*Théodicée*, § 173, GP VI, p. 217)

Though rather informally stated, an argument for contingency is contained in this passage. A plausible formulation would run as follows:

> (Principle of Mere Possibility) If we can imagine possible events that are certainly not part of the story of the actual world, then it is false that there is nothing possible but what really happens, sooner or later.
>
> (Assumption 1) At least some novels describe possible events.
>
> (Assumption 2) Certainly not all the events described in those novels are part of the story of the actual world.
>
> (Conclusion) Something is possible that does never happen; that is, there are genuine unrealized possibilities.

7 Bilfinger maintains that the possibility of each single part does not imply the possibility of the whole (§ 367).

The above quoted passage suggests that assumption 1 should be regarded as undeniable and that the negation of assumption 2 would be highly implausible (indeed, it would be an utter heresy or even an absurdity, according to other texts).[8] Hence, the only justification Leibniz feels required to give for both assumptions consists, in the end, in shifting the burden of proof onto the opponent. Of course, this seems to be a good strategy. A Spinozist, willing to eliminate contingency by claiming that there are no unrealized possibilities, should either deny that even the most ingeniously contrived stories are possible, or maintain that all such novel's fictions are, in fact, descriptions of real events, which indeed took (or are to take) place in some recesses of space and time[9] – a view that not even a Spinozist would endorse, says Leibniz. Literary fiction has, thus, the advantage of supplying event descriptions that are both manifestly false (or at least very unlikely), if considered as reports of real facts, and yet plausible, if understood as recounting facts that merely could have happened.

Fictional stories – or at least the well-plotted ones, which do not turn out to be inconsistent – seem then to satisfy both of the conditions that are required for the application of the Principle of Mere Possibility. Hence, they attest the possibility of sequences of events that are not included in this world. In this way, Leibniz's 'possibilist' reading of novels introduces an idea that exercised great influence on eighteenth-century aesthetics, mainly at the hands of Baumgarten – the idea that literary fiction can be regarded as a narration of what happens in other possible worlds (or, if preferred, of what would happen if a world existed, that were different from the actual one).[10]

However, that fictional stories are set in possible worlds is not a proposition that everyone would take for granted. Of course, it was only in the last century that the idea of treating fictional worlds as possible worlds began to be explored in depth and thus reveal its inner difficulties.[11] Nevertheless, even in the eighteenth century some reasons were available for

8 The 'heresy' consists in holding the principle of plenitude as applying unrestrictedly even to the domain of fictions: «Barclaii *Argenis* possibilis, seu clare distincteque imaginabilis est, etsi certum sit nunquam vixisse nec credo victuram esse, nisi quis sit in ea haeresi, ut sibi persuadeat temporum restantium infinito decursu omnia possibilia aliquando extitura» (A VI, 3, p. 128). In 1689, the realisation of every imaginable fictional story is rejected as 'absurd', and as following on from Descartes' doctrine that matter actually takes on all its possible forms (cf. A VI, 4, pp. 1663-1664; and p. 1654).

9 See *De contingentia* (1689): «Pro certo habendum est non omnia possibilia ad existentiam pervenire; alioqui nullus fingi posset Romaniscus qui non alicubi aut aliquando existeret» (A VI, 4, p. 1651; cf. pp. 1653-1654; Grua, 2, p. 478; GP IV, p. 259).

10 See, for instance, the theory of «heterocosmic fiction» by Baumgarten 1750, § 511. On Baumgarten's debt to Wolff on this topic cf. Adler 1990, pp. 22-23.

11 See, in the first place, David Lewis's seminal paper (1978).

casting doubt on Leibniz's argument from fiction. For, as we know, fictional stories can be taken as attesting some genuine possibilities only if they meet the two requirements of conceivability (i.e., internal consistency) and non-actuality. Although Leibniz found these assumptions not to be seriously disputable, they did not appear as such to all of his contemporaries.

An objection against Assumption 1had been raised by Louis Bourguet, claiming that one cannot tell whether a fictional story is possible, unless one can tell whether it is connected with the rest of the world. Leibniz took Bourguet as calling into question the compossibility of the story with the *actual* world. Thus, he discarded the objection as patently confusing absolute possibility with compossibility:

> Je n'accorde point que pour connoistre, si le Roman de l'Astrée est possible, il faille connoistre sa connexion avec le reste de l'Univers. Cela seroit necessaire pour savoir, s'il est compossible avec luy, et par consequent, si ce Roman a eté, ou est, ou sera dans quelque coin de l'Univers. [...] Mais autre chose est, si l'Astrée est possible absolument. Et je dis qu'ouy, parce qu'elle n'implique aucune contradiction. (GP III, pp. 572-573)[12]

Leibniz's reply, however, would appear misplaced if one construed Bourguet's doubt as being about the connection of the fictional story with the rest of *its* universe. We have met a similar objection in Bilfinger's remarks about Spinoza's allegedly possible death in Leiden. However, fictional stories, too, are liable to the same suspicion, according to Bilfinger. Spinozists will argue that they do not understand «omnes humani animi et rerum externarum recessus ita [...] ut certi esse possint, in nulla parte repugnantiam involvi» (Bilfinger [1724] 2002, § 360).[13] Due to the intricacy of their plot, novels may well contain a hidden contradiction. Our knowledge of the story's details is always too limited and partial for us to be able to judge «de *universo*»; that is, of the whole universe in which the story is set. Therefore, we have no certainty that «ejusmodi fabulae sint possibiles» (Bilfinger [1724] 2002, § 360).[14]

This objection may be rephrased in somewhat clearer terms. If we are willing to take the events described in the novel as belonging to a non-actual world, it is natural to think that they are (causally or otherwise) connected with other events of that world, some of which are not even

12 Leibniz's letters to Bourguet were first published in Dutens' edition (1768). Thus, in what follows, I am *not* suggesting that Bilfinger was acquainted with Bourguet's objection.

13 Bilfinger is commenting on the above quoted passage from *Théodicée*.

14 Note that Bilfinger's worry about hidden contradictions possibly contained in highly composite concepts («in vehementer compositis»: Bilfinger [1724] 2002, § 360) comes, in fact, from Leibniz himself: see his *Meditationes de cognitione, veritate, et ideis* (A VI, 4, pp. 585-592).

mentioned by the novelist. (Universal connection is, indeed, a hallmark of Leibnizian worlds.) In the narrated story, the majority of the intra-world connections are left as implicit, so that the story seems to be consistent. However, were we able to make all of these connections explicit, then we might discover that the world we are imagining is not, in fact, a possible one. For instance, two different parts of the story might have remote incompatible consequences, which in the novel are left untold.

In the above quoted passage, Leibniz correctly claims that compossibility with the actual world is not a necessary requisite for possibility. However, if we are to establish that a novel's story is *merely* possible, then its compossibility with the actual world is not just irrelevant. Rather, it is precisely what must be ruled out, for it would imply that the story was, or is, or will be actualised; but this would contradict Assumption 2. When imagining the world of *Astrée*, we would not be conceiving of a different possible world. Compossibility with the actual world is incompatible with mere possibility.[15]

Bilfinger, however, is not more prepared to bet on Assumption 2, for he disagrees with Leibniz on whether the Spinozist would dare to reject it. According to Bilfinger, the Spinozist may except that, even granting that some fictional stories are possible, there is no evidence proving that they did not exist in the past and will not exist in the future (Bilfinger [1724] 2002, § 360). Perhaps all that is possible is also compossible. The apparent unlikelihood of such a supposition is not sufficient to make the Spinozist feel compelled to accept Assumption 2. Hence, in Bilfinger's view, this version of Argument *C*, drawn from fiction, is not more effective than the counterfactualist version. The Spinozist can always reply that for every novel we want to consider, at least one of the two assumptions must be false: it is necessary that either the story told in the novel is not unactualised fiction or it involves a contradiction.

Although Bilfinger is generally regarded as a Wolffian philosopher,[16] his overall commitment to the main tenets and program of Wolffianism was accompanied, in fact, by a good deal of intellectual independence. As his contemporaries were certainly able to realise, Bilfinger's criticism of Leibniz's arguments also implied a critical stance towards Wolff, who had confidently made use of the same arguments in the *Specimen* of 1717 as well as in the *German Metaphysics* of 1720.

15 The notion of mere possibility seems to be what Bourguet found most puzzling in Leibniz's doctrine. Leibniz, in turn, was puzzled by Bourguet's modal parsimony, to which he opposed a definition of possibility in terms of knowability viz. conceivability: «Je ne vois aucune raison pourquoy *on ne puisse pas dire à la rigueur, que l'intelligence conçoive des possibles qui n'existent jamais*. Peutetre y a-t-il des figures de Geometrie et des Nombres sourds, qui n'ont jamais existé, et n'existeront jamais. En sont-ils moins possibles, c'est à dire moins connoissables?» (GP III, p. 573).

16 See the influential overview by Wundt 1945, pp. 214-215. Cf. Liebing 1961.

The *German Metaphysics* refers to the «erdichteten Geschichten, die man Romainen zu nennen pfleget» (Wolff [1720] 1983, § 571), in order to explain the claim that «[es] ist mehr als eine Welt möglich»; namely, that «ausser der Welt, darzu wir gehören, oder die wir empfinden, sind noch andere möglich», which all differ from each other with respect to the events that take place in them (§ 569). Wolff accepts, without reservation, the content of Assumption 1: «Wenn dergleichen Erzehlung mit solchem Verstande eingerichtet ist, daß nichts widersprechendes darinnen anzutreffen; so kan ich nicht anders sagen, als, es sey möglich, daß dergleichen geschiehet» (§ 571). Notice that, instead of being simply assumed, the possibility of some fictional stories is inferred via the 'logical' characterization of the possible as «was nichts widersprechendes in sich enthält» (§ 12); Wolff, therefore, must have regarded this characterisation as applying not only to individuals and kinds of individuals, but also to events and kinds of events.

Wolff, however, is also aware that a further premise is required: the question remains whether what is narrated in the novel «würcklich geschehen sey oder nicht». He tries, then, to justify Assumption 2 by claiming that, if one examines what is narrated, he will certainly find «daß es der gegenwärtigen Verknüpfung der Dinge widerspricht, und dannenhero in dieser Welt nicht möglich gewesen» (§ 571). This argument features two key concepts of Wolffian metaphysics: the concept of connection (*nexus* in Wolff's Latin works), and the modal concept of possibility-in-this-world.

In order for a possible being to be actualised, it must be possible-in-this-world; that is, it must fit into the net of connections that constitutes the actual world. Wolff sees the world as «eine Reihe veränderlicher Dinge […] die neben einander sind, und aufeinander folgen, insgesamt aber mit einander verknüpfet sind» (§ 544). Each of these intra-world connections is a causal (as well as an explanatory) link; for some beings are connected to each other if, and only if, «ein jedes unter ihnen den Grund in sich enthält, warum das andere neben ihm zugleich ist, oder auf dasselbe folget» (§ 545).[17] Causal fitness is thus the key to compossibility and actuality: a given possible is possible-in-this-world if, and only if, its causes do exist in this world. Hence, in order for a given possible to be actualised, its causes must be actual. Now, the novel's story is possible in itself, but cannot be part of the actual world, as this latter lacks any cause that could produce the objects and events that are described in the novel. What could make the fictional story real can only be found outside this world, «nehmlich in einem anderen Zusammenhange der Dinge, das ist, in einer anderen Welt»; consequently, we must exclude that fictional stories can ever hap-

17 I cannot elaborate here on the distinction between cause («Ursache») and reason («Grund»). For present purposes, it will suffice to note that a cause is what contains in itself the reason of something else (cf. Wolff [1720] 1983, § 29).

pen to be true of this world, and regard a novel as «eine Erzehlung von etwas, so in einer andern Welt sich zutragen kan» (§ 571).[18]

2.3 Contingency and Causal Connections

The concept of *nexus* also provides the cornerstone of Wolff's main argument for the contingency of this world and the possibility of other worlds. In some respect, this is a revival of Leibniz's counterfactualist argument, but the reference to the mutual connection of things gives it a typical Wolffian flavour.

The afore-mentioned statement of the universal connection of things in a world is, of course, deeply tied to the principle of sufficient reason. Understandably, then, Wolff strives to show that this statement, far from implying a strict form of necessitarianism, actually provides the best antidote to absolute necessity. The fact that, in the here and now, such and such events happen and such and such things exist, is determined by an entire series of causes or conditions; hence, it is not a necessary fact, because if the causal chain had been different, its effect would not have been the same.[19] To sum up Wolff's conviction in a slogan: being connected makes things contingent. That is, it makes them hypothetically, but not absolutely, necessary.

Just like every other composite being, the world itself is a machine; that is, «ein zusammengesetztes Werck, dessen Bewegungen in der Art der zusammensetzung gegründet sind» (Wolff [1720] 1983, § 557). And a machine's functioning depends not only upon the gears that constitute it, but also upon the way they are assembled; that is, upon the machine's structure. Quite expectably, Wolff resorts to the example of the clock to explain his mechanist-minded picture of the world. In order for the clock hand to point, now, to a number on the dial different from the one it is actually pointing to, it would have been necessary either that, from the beginning, the clock was differently set or that the clock's structure was different (cf. § 566). The same applies to the states of the world. To put it briefly, the conceivability (viz. possibility) of counterfactual situations is drawn by Wolff from the conceivability (viz. possibility) of distinct causal series that already diverge at their origins. The slightest change in the initial state of the world would have been sufficient to yield a different sequence of events. Hence, the actual world cannot be the only possible one, and all that happens in it cannot be but contingent.

18 My reading also draws on Wolff's *Cosmologia generalis* ([1731] 1964, § 111-112).

19 Wolff's argument from universal connection to contingency is developed in *German Metaphysics* ([1720] 1983, § 565-570).

As we have seen, Bilfinger calls into question the argument from conceivability of counterfactual situations. He grants, however, that this argument is acceptable, provided that the one who puts it forward has previously demonstrated that «res non occupare necessario locum et tempus, quibus existunt» ([1724] 2002, § 359). He further adds that this was Wolff's way of proceeding in the *German Metaphysics*. Here, Bilfinger must be hinting at the conclusions that Wolff draws from his principle of the universal spatial-temporal connection of things. Wolff indeed, to make his point, also has recourse to the subtly metaphorical image of the «filling» of space and time: that a certain connection of things holds means that space and time are filled in a certain way. Presumably, the use of this metaphor is to foster the intuition that in a single world there is no room for two different universal connections.[20] A counterfactual situation could exist in the real world only if an entirely different connection held; namely, only if space and time were filled in a way completely different from how they are actually filled.[21] Hence, if we admit that counterfactual situations are possible, we must posit non-actual worlds, in whose connections they are included.

Thus, Bilfinger's condition of acceptability implies, in fact, that the argument from conceivability is not an independent argument. It can be used, indeed, to set out the possibility of other worlds, but only once the contingency of this world has been demonstrated. That Bilfinger is not totally wrong is confirmed by the above-mentioned Wolffian dissertation of 1717, where the argument from conceivability plays exactly this subordinate role. Here, the contingency of the actual states of affairs is assumed from the beginning,[22] as the premise for the following rather concise argument. It is not absolutely impossible that it rains now, when in fact the sky is clear:

> […] concipi enim potest talis caussarum nexus, quo non invito pluviam serenitati substituere licet. Etsi autem nexum istum longius prosequi nobis non detur: ex contingentium tamen indole […] haud obscure sequitur, eundem et quod praeterita attinet, et futura, immo et praesentia,

20 The presence of this metaphor contrasts with Wolff's later wariness of the 'imaginary notions' of space and time: see sections 3.2 and 3.3 below. The metaphor, however, does not seem essential to the argument, which is grounded, rather, on a relational conception of space and time as orders resulting from the way things are connected (cf. Wolff [1720] 1983, § 46, § 94). On the other hand, a kindred imagery is detectable in Leibniz's so-called tiling analogy (cf. GP VII, 304; and McDonough 2010).

21 «[D]er Raum und die Zeit müste auf eine gantz andere Weise erfüllet seyn, als er jetzt erfüllet ist» (Wolff [1720] 1983, § 573). Here, «jetzt» should mean something similar to «actually», since it literally makes poor sense in this context.

22 «Contingentium opposita absolute spectata non involvunt contradictionem» (Wolff 1717, § 26).

esse debere infinitum, aut, si mavis, indefinitum. Quoniam itaque series plurium possibilium tam simultaneorum, quam successivorum inter se connexorum mundus est[,] plures mundos possibiles esse p[a]tet. (Wolff 1717, § 26)

3 Direct Arguments for Contingency

3.1 Necessity, Aseity, Immutability

The foregoing considerations lead to the conclusion that heterocosmic arguments either presuppose an independent demonstration of the contingency of this world, or are left pending on assumptions such as Assumptions 1 and 2, which the opponent can always contest. Hence, Bilfinger drops these arguments and places his bets on direct contingentist arguments.

Above all, Bilfinger bets on an argument of his own. He wonders why it has not occurred to anyone else; he also admits that it is so simple that it may appear as a sophism (cf. Bilfinger [1724] 2002, § 362). In its bare bones, the argument runs as follows. All that is absolutely necessary is also immutable in all of its parts and circumstances; our daily experience attests the mutability of the world in its parts and states; hence, the world is not absolutely necessary. Needless to say, after concluding that this world is contingent, Bilfinger infers that, therefore, other worlds are possible (cf. § 369). He also expands on the soundness of the inference from the contingency of each part to the contingency of the whole, by claiming that absolute necessity cannot be a property emerging, at the whole-level, from the composition of parts, all of which are contingent (cf. § 363-368).

The major premise of the argument (i.e., that necessity implies immutability) is supported by introducing, as a middle term between necessity and immutability, the property of having in itself the sufficient reason for its own existence. The succession of world states shows that none of them has its *ratio sui* in itself, so that they allow an infinite analysis; hence, they are not necessary (cf. § 362).[23]

In his *General Cosmology* (1731), Wolff appears to have acknowledged to some extent Bilfinger's criticism. Following a path different from the

23 Here Bilfinger draws on Wolff's clarification that a correct understanding of contingency is acquired when one considers that a contingent event is the consequence of an endless series of reasons (Wolff [1720] 1983, § 579). On the «Analysis contingentium», cf. Bilfinger [1725] 1982, § 68. Notice, incidentally, that this is how Leibniz's theory of the infinite analysis of contingent truths finds a place in Wolffian metaphysics – namely, as a cosmological thesis on the infinite length of causal chains in the physical world. Presumably, Wolff's source are Leibniz's *Remarques sur le Livre de l'origine du mal* (GP VI, pp. 413-414), from which Wolff further draws the comparison between contingent truths and irrational numbers ([1720] 1983, § 580).

one taken in the *German Metaphysics*, he decides to demonstrate the contingency of the world directly, through an argument very similar to Bilfinger's: since nothing is immutable among the things existing in the universe, nothing exists necessarily. Neither the composite substances, nor their modes, nor the simple elements have, in themselves, the reason for their own existence; all of them are contingent beings. Hence, «mundus seriem rerum contingentium continet» (Wolff [1731] 1964, § 81).[24]

It is only at this point, once the contingency of all worldly beings has been established, that the argument from conceivability appears. Its purpose, now, is just to state the possibility of other worlds. That a being is contingent implies that its existence depends on certain causal connections. A contingent being is actualised in the world if, and only if, its cause is contained in the actual series of things (Wolff [1731] 1964, § 97-98). This makes evident, according to Wolff, that the set of *possibilia* outnumbers the set of actual things. We conceive as possible the birth of a tree from a given cherry, but, unless the cherry stone is planted in a suitable soil, that tree will remain «in regione possibilium» (§ 97n).[25] Conceivability pertains not only to each single possible, but also to the causal chain that would bring a given possible into existence:

> Etenim possibilia, quae in praesente actum non consequuntur, existere possunt et concipi possunt causae, a quibus perinde ac ea, quae existunt, ad actualitatem perducuntur […]. Perinde igitur possibiles sunt aliquae causarum contingentium series, per quas actuantur alia, quam quae in mundo adspectabili contingunt, ac ea, quae mundum adspectabilem constituit, consequenter alii adhuc mundi possibiles sunt. (§ 101)

3.2 Laws of Nature

Not all of the arguments for contingency displayed in Leibniz's *Theodicy* are rejected by Bilfinger. Indeed, he approvingly mentions Leibniz's 'noble argument', drawn from the institution of the laws of nature – especially the laws of motion (Bilfinger [1724] 2002, § 361).

As is well known, Leibniz deemed natural laws to be neither purely arbitrary, since they conform to the principle of the best, nor absolutely

24 Here is also stated the contingency of composite substances and modes (Wolff [1731] 1964, § 80), while the contingency of the elements of material things is dealt with in the First Part of *Theologia naturalis* (Wolff [1736] 1978, § 56).

25 The quoted phrase is drawn, of course, from Leibniz (cf. *Théodicée*, § 42, § 335, GP VI, p. 126, 314).

necessary, as mathematical truths are.[26] While necessary truths can be demonstrated by the principle of contradiction, no contradiction follows from the hypothesis of natural laws being violated or being different from the actual ones. In the *Theodicy*, however, no explicit appeal is made to the modal status of these laws in order to establish the contingency of the world's events. Rather, Leibniz's aim in stating the non-necessity of the laws of nature is to vindicate God's freedom and wisdom, as well as the possibility of miracles.[27] Nevertheless, the relevant passages from the *Theodicy* could easily suggest an argument assuming the laws' contingency as the premise and concluding with global contingency. Such an argument is indeed put forward by both Wolff and Bilfinger in 1724.

Argument ***L***:

> [...] regulas tamen motus in materia minime fundatas esse atque perinde ac situationes corporum a necessitate absoluta exemtas cum *Leibnitio* agnosco. [...] Quamobrem rebus materialibus juxta leges motus in se mutabiles operantibus, ipsi quoque eventus in universo non sunt immutabilis necessitatis. Si enim Deo, universi Autori, alias motus regulas praescribere libuisset, alii prorsus futuri erant, iisdem manentibus rerum essentiis, eadem permanente corporum totalium compage, eventus. (Wolff [1724] 1983, § 9)

> *Si leges* ipsae *contingentes* sunt, si oppositae illis aliae, alios producturae effectus, repugnantiam non involvunt; manifestum est, quae nunc obtingunt, facta corporum et *phaenomena non* esse absolute *necessaria*. Non igitur hunc mundum esse absolute necessarium. (Bilfinger [1724] 2002, § 361)[28]

Since the laws of nature govern the transition from a given state of the world to the subsequent one, they concur to determine the course of the events. In the light of this insight into the nomological structure of the events, the inference from the contingency of the laws to the contingency of the world appears sound. Once granted that other laws of nature that are different from (and presumably incompatible with) the ones holding in our world are possible, it seems difficult to deny the possibility of alternative developments of the world's history. Obviously enough, a world where bodies would move according to some other set of laws of motion would

26 See, e.g., *Théodicée*, Préface (GP VI, p. 37, 44); and § 349 (GP VI, p. 321).

27 See *Théodicée*, § 345, § 350 (GP VI, p. 319, 322); and Discours, § 2-3 (GP VI, pp. 50-51).

28 A more detailed account of the whole issue is in Bilfinger's *Dilucidationes* ([1725] 1982, § 167-184).

be different from the actual world. Hence, if other laws are possible, then other worlds must be possible as well.

In his lengthy Latin works of the 1730s, Wolff still upholds the contingentist view on the laws of nature. The laws of motion would be necessary only if they flowed from the essence of bodies, but in that case, they could be deduced from this essence by the principle of contradiction; hence, they are contingent, because any demonstration of them must have recourse to the principle of sufficient reason (cf. Wolff [1731] 1964, § 527). Wolff emphasises the anti-Spinozist significance of this conclusion, mainly with respect to the possibility of miracles, but he does not state Argument *L* for the contingency of events.

As I suggested elsewhere (cf. Favaretti Camposampiero 2011b, 2012), the soundness of Argument *L* is conditional upon granting that the laws of nature are arbitrarily established – a view that conflicts with the Leibnizian as well as Wolffian attempt to ground the nomological order of the world in its ontology. Argument *L* requires that *the same* set of substances that constitute the actual furniture of the world could have been supplied by God with different sets of laws, so as to yield alternative stories. After choosing the substances that should inhabit the universe, God would have still been considering the different possible evolutions of this same 'population' according to the various sets of laws he could impose on it. Now, such a picture of the relation between laws and substances is at variance with some fundamental tenets of Wolff's *General Cosmology* – and this explains the absence of Argument *L* from this work.

In Wolff's *Cosmology*, a consequence of the contingency of the laws of motion is the contingency of the «order of nature» ([1731] 1964, § 561) – a term that expresses the intrinsic lawfulness and regularity that is detectable in all natural events.[29] However, since natural events are nothing but dynamical changes, the order of nature is properly found in the modifications of motive forces (§ 558).[30] Hence, Wolff claims that a different order could be obtained only if bodies were endowed with different active forces. And since such forces 'result' from what Wolff calls the 'elements of material things' (or simply 'elements', for sake of brevity), which are the simple substances that ultimately constitute the physical world, it follows that the order of nature would be different only if other elements existed, instead of the actual ones.[31]

29 No doubt, this concept comes from Leibniz's *Théodicée*, Discours, § 2 (GP VI, p. 50): «Cette necessité physique est ce qui fait l'ordre de la nature, et consiste dans les regles du mouvement, et dans quelques autres Loix generales».

30 For the claim that forces result from simple substances, see Wolff [1731] 1964, § 180.

31 «Si alius esse debet ordo naturae, elementa alia existere debent» (§ 569).

This strongly suggests the view that the laws of nature supervene on the elements, the immaterial atoms of the material world, containing the ultimate reasons of all the features of bodies. If it is so, then one set of substances is compatible with only one set of laws. It is impossible to obtain a different world just by modifying its nomological structure, while preserving the same ontological furniture: «Si alius existeret deberet mundus, elementa alia existere deberent» (§ 570).

After all, it seems that even Argument *L* contains an implicit appeal to conceivability – or better, to imaginability. Since we know (according to Leibniz's doctrine) that the laws of nature have no absolute necessity, we can feel free to imagine what would happen to our world if some alternative laws were held in it. In the 1730s, however, Wolff was even more cautious than before about drawing conclusions from such imaginary pictures. This is especially evident when he rejects the possibility of the same elements being ordered differently from how they actually are (§ 570n). Wolff maintains that, given a definite set of elements, all the spatio-temporal relations among those elements are fixed as well, since the way the elements are related to each other is univocally determined by the intrinsic features of each element (§ 571). We have, of course, a strong intuition that we can imagine alternative orders among the very same elements; but this epistemic fact is explained away by Wolff as a consequence of our having an 'imaginary notion' of space. Namely, we imagine space as a real being, as though it were an empty repository, which could be filled with elements arranged in all different ways (§ 571).[32]

We could say that, in Wolff's mature system, the order of nature (and, hence, the laws of mechanics) as well as the spatio-temporal relations among bodies supervene on the elements of bodies themselves – on their internal states and forces. A metaphysics of this sort, viewing the intrinsic features of simple substances as determining every feature of the physical world (its structure, laws, history, etc.), was likely to prevent Wolff from using Argument *L*. Moreover, it also undermined another Leibnizian argument for the plurality of possible worlds, as we shall presently see.

3.3 Time, Space, and Matter: Argument Tsm

The contingency of the order of nature is presented by Wolff as the crucial premise of what will be later called the physico-theological proof of God's existence (cf. Charrak 2006, pp. 76-77). It would be a fallacy, claims Wolff, to infer that an ordering entity must exist from the mere fact that the natural world is ordered. To draw the conclusion, we further need to

32 On space and time as imaginary beings, cf. Favaretti Camposampiero 2011a.

show, on the ground of independent premises,[33] that the actual order is contingent (Wolff [1731] 1964, § 561n; [1718] 1972, sect. 2, ch. 3, § 41).

This gives a hint about the function that the arguments for contingency play in Wolff's metaphysics. They are not primarily aimed at making room for divine choice among possible worlds, as was the case in Leibniz's and Bilfinger's theodicies; rather, Wolff uses them as steps in proving that God exists.

Indeed, Wolff's favourite argument for God's existence is the proof *a contingentia mundi*, showing that the existence of the world, as a series of contingent beings, must have its sufficient reason in a necessary being. What the *Cosmology*'s argument from mutability is for is to support the premise needed to prove God's existence *a contingentia mundi*: the world contains a series of contingent beings, whose sufficient reason is not to be found within the series, but in a necessary being, which does not belong to the series itself ([1731] 1964, § 81-90).

Of course, Wolff's proof heavily draws on Leibniz's *Monadology* (§ 36-38, GP VI, pp. 612-613). However, an argument *a contingentia* for God's existence can be found in the *Theodicy* as well. And this argument – as Wolff did not fail to notice – includes a rather peculiar argument for the contingency of the world.

Argument ***TSM***:

> *Dieu est la premiere raison des choses*, car celles qui sont bornées […] sont contingentes et n'ont rien en elles qui rende leur existence necessaire; étant manifeste que le temps, l'espace et la matiere, unies et uniformes en elles mêmes, et indifferentes à tout, pouvoient recevoir de tout autres mouvemens et figures, et dans un autre ordre. Il faut donc chercher *la raison de l'existence du Monde*, qui est l'assemblage entier des choses *contingentes*: et il faut la chercher dans la *substance qui porte la raison de son existence avec elle*, et laquelle par consequent est necessaire et eternelle. (*Théodicée*, § 7, GP VI, p. 106)

A similar account of contingency, as the possibility of filling space and time in different ways, is put forth by Wolff in his *Luculenta commentatio*, in the same paragraph where we have found a version of argument *L*. Here, Wolff contends that his system ascribes to the universe as much contingency as is possible, for it affirms that the actual cosmic structure is contingent and that all events are contingent as well (in virtue of argument *L*). Other bodies, different from the actual ones, could have filled space, and other

33 The independency requirement is meant to avoid any appeal to God's freedom in proving the order's contingency, since the argument for God's existence would otherwise be circular.

events could have filled time.[34] That is, alternative worlds would result from filling space with different objects, as well as from filling time with different events, by applying different laws to the same objects.

So it is no surprise that, later on, Wolff explicitly rejects Argument *TSM*, for the same reason why he abandons Argument *L* (if my hypothesis is true). Namely, he points out that in the above-quoted passage from *Théodicée*, § 7, «*Leibnitius* [...] existentiam Dei demonstraturus supponit tempus et spatium tanquam ens reale et absolutum, eique tribuit extensionem continuam uniformem» (Wolff [1730] 1962, § 611n; cf. Moretto 2004, p. 175n). In other words, the flaw in Leibniz's argument consists in presupposing the imaginary notions of space and time. Wolff is blaming Leibniz for not respecting the distinction – which Leibniz himself drew against Clarke![35] – between real and imaginary notions. Hence, he deems Argument *TSM* to be inconsistent with Leibniz's doctrine of the ideality of space and time.

Now, what about Leibniz's reference to a uniform and 'indifferent' matter, capable of being moulded in all sorts of shapes? This assumption must also have bewildered Wolff, who held such a uniform matter to also be an imaginary being (see, e.g., Wolff [1731] 1964, § 251n). In his *Natural Theology*, when proving that the elements of material things are contingent beings, Wolff warns against considering these elements as a matter that could take various forms or even exist without any form («materiam ad varias formas suscipiendum aptam, sine quibus existere possit») – as though created things were like human artifacts, and God were merely an artifex shaping a pre-existing matter ([1736] 1978, § 52n).

It is worth mentioning a related passage from this work, for it provides further confirmation of our previous remarks on Argument *L*. Wolff points out that it is the very idea of a uniform and perfectly pliable matter (or of material atoms, combinable at will) that makes conceivable the formation of different worlds from the same components. On the contrary, if one assumes (in keeping with Leibniz's doctrine) that the basic components of the physical world are simple substances – that is, completely determined individual substances – then every world turns out to be wholly determined by the properties of its components; and one sees that it is not possible

34 «[E]t spatium aliis corporibus repleri, quam repletum deprehenditur, et tempus aliis prorsus eventibus distingui potuit, quam in praesenti distinguitur, illis vel maxime iisdem manentibus» (Wolff [1724] 1983, § 9).

35 So, why did Leibniz state such an argument? Wolff's suggestion is that the passage at issue should be read as a remnant of Gassendi's influence on the young Leibniz. However, given Leibniz's subsequent engagement, in his letters to Clarke, against the imaginary notions of space and time, Wolff concludes that the confusion of such notions with the real notions was, in fact, alien to Leibniz's mature thought (Wolff [1730] 1962, § 611n). In his early review of the *Théodicée*, Wolff 1711, p. 116, did not mention the problem, but in rendering the passage at issue he avoided any reference to space and time.

to construct different worlds by using the same elements ([1736] 1978, § 755n; cf. [1731] 1964, § 251n).

4 Conclusion

Leibniz's *Theodicy* is built on the dual claim that the actual world is contingent and other worlds are possible. These characteristic statements became a cornerstone of Wolffian metaphysics and spread widely throughout the German pre-Kantian philosophical debate. Although further study would be needed to take stock of these developments, I think some clues have emerged, which can help in assessing the epistemological status of these fundamental propositions.

Wolff's odd claim in 1717 that the plurality of possible worlds is assumed by Leibniz without proof, is indeed revealing of both his aversion to unproved assumptions and his confidence that metaphysical truths can be justified. However, the review we have carried out allows for less confidence, for it shows that Wolff's and Bilfinger's concomitant attempts to give the required proof, by improving the arguments stated or suggested by Leibniz, were eventually not successful.

As Wolff came to realise, the doctrine of simple substances, which is the core of Leibnizian metaphysics, dictates the rejection of trans-world identity, and it consequently prevents us from accepting the two direct contingentist arguments drawn from *Theodicy*; that is, Argument *L* and Argument *TSM*. On the other hand, heterocosmic arguments had been weakened by Bilfinger's criticisms. Thus, Wolff could only use them with the utmost caution, finally dropping his previous attempt to state them as independent arguments.

In the light of the ultimate failure of such seemingly powerful arguments, we can be led to wonder whether Leibniz's option for contingency and possible worlds, against necessitarianism, was not, in fact, a basic assumption, such that no reasoning could force a differently minded adversary to accept it. A matter of intuition, rather than of rational deduction. And, as suggests the history of philosophy, conflicts of intuitions are hardly settled by argument.

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Theodicy and Reason
Logic, Metaphysics, and Theology in Leibniz's *Essais de Théodicée* (1710)
edited by Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero, Mattia Geretto, and Luigi Perissinotto

Receptions of Leibniz's Pre-established Harmony
Wolff and Baumgarten

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Abstract In the debate on causality in eighteenth-century Germany, Leibniz's theory of pre-established harmony plays a central role. This theory presupposes important metaphysical assumptions, such as the monadological structure of the world, and represents a radical alternative to the theory of *physical influx*. This paper provides an overview of the debate in the period between C. Wolff and A.G. Baumgarten. While the former is skeptical about the monadology and accepts pre-established harmony as a valid hypothesis only concerning the soul-body relationship, the latter endorses the monadological theory and therefore adopts pre-established harmony in its universal value. A further conclusion is that Leibniz's *Essais de Théodicée* can be taken as a robust point of reference to highlight the main metaphysical topics at stake in this lively intellectual scene.

Keywords Pre-established Harmony. Physical Influx. Monadology.

1 Introduction

Many historical reconstructions concerning the development of the theory of pre-established harmony and its relationship with the alternative theories of causality consider Kant's pre-critical thought as the highest point of a debate embracing almost two centuries and having in eighteenth century Germany its peak (cf. Watkins 1995, pp. 295-296; 1998, p. 197; Casula 1973, p. 11).

According to Giorgio Tonelli, it is only in his *Monadologia physica* (1756) that Kant is able to characterize in an original sense his theory of simple substance. Until that point this was more Wolffian than Leibnizian, insofar as it distinguished between material and spiritual substances (cf. Kant [1747] 1910, § 6, pp. 20-21; Tonelli 1959, p. 191). Tonelli also argues that the only evidence of Kant's distance from Wolff before 1756 is the admis-

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sion of a sort of *physical influx* (Tonelli 1959, p. 191).[1] Nonetheless this view deserves a deeper examination. Indeed, on the one hand, Wolff's position on this point is not always so clear and, on the other hand, a complete assess of its effective influence on Kant requires considering Alexander G. Baumgarten's *Metaphysica*, adopted by Kant as a textbook for metaphysics and anthropology during his whole teaching career.

Mario Casula (1973, p. 22) recognizes Baumgarten as a very peculiar figure synthesizing Leibnizian issues with the rigor of the Wolffian method. Casula stresses two points about Baumgarten: on the one hand, he emphasizes Leibniz's so-called panpsychism within the Wolffian metaphysics; on the other hand, he accepts the theory of pre-established harmony in its general sense, while Wolff takes it as a valid hypothesis only as regards the soul-body relationship.

Though agreeing on both these points, Tonelli suggests to rectify the picture sketched by Casula, since it would be too strong to identify «Wolff's basic position as non-Leibnizian, and Baumgarten's corresponding tenets as Leibnizian» (1959, p. 242). Instead of this stark distinction, Tonelli proposes to recognize two kinds of Leibnizianism: a Wolffian one, textually grounded on the *Système nouveau de la nature* (1695), and a Baumgartenian one, arising from the *Monadologie*. Tonelli provides both a chronological and a theoretical reason supporting this distinction: the *Monadologie* first appeared in German translation in 1720, the same year of Wolff's *Deutsche Metaphysik* (even though the Preface is dated 1719). Accordingly, Wolff seems to have concluded his basic metaphysical work before knowing the *Monadologie* (Tonelli 1959, pp. 242-243). In addition, in the *Système nouveau* Leibniz states a distinction between spiritual and material substances and makes the pre-established harmony derive from the problem of the connection between soul and body (GP IV, p. 485). These are exactly two typical features of Wolff's interpretation.

Casula replies that, even though the *Monadologie* and the *Deutsche Metaphysik* were published in the same year, both the theories of monads and pre-established harmony had already appeared in the *Principes de la nature et de la grâce fondés en raison* (1714). Furthermore, there is no doubt that Wolff was well acquainted at least with the *Essais de Théodicée* (cf. Casula 1979). Today we know that Wolff owned a copy of the *Monadologie* since 1717 through his scholar H. Köhler, who brought it from Wien in 1714 (cf. Lamarra, Palaia, Pimpinella 2001, pp. 59, 94; Poser 2004, p. 58), and it has been suggested that the anonymous Latin translator of the *Monadologie* could be Wolff himself (Lamarra, Palaia, Pimpinella 2001, p. 93). In addition, it has been defended that the ripest expression

1 Bianchi 1996, p. 481, underlines the Wolffian refusal of both physical influx and occasionalism, and the limited admission of pre-established harmony, even if only as a philosophical indemonstrable hypothesis.

of Wolff's theory of simple substance – and of its related consequences concerning the theory of pre-established harmony – must be found in his later Latin *Ontology* (1730) (cf. Soto Bruna 1991, p. 356).

In what follows we will try to show that if Wolff and Baumgarten can be assumed as the main characters within the history of the reception and development of the theory of pre-established harmony, the *Essais de Théodicée* can be considered as the most prevalent reference for this history.

In the *Théodicée* harmony is indeed carried up to signify also the harmony between the reign of Grace and that of Nature.[2] Accordingly, it is assumed by Leibniz in a more moral and theological sense than in the *Discours de métaphysique*, in the *Principes* or in the *Monadologie*. In the *Théodicée*, harmony is properly a plan concerned with God's rules about the world and his choice of the best among the possible worlds. However, such a perspective *presupposes* a world organized according to the two grounds of pre-established harmony and monadology.[3]

In order to provide a more detailed exposition of this history, we will also deal with the articulated context of Wolffianism until Baumgarten. Our aim is to evaluate the different positions emerging in the dispute between pre-established harmony and physical influx, which mark – with the 'third way' represented by occasionalism – the philosophical debate in the central decades of the eighteenth century in Germany.

2 Pre-established Harmony in the *Essais De Théodicée* and Its Presuppositions

The theory of pre-established harmony appears in the *Essais de Théodicée* already in the Preface, where Leibniz introduces his main interlocutor, Pierre Bayle. Bayle had discussed the theory in the entry 'Rorarius' of his *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1820, vol. 12, pp. 588-622, at 608-622). After his exchange with Leibniz,[4] he turned back to Leibniz's system while attacking the plastic natures proposed by Cudworth ([1678] 1977) and hosted by Le Clerc in his *Bibliothèque choisie*. Bayle contended that unintelligent natures, so as plastic natures, would weaken the theory that holds nature in general to be the best evidence that the universe has an

2 Cf. also *Principes de la Nature et de la Grâce, fondés en raison* (GP VI, pp. 598-606).

3 Such a perspective with reference to the *Théodicée* is effectively developed by Herring 1966.

4 Cf. *Théodicée*, Préface (GP VI, p. 40): Leibniz refers here to his reply to Bayle (cf. Leibniz 1698).

intelligent cause (1705, vol. 3, ch. 21, art. 11). Leibniz takes part in the debate with a note he sends to the *Histoire des Ouvrages des Savants*,[5] explaining that his system gives reason of the creation of animals without any plastic nature, but only by admitting pre-formation, that is to say, that the seeds, whose organization determines a certain body, already exist in the bodies that generate it, and so on, until the origin (*Théodicée*, GP VI, p. 40; cf. *Principes*, § 6, GP VI, p. 601).

In his *Réponse aux Questions d'un Provincial*, Bayle expresses some doubts about the possibility that God transmits to matter the faculty of organizing itself without transmitting also the knowledge of the whole organization (cf. 1704-1707, vol. 3, ch. 180). This objection astonishes Leibniz, who declares he cannot understand how and why God's power should be so limited (cf. *Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 41). This is the beginning of an articulated *querelle*, which goes through the whole text and concerns several metaphysical and theological issues. However, here we are concerned with Leibniz's reference to the central role of pre-established harmony, a theory that in this *querelle* is as basic as it was in the solution of the soul-body relationship (cf. cf. *Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 41). Leibniz states indeed that the pre-established harmony can explain also the agreement between Nature and Grace, the agreement of all things with one another (cf. § 62, pp. 136-137), and even the mutual actions between simple substances, that is, between monads (cf. § 66, p. 139). Now this statement sets the view of the *Théodicée* into a more general metaphysical perspective and turns the attention to the concept of world intended as totality of substances.

First, Leibniz strongly distinguishes between simple and composed substances by calling the former monads. Accordingly, he maintains that the general essence of substances (both simple and composed) consists in action (cf. § 393, p. 350; § 400, p. 354). Since every composed material substance is composed by simple, individual and immaterial substances, whose essence is action, Leibniz concludes that the ground of reality is unity. This means that if what is composed depends on what is simple, what is material depends on what is immaterial and, furthermore, what is not really a unity is not real at all. Only what is *unum per se* as *substantia simplex* is a being in the strict sense. This does not mean that something existing in a different way, for example a body, is nothing, but that the grounds of existence have to be found in the individual substance, namely, in the monad (cf. Herring 1966, pp. 144-145). Thus, in order to achieve a definition of the world, a well founded theory of simple substance is needed.

5 May 1705, art. 9: *Considération sur le principe de la vie et sur les natures plastiques* (GP VI, pp. 539-555).

As it is well known, monads have no direct relationship with one another. This idea is strictly related to the thesis that their essence consists in a spontaneous and representative action concerning the totality of the world and, as a consequence, the other substances: the monad is a mirror of the whole world and the adequateness of its representation is proportional to its perfection.[6] Such a structure is not compatible neither with physical influx nor with occasionalism. Rather, it deals with pre-established harmony. Insofar as it does not state a direct influx of God nor any interaction between substances, pre-established universal harmony seems to be the most adequate theory for preserving the perfection and stability of the universe since the moment it was created by God.

We will focus here on two of the different meanings of the pre-established harmony expounded in the *Théodicée*, both leading to liminal and challenging possibilities for Leibniz's metaphysics.

The first one dates back to the debate with the Jesuit Tournemine on pre-established harmony between soul and body. In an article published in the *Mémoires pour l'histoire des sciences et des beaux arts*, Tournemine (1703) claims the doctrine of pre-established harmony to account only for the interaction between soul and body, and not for their real union. In his first answer to Tournemine, appeared in 1708 in the *Mémoires de Trévoux*, Leibniz argues that the soul-body relationship, in his own view, can be conceived only in terms of phenomena and that pre-established harmony cannot solve the problem better than Descartes did. Though not denying the possibility of this metaphysical union, Leibniz concludes that it is a sort of 'mystery' (*Remarque de l'Auteur du Système de l'Harmonie préétablie sur un endroit des Mémoires de Trévoux du Mars 1704*, GP VI, pp. 595-596). Furthermore, in a letter to De Volder of 19 January 1706, in which he comments his response to Tournemine (before it was published in the *Mémoires*), Leibniz plainly confesses he cannot conceive a reason accounting for the metaphysical union of soul and body (GP II, p. 281). However, the end of the Preface of the *Théodicée* presents a turning point in Leibniz's treatment of the soul-body union. Leibniz explains that his refusal of the theory of a physical influx between body and soul does not contradict a certain metaphysical union between soul and body, which he calls *suppôt* (*Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 45). Further definitions of *suppôt* are given in the *Preliminary Discourse*, where it is defined as «a true union between the soul and the body» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 55, GP VI, p. 81, cf. also *Théodicée*, § 59, GP VI, p. 135). Such a concept seems to have scholastic origins (cf. Look 1998, pp. 512-514), insofar as the main

6 See the *Eclaircissement des difficultés que Monsieur Bayle a trouvées dans le système nouveau de l'union de l'âme et du corps* (GP VI, p. 542), *Discours de métaphysique*, § 9 (GP IV, pp. 433-434), *Monadologie*, § 72-77 (GP VI, pp. 619-620), *Letter to Arnauld*, 23 March 1690 (GP II, p. 136).

characteristic of the *suppositum* is action: «Action pertains to *supposita*». Both soul and body act and their metaphysical union arises from the harmony between their actions, which mutually harmonize as if they belonged to one individual substance, namely, the *suppôt*.

The second meaning of pre-established harmony we will focus on concerns the relationship between different simple substances. In a draft of a letter of 1706 to the Latin translator of the *Théodicée*, the Jesuit Des Bosses, Leibniz raises the problem of the unity «which joins the different simple substances or monads existing in our body with us», so that it makes an *unum per se*, and he admits that he cannot explain «how, in addition to the existence of individual monads, there may arise a new existing thing, unless they are joined by a continuous bond [*vinculum continuum*]» (Bodemann [1895] 1966, Br. 96, Bl. 11). Then, in a letter of April 1709 to Des Bosses, Leibniz adds a new term to the former expression 'metaphysical union': 'real metaphysical union' (GP II, p. 371). No further explanations are given here, but, after that in September 1709 Des Bosses raises the problem of accounting for the transubstantiation, Leibniz introduces the concept of *vinculum substantiale*. He defines it as a much more perfect relation that should be added to real relations, and by which a new substance arises from many substances and adds to them a new substantiality (cf. GP II, p. 438). Leibniz also states that the *vinculum substantiale* unites the monads dominated by one supreme monad, that is, makes an organic body a machine of nature. Although, as a Lutheran, Leibniz considers himself not personally committed to this debate, the *vinculum substantiale* is not simply an *ad hoc* hypothesis, but it has rather a relevance in its own right, especially if compared to the *suppôt*.

Leibniz equates indeed such a unity to the *vinculum metaphysicum* of soul and body, and affirms that it constitutes a *suppositum* (*Letter to Des Bosses*, 5 February 1712, GP II, p. 439). However, though Leibniz seems here to treat *suppositum* and *vinculum substantiale* as equivalent terms, a distinction should be maintained between them. On the one hand, the *suppôt* arises from its constituents, «matter and form, entelechy and matter, or soul and body», so that it adds no new substantiality and states a pure metaphysical union based on pre-established harmony. On the other hand, the *vinculum substantiale* «is to be considered a new substance-like thing beyond the original group of substances» (Look 1998, p. 519) and it is problematically introduced by Leibniz in order to explain a real relationship between substances, in particular between a dominant and a subordinate monad.[7]

7 Leibniz himself admits the difficulty of conciliating the theory of the *vinculum substantiale* with his previous metaphysical tenets: cf. the response to Tournemine (GP VI, p. 596), and the letter to Des Bosses of 30 June 1715 (GP II, p. 439). Although the metaphysical relevance of the *vinculum substantiale* cannot be denied, most scholars acknowledge the

In his exchange with Des Bosses Leibniz gives more details about the *vinculum substantiale*, which is taken as the ground of the unity of a composite, even corporeal substance. This clearly goes beyond what is stated in the *Théodicée*. In any event, for our purpose we need to highlight that none of these two kinds of relationship denies pre-established harmony. Rather, both of them at least suppose it, though Leibniz was urged to conceive them in response to two objections against this theory (cf. Reinhard 2011, p. 85).

At the same time, in light of the exchanges with Tournemine, De Volder and Des Bosses, Donald Rutherford (1995, pp. 276-277) suggests to be careful in taking the *Théodicée* as the most authentic expression of Leibniz's position concerning the themes at stake. Nevertheless, the investigation concerning the reception of these topics by Leibniz's immediate posterity requires to consider the Leibnitian texts, which at that time were most known and widespread. Therefore, the *Théodicée* has to be fully included in this analysis.

3 Wolff's Conception of Pre-established Harmony

Despite Wolff's reluctance to admit his early familiarity with the *Théodicée* (cf. Wuttke [ed.] 1841, pp. 140ff.; Poser 2004, pp. 57-58), we know that in 1711 he wrote an anonymous review of it in the *Acta eruditorum* (March 1711, pp. 110-121; April 1711, pp. 159-168). Furthermore, he was the copyist of the Leibnizian manuscript since 1707.[8] Thus, the *Théodicée* has to be considered one of Leibniz's texts that Wolff was earliest and most deeply acquainted with. Moreover, the 1708-1711 phase of the Leibniz-Wolff exchange clearly reveals Wolff's skepticism towards Leibniz's harmonic solution of the relations between primary and derivative force in dynamics. On this basis, let us turn to Wolff's consideration of the monadological problem, which is tightly linked to pre-established harmony as it is treated in the *Théodicée*.

Wolff deals with the problem of the monadological structure of the world and its explanation in terms of pre-established harmony in several works. However, we should focus at first on two assumptions stated in the *Psychologia rationalis* and defining the limits of his adherence to Leibniz. The first concerns the dualism between soul and body (cf. Wolff [1734] 1972, § 44-48), conceived through the argument that body cannot have the main

difficulties in making this concept consistent with the more general picture of Leibniz's metaphysics (cf. Adams 1994, pp. 299-307; Look 1999; 2000, pp. 219-220).

8 For a complete history of such a discovery and its consequences in the evaluation of Wolff's debt to Leibniz cf. Tognon 1989.

property of soul, namely, the capability of thinking. Accordingly, Wolff argues that «facultas cogitandi corpori vel materiae communicari nequit, quam per se non habet» (§ 46), so that «anima materialis, seu corpus esse nequit» (§ 47). He is even more explicit when he quotes Leibniz in order to reject the term 'monad' for the simple substances (§ 644n).[9] This strong discontinuity towards Leibniz's foundation of the material nature on the spiritual one leads to the second point. Wolff limits indeed the representative activity to the soul ([1734] 1972, § 547),[10] so that the distance between spiritual and material substance is deepened.

The *Psychologia rationalis* can be regarded as the most explicit Wolffian text about the dualism of matter and spirit. It provides also a stance about pre-established harmony as the best theory for giving reason of the relationship between soul and body (§ 639), whose union is significantly defined as a *suppositum* (§ 724). This is not the first time that Wolff takes this theory as possible limitedly to the soul-body union. Indeed, he had already assumed it in the *Deutsche Metaphysik*. Here, however, though rejecting physical influx and occasionalism as well (cf. [1719] 1983, § 765), Wolff claims he is not convinced about the existence of the Leibnizian unities of nature (*Einheiten der Natur*), that is, the monads. Accordingly, he admits the possibility of the existence of monads, but he is still skeptical in admitting the universal harmony between things (§ 598-600). In the notes to these paragraphs Wolff doubts more sharply about the admission of Leibnizian monads and consequently of universal harmony (cf. [1724] 1983, § 215, 216). A clear rejection of monads concerning his theory of simple substance is stated in the *Ontologia*, where Wolff refers to Suarez (cf. Suarez 1597, part 2, disp. 30, sect. 3, § 3; École 2001, p. 123), who defended the distinction between simple and composite substances through the analogy with the distinction between immaterial and material substance (cf. Wolff [1730] 1977, § 684). In this paragraph there is a meaningful point of contact between two crucial frameworks of Wolff's distance from Leibniz: the separation between spiritual and material world, and the refutation of the Leibnizian monad with its power of representing the whole world (cf. Soto Bruna 1991, pp. 356-357). As an implicit consequence of the second feature, we can easily infer the rejection of the generalized version of pre-established harmony.

Thus, if Wolff restricts the representative power to the soul and, at the same time, he rejects the Leibnizian monad as a simple substance, what are then the characteristics of the simple elements composing material substances? To answer this question, we should refer to the *Cosmologia*

9 For the refusal of the term 'monad' see also Wolff [1731] 1964, § 182n.

10 Already in the *Deutsche Metaphysik*, Wolff was skeptical as regards the attribution of a *vis representativa* to any substance (cf. [1719] 1983, § 600).

generalis, where Wolff introduces and describes these elements, which he calls *atomi naturae* (cf. [1731] 1964, § 186, 187n, 216n). While Leibniz's monads are metaphysical points endowed with a representative force, Wolff's elements are physical (but not material)[11] points, whose *vis activa* is physical too and not representative (§ 187n, 191, 192, 196, 216n).[12] The former are closed and their only mutual relationship relies on God, while the second have real mutual relations (§ 202, 204-208). In addition, even though the bodies in Leibniz are grounded on simple substances, they cannot be considered as *composed* by simple substances. On the contrary, the Wolffian elements are the last components of bodies (cf. Wolff [1730] 1977, § 793-794; [1731] 1964, § 176; Poser 2004, p. 58).

In other words, in order to understand to what extent Wolff admits pre-established harmony, we need to state the qualitative distinction between the soul-body harmony and the harmony between monads. Accordingly, one should avoid the common mistake of thinking that Wolff admits only the first and does not provide any convincing reason for this choice. Wolff's limitation to the soul-body harmony can be regarded as a simple consequence of his separation between spirit and matter, which marks a distance from Leibniz. The essence of the *ens* as it is described in the *Ontologia* coincides indeed with its logic possibility (non-contradiction), while the atoms of the *Cosmologia* give reason of both the composition of bodies, and the relationships between them. Most importantly, this account is not provided in an ideal, but in a real sense. Indeed, differently from Leibniz, Wolff assigns to the physical substances a generic *vis activa*, putting the elements into a real relationship.

4 Wolff's Disciples and the Physical Influx

As Eric Watkins points out (1998, p. 141), it would be incorrect to consider Wolff as a physical influxionist only because of his reluctance to attribute a representational power to all monads. There are indeed no evidences of Wolff's acceptance of this theory as regards the relationship between material substances. In addition, as concerns the soul-body relation, in the notes to the *Deutsche Metaphysik* Wolff is skeptical about both physical influx and occasionalism ([1724] 1983, § 273-277). Moreover, in the *Psychologia rationalis* he clearly rejects both these theories to the advantage of pre-established harmony ([1734] 1972, § 573-588, 605-611, 622-639).

11 Thus, the 'atomi naturae' are opposed to the 'atomi materiales', insofar as the former have no extension, no figure, no magnitude, they fill no space and so they are not divisible, whereas the latter possess all these characteristics (cf. Wolff [1731] 1964, § 184-188).

12 Wolff rejects the term monad in the note to § 182, but he admits it a few later in the note to § 187, with the important clarification that his points are physical.

However, it is not clear to what extent Wolff admits the theory of the pre-established harmony. Although he cannot assume it because of his disagreement with Leibniz in taking the monad as a simple substance, there are indeed no certain clues that he adopts an alternative theory. This state of affairs has generated a great variety of interpretations and revisions within the so called Wolffian school, and some of the main developments of physical influx come from authors traditionally considered as Wolffians.[13]

Despite the moderate positions of some Wolffians like Thümmig ([1725-26] 1982) and Baumeister (1739), there are some other Wolff's disciples that defend the pre-established harmony more strongly than Wolff, and with an even more explicit reference to Leibniz than to Wolff. This is the case of Bilfinger ([1723] 1984). He supports the theory of pre-established harmony against the attacks of authors like Bayle and Tournemine, but at the same time he clearly maintains that his adherence to pre-established harmony does not concern the universal version presented in the *Théodicée* (§ 62, GP VI, pp. 136-137).

On a more polemical side, Andreas Rüdiger, in his *Gegenmeinung*, supports the need of a new definition of the concepts of *body*, *soul* and *matter*, and polemically addresses the chapter of the *Deutsche Metaphysik* devoted by Wolff to rational psychology. Rüdiger accepts the postulate that 'no action can occur in another without contact' and, accordingly, he exposes the difficulties arising from the Wolffian separation of spiritual and material substance, since it would prevent the soul and the body to act on each other (1727, § 16). Rüdiger does think indeed that soul and body can mutually interact. In order to explain how this is possible, he proposes a new definition of the essence of bodies as elasticity and identifies extension and creation (cf. § 11). According to him, extension is no longer an exclusive characteristic of bodies, but it also pertains to soul, insofar as it is created. In Rüdiger's view, body and soul belong to the same genus (cf. § 12), and this grounds the possibility of their reciprocal actions, making both Descartes' occasionalism and Leibniz's pre-established harmony useless. Beyond the standard objections against Leibniz's pre-established harmony and Wolff's limited version of it, Rüdiger charges the latter with inconsistency, since Wolff adopts a Cartesian dualism, but systematically confounds physical and metaphysical abstraction by pretending to deduce the properties of bodies (*abstractio physica*) from the metaphysical power of the soul (r2-s2, pp. 37-40).

Another author who was significantly influenced by Wolff on these topics is Johann Christoph Gottsched. The distinction he provides in the first part of his *Vindiciae systematis influxus physici* between the three canonical

13 For a more complete picture of this debate see Watkins 1998, pp. 145-166; Pasini 1994. The most important historical source on this polemic is Ludovici [1737] 1966, 2, § 533-597.

causal theories is akin to the one proposed by Wolff in his *Psychologia rationalis* (cf. Gottsched 1727-1729, 1, § 1-12). In the second part of his work he presents a defence of physical influx as regards the soul-body relationship against the two classical objections. He rejects Descartes' objection to the possibility of an interaction between soul and body – which relied on the heterogeneity of their essence (thought and extension) – by claiming that one would need a more complete account of thought and extension in order to be sure that all the properties of soul and body come from their essences. Against the alleged violation of the law of conservation of the quantity of motion implicated by the physical influx, Gottsched stresses that Leibniz had demonstrated this law – in the formulation given by Descartes and his followers – to be false, insofar as it is not motion, but the *vis viva* that is conserved. Then he adds that the physical influx between soul and body does not contradict even the correct formulation of the law, since the *vis viva* (*motrix*) in the world is always the same, whether the action of the soul on the body (or vice versa) is actually expressed or impeded by external actions (cf. 2, § 14-15). In the *Erste Gründe der Gesammten Weltweisheit*, Gottsched goes even further by stating his most original argument in favour of physical influx. He proposes to understand the word *influx* not literally (as a 'flowing'), but in a metaphorical sense, as the power of a substance to act directly on another (cf. [1733-34] 1983, § 1067). On this ground, after providing an argument for the physical influx between soul and body (cf. § 1080), he tries to extend this theory to the relations between bodies (cf. § 1081).

This extension is explicitly stated by Martin Knutzen (1735) and Johann Peter Reusch ([1735] 1990), whose works in support of physical influx appear in the same year. The most original feature of their defence consists in their substantial acceptance of Leibniz's and Wolff's assumptions. Nevertheless, they maintain, as Watkins puts it, that «nothing Leibniz and Wolff say prohibits interpreting this 'well-founding' relationship [between simple and composite] as a causal relationship, because the simples are necessary conditions for their composites, just as a cause is a necessary condition for its effect» (Watkins 1998, p. 183).

Knutzen's basic assumption is that the force of moving itself that characterizes the Leibnizian monad implies the force of moving other things (1735, § 28). This is also demonstrated through impenetrability (§ 29). Thus, Knutzen faces the two traditional objections against physical influx and argues that this latter does not implies the migration of accidents from one substance to another, but only a change in the substance subjected to the action of another. Furthermore, Knutzen rejects the objection concerning the conservation of the *vis viva* in the world as not valid for the soul-body interaction by means of a Leibnizian reference: Leibniz deduces indeed this law from the principle of inertia, which cannot hold for the soul (§ 53).

In his *Systema metaphysicum* Reusch argues, like Knutzen, that no force is transferred from one substance into another through influx, but rather that certain new limitations arise through the proper substantial force that is only caused contingently by a substance ([1735] 1990, § 792). Reusch is even more explicit than Knutzen in dissolving the heterogeneity between soul and body by resolving every kind of relation (included the relation between spiritual and material substances) into a relation between the simple substances composing the complex (§ 794).

Knutzen and Reusch are maybe the finest holders of physical influx, since they extend this theory to the relations between physical substances. However, as mentioned, this theory should be considered as only allegedly Wolffian, since the Wolffian texts do not allow room for a strong defense of it.

5 Leibnizian Frameworks in the Defence of Pre-established Harmony: Baumgarten and Meier

The year 1739 marks a turning point in the debate about the causal theories thanks to the first edition of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica*. Baumgarten's main goal is to turn back to a Leibniz-oriented version of pre-established harmony. Accordingly, he defends the theory of pre-established harmony both by recovering some crucial features of the Leibnizian metaphysics neglected by Wolff – as a *vis representativa* for any monad – and by adding to the monad other characteristics, like impenetrability, which are hard to find in Leibniz (cf. Baumgarten 1739, § 398). Thus, in the section of the *Metaphysica* concerning cosmology, Baumgarten deals with the physical influx between monads (cf. 448-451), but he does not endorse it, insofar as it is a real influx. Instead, he thinks the only true influx is the ideal one (cf. § 463). This latter consists in that: the passivity of a substance affected by the action of another substance should be considered at the same time as an action of the passive substance (cf. § 212, 463). This thesis, as well as the picture of the soul-body harmony as a particular application of the more general harmony between substances, is drawn of course from the *Monadologie* (cf. § 52, 78, GP VI, p. 615) but more explicitly from the *Théodicée* (cf. *Théodicée*, § 66, GP VI, pp. 138-139, as regards the bodies cf. *Specimen dynamicum*, GM VI, p. 251; Baumgarten 1739, § 741, 762). As regards the soul-body relationship, Baumgarten attributes to the soul some characters that are hardly reconcilable with the soul's immateriality. Indeed, although the human soul, as a spirit, is immaterial, indivisible, without quantitative magnitude, so that it is not a *phaenomenon substantiatum*, it is nevertheless placed in space, since it coexists with the monads posited outside of itself (cf. § 742-746). According to Baumgarten «a soul with the

body, with which it is in the closest interaction [*commercium*] constitutes an animal», and when this soul (and this body) is human, this animal is a human being (§ 740).

Georg Friedrich Meier, a disciple of Baumgarten, goes even further in the defence and development of pre-established harmony, and devotes to it a treatise. In his positive defence of the pre-established harmony, he shares Baumgarten's opinion, but he proposes new arguments against physical influx. He defines a natural passivity as a harmonious change in a substance of the world that has its reason in another thing (cf. Meier 1743, § 14). Since an influxionist would define every natural passion as a real passion, he would exclude every kind of internal change in the substance as well. However, according to Meier, this would be contradictory, because the real causation between substances cannot occur without an internal change of each substance involved in the causal relation (cf. § 49). The assumption of Baumgarten's distinction between real and ideal influx is determinant here, but Meier adds that the smallest substance (or force) cannot physically act on another, since it would imply the admission of at least two determinations (one in the active and the other in the passive substance) even smaller than the smallest, which would be contradictory (cf. § 51).

Finally Meier provides a development of Baumgarten's definition of ideal influx, stating that its nature is not merely analogical or fictional, but really based on the representational nature of the substance in general (once more against Wolff), and thus on the common nature of substances, insofar as they were created by God from eternity (cf. § 12).

6 Final Remarks

Turning back to the debate described in the introduction, maybe a middle way between Tonelli and Casula is the most suitable. Wolff is certainly not a Leibnizian when he deals with the relationships between material substances, but this is the consequence of his choice of limiting the representative power to the spiritual substance, namely, to the soul. This leads indeed to a sort of Cartesian dualism.[14] However, pre-established harmony is conceived by Leibniz as a unitary concept, which embraces both the soul-body relation and the relation between substances. We can acknowledge that he is mainly concerned with the former, but this is not sufficient to

14 It has been argued that, about these themes, Wolff was more influenced by Descartes than by Leibniz: see Wundt 1924, p. 48; de Vleeschauwer 1932, p. 676. Cataldi Madonna 2001, p. 17 substantially agrees with this position but is more careful. See also Poser 2004, p. 59, quoting here Campo 1939, p. 276, 284 about the Wolffian refusal of an individualistic and organicist conception of substance.

explain why Wolff hypothetically admits pre-established harmony only in its former application and not in its broader meaning.

Thus, despite the debate about the effective influence exerted by the *Monadologie* on Wolff's thought, we could maintain that the *Théodicée* is one of the most influential texts in Wolff's reception of the concept of pre-established harmony, since it earlier and more widely allows Wolff not only to adopt the soul-body limited version of this theory, but also to assess and reject its broader meaning.

Yet for the same reason the *Théodicée* can be taken, not less than the *Monadologie*, as Baumgarten's main reference in his endorsement of pre-established harmony *tout court*, as it emerges from his defence of the reciprocity of activity and passivity in the ideal influx between substances.

However, in none of these cases it is possible to assess the real weigh of the limit-concepts of *suppôt* and *vinculum substantiale* in the reception of pre-established harmony. This holds even more for the *vinculum substantiale*, which was introduced by Leibniz in the exchange with Des Bosses, whose echo on the immediate posterity cannot be compared to that of a printed writing.

Certainly, the richness of this concept in Leibniz's thought is demonstrated by the breadth of its discussion over the following years, a breadth of which Wolff and Baumgarten are probably the most influent pre-Kantian interpreters.

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Part III
Challenging Reason:
Revelation and the Problem of Evil

Theodicy and Reason
Logic, Metaphysics, and Theology in Leibniz's *Essais de Théodicée* (1710)
edited by Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero, Mattia Geretto, and Luigi Perissinotto

The Sanctity of Reason and Complementarity of Revelation in the *Essais de Théodicée*

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Abstract Aim of this article is to determine to what extent philosophy and 'revealed message' can be viewed separately in Leibniz's *Theodicy*, in order to demonstrate that Leibniz's texts seem to try to reconcile 'reason' and 'revelation', a complementarity justified by what can be called the 'sanctity' of reason. Leibniz's reference to the 'image of Divinity' reveals that he refers to both 'reason' and 'intelligence', thus confirming his position in a well-rooted exegetical tradition that goes directly to the Late Classical concept of *synderesis* (συντήρησις). Although Leibniz does not explicitly use the term *synderesis*, he still refers to 'pure reason', a reason instilled in man by God and free of corruption. The conclusion in the last section examines some interesting passages in the *Theodicy*, § 91 and § 397, in which Leibniz deals with reason and original sin, and seems to hold that reason has somehow eluded the corrupting nature of original sin.

Keywords Reason. Untainted Reason. Synderesis.

1 The Nexus Between Philosophy and Theology in the *Theodicy*

Reason and revelation in Leibniz's *Theodicy* are so inextricably woven together that attempting to define the terms separately is a complex task. We should first seek to determine the extent to which the *Theodicy* may be considered a purely philosophical work, or whether it concerns more dogmatic theology or biblical exegesis. Indeed, it is no coincidence that following the work's publication, in a letter to Des Billettes, Leibniz jokingly refers to himself as a 'public preacher'.[1] Moreover, at certain points in the text one feels that Leibniz holds forth from the pulpit, just as in other parts

1 See Leibniz's letter to Des Billettes dated 28 June, 1713. In the letter Leibniz half-jokingly imagines he is Des Billettes' confessor («Si j'etois votre Confesseur…») and it is difficult to ascertain to what extent he is being serious, although there is no reason to doubt his good faith: «A quoy servira donc la pieté et la bonne morale, si elle ne porte à la charité? Vous

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his theory of monads seems to hold sway. It is precisely this combination of the two apparently different approaches that may cause bewilderment.

One point to bear in mind, nevertheless, is that when Leibniz undertakes a philosophical analysis of issues concerning faith or dogma, he does so because he firmly believes that the philosophical aspect is congruent with revelation, as well as the fact that philosophy can defend faith, while safeguarding reason. Hence, I shall start by providing some examples of his approach, beginning with the aspect of the 'complementarity' of the Scriptures.

Let us first examine the biblical doctrine of creation, which is central to Leibniz's philosophy. In the *Theodicy*, this doctrine is never challenged. On the contrary, it is present right from the beginning of his *Preface* when he uses the term 'creature', expressed in terms of the *continuing creation of creatures* (Cf. *Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 37). Leibniz must surely have been aware of the implications arising from the use of this term, namely the acknowledgement of a revealed truth. I agree with Cook's affirmation (in turn based on Loemker)[2] in a recent article that «Leibniz did believe that creation is an act of divine revelation» (Cook 2009, p. 456); and also with his further assertion that it is a revelation «open at least in part to all rational beings and not an esoteric mystery open only to the converted» (Cook 2009, p. 456).

However, when considering divine revelation we are faced with something 'more' that reason alone can only suppose or conjecture, but cannot demonstrate. Cook's assertion that «Leibniz did believe that creation is an act of divine revelation» is borne out by the fact that on this point Leibniz shares the same view as Aquinas, who – according to Leibniz 'together with other great scholars' – had established that the doctrine of creation could not be proved through reason alone. At this point I would like to mention Leibniz's famous letter/treatise to De Remond on Chinese philosophy, better known as *Discours sur la Theologie naturelle des Chinois*. Leibniz at a certain point considers the question of the relation between '*Li*', the First Principle, and '*Ki*', a kind of universal primitive matter, and from these he goes on to demonstrate the compatibility between Chinese philosophy and Christian theology:

> Il est vrai qu'il semble que les Chinois ont cru, que le Li a d'abord et [a] tousjours produit son Ki, et qu'ainsi l'un est aussi eternel que l'autre. Mais il ne faut point s'en étonner, puis qu'apparemment ils ont ignoré cette Revelation, laquelle seule nous peut apprendre le commencement

me voyes en train de precher et apres avoir publié mes Essais de Theodicée, il me semble que je suis predicateur public» (GP VII, p. 458).

2 See Loemker 1972, p. 88.

> de l'univers. *S. Thomas et d'autres grands docteurs ayant jugé, que ce dogme ne peut point être demonstré par la seule Raison*. Cependant quoy que les anciens Chinois disent formellement que le Ki ne perit jamais, ils ne disent point assés expressement qu'il n'a jamais commencé. Et il y a des gens qui croyent que le commencement de leur Empire tombant dans le temps de Patriarques, ils pourroient avoir appris d'eux la Creation du monde. (Leibniz 2002, Section II, § 24, p. 51-53, italics mine; cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 46, a. 2)

However, acknowledging creation as an act of divine revelation does not mean that Leibniz considers revelation as the *conditio sine qua non* in order to achieve an understanding of God. To illustrate this point Leibniz tackles the interpretations of a Jesuit priest, Father Longobardi, in his *Traité sur quelques points de la religion des Chinois*, in which the priest asserts that the ancient Chinese do not make a clear distinction between spiritual (God or angels) and material substances, because they lack the concept of creation out of nothing by an infinite power. Leibniz points out that in that case 'for the same reason Plato could not have identified a god, either'![3] On the contrary, Leibniz believed that although biblical revelation was absent from Chinese theology, there could still have been the acknowledgement of a supreme God.[4] Indeed, the demonstration of the existence of the First Principle could be achieved through what he believed to be the best means, namely 'natural' reason. In his *Discours préliminaire* of the *Theodicy*, he states: «Or nous n'avons point besoin de la foy revelée, pour savoir qu'il y a un tel principe unique de toutes choses, parfaitement bon et sage. La raison nous l'apprend par des demonstrations infaillibles» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 44, GP VI, p. 75).

Thus, Leibniz believes that creation, which is an example of 'truth above reason', is a 'complementary truth' to the existence of a First Principle demonstrable through reason alone. The concept of creation as 'truth above reason' integrates or completes with added information what pure reason has achieved, which does not mean to say that revealed truth or mystery, once accepted, can or even need to be further analysed in detail to understand 'how' this comes about. As he states in § 54 of his *Discours préliminaire*:

3 «Par la même raison Platon n'auvoit [sic] point reconnu une divinité». Cf. N. Longobardi, *Traité sur quelques point de la religion des Chinois*, Section X in Leibniz 2002, p. 129; translation mine.

4 On this point see Patrick Riley's 2008 masterful analysis of Leibniz's 1714 Vienna lecture on *The Greeks as Founders of a Sacred Philosophy* (the title is provided by Riley himself). The conclusion of the writing, which is untitled, merely ends with «Recitata in Academia quadam Viennae 1.jul[ii] 1714».

> Ainsi nous convenons que les mysteres reçoivent une explication, mais cette explication est imparfaite. Il suffit que nous ayons quelque intelligence analogique d'un mystere, tel que la Trinité et que l'Incarnation, afin qu'en les recevant nous ne prononcions pas des paroles entierement destituées de sens: mais il n'est point necessaire que l'explication aille aussi loin qu'il seroit à souhaiter, c'est à dire; qu'elle aille jusqu'à la comprehension et au comment. (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 54, GP VI, p. 80)

I shall now provide another example of Leibniz's view. Take, for example, two concepts such as the soul's immortality and the afterlife, two metaphysical truths that Leibniz believes demonstrable on the basis of the same principles within his own system. The simplicity of simple substances/souls prevents them from perishing (cf. *Monadologie*, § 4-5, GP VI, p. 607); and in the same way organic bodies can never be annihilated, but only evolve or diminish (cf. § 73-76, pp. 619-620). Now, all these philosophical considerations, dealt with in a separate section in the *Theodicy*, evidently adhere to the concept of revealed truth which addresses the afterlife.

A third example of Leibniz's arguments, which is more challenging, is the concept of the 'real presence' of Christ in the Eucharist. In this case it is the metaphysical premises based on the ontological rules of matter and body that guarantee the conclusion that Jesus Christ's words, uttered at the Last Supper, should be taken literally in a 'reasonable' manner. Let us examine this issue more closely as it is set out in Leibniz's *Discours préliminaire* (already discussed in his *Nouveaux Essais*, Book 4, ch. 18).

In § 16 Leibniz introduces the question stating that applying philosophy to theology has been much debated amongst Christians and that the Mysteries of the Trinity, Incarnation and the Eucharist have been the most disputed (cf. *Théodicée*, Discours, § 16, GP VI, p. 59). His account of the defence of orthodox Christianity against the Socinians (also known as 'Photinians') by scholars such as Abraham Calovius or Johann Adam Scherzer (his old master in Leipzig) and other worthy scholars enables Leibniz to address the distinction between what is or is not necessary and indispensible in natural or philosophical truths when dealing with the Protestant dispute over the Eucharist. The dispute concerns various doctrinal differences between the 'Reformed' (Zwingli's followers) and the 'Evangelicals'. The former reduced the Eucharist to mere representation, as they affirmed that 'a body can only be in one place at a time', while the latter, like Luther, believed in the real presence of Christ, interpreting a more literal meaning of the Scriptures. At this point Leibniz, evidently having reflected at length, believes he can provide a better explanation of the position of the Evangelicals:

> Ils rejettent, à la verité, le dogme de la Transsubstantiation qu'ils croyent peu fondé dans le Texte; et ils n'approuvent point non plus celuy de la Consubstantiation ou de l'impanation, qu'on ne peut leur imputer que faute d'être bien informé de leur sentiment, puisqu'ils n'admettent point l'inclusion du corps de Jesus Christ dans le pain, et ne demandent même aucune union de l'un avec l'autre: mais ils demandent au moins une concomitance, en sorte que ces deux substances soyent reçues toutes deux en même temps. Ils croyent que la signification ordinaire des paroles de Jesus Christ dans une occasion aussi importante que celle où il s'agissoit d'exprimer ses dernieres volontés, doit être conservée; et pour maintenir que ce sens est exemt de toute absurdité qui nous en pourroit éloigner, ils soutiennent que la maxime philosophique, qui borne l'existence et la participation des corps à un seul lieu, n'est qu'une suite du cours ordinaire de la nature. (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 18, GP VI, pp. 60-61)

The philosophical maxim regarding the impossibility of a body to be in two places at the same time is thus valid for Evangelicals *only in reference to the ordinary course of Nature*, *without destroying the presence of the body of Christ* – says Leibniz – '*in keeping with the most glorified body*'.[5]

Further on, Leibniz discusses the dispute between Nicolaus Vedelius and Johann Musäus, two theologians, in order to introduce the question of applying reason to faith. He states that their views concerning the main rules of the use of reason are basically similar, and that conflict arises over the manner of applying these rules (cf. *Théodicée*, Discours, § 20, GP VI, p. 62). What Leibniz sets out here is substantially also what he believes himself, namely that revelation cannot contradict truths whose necessity is 'logical' or 'metaphysical'. On the contrary, revelation can deny principles whose necessity is 'physical', as it is founded only upon the laws prescribed by God for the ordinary course of Nature. According to Leibniz, the initial question of whether a body can occupy several places at once in the supernatural order (a question that concerns the application of the rule just mentioned), could be solved through reason, *only by explaining exactly in what consists the essence of body*. In fact, he decides not to proceed further and the only thing he does is to mention the Cartesian extension as primary attribute of body (cf. *Théodicée*, Discours, § 20, GP VI, p. 62).

This brief affirmation and abrupt conclusion implies that his own conception of bodies and matter, originating in his monadological doctrine,

5 «Ils ne detruisent pas pour cela la presence ordinaire du corps de nostre Sauveur, telle qu'elle peut convenir au corps le plus glorifié» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 18, GP VI, p. 61).

could represent a method to acknowledge or make room for truths of faith such as the *real presence*, in this case a truth founded on the literal meaning attributed to Christ's words at the Last Supper. Thus, the real presence in the Eucharist is a further example of the truth of faith that is acknowledged because 'prepared', 'admitted' or 'tolerated' by reason.[6]

2 On the Correct Way, According to Leibniz, to Interpret Controversial Passage in the Scriptures and Mysteries

At this point it is worth examining briefly the issue of the literal interpretation of the Scriptures, addressed by Leibniz in the *Nouveaux Essais*:

> Mais il me semble qu'il reste une question que les auteurs dont je viens de parler n'ont pas assés examinée, que voicy: Supposé que d'un costé se trouve le sens literal d'un texte de la *Sainte Ecriture*, et que de l'autre costé se trouve une grande apparence d'une impossibilité Logique, ou du moins une impossibilité physique reconnue; s'il est plus raisonnable de renoncer au sens literal ou de renoncer au principe philosophique? (*Nouveaux Essais*, Book 4, ch. 18, A VI, 6, p. 499)

Leibniz answers the question according to the principle mentioned above:

> Il est seur qu'il y a des endroits où l'on ne fait point difficulté de quitter la lettre, comme lors que l'*Ecriture* donne des mains à Dieu, et luy attribue la colere, la penitence, et autres affections humaines. Autrement il faudroit se ranger du costé des Anthropomorphites, ou de certains fanatiques d'Angleterre, qui crurent qu'Herode avoit esté metamorphosé effectivement en un renard, lors que Jesus Christ l'appella de ce nom. (*Nouveaux Essais*, Book 4, ch. 18, A VI, 6, pp. 499-500; cf. *Théodicée*, Discours, § 21)

Although a literal interpretation is sometimes preferred, as seen with the example of the Last Supper, in general Leibniz's position is to reject any kind of fanaticism or extreme point of view. Indeed, he is more inclined to choose the most 'reasonable' or 'likely' interpretation. This is why in the *Theodicy* Leibniz refrains from speculation such as that put forward by Robert Fludd, for example, on the notion that the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden was a poison, instead limiting himself

6 See Leibniz's fundamental analysis of this question in the critical edition of collected writings, entitled *Demonstratio Possibilitatis Mysteriorum Eucharistiae* (cf. A VI, 1, pp. 501-517).

to saying that «we cannot enter into this detail».[7] Later on, Leibniz briefly attempts to explain the events in the *Book of Genesis* in terms of natural causes, as when he refers to the 'separation of light from darkness', with the purpose to reconcile this event with past cataclysms and concluding that, as can be seen, ultimately order emerges out of apparent chaos (*Théodicée*, § 245, GP VI, p. 263).

Although justifying or in any case acknowledging 'truths above reason' such as mysteries, which are truths based on particular passages of revelation, Leibniz believes that necessary and eternal truths should not be abandoned, because doing so would only fuel the arguments of those enemies of religion who challenge religion and mysteries (cf. *Théodicée*, Discours, § 22, GP VI, p. 64). According to Leibniz, mysteries should not be taken to absurd lengths, as this would make the notion of mystery itself absurd. He believes that it is beyond dispute the fact that generally truths of faith are contrary to our experience and are implausible if only considered from the point of view of reason. Nevertheless, nothing absurd should be included. For instance, in order to uphold the Holy Trinity one cannot abandon the logical principle that if two things are the same as a third, then they are the same as each other, as by abandoning the basis of logic and principle of contradiction there would no longer be the means to reason with certainty. In the case of applying this rule to the Holy Trinity, Leibniz specifies that the word 'God' ultimately has two separate meanings.[8]

What is 'against reason' is that which is contrary to logical or metaphysical necessary truths, namely truths that are absolute and indispensable in all cases. On the other hand, what is 'above reason' is only against ordinary experience and understanding (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 23, GP VI, p. 64). Leibniz considers this distinction 'well founded' and he goes on to say:

> Une verité est au dessus de la raison, quand nostre esprit (ou même tout esprit creé) ne la sauroit comprendre: et telle est, à mon avis, la Sainte Trinité; tels sont les miracles reservés à Dieu seul, comme par exemple, la Création; tel est le choix de l'ordre de l'Univers, qui depend

7 «Mais nous ne pouvons pas entrer dans ce detail» (*Théodicée*, § 112, GP VI, p. 164).

8 «Il s'ensuit de là que certains Auteurs ont été trop faciles à accorder que la Sainte Trinité est contraire à ce grand principe, qui porte que deux choses, qui sont les mêmes avec une troisième, sont aussi les mêmes entr'elles; c'est à dire, si A est le même avec B, et si C est le même avec B, qu'il faut qu'A et C soyent aussi les mêmes entr'eux. Car ce principe est une suite immediate de celuy de la contradiction, et fait le fondement de toute la Logique; et s'il cesse, il n'y a pas moyen de raisonner avec certitude. Ainsi lorsqu'on dit que le Père est Dieu, que le Fils est Dieu, et que le Saint Esprits est Dieu, et que cependant il n'y a qu'un Dieu, quoyque ces trois Personne different entr'elles, il faut juger que ce mot Dieu n'a pas la même signification au commencement et à la fin de cette expression. En effect, il signifie tantôt la Substance Divine, tantôt une Personne de la Divinité» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 22, GP VI, pp. 63-64).

> de l'Harmonie Universelle, et de la connoissance distincte d'une infinité de choses à la fois. Mais une verité ne sauroit jamais être contre la raison [...]. (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 23, GP VI, p. 64)

In the event that reason provides water-tight objections to a purported dogma or mystery and therefore the two cannot be reconciled, Leibniz argues that we should have to consider such dogmas or mysteries as *false* and not 'incomprehensible'.[9]

In § 29 of the *Discours préliminaire*, in order to illustrate the dangers of literal interpretation Leibniz provides an exegetical analysis of a famous passage in the Sacred Scriptures. To say that the wisdom of God is 'foolishness to men', and moreover, citing verse from the *First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, that «l'Evangile de Jesus Christ est une folie aux Grecs, aussi bien qu'un scandale aux Juifs», never means that 'foolishness' ['folie'] may be interpreted as meaning 'absurdity'. Similarly, he refers to hyperbolic statements such as those to be found in *De Carne Christi* by Tertullian («mortuus est Dei Filius, credibile est, quia ineptum est; et sepultus revixit, certum est, quia impossibile»), which can only be understood in the sense of «an appearance of absurdity» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 50, GP VI, p. 78).

Thus, Leibniz certainly does not consider reason as a 'coureuse qui ne sait où s'arrêter' (like Bayle), which, like Penelope 'destroys her own work'. Indeed, Leibniz believes Bayle should condemn the abuse of reason rather than condemn reason itself (cf. *Théodicée*, Discours, § 46, GP VI, p. 76). This reflects Leibniz's essential approach to his own faith, ultimately dictated by the fact that 'the light of reason is no less a gift of God than that of revelation'.[10] Hence, it is the light of reason itself that acknowledges the validity of the 'motives of credibility' that give way to faith as before a new light (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 29, GP VI, p. 67).

3 The Sanctity of Reason and *Synderesis*

Now, at first glance we could be tempted to say that it is quite simple to show how the famous specular Augustinian phrases on seeking knowledge 'credo ut intelligam' and 'intelligo ut credam' as interpreted by Leibniz results in a definite inclination towards 'intelligere'.[11] The anti-Bayle stance

9 «Si les mysteres étoient irreconciliables avec la raison, et s'il y avoit des objections insolubles, bien loin de trouver le mystere incomprehensible, nous en comprendrions la fausseté» (*Théodicée*, § 294, GP VI, p. 291).

10 «La lumière de la Raison n'est pas moins un don de Dieu que celle de la Revelation» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 29, GP VI, p. 67).

11 Although this expression does not appear in St. Augustine's works, the expressions in Sermon 43 are highly significant (my grateful thanks to Prof. Giovanni Catapano for all his help).

in the work certainly reflects this, seeing as we know that Leibniz accused Bayle of wishing to silence reason «après l'avoir fait trop parler» (*Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 39). In the *Theodicy* Leibniz, pleading for God's cause, at the same time offers himself as reason's advocate. However, as here reason is considered 'sacred' it becomes evident that the apparently simple idea is rather more complex than had previously been thought. I shall now attempt to explain why and in what way for Leibniz reason assumes connotations of 'sanctity' as mentioned in the title, a characteristic which could contribute to putting back into perspective what is so often dismissed as Leibniz's 'religious intellectualism'.

Let us go back to section § 29 of the *Discours préliminaire* seen above. Here Leibniz clearly states that the light of reason is a gift of God («la lumière de la Raison n'est pas moins un don de Dieu que celle de la Revelation»: *Théodicée*, Discours, § 29, GP VI, p. 67). Again, later on in the *Discours préliminaire*, Leibniz expresses this idea of a 'divine gift' and to this he adds an important point, namely that such a gift consists in a «natural light that has remained with us in the midst of corruption».[12] Moreover, in the second 'resumptive table' of the *Causa Dei* the light of the intellect, together with freedom of will, is defined by Leibniz as 'vestiges of integrity' left after original sin (*Causa Dei*, Tab. II, GP VI, p. 462).

Now, right from the beginning of the work Leibniz argues that reason consists of a 'linking together of truths',[13] specifying in § 63 of the *Discours* that this is apprehended through the 'light of nature'.[14] In § 26 of the First Part reason is recognized as the 'image of Divinity',[15] just as in § 147 of the Second Part the 'image of Divinity' is also called by Leibniz the 'intelligence' that God has given to man.[16]

Thus, when Leibniz refers to reason he does so in a narrow and technical sense, interpreting it as (1) the logical linking together of truths, also

12 «Mais comme cette portion de Raison que nous possedons est un don de Dieu, et consiste dans la lumiere naturelle qui nous est restée au milieu de la corruption; cette portion est conforme avec le tout, et elle ne differe de celle qui est en Dieu, que comme une goute d'eau differe de l'Ocean, ou plustost comme le fini de l'infini» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 61, GP VI, p. 84).

13 «La Raison consistant dans l'enchainement des verités [...]» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 1, GP VI, p. 49).

14 «Je reponds, comme j'ay déjà fait, que la Raison icy est l'enchainement des verités, que nous connoissons par la lumiere naturelle» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 63, GP VI, p. 86).

15 «[...] la Raison, qui est une image de la divinité [...]» (*Théodicée*, § 26, GP VI, p. 118).

16 «Voicy encor une raison particuliere du desordre apparent dans ce qui regarde l'homme. C'est que Dieu luy a fait present d'une image de la divinité, en luy donnant l'intelligence» (*Théodicée*, § 147, GP VI, p. 197).

defined as the 'inviolable linking together of truths',[17] but he interprets reason in a wider sense as (2) *the natural light of intelligence* by means of which the linking together of truths appears to us or, we could say (pointing out another key term), to our *minds*.

The difficulty with terms that arises as a result of this interpretation can be traced to the similarly complex biblical concept of 'image of the Divinity'. On this point it is well worth considering St. Augustine's famous comment on the *Book of Genesis* as a model for all subsequent interpretations and shifting of positions or of importance between the terms 'reason', 'mind' and 'intelligence':

> […] cum dixisset: *ad imaginem nostram*, statim subiunxit: *et habeat potestatem piscium maris et volatilium caeli* et ceterorum animalium rationis expertium, ut videlicet intellegamus in eo factum hominem ad imaginem Dei, in quo irrationalibus animantibus antecellit. Id autem est ipsa ratio vel mens vel intellegentia vel si quo alio vocabulo commodius appellatur. (St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, 3, 20, 30; 1989, p. 146)

If the 'precious gift' that distinguishes rational souls or spirits from all other creatures in the universe is a divine gift, then all the premises based on blind, steadfast faith in the potentiality of this gift change. As we have seen, this is a gift that Leibniz believes is untainted by original sin, and thus, since the gift of reason is from God, whether in the form of *ratio*, *mens* or *intelligentia*, it can be considered 'holy'. At the end of the day, a well-known medieval concept is being revisited here, namely the concept of *synderesis* (συντήρησις), which we shall now consider.

The concept of *synderesis* runs through the history of Scholastic philosophy, and its treatment can be found in the works of Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Meister Eckhart and Rusbroeck, probably rooted in Neo-Platonic thought to the extent that philosophers often associated the most noble, divine or 'purest' part of the soul with the idea of light or 'spark of conscience', a term introduced by St. Jerome, who is credited with being the founder of this tradition (cf. St. Jerome, *Comm. In Ezech*., I, c. I).

The concept of *synderesis* may also be found in famous passages of biblical exegesis in reference to the image of reason/light, such as in the *Book of Proverbs*: «The lamp of the Lord searches the spirit of a man; it searches

17 «Car j'ay remarqué d'abord que par LA RAISON on n'entend pas icy les opinions et les discours des hommes, ny même l'habitude qu'ils ont prise de juger des choses suivant le cours ordinaire de la nature, mais l'enchainement inviolable des verités» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 23, GP VI, p. 64).

out his inmost being».[18] This was then expanded by the Cambridge Platonists, in particular Whichcote and Culverwell with their famous vision of the spirit as 'candle of the Lord' (cf. Greene 1991). The Scolastic tradition largely viewed the *scintilla conscientiae* as that part of the spirit uncontaminated by the Fall, by virtue of which man could discern the primary principles of moral action.

Although Leibniz does not explicitly use the term *synderesis*, he still refers to 'pure reason', a reason instilled in man by God and free of corruption. There are two key sections in the *Theodicy* that illustrate this point and which, to conclude, we shall now consider: § 91 and § 397.

4 Sections 91 and 397 in the *Theodicy*

With regard to the question of the origin of 'substantial forms' and 'souls', in the *Theodicy* Leibniz argues that the theories of 'traduction' and 'eduction' are equally inexplicable when it is a question of finding the origin of the soul, whether of man or beast (§ 89) and proposes his own 'creationist' solution (§ 90) consisting in the preformation of the bodies of living organisms so that the 'generation of an animal' is nothing but 'transformation' and 'augmentation'. Similarly, once the soul is created and conserved, so is the whole animal, whose apparent death is seen as a simple 'envelopment'. Once he has set out these general rules that concern all living beings, Leibniz goes on to consider the conception of man: «ainsi je croirois, que les ames, qui seront un jour ames humaines, comme celles des autres especes, ont été dans les semences, et dans les ancetres jusqu'à Adam, et ont existé par consequent depuis le commencement des choses, tousjours dans une maniere de corps organisé» (*Théodicée*, § 91, GP VI, p. 152).

Such souls remain in the state of sentient souls or animals, able to perceive and feel, but not to reason, until the moment when they are generated as man, when they are provided with reason. The two alternatives suggested in order to explain how the soul acquires reason are the following: «soit qu'il y ait un moyen, naturel d'elever une ame sensitive au degré d'ame raisonnable (ce que j'ay de la peine à concevoir) soit que Dieu ait donné la raison à cette ame par une operation particuliere, ou (si vous voulés) *par une espece de transcreation*» (*Théodicée*, § 91, GP VI, p. 153; italics mine).

Indeed, in § 91 it is precisely the latter solution favoured by Leibniz, a solution which is moreover supported by revelation:

18 Pr. 20,27 in *The NIV Interlinear Hebrew-English Old Testament, Four Volumes in One Genesis-Malachi* (Gran Rapids (MI): Zondervan Publishing House, 1987, p. 547. See also Psalm 4,6: «Many are asking, 'Who can show us any good?' Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord». Cf. *The NIV Interlinear Hebrew-English Old Testament*, 350.

> Ce qui est d'autant plus aisé à admettre, que la revelation enseigne beaucoup d'autres operations immediates de Dieu sur nos ames. Cette explication paroit lever les embarras, qui se presentent icy en Philosophie ou en Theologie, puisque la difficulté de l'origine des formes cesse entierement, et puisqu'il est bien plus convenable à la justice Divine de donner à l'ame, déja corrompue physiquement ou animalement par le peché d'Adam, une nouvelle perfection qui est la raison, que de mettre une ame raisonnable par creation ou autrement, dans un corps, où elle doive être corrompue moralement. (*Théodicée*, § 91, GP VI, p. 153)

Thus, it appears evident that through this 'immediate operation by God' and 'kind of transcreation' occurs, as it were, the miraculous instilling of the 'pure/immaculate gift' mentioned above, which comprises the 'mind', 'reason', 'intelligence', or using another key expression, 'natural light'. Towards the end of his work, in § 397 Leibniz goes back to reconsider the content of the paragraph highlighting the most important points, and here he provides more on what he had termed earlier as a 'kind of transcreation':

> J'ay même montré un certain milieu entre une creation et une préexistence entiere, en trouvant convenable de dire que l'Ame préexistante dans les semences depuis le commencement des choses, n'étoit que sensitive, mais qu'elle a eté elevée au degré superieur, qui est la raison, lorsque l'homme, à qui cette ame doit appartenir, a eté conçû, et que le corps organisé, accompagnant tousjours cette ame depuis le commencement, mais sous bien de changemens, a eté determiné à former le corps humain. (*Théodicée*, § 397, GP VI, p. 352)

Leibniz acknowledges that he also said that such an elevation of sentient souls can be attributed to the extraordinary or 'miraculous' operation of God. Nevertheless, at this point he adds a further comment:

> Cependant il sera bon d'adjouter, que j'aimerois mieux me passer du miracle dans la generation de l'homme, comme dans celle des autres animaux: et cela se pourra expliquer, en concevant que dans ce grand nombre d'Ames et d'Animaux, ou du moins de corps organiques vivans qui sont dans les semences, ces ames seules qui sont destinées à parvenir un jour à la nature humaine, enveloppent la raison qui y paroitra un jour, et que les seuls corps organiques de ces ames sont preformés et predisposés à prendre un jour la forme humaine [...]. (*Théodicée*, § 397, GP VI, p. 352)

In this last solution reason is presented as something which has always been present in chosen and predestined souls (and bodies). How this is

present is not explained. However, reason is clearly presented as the *potential characteristics of some souls* (and bodies), namely only those souls who will become human souls, and so 'spirits', one day. Through this solution reason is somehow 'preserved' or mysteriously safeguarded until the time when the individual is generated to which the soul belongs. This is why Leibniz refers to this last solution as 'a kind of *traduction*' according to which «it does not derive the soul from a soul, but only the animate from an animate», (in this way denying the process as being miraculous).[19] Up to now, each of the various solutions seen here more or less markedly reveal Leibniz's emphasis on the 'exceptional' or should we say 'divine' nature of reason.

In his *Discours préliminaire* Leibniz was convinced that he had managed to settle the conflict between reason and faith, placing reason 'at the service of faith'.[20] He was also certain that he had proved that reason and faith were far from being incompatibile with one another and that both were on an equal footing when it came to confirm and reconcile «ce que la lumière naturelle et la lumière revelée nous apprennent de Dieu et de l'Homme par rapport au Mal» (*Théodicée*, § 1, GP VI, p. 102). Hence, 'natural light' is on a par with 'revealed light' in a kind of inseparable relationship to which Leibniz appeals when tackling some issues, as for example when dealing with the thorny question of the fate of unbaptised children when they die:

> Beaucoup de Prelats et de Theologiens de France qui sont bien aises de s'eloigner de Molina, et de s'attacher à Saint Augustin, semblent pencher vers l'opinion de ce grand Docteur, qui condamne aux flammes eternelles les enfans morts dans l'age d'innocence avant que d'avoir reçu le baptême. [...] Mais il faut avouer que ce sentiment n'a point de fondement suffisant *ny dans la raison, ny dans l'Ecriture*, et qu'il est d'une dureté des plus choquantes. (*Théodicée*, § 93, GP VI, p. 154; italics mine)[21]

19 «Cette production est une maniere de Traduction, mais plus traitable que celle qu'on enseigne vulgairement: elle ne tire pas l'ame d'une ame, mais seulement l'animé d'un animé, et elle evite les miracles frequens d'une nouvelle creation, qui feroient entrer une ame neuve et nette dans un corps qui la doit corrompre» (*Théodicée*, § 397, GP VI, pp. 352-353).

20 «Apres avoir reglé les droits de la Foy et de la Raison, d'une manière qui fait servir la Raison à la Foy, bien loin de luy être contraire» (*Théodicée*, § 1, GP VI, p. 102).

21 The conciliation of reason with revelation as the basis of a common ground is to be found again in Leibniz's correspondence with Des Bosses, in this case to refute the idea that angels are totally disembodied: «Sententia de omnimoda sejunctione Angelorum a corporibus, *non rationem, non scripturam*, sed solam opinionem communem scholarum pro fundamento habet» (GP II, p. 319; italics mine).

By virtue of the knowledge and acceptance of 'creation' and the incorruptible nature of 'natural light', in Leibniz reason and revelation are united with a common purpose, a unity which would subsequently be divided under Kant and German Idealism. Indeed, it would be interesting to develop this particular line through a lexicographical analysis of Leibniz's expression 'pure reason' and compare it with Kant's subsequent use of the same term, and the difference Kant draws between the terms *Verstand* (Understanding) and *Vernunft* (Reason).

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Theodicy and Reason
Logic, Metaphysics, and Theology in Leibniz's *Essais de Théodicée* (1710)
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Leibniz and the Anti-Theodicy of Bayle

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Abstract Bayle was the great adversary of Leibniz's theodicy, and it was only when faced with Bayle's reprimands against every possible theological justification of evil that Leibniz completely developed his own theory. The *Theodicy* was written, in fact, as a continual counterpoint to Bayle's arguments in the *Dictionnaire historique et critique* and other works. Bayle indicated the bankruptcy of any rational theology in confronting the question of evil, suggesting to the faithful the renunciation of every real cognitive content of their belief, and reducing it to mere *empty faith*. Christian theology thus became incapable of distinguishing itself from deism or atheism, from which it was separated only by a '*dispute de mots*'. It was the moral attributes of God in particular which Bayle considered completely ungraspable; and this was the challenge which Leibniz sought to take up, revisiting with courage and lucidity the arguments of both the theological and metaphysical traditions.

Keywords Bayle. Rational Theology. Evil.

1 The Great Adversary of Leibniz's Theodicy

It is well-known that Leibniz referred to Bayle more than once as the great adversary of the *Essais de Théodicée*, yet the historical and theoretical importance of this has been somewhat underrated. At the date when this paper was presented two important conferences focussing on the relationship between the two philosophers were announced to take place in 2012, which may herald a reappraisal of this aspect in current research. Until now it has often appeared as if there is an invisible wall separating scholars of Bayle and Leibniz, notwithstanding their mutual aims.[1] I will shortly

1 There are of course a number of studies focussing on the relation between the two writers, though these often tend to leave aside the question of theodicy and anti-theodicy. For a useful general overview see De Tommaso 2006. See also Delvolvé 1906, pp. 324-335; Andreassi Liberatore 1932; Robinet 1959; Corsano 1971; De Negroni 1991; Gros 1998; Bouchilloux 2003; de Gaudemar 2003; Remiatte 2003. Amongst the studies particularly

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have something to say about the attitude of the former (among whose ranks I number myself); firstly however it is necessary to concern ourselves with the latter, often keen to demonstrate that the *Essais de Théodicée* are not 'reducible' to the controversy with Bayle, as if there were something limiting in the contentious feature of the work, an aspect which is in fact essential for a full understanding of its most innovative aspects.

This tendency of Leibnizian historiography includes among its representatives illustrious figures, among whom I will limit myself to mention only the authors of the two most recent monographs which have focussed with especial attention on the diachronic development of Leibniz's investigation into the nature of evil. Both Gianfranco Mormino – particularly attentive to the ontological and scientific implications of the *Théodicée* – as well as Paul Rateau – whose mammoth study has rapidly become the standard work on the *Théodicée* – consider the refutation of Bayle as the occasion for the fulfilment of a project which was conceived and theoretically delineated independently and prior to this. Mormino's treatment of this aspect is drier and free of nuances, while Rateau's is more ambiguous. The former restricts the theoretical prominence of the argument with Bayle to the discussion of the nature of physical laws. Against the thesis that God could have freely established other laws, Leibniz maintains that the existing laws (known to us) are absolutely necessary to the harmony and coherence of the world and to its concordant recognition by all intelligent beings (cf. Mormino 2005, pp. 167, 175, 181-197). For his part, taking up again the time-honoured judgement of Baruzi, according to which the dispute with Bayle was only an 'occasional cause' of Leibniz's own studies, Rateau maintains that this is a 'véritable «cause occasionnelle» déterminante': but this oxymoron serves rather to invalidate the evidence with which the *Théodicée* declares its own Baylean derivation (2008, p. 40, 402).[2] According to Rateau (pp. 402-420), the *Théodicée* cannot be 'limited' to the conflict with Bayle, for at least three reasons: 1) Leibniz's project was already fully mature by 1695-1697; 2) the presence of Baylean references should not be overvalued; 3) Leibniz's doctrine was more than a mere reply to Bayle.[3] I however believe that all three of these arguments can be refuted: the first and the third on the basis of elements furnished by Rateau himself; the second on the basis of a series of unequivocal facts, with which I propose to commence.

relevant to the present discussion cf. Barber 1955, pp. 58-89; Norton 1964; Nedergaard-Hansen 1965; Paradis 1969; Bianchi 1990, 1992; Bahr 2005; Paganini 2008; Pécharman 2010. The proceedings of conferences held in Paris and Montreal (September-October 2012) has been edited in Leduc, Rateau, Solère 2015.

2 Cf. Jean Baruzi's judgement 1907, p. 195, n 4 and the analogous evaluations of Grua 1953, p. 16, 356.

3 Against the devaluation of the relation with Bayle in the *Théodicée* M. Lærke 2009 has reacted opportunely, however without adding any new elements.

2 The Presence of Bayle in Leibniz's Essays of *Théodicée*

It can be shown that the *Théodicée* functions as a continual objection to the arguments in the *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697, 1702) and to Bayle's later writings, namely the *Continuation des pensées diverses* (1704), the *Réponse aux questions d'un provincial* (1704-1707), and the *Entretiens de Maxime et de Themiste* (1707).[4] In a certain sense, it is a critical commentary on Bayle conducted on the basis of the metaphysics which Leibniz had elaborated throughout the preceding years, and which now, for the first time, was made public in all its complexity. I am aware that in order to be adequately substantiated my conviction would require a systematic critique of Bayle's presence throughout the *Essais de théodicée*, a task which I am clearly not in a position to accomplish in this paper. It would involve, in effect, the realisation of the project once proposed by Gaston Grua, who intended to publish a critical edition of the *Essais* which would document with minute accuracy Bayle's presence: a project unfortunately to date not realised by anybody (cf. Grua 1953, p. 17, 369).[5]

According to what Leibniz himself affirmed in a letter to Thomas Burnett of Kemney as well as in the preface itself, the *Essais de théodicée* arose from conversations with Sophie Charlotte concerning the articles on 'Manichaeism' in the *Dictionnaire* (cf. GP III, pp. 320-322; GP VI, pp. 38-39). Grua is inclined to diminish the importance of these conversations, which took place in the summer of 1702, convinced that the greater part of the work in fact took place after the Queen's death in 1705 (Grua 1953, p. 494 n. 449).[6] I however do not believe that Leibniz only had Bayle's most recent works at hand: certain passages of the *Théodicée* clearly presuppose at least a partial reading of the *Dictionnaire*. Leibniz's notes attest to a 'continual' reading of the articles found under the letter *A*, and also those articles between *Origène* (dedicated – not by chance – to the polemic against Le Clerc) and *Pauliciens* (one of the most celebrated

4 Following standard practice I cite the *Dictionnaire historique et critique* from the fourth Amsterdam edition (Bayle 1740: hereafter cited as DHC) and Bayle's successive works from the *Oeuvres diverses* 1737: hereafter OD).

5 Referring to the second and third parts of the *Essais de Théodicée* in particular, Grua shows that Leibniz's position regarding Bayle follows «les méandres de textes commentés»: this can in fact be said too of the DP and the first part. Grua tended to diminish the theoretical aspect of Bayle's presence, in contrast to M. Paradis, whose important *thèse* was however marred by an inadequate reconstruction of Leibniz's defensive strategy.

6 Grua maintains that Leibniz's relation with the DHC was mostly mediated by the successive works; for a diametrically contrary view – which must nevertheless be seriously considered – cf. Bianchi 1990.

articles dealing with the 'Manichaean' argument).[7] But obviously we have clear proof of his reading of many further articles too, some of which I will refer to shortly.

Leibniz's report of the genesis of the *Théodicée* was, as is surely obvious, only partial: nevertheless it confirms the active interest with which he followed the polemic between Bayle and the so-called *rationaux*, among whom were to be found figures well-known by him such as the Calvinist pastor Isaac Jaquelot, now sheltering in Berlin, and the great Arminian erudite Jean Le Clerc, now in exile in Amsterdam owing to his opposition to the intransigent Calvinism of his native Geneva. Jaquelot, in particular, maintained close contact with Leibniz throughout the dispute, seeking him out and asking for advice (cf. GP III, pp. 437-482; GP VI, pp. 556-573; Grua, pp. 64-68). Of this contact Bayle himself probably had news, because via Basnage de Beauval he threw down the gauntlet to Leibniz, goading him into personally descending into the arena: so at least Leibniz and Jaquelot both interpreted the letter of 15 January 1706, to which the German replied with tactful irony, cautiously avoiding the provocation (GP III, pp. 142-145, 480-482).

Even if Leibniz did not escape the discussion concerning the theory of pre-established harmony or the question of whether animals possess souls, he nevertheless avoided crossing swords directly with Bayle over the question of evil, justifying this behaviour by stating his intention not to rile such a daring adversary of Christian theology. Only after Bayle's death would he enter directly into the conflict: behaviour which appeared and frankly could appear questionable, though whose real motives need to be fully understood. Leibniz probably feared not only the dialectical ability of his Huguenot opponent, but also and above all his capacity to put his adversaries into difficulty regarding their denominational background, with arguments *ad hominem* which tended to raise doubts and recriminations in the 'orthodox' environment. The polemics in which Bayle was involved often ended by assuming disagreeable accents and reciprocal reproaches: waiting until his opponent was no longer able to respond directly, Leibniz was instead able to regulate the tone of the dispute to his own pleasure.

As is well-known, Bayle's works are often referred to in the *Théodicée*: but the textual references are much more numerous than explicit citations. This applies to the first part of the work, which, according to Rateau, was developed independently from Bayle, and constitutes, together with the *Causa Dei*, the theoretical and systematic fulfilment of Leibniz's thinking. This first part is also grounded on a series of continual (albeit

7 On this second group of articles cf. *Remarques critiques de Leibniz sur le Dictionnaire de Bayle*, in Leibniz 1854, pp. 173-186. On *Quelques remarques faites en feuillettant la lettre A du Dictionnaire de M. Bayle* (noted in LH, p. 64) cf. the important notice by Bianchi 1990, pp. 321-324.

implicit) references to the articles found in the *Dictionnaire* and in successive works of Bayle, which together form a species of hidden skeleton supporting the main body of the text. It is not possible here to fully detail all such underlying references; nevertheless it may be useful to furnish some initial outlines.

The explicit references to Bayle in this here are rarer (*Théodicée*, § 3, 5, 49, 91, 93), but the impetus to refute ideas typical of the Huguenot is constant, commencing with an attack on the theory that God could have created the world free of sin and suffering: when Leibniz (§ 9) alludes to a 'certain adversary' who would deny that our world is the best of all possible worlds, «en disant que le monde aurait pu être sans le péché et sans les souffrances», he is referring principally to Bayle, who above all others had voiced this objection.[8] Limiting ourselves to the first chapter of the first part, the refutation of the prevalence of physical evil over physical good on our earth (§ 12-16) is evidently addressed against certain celebrated passages of Bayle. This confirms the fact that in the same context Leibniz is opposing the idea that nobody would desire to live their own life again, an idea developed in the articles on *Vayer* and *Xénophanes*. As I dealt with this specific discussion in a book which traces the long history of the idea, I will thus restrict myself here to remarking on how Leibniz proposed to refute in detail Bayle's thesis according to which pain is more intense than pleasure, and consequently how a day of pain outweighs a month of good health in the balance of life.[9] According to Leibniz this derives from the fact that we experience good more than evil: as we are almost always in good health, we are more sensitive to illness when it strikes; nevertheless we would not wish for a life in which health was not the usual condition. Here there is no doubt that Leibniz is directly refuting Bayle; this is confirmed by the successive assumption of the theme, with a quotation of La Mothe le Vayer taken directly from the *Dictionnaire* (cf. *Vayer F*, DHC IV, p. 411a-b; *Tullie R*, pp. 403b-404a).

I hope to have occasion to return in greater detail to the presence of Bayle in the first part of the *Théodicée*. For now I will instead attempt to provide some more precise indications with regard to the *Discours préliminaire*, where the explicit allusions to Bayle are however so numerous as to leave no room for doubt. Bayle is in fact expressly named about sixty times, and his works are repeatedly and amply cited. Not by chance, in a letter of 30 October 1710 announcing the *Discours* to Burnett, Leibniz presents the work as an accurate examination of the difficulties raised by

8 Note that Bayle had reformulated it, in his typical style, arguing that to deny this thesis would be tantamount to limiting the divine power: cf. in particular *Pauliciens E*, DHC III, pp. 625a-628a.

9 An idea developed above all in note *F* to *Xénophanes*, DHC IV, pp. 519a-521b (see also *Pericles K*, DHC III, pp. 668b-670b). Cf. Brogi 2012, pp. 47-63.

Bayle (GP III, p. 321). Notwithstanding this clear proof I do not consider it superfluous to emphasize here too the *implicit* references that go side by side with the explicit, in particular two important digressions which constitute a direct counterpoint to specific arguments of Bayle. I refer to the digression on Averroism and the soul of the world (*Discours*, § 7-10), which refers to various articles by Bayle (*Averroès*, *Césalpin*, *Pomponace, Sennert, Spinoza, Zabarella*), and to the digression which immediately follows (§ 11-22), related to the double truth, which takes up the articles on *Hoffman*, *Luther*, and *Pomponace*.

I do not pretend to provide a thoroughly detailed list here; however it seems to me useful to note the citation of specific passages from Virgil, which should not be considered accidental owing to their being only marginally relevant to the themes dealt with here. The two citations of Virgil to be found in *Discours* § 8 are evidently taken from note D of the article *Rorarius* and from *Continuation des Pensées diverses* § 26; that of *Discours* § 3 probably derives from *Amyraut F*; *Discours* § 87 may well originate from *Navarre P*.[10] I am not of course claiming – I say this to avoid any misunderstanding – that Leibniz relied on Bayle for his knowledge of Virgil: I am merely observing that the concomitance of the two quotations is a precise indication that the drafting of *Discours* arose through close contact with Bayle's own work. The quotation from Lucan in § 87 (cf. *Réponse aux questions d'un provincial* II, § 172) is certainly appropriated from Bayle, as is the polemic of Joseph Scaliger against Archimedes and of Hobbes against Euclid in *Discours* § 26 (cf. *Hobbes D*), not to mention the citations that Leibniz himself declares to have found in Bayle: that of Nicole in § 39, for example, of Horace in § 46, of Cajetan in § 48, and of Joseph Scaliger in § 56. However this only serves once more to confirm that which is already explicitly stated in the text, the elaboration of which follows Bayle's arguments step by step in order to refute them.

3 Leibniz's Reaction to Baylean Arguments

It is true that from his youth Leibniz was occupied with possible answers to the great question of evil: yet it was only after being armed with the objections gleaned from Bayle did he definitively develop his own theoretical position, a position based on these new acquisitions. Rateau supplies the elements necessary for a correct statement of the relationship between Leibniz's first youthful attempts and his fully matured development; from this point of view I will limit myself to grant the ample treatment with

10 Cf. respectively DHC IV, p. 78a; OD III, p. 225a; DHC I, p. 184b; and DHC III, p. 472b. It is worth remembering that Bayle dedicated a rather lengthy article to the great Mantovan poet (DHC IV, pp. 453-459).

which he has demonstrated that the substance of the *Théodicée* cannot be backdated to its youthful 'anticipations', something claimed by several commentators. Certainly Leibniz had no need to wait for Bayle before concerning himself with the question of evil, a problem which he had meditated on since early youth: however this does not exclude the fact that such meditation saw an evolution often unacknowledged (cf. Rateau 2008, pp. 40-42). From this evolutionary context I believe it is necessary to understand with greater precision the determining role of Bayle in the maturation of the theoretical perspective which found its complete expression in the *Théodicée*.

Within the *Théodicée* (and especially in the *Discours*) Rateau notes two new essentials with respect to the project of 1695-97: 1) the collocation of the question of evil within the more general problem of the relation between revelation and reason, or between theology and philosophy; 2) the supplementing of the strategy of defence with the theoretical-systematic perspective. Both of these new features are decisively concerned with Bayle. The same may be said of the fact that Leibniz now felt the need to move out of the environment of 'natural theology' in order to give space to the themes of 'revealed theology', such as original sin, divine grace and predestination, and the Eucharist – themes which Bayle had brought to the forefront, above all in the course of the dispute with the *rationaux*, in order to confirm the impossibility of a rational defence of the Christian mysteries (cf. Rateau 2008, p. 408). Though not drawing the final conclusions, Rateau admits that the polemic with Bayle had conditioned not only the above arguments, but even the *form* of the *Théodicée*, on the basis of a reconsideration of the *ars disputandi* developed in the *Discours* (cf. pp. 431-432). These ideas deserve to be evaluated and reconsidered further than the conclusions which Rateau draws. The *defensive* dimension of the *Théodicée*, in particular, constitutes an original and decisive trait of the perspective which Leibniz acquires precisely on the basis of the controversy with Bayle (cf. pp. 432-433).[11] Thus Rateau himself provides the elements necessary to refute the thesis according to which Bayle would only have been the occasion for Leibniz to present his position already fully mature to the public. In reality Bayle's challenge compelled Leibniz to a theoretical turnaround of the greatest importance, implying a profound reconsideration of the nature of the *Théodicée*, from which now emerged at the forefront the *dialectic* dimension, within a more mature awareness of the limits of a rational investigation into the mysteries of faith.

11 On Leibniz and the *ars disputandi* see of course de Olaso 1975 as well as the numerous studies by Marcelo Dascal, collected in, amongst other works, Dascal 2006, 2008.

4 Leibniz and the Dispute Between Bayle and the 'rationaux'

Bayle was thus the effective and not only the occasional cause of the *Théodicée*: this does not of course mean that he was the sole and exclusive cause, not only because reflection on this theme went back a long way in Leibniz, or because other intellectual provocations were certainly present, such as that from Toland, but above all because Bayle's writings are located firmly in a context of discussion and polemic from which they cannot be isolated. This took the form of a true polemic, a veritable war of words against the theological rationalism of the Arminian Le Clerc and the philo-Arminians Jaquelot and Bernard. Note that this was valid not only for the works of 1703-1707 but in addition for many of the articles in the *Dictionnaire*, at least those appearing in the second edition of 1702, such as certain relevant sections of the articles on *Origène* and *Pauliciens*, as well of course as the *Eclaircissements*. Of the essentially polemical nature of these writings and of Bayle's belligerent character generally, Leibniz was clearly aware: not by chance he repeated the suggestion that in order to stimulate Bayle to write in favour of Christianity it would have been necessary to feign contestation towards it.[12]

Thus, to be precise, we should regard both the immediate cause and at the same time the deep-seated roots of the *Théodicée* within the context of the dispute between Bayle and the *rationaux*. If Leibniz did not take part when it first broke out it was only in order to have the time to adequately structure his intervention, and, perhaps, to evade the inevitable reaction, even if in the preface he maintains that he wanted «faire passer sous les yeux de Monsieur Bayle, aussi bien que de ceux qui sont en dispute avec lui» his «système sur la liberté de l'homme et sur le concours de Dieu» (GP VI, p. 44). Contrary to what Rateau appears to suppose, moreover, Bayle's polemic with the *rationaux* was not limited to the question of evil *stricto sensu*, but was from the beginning configured as a *redde rationem* against every attempt at conciliation between Christianity and philosophy (cf. Rateau 2011). This was why Leibniz was unable to avoid being drawn into the controversy, albeit at a later stage in the proceedings.

Leibniz wanted to reply in the *Théodicée* to the same challenge and the same provocations which Le Clerc and Jaquelot had tried to face. Not by chance did the discussion about the origin of evil constitute for them the crucial location to verify the conformity between faith and reason: here too Leibniz did not shy from directly referring to the controversy, borrowing almost word for word the title of the *Discours* from the work with which Jaquelot took up arms against Bayle, in 1703 (cf. Jaquelot 1705). But the

12 Cf. the letters to Basnage of 19 February 1706 (GP III, p. 144) and to Thomas Burnett of Kemney (GP III, p. 306).

theme had certainly not been neglected by other contestants, in particular by Le Clerc, the most interesting author – for many reasons – with respect to Leibniz. What may seem surprising at first glance, however, is that the anti-metaphysical, Lockean and crypto-Socinian Le Clerc employed certain arguments *contra* Bayle which appear precursors to those found in the *Théodicée*.

5 Bayle in the Mirror of Leibniz

The difficulty which Leibniz scholars find themselves faced with derives not only from the labyrinthian structure of Bayle's works, as vast as they are intricate, but above all from the radically diverse readings given to them, making the great *réfugié* of Rotterdam now a radical sceptic, now a sincere Calvinist with fideistic inclinations, now an epigone of Cartesian metaphysics. In a context in which even specialists are liable to become disoriented, a certain reluctance is fully understandable. However perhaps Leibniz himself could act as an authoritative and shrewd guide to grasp the real sense of the provocations of his adversary. In effect Leibniz never displayed personal animosity towards Bayle, whose intellectual value he constantly acknowledged, whereas many of his contemporaries abandoned themselves to mere denigration. At the same time, however, Leibniz clearly perceived the danger represented by Bayle, and the accompanying urgency to reply adequately. Adopting Leibniz as a guide may thus provide a useful means of escaping the stagnancy of a certain type of historiography, by focalising the real meaning of Bayle's thought in its effective context, and without assimilating it improperly to Voltaire or d'Holbach, or indeed to Kierkegaard or Barth.

Leibniz represents an intelligent and sufficiently equanimous mirror because he reveals an image of his opponent which is not deformed by prejudice, in which the historical and theoretical importance of 'fideism' and 'manichaeism' put forward by the *Dictionnaire* can be concretely grasped. Leibniz's reading of Bayle and his anti-theodicy can therefore be useful for scholars of both thinkers. Only by fixing the real terms of their dissent is it possible to delineate correctly their respective theoretical positions, reconstructing the authentic meaning of a controversy which marked European culture for a long time. Furthermore it is not written anywhere that a controversy may not constitute *as such* a milestone of philosophical reflection, in as much as it arises from crucial issues and provides significant new ideas; thus we should not be afraid to read the *Théodicée* of Leibniz as a text which arose from a specific controversy and should necessarily be understood with reference to such.

Leibniz clearly perceived the threat from Bayle and his 'fideism': however it appeared essentially irrelevant to him to establish whether it was

more or less sincere, a question which continues to haunt contemporary scholars (including at times the present writer). Leibniz, contrary to many of his contemporaries, never posed the question whether or not to condemn the fideism of his opponent as opportunistic (even if he did not fail to slyly observe that Bayle claimed to silence reason after it had already spoken too much), but was interested to test the theoretical consistence and to reveal its unpleasant consequences (which however Bayle himself had never attempted to conceal). In confronting the question of evil Bayle indicated the bankruptcy of any rational theology, suggesting to Christians the renunciation of every cognitive content of their own belief, which according to him was able to escape from libertine criticism only by reducing itself to bare faith in the truth of revelation, a faith *substantially empty* from the point of view of reason. The moral attributes of God, in particular, ended up revealing themselves as completely unknowable and God himself appeared as a sort of capricious tyrant, a principle morally as equivocal as that of Spinoza's God-Nature or Strato's matter (cf. Brogi 1998). It is thus easy to see how Leibniz was aware of the necessity of disproving Bayle's opinions, revisiting with courage and lucidity the arguments of traditional theology and metaphysics.

If we use the *Discours* as an indicator of those challenges of Bayle's which Leibniz intended to take up, we obtain a coherent picture, product of an attentive and penetrating reading, as well as substantially converging with that of Le Clerc and Jaquelot. Leibniz counterpoises the necessary coherence of reason itself, a chain of truths incapable of contradicting one another, to the Baylean conception of a divided reason, principle of destruction and not of edification, derived from the irreducible contrast between Christian dogma and accepted common notions. Hence the refusal of the pretence that certain truths can lead to insoluble objections, it not being possible to distinguish an insoluble objection from the demonstration of the falsity of a proposition. Thus, *contra* Bayle (and *contra* Toland), the traditional distinction between doctrines contrary and superior to reason was restored. We know how much attention Leibniz paid to this recovery, which for him was substantiated in the distinction between *explain* and *comprehend*, *uphold* and *prove*, declaredly against the assimilation of these concepts achieved by Bayle.[13]

All of Leibniz's efforts to individuate an intermediate space between rational transparency and absolute irrationality for the Christian mysteries had as their polemical aim the thesis with which Bayle indicated in

13 «La manière dont le mal s'est introduit sous l'empire d'un souverain être infiniment bon, infiniment saint, infiniment puissant, est *non-seulement inexplicable, mais même incompréhensible*; et tout ce que l'on oppose aux raisons pourquoi cet être a permis le mal, est plus conforme aux lumières naturelles, et aux idées de l'ordre, que ne le sont pas ces raisons» (DHC III, p. 625a: italics mine).

the double truth the sole coherent outcome of Christian theology, significantly tracked down not in Pomponazzi or the radical Aristotelians, but rather in Luther and Daniel Hofmann (cf. Brogi 2000). Such a theology would put in doubt not only the logical foundations of rational humanity, but the very foundations of any objective morality. It was the subtle arguments which Bayle deployed in the *David* and later in the polemic with Jaquelot and Le Clerc, insisting on the absolute equivocity of human and divine virtue, according to him the inevitable outcome of any discussion on divine responsibility with regard to evil and sin. *God's ways are not our ways*: to this principle every defender of Christianity had finally to appeal, compelled by Manichaean objections. But this devoted contestation, rigorously interpreted, inhibited every human discourse on divine justice and sanctity, reducing them to mere verbal simulacra. The infinite distance between God and man which Bayle compelled Jaquelot to appeal became thus the principle of moral equivocity between divine and human action, paving the way to an absolute ethical relativism. Nothing was more able «d'effaroucher et de révolter la Raison», in fact, than claiming that God's pre-eminence and hiddenness could consist – *without abandoning the principles of sovereign goodness and sanctity* – in letting any kind of crimes and disorder, together with any kind of suffering, rule among men, and waiting for the majority of them to be condemned to eternal unhappiness (OD IV, p. 56b).

> Vous croyez sortir par là d'un grand labyrinthe, et vous ne vous apercevez pas que vous tombez dans un autre beaucoup plus affreux, car que répondriez-vous aux fanatiques contemporains de Calvin qui vous soutiendraient que Dieu est la cause efficiente et immédiate du péché, sans que cela fasse aucun tort à sa perfection infinie, vu la prééminence de sa nature? Que pourriez-vous leur dire sinon qu'il est évident par la lumière naturelle que Dieu ne peut être l'auteur du péché en cette manière-là? Mais, répliqueraient-ils, il n'est pas moins évident par la lumière naturelle qu'il ne peut être l'auteur du péché selon les deux manières proprement dites que vous admettez. (OD IV, p. 72b)

This destructive outcome of fideism – for which Bayle reproached Jaquelot after having pushed himself into this extreme refuge – was however already present from the very onset of the controversy, as evinced by the *Éclaircissement sur les manichéens* of 1702:

> La solution même que l'on tire de l'infinité de Dieu, et qui sert d'un puissant motif pour captiver l'entendement, n'est pas exempte d'une nouvelle difficulté; car si la distance infinie, qui élève Dieu au-dessus de toutes choses, doit persuader qu'il n'est point soumis aux règles

> des vertus humaines, on ne sera plus certain que sa justice l'engage à punir le mal, et l'on ne saurait réfuter ceux qui soutiendraient qu'il est l'Auteur du péché, et qu'il le punit néanmoins fort justement, et qu'en tout cela il ne fait rien qui ne s'accorde avec les perfections infinies du souverain Être; car ce ne sont pas des perfections qu'il faille ajuster aux idées que nous avons de la vertu. (DHC IV, p. 635)

Against this type of consequence of fideism – malignly put in evidence by the very person who indicated it as the only possible refuge from the irresoluble difficulties of reason – Le Clerc had reacted, with arguments similar to those employed by Leibniz. The Arminian considered the recourse to the inscrutability of God, or rather to the absolute equivocity between the human notions of goodness and justice and the divine virtues, as the antechamber of a substantial atheism. It would be useless to proclaim the goodness and sanctity of God whilst having no other cognition of such concepts: it would be absurd to defend these divine perfections «sans y donner aucun sens, *abstrahendo ab omni sensu*» or as an incomprehensible magic formula along the lines of «*hocus pocus, tempora bonus*».[14] Denying the goodness and sanctity of God, according to the usual sense of the words, would for Le Clerc be tantamount to «nier que Dieu soit un Être tout-parfait, et par conséquent qu'il y en ait un» (BC 10, 1706, p. 400). For this reason he regarded the way of escape suggested by Bayle as unacceptable, a way which in his eyes implied the dissolution of the whole idea of God and so did not differ from atheism – a conviction shared by Leibniz in the notes to the article *Pauliciens* and later in the *Théodicée*.

> Quand on dit que les voies de Dieu ne sont pas nos voies […], il ne faut pas entendre comme s'il avait d'autres idées que nous de la bonté et de justice, il a les mêmes que nous, et nous le savons de lui comme celles de grandeurs et des nombres, mais nous n'entendons pas comment il les applique, parce que nous ne sommes pas informés du fait dont la trop grande étendue passe notre compréhension. (Leibniz 1854, p. 181)

> Ce n'est donc pas que nous n'ayons aucune notion de la justice en général qui puisse convenir aussi à celle de Dieu; et ce n'est pas non plus que la justice de Dieu ait d'autres règles que la justice connue des hommes; mais c'est que le cas dont il s'agit est tout différent de ceux qui sont ordinaires parmi les hommes. Le droit universel est le

14 «Bibliothèque choisie» (hereafter: BC) 10, 1706, pp. 364-426; cf. BC 12, 1707, pp. 198-386.

même pour Dieu et pour les hommes; mais le fait est tout différent dans le cas dont il s'agit. (GP VI, p. 70)[15]

The refusal of a theism reduced to a purely linguistic formula, deprived of all ethical and metaphysical content, and thus indistinguishable from atheism itself, was thus the main objective of the *Discours* and the entire *Théodicée*, as it had been for Le Clerc and the *rationaux*. Yet if the perception of the challenge was held in common, the responses were unquestionably varied, even if sharing mutual points of contact: all in all Leibniz's ended by resembling more the defensive strategy of the biblicist Le Clerc, with his diffidence toward every type of speculative theology, than the systematic *Theodicy* of Jaquelot, borrowed from Malebranche.

The length of this paper does not allow an adequate reconstruction of Leibniz's defence, and how it is constructed on the one side with the recovery of the Thomist analogy (opposed to the mere alternative between univocity and equivocity as stabilised by Bayle following Descartes and Suárez), and on the other side with the punctual revision of the *ars disputandi*, which is itself a reply to the way in which the Huguenot had stabilised the rules of the controversy between the Manichaeans and the defenders of Christianity (cf. Brogi 2015; Dascal 1975; Antognazza 2001). Here I would like merely to draw attention to the idea that the strategy of defence with which Leibniz attempted to escape from the limits to which Bayle had restricted any type of rational theology (a defence which probably constituted the element of greatest originality in the *Théodicée*) had in some degree been anticipated by Le Clerc's hypothetical Origenist. In attempting to refute the Manichaean difficulties concerning the eternity of the torments of hell, Le Clerc had resuscitated the doctrine of universal salvation without adhering to a positive Origenism: the simple possibility of a non-eternal hell, in his opinion, showed the groundlessness of Manichaeans' conclusive claims. Compelled perhaps too by tactical reasons, the Arminian did not wish to wholeheartedly embrace the doctrine of universal salvation (a doctrine condemned since antiquity as heretical), but instead attempted to appeal to it as a conjecture which, as uncertain as it was, was nevertheless useful to deny what Bayle wanted to demonstrate, namely the irreconcilability between moral reason and revelation.[16] His opponent had seen that in this way, only a *peut-être* could oppose him, a *peut-être*

15 Note that the first passage cited contains a distinction, analogous to Le Clerc's, between the divine virtues considered in themselves, and the same virtues considered with regard to their *practice* (BC 12, 1707, pp. 360-361). The *Théodicée*, on the other hand, prefers to insist on the factual difference between divine action (which must take into consideration infinite possibilities) and human action.

16 Among the interventions of Le Clerc on Origenism I limit myself to noting Le Clerc 1699, pp. 301-314; BC 9, 1706: pp. 103-171; BC 10, 1706: pp. 364-426; BC 12, 1707: pp. 198-386.

on the basis of which it was thus not possible to state with certainty the conformity of faith and of reason (OD III, pp. 1001b-1002b). Yet the Arminian had chosen, not unwisely, to defend a weaker thesis, limiting himself to maintaining that not even the irreconcilability between Christianity and reason could be rigorously proven – the same position, strangely enough, which Leibniz will attest in the *Discours*, with a theoretical instrumentation and an argumentative strictness of a much greater level.

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Theodicy and Reason
Logic, Metaphysics, and Theology in Leibniz's *Essais de Théodicée* (1710)
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Justifying Leibniz, or the Infinite Patience of Reasoning

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Abstract Leibniz's *Theodicy* can and should be read otherwise than a naive statement of metaphysical optimism. To make this point, the Author revives some suggestions by Deleuze and contrasts them with Heidegger's critical reading of Leibniz's rationalism. Leibniz neither defends God simply by asserting his innocence, nor affirms that bad events are merely an unpleasant, human dream. Just as in Bach's *Art of Fugue* every chord is repeated in multiple tonalities, in Leibniz's universe each event is a moment of an infinite rational web. The best of all possible worlds is not 'perfect', as its harmony and order are not free from dissonances; but each dissonant chord of reality is 'well-tempered' through its infinite relations to all the other chords and tonalities. Two conclusions follow: that Leibniz's view is a powerful antidote for any childish humanistic anthropomorphism; and that his teleology is in no need of progress. The best of all possible worlds is actually the world in which we live.

Keywords Evil. Arbitrariness. Counterpoint.

The beginning of *The Book of Job* (1, 6-7) reads as follows:

> Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

The first one who asks the question 'Where does evil come from if God exists?' is, therefore, God Himself; moreover, He is not speaking to something that is totally alien to Himself. Perhaps, His inquiring into a provenance reveals some sort of surprise or unease, but all the questions of Theodicy originate from here: from the proximity and reciprocal intimacy between God and evil, from their compossibility.

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Among His sons God finds Satan, too, and when He asks the latter 'where do you come from?' they understand each other completely. They speak the same language. It is by starting from that original intimacy, the one shared by a father and his son, by a creator and his creature, that the question about the provenance evokes a distance, a non-total identity. God is not making enquiries about a possible, non-actual world; He is not asking Satan the name of a place unknown to Himself. In point of fact, Satan's answer is of no short or partial range: 'from the earth'. Here, certainly, the distance between the creator's height and His creation's lowness or inferiority is voiced, but the earth's distance does not annihilate its proximity to God, who has created and given life to it: therefore God is interrogating Himself about that material He Himself has planned and generated, as if He were turning towards a son He has not seen for a long time, finding his face is deformed. Satan does not answer by indicating a specific point of the earth and of creation. There is no specific damned place: of it it would be enough to beware. It could be enclosed and avoided. The whole earth is scoured throughout by Satan.[1] The very creation willed and judged by God as 'the best possible' is, at the same time, in its infinity, bed of imperfection, sorrow, injustice.

Struck by a myriad of undeserved blows, Job will raise vehement words to proclaim his clean conscience with complete honesty and, above all, to get an answer from that God to Whom he has been, is and will remain faithful. Job's friends intervene by only worrying about using arguments that may be useful for ingratiating themselves with God, as if addressing a monarch yearning for being ascribed all the most perfect attributes, first of all goodness and, together with it, might.

In the end, God answers the call of that man overwhelmed by an undeserved unhappiness and the latter will keep silent at last, not because he will have acknowledged that God is good anyhow, but, rather, because he will put himself in the hands of His omnipotent, majestic sovereignty. Worthwhile remarking is that God prefers Job to the latter's friends, getting enraged with them and sparing them only because Job has asked Him not to punish them.

In the essay *On the Miscarriage of all Trials on Theodicy* (1791) Kant pays homage to Job's sincerity (*Aufrichtigkeit*) and honesty (*Redlichkeit*), to Job's addressing God directly, showing no servile fear, which lays him open to the risk of pronouncing excessive words, but which demonstrates an authentic and sincere relationship of faith.

1 Cf. *Théodicée*, § 274: «And the great Dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil [...]: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him» (Rev. Xii. 7,8,9).

> Job's friends [say that they consider…] all ills in the world […] as so many punishments for crimes committed; […] Job [instead] declares himself for the system of *unconditional divine decision*. «He has decided», Job says, «He does as he wills». […] Job speaks as he thinks, and with the courage with which he, as well as every human being in his position, can well afford; his friends, on the contrary, speak as if […] gaining his [God's] favor through their judgment were closer to their heart than the truth […]. God [in answering Job…] allowed him glimpses into the beautiful side of creation, […] but also, by contrast, into the horrible side, by calling out to him the products of his might, among which also harmful and fearsome things, each of which appears […] as destructive, counterpurposive, and incompatible with a universal plan established with goodness and wisdom. […] before any court of dogmatic theologians […] Job would have likely suffered a sad fate. Hence only sincerity of heart and not distinction of insight […] are the attributes [appreciated] before God. (Kant 1996, pp. 32-33)

A long and famous passage, here reproposed as a springboard for a few questions. Is the Leibniz of *Theodicy* only the *nth* 'friend of Job', dogmatic and moralistic, who, in proclaiming that God «deserves» our love and that we feel «animated by a zeal such as cannot fail to please Him» (*Théodicée*, § 6, GP VI, p. 106),[2] does not even appear to be exempt from flattering apology?

I also wonder whether the image of Leibniz as of a Christian Pythagoras who stages one of the most cumbersome chapters of metaphysical optimism really is a reading that gives him his due or, anyway, whether it is a fruitful interpretation nowadays. Besides, according to Leibniz himself, «once penetrated into the bottom of things, it is possible to see how almost any theoretical point of view has its own truth» (Tomasi 2002, p. 12, our transl.). Which is, then, Leibniz's truth? I will attempt to use a definitely unrestrained statement, to propose a few first notes for a *Leibnizdicy*. Of course it is difficult to put between brackets the fact that Leibniz introduces himself as, first of all, «God's attorney» (Stewart 2006, chap. 5) – «because it is the cause of God I plead» (*Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 38) – driven, «in a submissive and zealous spirit», by the «intent to sustain and exalt the glory of God» by defending him from the charge of being unjust (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 81, GP VI, p. 97). Having said that the explicitly apologetic intent is linked with an untenable optimism, still, the easy way in which we wave this reservation should put us on the alert.

2 I follow Huggard's translation (cf. Leibniz 1952).

Leibniz himself denounces as stale and alleged the depth of those who are pessimists by profession, in the ways of old Silenus caught by King Midas and of his «allegedly beautiful statement (*prétendue belle sentence*)», according to which «the first and the greatest of goods was not to be born, and the second, to depart from this life with dispatch» (*Théodicée*, § 260, GP VI, p. 271). Hastingly repeating the same old story of the ills of the world and taking it for granted is self-referential in an unacceptable, somehow puerile, way. That is the mistake of those who figure to themselves that «Nature was made for them only, and that they hold of no account what is separate from their person; whence they infer that when something unpleasing to them occurs all goes ill in the universe» (*Théodicée*, § 262, GP VI, p. 273). Put bluntly, Leibniz also helps us to outdistance that *cliché* handed down to us according to which whoever shows a positive appreciation of the world is guilty of foolish or naïve optimism, whereas whoever denounces the ills of the earth, injustice and the imperfection of the human nature, is deep and sensitive. In order to avoid misunderstandings, it must be said that I would actually find it very difficult to sail into the eulogy of the perfections of creation,[3] yet I understand very well the Leibnizian unmasking of the excessive anthropocentric easiness indulged in when one fully poses – not only in philosophy – as suffering and deep accuser of the wickedness and woe in the world. I wonder, then, whether the label 'metaphysical optimism' might not turn out to be inappropriate, at least when it coincides with that nice tale for naïve and ever-edifying thinkers mocked by Voltaire's *Candide*.

Besides, the core of the considerations I am putting forth is the following: according to Leibniz, 'best' does not mean 'perfect'; 'possible' (at least with regard to God) does not equal to 'necessary'; 'calculable' does not simply correspond to 'logistic'; and, above all, 'harmonic' is not equivalent to 'clear of dissonances', and, when coinciding with 'ordered', it does so only in a peculiarly baroque sense, that is, with the meaning of alive, multiform, variously inflected, and vibrant with spiritual active force.

> A little acid, sharpness or bitterness is often more pleasing than sugar; shadows enhance colours; and even a dissonance in the right place (*placée où il faut*) gives relief to harmony. We wish to be terrified by rope-dancers on the point of falling and we wish that tragedies shall well-nigh cause us to weep. Do men relish health enough, or thank God enough for it, without having ever been sick? And is it not most often necessary that a little evil render the good more discernible, that is to say, greater? (*Théodicée*, § 12, GP VI, p. 109)

3 «His [Leibniz's] *harmonia praestabilita* is miraculous and contradicts the daily experience of all mankind», Newton to Conti, 26th Feb. 1716, in Leibniz, Clarke [1956] 1998, p. 186.

Moreover, in attempting to understand and, so, justify this Leibnizian position, thus also accepting the equation between knowing and justifying – against which Kant, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, will put the distinction between *quid facti* and *quid iuris* –, I do not even mean to ignore the considerations most cherished by the contemporary thought. Explanations and justifications add an annoying, both intellectualistic and moralistic, superstructure to suffering and to moral evil, be it committed or endured. In spite of this, Leibnizian metaphysics appears as a design that, though sidereally distant and untenable, does not seem as simply to be reducible to the charge of being short-sighted or theoretically insensitive. This Leibnizian reason, even as *ratio sufficiens*, certainly is an interweaving of logical and causal relationships of the being in its totality, but it is a beautifully resonant «linking together (*enchaînement*) of truths» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 1, 62, 64; GP VI, pp. 49, 84, 86), arousing sensible pleasures that join the pleasures of the mind engendered by knowledge of rational connections (cf. *Théodicée*, § 254). According to Leibniz, all this inflames with love rational creatures and their knowing, penetrating as much as patient, intelligence. Well, I would say that the Leibnizian love for the real world is not reduced to a theological reflex, a 'due' effect, aprioristically deduced from a faith position or, worse, from a doctrinal hypostasis. That is why, then, all this can be handed down to us, even leaving out of consideration the reference to God or the excessive theoretical enthusiasm for the logical-rational linking that keeps the things of the universe together.

1 No Arbitrariness

It is hard to meet a more distant interpreter of Leibniz than Martin Heidegger (cf. Cristin 1998), still the latter's reflections decisively contribute to effectively focus upon one of the structural features of Leibnizian thought: the exclusion of arbitrariness in whatever happens in the real world. Heidegger shares Leibniz's target and for this reason his journey necessarily cuts across Leibniz's onto-theological moves, even while radically questioning them. Of course, the heterogeneity between the sharp philosophical intelligence of a Swabian farmer and the ingenious logical-mathematical intellect of a baroque scientist remains unbridgeable, as much unbridgeable as the gap between the existential sensitivity of the first, whose aprioris are this world and the earth, and the theological sensitivity of the latter, for whom there is no thought or perception that can avoid the lens of the Christian faith in God the good and wise creator.

Certainly, every time Heidegger – as in the *Postscript to 'What is Me-*

taphysics?' (1943-1949) – encloses Leibniz's moves within the label of modern 'calculative thinking', he misses the target. Heidegger does not appear as being either interested in or receptive towards a rationality, like Leibniz's baroque one, that can be simultaneously logical-mathematical computation and harmonic and musical warp, or animated and variegated weaving of the universe. Heidegger and, too often, many of us, in the Baroque can only see the artifice of the mannerist frills or the forced formalism of the mathematical algorithm, almost superstitious in its claiming it is telling us 'the everything' of the world. To the twentieth-century-Heideggerian sensitivity logic is nothing but 'logistics', a merely technical, as much correct as truthless, inflection of thought.

The vivid, concrete and, so, true aspect of Leibnizian logic meant as effective design of God, as infinitely articulated, connective weaving that illuminates, unifies, and disseminates truth among the things of the world[4] remains, to the Heideggerian viewer, a mere episode of the metaphysical oblivion of the truth of being.

As is well known, Martin Heidegger concentrates the whole of his philosophical attention on a Leibnizian passage that occurs in the seventh section of the *Principles of Nature and Grace Based on Reason* (1714):

> Why is there something rather than nothing (*Pourquoi il y a plutôt quelque chose que rien*)? After all, nothing is simpler and easier than something. Also, given that things have to exist, we must be able to give a reason why they have to exist as they are and not otherwise.

Heidegger finds exemplarily metaphysical that to Leibniz nothing is only a void of being, a mere nothingness, insignificantly simple. All the philosophical-onto-theological wonder, on the contrary, arises at the presence of something of being that stands out on this nothingness, overcoming and suppressing it.[5] Why is there something in this void? Which substance capable of action has put it there? Referring back to the biblical God as first cause is the great, all-founding principle that explains and makes us understand and admire the infinite chain of things.

Neglecting, here, the reasons that led Heidegger to evoke the role of foundation and groundness, at the same time, of nothing meant as non-

4 Yet Leibniz would never agree to think of God as of the world soul (cf. *Théodicée*, § 195).

5 In fact, once the act of creation has occurred, the nothing as empty nothingness disappears: «to admit a vacuum in nature, is ascribing to God a very imperfect work: 'tis violating the grand principle of the necessity of a sufficient reason; [...] all is full. [...] matter is more perfect than a vacuum, [...] then there must be no vacuum at all; for the perfection of matter is to that of a vacuum, as something to nothing», *Mr. Leibniz's Fourth Paper*, in Leibniz, Clarke [1956] 1998, p. 44. Cf. Leibniz, *Principles of Nature and Grace Based on Reason*, § 3 (GP VI, pp. 598-599).

being and, so, as 'Being' ('Sein' as no-thing), the point at which his considerations become precious with respect to Leibniz is not where the author of *What is Metaphysics?* and, above all, of *The Principle of Reason* (1957) denounces the pervasive monopoly of the causality principle. Although Heidegger is not a thinker who articulates confutations to correct others' mistakes, his questioning could be summed up in these terms: Leibniz's mistake lies not in thinking that it is always possible to find a reason why; on the contrary, it lies in thinking that, where a sufficient reason is not determinable, only the arbitrariness of being as insignificant casualness would burst open. As above all inferable from the fifth and sixth lectures of *The Principle of Reason*, the Heideggerian lunge is radical: the metaphysical oblivion does not lie in presuming to drive everything back to one reason why, but in maintaining the contingency of the world. In point of fact, Leibniz causalistically embanks arbitrariness but in order to seal the very contingency of being meant as dependent on the divine cause.

Heidegger collides with Leibniz and delivers the latter up to the metaphysical inability to remain faithful to Being's character of event (*Ereignis*), which is neither arbitrary nor contingent; yet, by so doing, he also offers a precious contribution to our understanding of the truth force of the Leibnizian thought. This exceeds the extension of the causality principle and even the reduction to sufficient reason of the foundation. By stating that «there is nothing casual in the world, if not out of our ignorance, since deep causes remain hidden to us» (*Provisional Thoughts Concerning the Use and Improvement of the German Language*, § 50, 1697, published 1714), Leibniz is not simply subsuming Being within the causalistic pigeonholes,[6] neither is he only engaged in rejecting the idea of a tyrant God whose will is whimsical and despotic (cf. *Théodicée*, Préface; Discours, § 2, 6). The truth force of Leibniz's philosophy reaches down to us as it anyway rejects the arbitrariness of evil, by considering it as integral part of life, co-essential to it.

Leibniz does assimilate evil to darkness and to ignorance, that is, to «a certain kind of privation», the cause of which is, so, *deficiens* (*Théodicée*, § 32-33; GP VI, pp. 121-122), but he appears to keep far from the definitely more abstract and metaphysical attempts of those who, Augustine-like, only worry about depriving evil of any ontological reality so as to be able, in this way, to absolve God.[7]

6 In quoting the beautiful lines by Giuseppe Scaligero, «Ne curiosus quaere causas omnium», Leibniz himself allows that the obsessive rational asking for a reason why can favour the adversary's game: when our inadequacy will prevent us from determining the cause, the adversary will exult as he will infer from it the blindness of God's will (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 56, GP VI, p. 81).

7 «For to say that God is not the author of sin, because he is not the author of a privation, although he can be called the author of everything that is real and positive in the sin – that

According to Leibniz the world is contingent but bad things are inscribed in the necessary plot of life. In Leibniz's view evil is no mere collateral effect of the creation of good. He does not say: God has deemed a good thing to create light and, so, human beings have to suffer shadows, too, 'cold' and 'unpleasant' consequences (by inertial necessity) of the presence of light (cf. *Théodicée*, § 209). His perspective, on the contrary, is more pregnant: imperfection, suffering and criminal deeds are integral part, if only as species of privations, of the web of relationships that forms the truth of the whole creation. Evil is no exception, nor arbitrary or casual suspension of the ordinary goodness of the universe, but is an essential part of this unique actual world without which the latter would not be 'the best possible'. However much this may trouble our contemporary philosophers' hypersensitivity with respect to disharmony, Leibniz tells us about a composite universe that is not viable only starting from above (God, faith, eternal truths), analytically and aprioristically, downwards (the world, knowledge, perception, pleasure, suffering). Evil is everywhere and yet, in being wisely sewn together with the other parts, it helps make this world lovable and worthwhile living, to the extent that, if one does not halt at those tesserae of the mosaic that are badly-made, he/she rejoices with intelligence and passion at the whole weaving of this actual universe, acknowledging the prevailing in it of the harmonic result. Let's be clear, Leibniz's is a theodicy, not a cosmodicy, as Nietzsche would have it, still what in his reasonings turns out to be philosophically strong and original to us is his vision not of the creator but of the existing reality, the actual world with respect to which reason and experience, cognitive love and patience, beauty and harmony are, marvellously, one.

2 The Non Correctibility of the Universe as It Is

The hyper-articulated Leibnizian labyrinth appears to make itself valuable exactly by virtue of its revisiting, in fully modern times, medieval legacies that, with no solution of continuity, are nonetheless merged with the new sense of nature acquired through physics as a science. These are years in which European philosophy is elaborating the idea of progress, around which the modern project of improvement and correction of the world can be developed, yet Leibniz puts himself outside of the principle of the world's perfectibility, especially the one of anthropocentric-humanistic orientation.

is a manifest illusion. It is a leftover from the visionary philosophy of the past; it is a subterfuge (*un faux-fuyant*) with which a reasonable person will never be satisfied» (*The Author of Sin* [1673?], in Leibniz 2005, pp. 150, 110-111).

> No more am I able to approve of the opinion of certain modern writers who boldly maintain that which God has made is not perfect in the highest degree, and that he might have done better. […] To show that an architect could have done better is to find fault with his work. […]
>
> Their [*sc.* modern thinkers'] opinion is, in my judgment, unknown to the writers of antiquity and is a deduction based upon the too slight acquaintance which we have with the general harmony of the universe and with the hidden reasons for God's conduct. In our ignorance, therefore, we are tempted to decide audaciously that many things might have been done better. (Leibniz [1686] 1924, § 3)

The glorification of God's supreme wisdom is not only the key for defending «the objective goodness of the world» from those modern conceptions that reduce good and evil to «human needs and preferences» (Wilson 2011). Leibniz attacks those who hold that God «could have done better» (*Théodicée*, § 168, GP VI, p. 211).[8] In point of fact, this equals to «setting bounds to the goodness and the perfection of God» (§ 193-194, p. 231). Here one can see the resurfacing of the weighty Thomistic paradigm to which Leibniz is indebted for the claimed and indissoluble conjuction in God of might, will, and wisdom.[9] Aquinas, as a medieval thinker, does exclude any proportion between the finite creatural and the infinite divine, whereas, on the contrary, Leibniz is modern in his thinking that the divine choice finds sufficient reasons by taking into account the created world (cf. *Théodicée*, § 79) and, so, exactly like Malebranche, is walking the way of the commensurability to God of the finite world, in contrast with the Thomistic theology (cf. Scribano 2003, p. 179). Saint Thomas, however, lays the foundations for Leibniz's teleological thinking without admitting, as the modern do, of the correctibility of the universe. Thomistically, the universe as it is cannot be better, in that God has always done everything in the best way, but as all-mighty He could make things better, things which, therefore, would constitute a better universe. Leibniz keeps close to Saint Thomas with regard to many aspects,[10] though he does not worry, as the latter does, about pointing out

8 Emanuela Scribano has shown how, here, Leibniz's adversary is not Malebranche, as is usually maintained, but Suarez, who, in his *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, is anxious about safeguarding, first of all, divine omnipotence and freedom of indifference (cf. *Théodicée*, § 199): God can therefore improve even the most perfect thing (cf. Scribano 2003, pp. 166, 169, 173).

9 Cf. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Prima pars, Question 25, art. 5, Reply to Objection 1: «In God, power and essence, will and intellect, wisdom and justice, are one and the same».

10 Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Prima pars, Question 25, art. 3: «I answer that […] «God can do all things» is rightly understood to mean that God can do all things that are possible; and for this reason He is said to be omnipotent. […] whatever implies

the unfolding of the divine might much beyond the created nature but, rather, takes care to show the reciprocal interpenetration of God's wisdom, His excellent choices, and the physical order of nature.

Multiform and inclusive of infinite variety to the extent of risking dispersiveness, the Leibnizian mirror takes possession of the most advanced feature of modern physical-mathematical scientificalness. However, this is done without falling prey to the dawning progressive philosophies of history obsessed with the now violent now morally edifying task of improving the world. Perhaps it was a question of consistency with the theological faith in an omnipotent wise and good creator, who cannot but have created a world that already is the possible best and, therefore, is in no need of corrections. Perhaps it was a peculiar and untimely medieval legacy, but the point is that Leibniz has got the strength of being of value nowadays, provided we leave out the reference to God, and of reaching us, who are now disenchanted as to any hypothesis of progress or any naïve anthropocentrism. An unrelinquishable Leibnizian refrain that we cannot abandon underlines the defectiveness, confusion, and partiality of our representations of the world. «The lazy ones are always in a hurry».[11] Those who are suffering from mental laziness come too soon to a halt in their reasonings and knowledge, and, so, are inclined to make rash judgments. In tackling events that bring suffering or moral indignation they advance judgments formed on their own perspective, often on their own ignorance, too, moreover presuming that they can measure the whole by starting from their personal negative experience.

> You have known the world only since the day before yesterday, you see scarce farther than your nose, and you carp at the world. Wait until you know more of the world and consider therein especially the parts which present a complete whole (as do organic bodies); and you will find there a contrivance and a beauty transcending all imagination. […] We find in the universe some things which are not pleasing to us; but let us be aware that it is not made for us alone. It is nevertheless made for us if we are wise. (*Théodicée*, § 194, GP VI, p. 232)

Those who are patient in reasoning and cognitively penetrating the things of the world get a wider, more articulate, that is, truer, vision than the one hastily obtained through self-referential, partial, and ignorant judgments. The man of knowledge receives joy from his patient and wise investigat-

contradiction does not come within the scope of divine omnipotence, because it cannot have the aspect of possibility». See, for istance, *Théodicée*, § 226-227.

11 «Pigros semper festinare» (*De scientia universali seu calculo philosophico*, in Leibniz 1860, XI, p. 84).

ing – and, perhaps, the present contribution could have been entitled: An «overmastering joy founded on reason» and knowledge (§ 257, p. 269; cf. § 254),[12] rather than: The infinite patience of reasoning.

If Leibniz keeps on enthralling philosophers that is because he is proposing a radical questioning of any banally humanistic progression. His moves are certainly soaked with faith and Christian theology, but their logical-mathematical, scientific, and physical approach keeps on addressing those who relate themselves to the universe without establishing as unit of measurement their own small perspective and, at the same time, take care not to deny evil or, worse, not to make of it an irrelevant occurrence in a perfect universe. All this goes well together with an idea of universe that becomes experience of it as a network of links and laws of nature, with no holes or weak meshes. From this point of view quite significant is Leibniz's position with respect to miracles and mysteries, in that it effectively exemplifies, thus helping us understand it, how the physical-scientific approach not 'in spite of' but exactly 'owing to' its being soaked with Christian theology excludes the correctibility of the existing world.

According to Leibniz, God has pre-formed and pre-established the order of things in a supernatural way, foreseeing and choosing the best and the most convenient one. Once the «original constitution» of things has been set out in this way all the others, even the new organisms, follow, as «a mechanical consequence of a preceding organic constitution», that is, according to the laws of nature (*Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 41). In one move Leibniz succeeds in setting up a scientific-rational and physical view of nature and, at the same time, in rendering superfluous human appeals to God's perpetual miracles.[13] Of course the Creator's omnipotence entails that He may perform miracles as acts of grace, but the decisive point is the following: the world created by God is a clock in no need of being mended. The harmony of the universe is not the effect of a perpetual miracle through which God would providentially come to mend the series of things. Conceding that would mean making of God an awkward and improvident architect always ready to intervene in order to fix the building poorly planned and defectively carried out by Himself (cf. *Théodicée*,

12 In Leibniz's view the best way to know God is by scientifically knowing the created world, that is nature, and, when man knows it, he will love God. Though Leibniz sees only a difference of degree between the theological-religious moment and the cognitive-experiential moment, the wealth of indications articulated in the second is such that his philosophizing nourishes his love for the world even independently of his relationship of faith with its creator.

13 Besides, miracles and mysteries are not 'against reason', but 'above reason', that is incomprehensible to the human reason, which is limited and partial (cf. Antognazza 2011, pp. 233-235).

§ 53).[14] Moreover, the question that might be put forth is: those who think or hope – praying to this end[15] – that God may intervene with providential miracles are not disparaging the creation and its creator? If, then, as already pointed out, the Leibnizian directions are able to go beyond the horizon of faith, one can reformulate the question: are those who are hopefully waiting for exceptional happenings to suspend the laws of natural reality, by bringing improvements and corrections in human life, only the most unhappy of men or, also, are they the most incapable of loving and understanding this world they do necessarily belong to?[16] It is here – it won't escape my readers' attention – that an unexpected convergence between reciprocally remote thinkers such as Leibniz and Heidegger can emerge.

On attempting a rereading of the phrase proposed by Heidegger in *Identity and Difference* (1957) one could say that more than an onto-theo-logy Leibniz's is an 'onto-teleo-logy' where, however, 'teleology' rhymes with 'Entelechy' (*Théodicée*, § 87, GP VI, p. 150) and 'harmonic development', and not with 'progress of the perfectible'. Leibniz, in fact, admits of the gradual transformation of things which can, therefore, improve, thus teleologically unfolding and completing their essence. And since every single part is linked with all the others, the progress of a single substance will entail a progress of the whole universe (cf. § 202). Still, the infinite weaving of the universe or, better, the infinite weavings (in the plural) of the universe constitute a harmony that, even when bringing better futures, does not pave the way to any progressive proto-philosophy of history. Suffered evil does not improve anything, nor make it progress. Simply, it is part of the best world; the imperfect or painful parts combine in the best way, first in God's intellect and then in the actual creatural realization. The best of all possible systems «is precisely the plan of the universe as it

14 «I maintain it [the creation] to be a watch, that goes without wanting to be mended by him: otherwise we must say, that God bethinks himself again. No; God has foreseen every thing; he has provided a remedy for every thing before-hand; there is in his works a harmony, a beauty, already pre-established» (*Mr. Leibiz's Second Paper*, § 8, in Leibniz, Clarke [1956] 1998, p. 18). «The harmony [...] is not a perpetual miracle; but the effect or consequence of an original miracle, worked at the creation of things; as all natural things are. Though indeed it is a perpetual wonder, as many natural things are» (*Mr. Leibniz's Fifth Paper*, § 89, in *The Leibniz-Clarke correspondence*, 85).

15 «[Bayle says] that those who pray to God hope for some change in the order of nature; but it seems as though, according to his opinion, they are mistaken. [...] Indeed, if they receive succour from good angels there will be no change in the general order of things» (*Théodicée*, Remarques sur le Livre de l'origine du mal, § 27, GP VI, p. 433).

16 «It is only people of a malicious disposition (*gens d'un naturel malin*) or those who have become somewhat misanthropic through misfortunes, like Lucian's Timon, who find wickedness everywhere, and who poison the best actions by the interpretations they give to them» (*Théodicée*, § 220, GP VI, p. 249).

is» (§ 225, p. 252). There is nothing to be corrected or mended.[17] Leibniz's is a teleological in-motion photography of the world. The best is here and now, and it is exactly this very world that we are given to live.[18]

3 *Concordia Discors*

God is not harmonic. He is the sum of all perfections, the reason of universal harmony, but He Himself is not harmonic. Harmony only springs from the unifying relation among opposites, harmony is of the real world and is the result of the reciprocal joining together of good and bad things, of consonances and dissonances.

God has willed a world in which evil had to be not because He wished for evil but because He has judged that ills, included in the interconnection of the whole, contribute to make the latter the best possible (cf. *Théodicée*, § 204, 225, 350). «All is connected (*lié*) in God's great design» (§ 118, p. 168) and each single part acquires sense, value, and truth only within that infinite connective weaving that in the divine intellect is completely distinct idea. Even the most beautiful thing, however, if we detach and isolate a part of it, this, reduced to a disconnected 'piece', will quite possibly appear to us both ugly and devoid of any sense (cf. § 213). In the same way, if we are not patient enough to outdistance our own perspective from evil, as when we get too close to a painting, our eyes are invaded by blots of colour and by the imperfections of the canvas, and we become unable to grasp and, even less, to appreciate that painting in its entirety.[19]

Leibniz resumes the word of Greek origin 'Harmony',[20] to testify how the whole is a mathematically-ordered composition (cf. *Théodicée*, § 242), made of contrasts and, also, constitutively beautiful.

Order, fundamentally logical and rational, can, in fact, arouse both intellectual pleasure in those who are able to know it (cf. § 254), and aesthetic-

17 «God cannot do the impossible». A project for a better world? Impossible. Had it been possible, «God would have preferred it» (*Théodicée*, § 226, GP VI, p. 253).

18 I am well aware that this is in keeping with some Thomistic positions that are dear to that part of the Catholic tradition that tries to contain, if not to exclude, any active, autonomous, and responsible intervention on man's part, for example in the bioethical field. While definitely not sharing this approach, I find, anyway, that it is philosophically necessary to come to grips with the challenge coming from this non progressive paradigm which, in point of fact, is tenable independently of positions of faith or ethical-naturalistic hypostases.

19 Cf. *Théodicée*, § 147, GP VI, p. 198: «The apparent deformities of our little worlds combine to become beauties in the great world».

20 Cf. Heraclitus, Diels-Kranz Fragment 8 (from Aristoteles, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1155b): «it is what opposes that helps and from different tones comes the fairest tune (εκ τῶν διαφερόντων καλλίστην αρμονίαν)» (Plato, *Timaeus*, 31c-36b, 80a-b).

sensible pleasure in those who rely on perception and imagination. Reality is structured according to hierarchies and priorities in which mathematics plays a supporting role, still it is a labyrinth that we cross, however incompletely, also through the perceptive and aesthetic representations which, therefore, are not reducible to a merely subjective question, nor to illusions or falsities. Though beauty entails a subjective reception, it is, at the same time, objective manifestation of the good order of the universe (cf. § 146). The Leibnizian Baroque – *ante litteram* – tries to avoid any 'aesthetistic' reduction of the aesthetic dimension and, by embracing motifs that are not exclusively Platonic, keeps the objective anchoring of beauty safe (cf. Tomasi 2002, pp. 61-63, 99, 176).

In *Confessio philosophy* Leibniz had resumed a very traditional meaning of harmony as unitary composing of the opposites as «Similarity in variety, that is, diversity compensated by identity».[21] One gets intellectual pleasure from the order that unifies opposed and contrary things, but it is a harmonizing involving the aesthetic dimension, too. This meaning of 'harmony', on the other hand, is destined to become wondrously complicated, fed by paradigms that are still philosophical-theological and, in particular, baroque.

Leibniz often proposes, at least at neuralgic points, in his long reflection on the ills of the world, musical references and examples. We would miss the point if we took them as simply explicative similes of aesthetic type.

In point of fact, Leibniz throws a bridge between the medieval meaning of music and the one characterizing baroque theology and aesthetics. In the Middle Ages '*musica*' stands for '*musica theorica*' and it is science and doctrine of the *ratios* and proportions, a wider domain than music, placed anyway among the mathematical sciences and subordinated to metaphysical philosophy (cf. Hentschel 1999, pp. 53-54). The Baroque injects active strength and infinite differentiation in it.

The harmony of the Leibnizian universe is articulated, first of all, according to numerical relations but, at the same time, it is order resonating like music (and here 'like' is obtrusively used), displaying the beauty, as well as the goodness, of divine choices in an aesthetic, perceptive and physical-acoustic manner. As said above, no matter how pervasive, the Leibnizian evocation of God does not succeed in replacing the joy of the world as it is or in rendering it a mere appendix. It is by following this clue that the references to musical harmony, especially in a baroque frame, reveal a significant qualitative import, in spite of their unobtrusive frequency. One should not be surprised at the fact that, for example, Leibniz inserts *Instituzioni harmoniche* (1588), the work by Gioseffo Zarlino, among the necessary

21 «Similitudo in varietate, seu diversitas identitate compensata» (G.W. Leibniz, *The Confession of a Philosopher*, [1673?], 116, in Leibniz 2005, pp. 28-29).

sources – within the class *Mathematics* – of his project for a *Bibliotheca Universalis*. Zarlino, *Maestro* of the Saint Mark Chapel in Venice, was a supreme authority in the field of musical harmony; Leibniz shows he has a direct notion of it and it is plausible to assume that Zarlino's definition of consonance as «dynamic balance», «proportion of movements», «relation among opposites: the low- and the high-pitched sounds», has influenced the philosopher's thought. The idea that true harmony must be experienced through the modulation of diversity and be made of the coexistence of consonances and dissonances[22] is shared in common by this conception of music and the Leibnizian reflection on the ills of the world seen as dissonances contributing to the harmony of the universe.[23] Harmony is not interrupted by dissonances but springs exactly from their combining with consonances. This has nothing to do with whatsoever aestheticizing of evil, nor is the musical example to be meant as a mere metaphorical illustration. Evil is not facing us as something that can be isolated and taken to Court as material evidence in order to charge God with being unjust. Evil has to be known and judged in a larger combinatory network that is not immediately perceivable but that makes of it an unavoidable ingredient of universal harmony. Dilthey narrates that Leibniz, endowed with a robust appetite but having no inclination for physical exercise, became a sufferer from gout. In order to put up with pain and be able to walk, he had supporting wooden vice fitted on his legs. This was a logistic device that made his health worse, fatally shortening his life (cf. Dilthey 1969, p. 30). Well, the harmony thought through and philosophically experienced by Leibniz is the very opposite of this artificial and extrinsic overlapping of reasoning, physical nature and subjective perceptions. Organ music, for example, is a wind – physical nature – «blown into properly adjusted pipes» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 7, GP VI, p. 54), wind harmonized with technical sagacity and mathematical congruence.

The Leibnizian musical harmony is made of variations and contrasts. The slavish repetition of the same chords, or an excess of regularity and uniformity of sounds stifles and fades it away,[24] preventing it from being

22 Cf. Erle 2005, pp. 15-16, 22-26. In Leibniz's times the court of Hannover cultivated a keen interest in music and entertained intense relationships with Venice, a city that, like few others, was open to the artistic culture of whole Europe. A significant figure, working at the German court, was that of the Venetian Agostino Steffani whose musical talent was second only to diplomatic expertise (cf. de' Grandis 1966, pp. 118, 121-123).

23 «Vices and crimes do not detract from the beauty of the universe, but rather add to it, just as certain dissonances would offend the ear by their harshness if they were heard quite alone, and yet in combination they render the harmony more pleasing» (*Théodicée*, Remarques sur le Livre de l'origine du mal, § 27, GP VI, p. 434).

24 In *Théodicée*, § 211 (GP VI, p. 244), Leibniz quotes Horace, *Ars poetica*, vv. 355-356: «Ut citharoedus ridetur chorda qui semper oberrat eadem (in the same way as the citharoedus always touching on the same string is laughed at)».

mirror and staging of the complex truth of the real world.

> The sense pleasures that get closest to the pleasures of the mind (*de l'esprit*) […] are those of music and of symmetry (*symmetrie*), the first ones being pleasures for the ears, the latter for the eyes, and it is easy to understand the reasons of harmony or of this perfection that gives us pleasure. The only thing that can be feared, here, is using it for too long. (Grua, 580)

Leibniz's aversion for the prolonged and monotonous repetition of the same is not confined to a wish for novelty or variation, at least whenever he can be seen to welcome the complexity of the relations of contrast and opposition. The characterization of evil as 'a dissonance' is no aestheticizing digression: it is a philosophical call to the truth of the world made of a mobile coexistence and connection of ills and goods, of clashing and soft sounds whose contrast is able to metamorphosize itself into a beautiful unity begetter of pleasures for the intellect, as well as for the senses. In *Théodicée*, § 124, the airs of Lully's *Cadmus and Hermione* are mentioned:

> wisdom must vary. To multiply one and the same thing only would be superfluity, and poverty too. To have a thousand well-bound Vergils in one's library, always to sing the airs from the opera of *Cadmus and Hermione*, to break all the china in order only to have cups of gold, to have only diamond buttons, to eat nothing but partridges, to drink only Hungarian or Shiraz wine – would one call that reason? (GP VI, p. 179)

Advancing a critical remark about Jean-Baptiste Lully meant objecting against the composer of Tuscan descent consecrated by Louis XIV as an authentic art celebrity whose airs were 'radiant' just like the court of Roi Soleil. In Lully dissonance is not, actually, absent but, nevertheless, it is definitely mitigated. In the air 'La peine d'aimer', for example, in *Cadmus and Hermione*, he «builds up an idyllic situation» in which falling prey to love passion is devoid of any cruelty and danger, deprived as it is of divergences capable of acting as really «dissonant forces» (Erle 2005, pp. 59-81, 95-99).[25] Thus, the truth of Baroque becomes a fable, in the same way as Leibniz's perspective would end up and, finally, ends up appearing like the optimistic philosophical tale of those who can see only what they have chosen to think. However, a definitely 'other' dramatic intensity permeates Leibniz's philosophical vision, one that evokes another great Lutheran, almost contemporary Bach.

25 Erle 2005, pp. 69-72 underlines how the aesthetics of baroque rhetoric, centered on a harmony animated by real contrasts, is, instead, on the other hand, realized in Monteverdi's Madrigals.

Nowadays we are tempted to 'receive' the Leibnizian representation of the universe as a self-referential, logical-theological construction of modern and Christian metaphysics. Similarly, we tend to conceive Bach's art of counterpoint as «a closed musical system without reference beyond itself», exempt from «'extra-musical' assumptions and attitudes». Yet, witness above all some of Bach's amazing chorales, in the first half of the eighteenth century «double counterpoint and canon were concrete manifestations of the 'order of God'» and, more specifically, «a way of contemplating death and of investigating the hidden connections governing the universe» (Yearsley 2002, p. XIII, 24). Brought up in the Lutheran *schola mortis*, Bach makes of the canon, or fugue, the sound-unfolding of the infinite interweaving and reciprocal passing of the living into the dying, of the dying into the living. An interweaving and overlapping that does not act through points but through numerical relations and intervals. This contrapuntal web is not, therefore, ornament or construction ending in themselves, but, on the contrary, is a way of contemplating death, of moving towards it along a path paved with musical harmony.

The art of dying did not find in the counterpoint of the chorals an aesthetic illustration or a celebratory moment, but the logical-aesthetic articulation of the mobile compresence of life and death, of their connecting themselves to the whole, of the infinite scale in which, through an infinite counterpoint, consonances and dissonances, pleasure and suffering, overlap. Playing, more than composing, this music was a concrete way of harmonically thinking and, at the same time, perceiving the destiny assigned to men – obviously conceived by a Christian as creatures of God called to test their faith in point of death – a way of putting themselves to the test of having to die.

The canon exhibited a type of infinity that made of it much more than a mere scholastic exercise or a display of musical samplings. Infinite articulation – according to eternal ideal rules[26] – of the differentiating of unity, the canon imposed itself as sacred music, as «church music» (Yearsley 2002, p. 52). In the years 1723-24 an exemplary dispute arose between Heinrich Bokemeyer and Johann Mattheson. To the latter the canon was only an anatomical dissection of the musical rules and only a magic and obscurantist approach could pass off this *music-to-be-seen* on the score (*Augenmusik* or *Papiermusik*) as authentic music involving the senses and

26 «Virtues are virtues […] by their nature and by the nature of rational creatures, before God decrees to create them. To hold a different opinion would be as if someone were to say that the rules of proportion and harmony are arbitrary with regard to musicians because they occur in music only when one has resolved to sing or to play some instrument. But that is exactly what is meant by being essential to good music: for those rules belong to it already in the ideal state, even when none yet thinks of singing, since it is known that they must of necessity belong to it as soon as one shall sing» (*Théodicée*, § 181, GP VI, pp. 222-223).

manifesting true harmony. On the other hand, Bokemeyer defended «the honor of counterpoint», holding that the technical framework of the canon is no mere artifice, but, on the contrary, is a logical-musical weaving that is really harmonic. In the canon – Bokemeyer insisted – one could contemplate «the 'true essence' of all other musical forms». Well, Bach is certainly in agreement with the latter. Harmony results from following the rules and not from the free power of being indifferent to them. *Concordia discors*, the title of canon BWV 1086 (cf. Yearsley 2002, pp. 52-55, 59-60, 68-69, 73, 97), consists of a mobile and holistic interpenetration of consonances and dissonances the logic of which is not at all an empty formal skeleton. Leibniz, too,[27] would have been on the side of Bokemeyer and Bach. With Bach, besides, he also shares the fact of giving the impression of referring musical harmony back to an occult invisible filigree, like the most oscurantist of alchemists. As pointed out before, however, Leibniz is no philosopher of the magic or secret causes, but only of the complex reasons that, in order for them to be calculated, require patience, capacity to outdistance and to penetrate. Similarly, Bach, in entrusting the score of a canon – for istance «the so-called Hudemann canon, BWV 1074» – to «an enigmatic, cryptic notation» (Yearsley 2002, pp. 42-44), is not being driven by obscurantist or superstitious inclinations, but, instead, by the intent of effectively referring to the stratified complexity of cosmic harmony which is rational without being immediately and completely exhibited on the surface.

In § 17 of *Principles of Nature and Grace* Leibniz writes:

> Music that we hear can charm us, even though its beauty consists only in relations among numbers, and in the way the beats or vibrations of the sounding body return to the same frequency at certain intervals. (We are not aware of the numbers of these beats, but the soul counts them all the same!) Our pleasure in the proportions of things we see are of the same kind; and those that the other senses produce will come down to something similar, even though we couldn't explain them so straightforwardly. (GP VI, pp. 605-606)

The beauty of music lies in the congruity of numerical relations, and aesthetic pleasure derives from the pleasure for the proportions among things. As is remarked in the famous Letter of 17th April 1712 to Christian Goldbach,

27 The canon was held as a natural matrix from which every musical art derives. Now, it would be opportune to wonder which Leibniz's position is concerning the temperate scale, which artificially harmonizes the natural scale by introducing semitones that express irrational numbers. Was Leibniz distrustful of whatever moved away from nature, conceived and chosen by God? Or, mathematics and nature being insurmountable, therefore *assisted music*, too, cannot but have been thought, foreseen and chosen by the creator of the universe? Notwithstanding what I have been maintaining, with respect to the non correctibility of the universe, I would lean towards the second hypothesis.

in perceiving the beauty of chords our soul is not aware of being counting, music is an occult arithmetic exercise: «musica est exercitium arithmeticae occultum nescientis se numerare animi».[28] When a painful event appears to us as an insurmountable objection against the harmony of the world, it means that in us the unaware counting of the convenient proportions of the whole (within which dissonances are essential) stops resounding.

May we say that Leibniz's thought is a musical thought? We could not definitely ask the same question with respect to Heidegger. Well, although neither the rhythm nor the sound of *Essays on Theodicy* can be said to make them musical, still, it remains plausible to hold that the adjective 'musical' is not here applied at a merely metaphorical level (cf. Bockholdt 1999, pp. 163-174).

Music is listened to, enjoyed, thought, (unawarely) counted by us. These are not levels extrinsically overlapped, though. The pre-established harmony is no paratactic juxtaposition based on contiguity. A few years later, Kant will propose the image of the concentric circles in order to explain the relationship between morality and religion. One may venture to say that it could help us understand the coexistence between mathematical framework, causal and cognitive weft, physical phenomenicity and subjective perceptive dimension. These are concentric circles that are differentiated 'only' by diverse grades of distinction but that are compresent. Diverse infinities, variously and endlessly interwined. Of course, to Leibniz numerical relations are more decisive than perceptive representations but anyway all concur in forming the harmony of the whole. According to Leibniz music, as artistic and physical-acoustic articulation offered to subjective perceptions and taste, is the clothing of mathematics, not its disguise. Counterpoint is arithmetic, even though we perceive of it only the sounding *mise-en-scène*.

Mathematical rules and arithmetic computation do not deny, nor replace our perceptions or aesthetic pleasure. There is a simultaneous unity of the components of the universe, which unfolds diachronically, too. Leibniz infinitely varies and animates the presence and unity of the real world. Baroque music offers exemplary manifestations of it. This is what Deleuze has understood earlier and better than others: in Leibniz the diverse does not simply divide the 'cake' of the universe in slices: here logic and mathematics, there aesthetics, there the physical reality objectively known, here the subjective representations, where everybody occupies a part of it. In Leibniz's view the harmony of the universe is no mere role-play, on the contrary, it is coexistence, actual compossibility of the diverse, even of the opposite, where each fabric has got the other within itself. «The manifold,

28 «Does the pleasure of music arise *because* we are unaware of calculating, or *in spite of* this unawareness? The correct answer is undoubtedly the second one» (Martinelli 2012, 2, § 2, p. 72; our transl.).

then, is not only what has got many parts» (Deleuze 1988, p. 5). The unifying tension animating it engenders the network of diverse orders of the infinite. In Leibniz more than one single infinite, rather, infinite infinites interweave, cohabiting harmoniously (cf. pp. 5, 23, 40, 61-3, 78). Not only are there no fissures, nor discontinuities, but the folds and the curves it is made up of allow for that very elasticity and flexibility (cf. pp. 8, 169) that preserve unity even in the highest opposing tension. The universe unfolds as an interwoven series of labyrinths, the intelligibility of which shirks being within easy grasp.

Though seemingly redundant and whimsical, the spirals of the façade of a baroque church or the puffs of a baroque dress hide but do not cover. They are full of spiritual energy and, so, contribute, in their way, to display the vibrant complexity of the real, at the same time also pointing to its infinite, invisible and multidimensional stratification. Baroque music becomes architectural, even urbanistic, like painting (cf. p. 168). The world is an immense city in which it is difficult to orient ourselves. It is like a contemporary metropolis: a few single areas or a few particular circles of people may be well familiar to us, and, however, it appears we are allowed to lead 'our own lives' autonomously. Still, if we believe that even the most proven familiarity can reduce to itself the complexity and undisposability of the world, we are done for. We will end up interpreting failures and sufferings as ill-fated exceptions devoid of any sense, out of the score of life,[29] or, narcisistically, believing that we are victims of unjust shortcomings.

The whole is this very world: its complexity is humanly insaturable.

29 Dissonant chords, as much as sorrow, are prepared, and do not come unexpectedly. «The whole Leibnizian theory of evil is a method to prepare and solve the dissonances of a universal harmony» (Deleuze 1988, pp. 179-180; our transl.).

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Index of Names

Leibniz's *Theodicy* is both a work of reason and a work on reason: reason as rational ground or justification, reason as universal order of the world, and reason as the human cognitive faculty, always in search of reasons. This book explores the depth of theodicean doctrines from the logical, metaphysical, and theological points of view. The first section is devoted to Leibniz's argumentative style and rhetorical devices. The second section focuses on the metaphysical structures that underlie Leibniz's vindication of God's goodness. The third section offers new insights into Leibniz's answer to one of the most difficult challenges faced by human reason: the existence of evil.

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