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CRITICAL STUDY

Sleigh's *Leibniz & Arnauld: A Commentary on Their Correspondence* (New Haven: Yale University Press)

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Robert Sleigh has written a wonderful book (Sleigh [1990]), elegant in concept and in execution, combining historical scholarship and philosophical analysis of equal rigor. It is devoted to interpretation of the remarkable series of letters exchanged between Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Antoine Arnauld in 1686 and 1687 (with a couple of further letters, in 1688 and 1690, in which Leibniz tried unsuccessfully to revive the correspondence). These letters are among the writings that mark the beginning of the mature period of Leibniz's thought. No part of the immense body of his surviving work is more celebrated today, and none presents a fuller or more interesting statement of the main themes and arguments of his metaphysics. It is naturally read in conjunction with Leibniz's *Discourse on Metaphysics*, which was written in 1686, apparently to be sent to Arnauld and to be discussed in the correspondence. In fact only a summary of the *Discourse* was sent to Arnauld, and much of its content is not mentioned in the letters.

Sleigh's commentary, accordingly, "focus[es] on the *Discourse* only to the extent that it illuminates the discussion in the correspondence" (Sleigh [1990], 2), which leaves him indeed with quite a bit to say about the *Discourse*. As a previous reviewer has noted (Nadler [1991], 496), Arnauld's doctrines get nothing like the sustained attention from Sleigh that Leibniz's do; but I think this fairly reflects the content of the correspondence, which is explicitly focused on Leibniz's views, with Arnauld's entering only in commentary on Leibniz. One of the marks of distinction of Sleigh's work is the access he provides to the latest manuscript research, of which he makes fruitful use at many points. Sleigh's commentary deserves the attention of all serious students of Leibniz.

The book opens with three short but exemplary and extremely illuminating chapters introducing the texts, the parties to the correspondence, their projects and motives, and their relations with each other; it closes with an even shorter eighth chapter of concluding remarks. The much longer chapters 4–7, topically

organized, concern "Freedom and Contingency" (4), "Substance" (5), "Substantial Forms" (6), and "Action" (7). The two topics on which I will comment at length here have to do with Leibniz's motives in writing to Arnauld and with freedom and contingency, but I will say a bit first about chapters 5–7.

Sleigh's treatment of Leibniz's views on the nature of corporeal things in chapters 5 and 6 includes a careful exposition of four different theories that might claim some textual support from the *Discourse* and correspondence; Sleigh argues for a moderately idealistic interpretation. His treatment of this subject has already attracted significant discussion (notably in Garber [1992], 161–65). I believe Sleigh is mainly right (and very helpful) in this area. I have some disagreements on points of detail; most of them can be inferred from what I have written elsewhere (Adams [1994a], ch. 10).

Particularly interesting is Sleigh's proposed explanation of the unity *per se* that Leibniz claims for corporeal substances, as contrasted with the accidental unity of mere aggregates–a unity that many (including Leibniz himself, in later years) have found one of the most problematic points in his theory of the corporeal world. What is required for Leibnizian substantial unity, Sleigh suggests, is precisely the sort of internal, self-sufficient causal connectedness that Leibniz ascribes to substances and their histories. This suggestion is shown to be deeply rooted in the texts. Its full development might encounter serious problems that Sleigh does not discuss, but it is not clear that Leibniz could give any explanation that would do better.

The discussion of causation in chapter 7 is of great value. Sleigh's account of Leibniz's views, and those of Arnauld and Malebranche, on miracles and on occasionalism is original, subtle, and illuminating. The concluding section, on "Divine Concurrence," though brief, is extremely helpful in forcing us to take seriously Leibniz's commitment to the doctrine that God is a direct cause of every event, despite the tension that Sleigh acknowledges with Leibniz's more famous commitment to the causal spontaneity of created substances (Sleigh [1990], 185).

1. Theological Background and Motivation

The primary historical context of the correspondence is theological, or more broadly religious and ecclesiastical, and is rightly presented as such by Sleigh. He situates the correspondence, and the *Discourse on Metaphysics*, within Leibniz's "project...to contribute to reunion" of the Protestant and Catholic churches (Sleigh [1990], 23). The Leibniz-Arnauld correspondence was three-cornered, the third corner being an "intermediary," the landgrave Ernst of Hessen-Rheinfels, through whom Leibniz and Arnauld exchanged their letters. Sleigh points out that this was one of a series of "triads" that Leibniz organized or tried to organize, consisting in each case of himself, a Catholic theologian, and a Catholic intermediary drawn from the nobility. The letters exchanged among the later triads in the 1690s, in which the Catholic theologians were Paul Pellisson-Fontanier and Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, were explicitly focused on

issues of church reunion; and Sleigh sees Leibniz's purpose in writing to Arnauld through Ernst as similar:

> By making use of a friendly Catholic nobleman, he hoped to gain a sympathetic hearing for his views from a Catholic theologian. Arnauld would then vouch that Leibniz's thoughts about fundamental questions in dispute between Protestants and Catholics were not heretical from the Catholic point of view (Sleigh [1990], 15).

The views on which Leibniz hoped for Arnauld's approval were laid out in the *Discourse on Metaphysics*; Sleigh holds that "the *Discourse* was intended to provide a philosophical framework within which the leading theological disputes might be resolved" (Sleigh [1990], 10).

Sleigh's account of Leibniz's motives is illuminating, presenting much material of importance for understanding the correspondence. For several reasons, however, I doubt that church reunion, as such, can have been Leibniz's main goal in writing the *Discourse* or in the subsequent correspondence with Arnauld. For one thing, church reunion is not a topic of the *Discourse* or the correspondence,[1] and the issues discussed in those documents are not (in Sleigh's words) "fundamental questions in dispute between Protestants and Catholics." They are in large part theological issues, but not the ones that divided the churches.[2] Moreover, it is not clear what Arnauld's sponsorship would have accomplished for an ecclesiastical reunion project, since he was extremely controversial, and (unlike Bossuet) more out of power than in power, in his own church.

Leibniz did sometimes claim that his metaphysics could be helpful for resolving issues of theological controversy; Sleigh rightly quotes a letter of 1682 in which Leibniz makes such a claim with regard to eucharistic theology (Sleigh [1990], 19). By the mid-1680s, however, Leibniz certainly thought that the main problems in church reunion pertained to politics and religious practices rather than to metaphysics, as he implies in the same letter of 1682. Since 1683 he had been privy to a reunion strategy about which he stated to the landgrave Ernst in November 1687 that it is "of all the methods that have been proposed to remove this great Schism of the West, ... the most reasonable" (A I,v,10). This is the strategy that Leibniz later tried to promote in his correspondence with Bossuet, but he did not invent it. It grew out of discussions in Hannover between ecumenically minded Lutheran theologians and Cristobal de Rojas y Spinola, a Catholic bishop and ecumenist sponsored by the Imperial court in Vienna. It was largely concerned with practical and juridical matters, and its central feature was the proposal that Protestant churches could be reunited into the Roman Catholic Church without their having first to accept all the decrees of the Counterreformation Council of Trent; certain issues would be left open to be settled by a future ecumenical council whose legitimacy and authority would be accepted by all (Adams [1994b], 518–26; Sleigh [1990], 24). The platform for this strategy has virtually no overlap with the topics of the *Discourse on Metaphysics* or the Leibniz-Arnauld correspondence.

This is not to disparage the importance of the latter topics for Leibniz. On the contrary, the doctrines of the *Discourse* were more rather than less important to his religious agenda than the topics of the Hannover platform, as I take it Sleigh would agree (cf. Sleigh [1990], 23). But I believe Leibniz's religious aims in the *Discourse* and the correspondence with Arnauld were more personal in a way, and in a way even larger, than those of church reunion. The most important thing in religion, for Leibniz, is theistic devotion, "the love of God above all things" (e.g., Gr 7, 161; cf. Adams [1994b], 526ff.). The ultimate religious goal to which Leibniz hoped his work might contribute was the spread of such devotion. The reunion of the churches (indeed the very existence of churches) was of value in his eyes primarily as a means to that end. But the very best means to true piety, in his opinion, is rational understanding and demonstration of the perfection of God (Gr 8f.; VE 1810–15; G VI,27–29/T 51–53). And the *Discourse on Metaphysics* claims to offer this very best means. The topic with which it begins is the perfection of God, and it is stressed repeatedly in DM 2–5 that a proper understanding of the divine perfections is important for the love of God. Thus the *Discourse* is meant to contribute directly, and in the best possible way, to the ultimate religious goal. If it was also intended to contribute indirectly to the same goal by facilitating church reunion, that, I believe, was a secondary aim, and one that is not explicitly indicated in the text.

Besides this direct and optimal relation to the ultimate goal, there is another characteristic of Leibniz's metaphysical theology that contributes to its preeminent religious importance for him, and that is the *demonstrative* character that he attributed to much of it. This is connected with a Leibnizian apportionment of the territory of philosophy that may seem strange to us. Leibniz distinguished between truths of demonstrative or "metaphysical" certainty and those that are merely probable or at best of "moral certainty." The former alone belong in his view to "theoretical philosophy"; the latter he assigns to "practical philosophy." And this applies quite explicitly to "theological truths and inferences" (G III,193). I believe that Leibniz inferred that where we have demonstrative proofs, we must take them as decisive, pragmatic considerations to the contrary notwithstanding, but that where we have only probability, pragmatic considerations are very much in order. In theology, the data of revelation, being of moral rather than metaphysical certainty, may be judged and interpreted by pragmatic criteria, according to their tendency to promote the ultimate religious goal of devotion to God, or such proximate goals as church unity; but principles of natural theology established by demonstrative rational proofs have priority over pragmatic criteria.[3]

The significance of demonstrative certainty in theology figures in a letter of 1684 from Leibniz to Ernst that Sleigh rightly quotes as relevant to the *Discourse* and the Leibniz-Arnauld correspondence. In this letter Leibniz grants that "the visible Catholic church is infallible on all points of belief that are necessary for salvation," and goes on to ask why he himself does not seek admission to that church. He replies that it can still happen that the church requires its members to assent to errors on other points (presumably not strictly *necessary* for salvation),

and one may be unable in conscience to give such assent. In his own case, he says, "there are some philosophic opinions of which I believe I have demonstrations," which he could not conscientiously abandon, as they "are of great importance in philosophy." He is sure they are not contrary to the faith, but he is not sure they would be tolerated in the Roman church, and that is why he does not join it.[4]

Sleigh is surely right in stating that "the philosophical opinions in question are those that found expression in the *Discourse on Metaphysics*" (Sleigh [1990], 21). And one of Leibniz's aims in corresponding with Arnauld (an aim in which he was only partly successful) was surely to obtain Arnauld's assurance that they would indeed be tolerated in the Roman Catholic Church (LA 131). Was Leibniz pursuing this subject with a view to a personal conversion to Catholicism? Such was the fond hope of Ernst and of Arnauld (LA 16, 90, 110f.), and it is possible; but I doubt it. The conflicting evidence Leibniz has left us of his mind on this point (Adams [1994b], 518) does not enable us to pronounce with confidence on his motives.

In any case no project of personal conversion is needed to explain Leibniz's interest in obtaining Arnauld's certification of ecclesiastical acceptability. In the 1680s Leibniz clearly viewed the Roman Catholic Church as the dominant religious institution of Europe. In all his strategies for Protestant-Catholic reunion Protestants would be merged into the Roman church, which would be the surviving institution. So Leibniz envisaged a possible future in which he might be virtually required to make his peace with that church; and in any event his metaphysical theology could not have anything like the salutary religious influence he hoped for it if it were repudiated by Catholic authorities.

Arnauld's reactions, moreover, might well be taken as some indication of the reception to be expected for Leibniz's thought in *any* of the major churches of Europe, Protestant as well as Catholic. When the question of ecclesiastical acceptability comes up in the correspondence, it always explicitly concerns the Catholic church; but, as I have noted, the topics under discussion are not those that divided the churches. Leibniz's theses in the *Discourse* and the correspondence are not distinctively Protestant or Catholic, and the apparent implications about the freedom of God that alarmed Arnauld could as easily have alarmed Protestant theologians. Arnauld's verdict could therefore serve as an omen of the kind of response Leibniz's thoùght might receive from orthodox theologians of any Christian denomination.

2. Superintrinsicalness *versus* Superessentialism

One of the most memorable features of Sleigh's interpretation is connected with Leibniz's well known claim, which plays a central role in the correspondence with Arnauld, that the individual concept of each person, and of every other individual substance, contains, at least by implication, every predicate that can be truly ascribed to that substance. Many have taken this to imply "superessentialism," as it has been called: "the doctrine that each individual substance has all its

properties essentially" (Sleigh [1990], 51). Not so, says Sleigh; all that Leibniz affirmed was "superintrinsicalness," the doctrine "that every individual has all its properties intrinsically" (Sleigh [1990], 57). So stated, the contrast obviously turns on the meanings of 'essentially' and 'intrinsically'. In Sleigh's interpretation 'essentially' is understood in terms of metaphysical modality; 'intrinsically', in terms of subjunctive conditionals. A substance has a property essentially if and only if it has it and it is metaphysically impossible for it to exist without having it. It has the property intrinsically if and only if nothing whatever that lacked the property would be that same individual substance.[5]

Sleigh's account of superintrinsicalness seems to me in large part right, important, and illuminating. It can claim a starting point in Leibniz's writing to Arnauld of a connection that "is not necessary, though it is intrinsic" (LA 56). The key point in Sleigh's effort to make something useful of this distinction is his correct observation that when Leibniz asserts a strong connection between individuals and their properties, he uses subjunctive conditionals rather than modal terms such as 'necessary' (Sleigh [1990], 68).

It is easy for post-Kantian philosophers to overlook this. Is not the containment of the predicate in the subject concept the very definition of an analytic truth? And is not analytic truth the clearest case of absolute necessity? It is tempting, therefore, to read Leibniz's predicate containment theory of truth as implying that all truths are analytic and therefore necessary. Bertrand Russell read it so, for example, in his deservedly celebrated and hugely influential book on Leibniz (Russell [1937], 9f.). This can hardly be what Leibniz meant, however, when he stated to Arnauld that his predicate containment account of truth applies to "every true affirmative proposition, necessary *or contingent*" (LA 56, my emphasis). This pivotal text certainly suggests that the connection by which the predicate of every affirmative truth is contained in its subject concept can be something less than a necessary connection. Sleigh proposes, plausibly, that it need not be anything stronger than Leibniz would require for the grounding of a subjunctive conditional.

What does that require? Here, with only minor disagreements with Sleigh, I wish to push the analysis a bit farther than he does in a certain direction, beginning with certain Leibnizian claims that Sleigh rightly brings to our attention. Leibniz holds that "the connection between Adam and [later] human events is not independent of all the free decrees of God," but that it depends in particular on "a few primitive free decrees that can be called laws of the universe, which regulate the consequences of things" (LA 40). To the objection that the concept of Adam defines a possibility that God could have decided not to create, and that "the possibles are independent of God's decrees," Leibniz replies, "I grant it of *actual* decrees ... but I maintain that possible individual concepts include some *possible* free decrees" (LA 40, emphasis added); in particular, they include, as possible, the laws of their universe. In this way, Leibniz seems to have thought, connections that are intrinsic to the concepts of possible individuals can still be sufficiently dependent on God's will to leave God free, and to be contingent.

It is natural to ask at this point, though Sleigh ([1990], 67) does not, *which* possible free decrees are included as laws in the concept of a merely possible individual substance. If the decrees are free, there must be many possible decrees that in some sense *could* be so included; which of them *are* included? Given Sleigh's subjunctive conditional criterion for intrinsicalness, the laws to be included will presumably be those that God *would* actually decree if God created the substance in question; but which are those? The obvious Leibnizian answer to this problem is that God would decree the *best* possible laws–or those, at any rate, that would be best on the assumption of the existence of that particular substance.

This suggests the following account, which I am presently inclined to believe underlies Leibniz's claims about freedom and contingency in his letters to Arnauld.[6] I will sketch it somewhat dogmatically, to save space. The connections whose contingency is most important for Leibniz are those between different created substances in the same possible world, and those between earlier and later stages of the same substance. Each of these sets of connections can be seen as depending on the laws that God would decree if God created the substances in question. Suppose we subtract these laws, and all that depends on them, from the concept of an individual substance; what is left to form the primitive core of the concept? Or, reversing the question, what facts about the individual as such will be sufficient, together with the laws, for deriving the whole history of the individual and all its relations with other individuals? The most obvious candidate is a complete characterization of one instantaneous state of the individual substance–presumably its initial state, if it has an initial state. Given the sort of deterministic laws that Leibniz assumes, that will be enough to generate all the other facts.

So we envisage an individual concept as composed of a complete concept of an initial state plus a set of laws sufficient to generate the rest of the history of the universe from that state. And these two parts of the concept are not arbitrarily connected; their connection is not necessary, but is intrinsic to the initial state, inasmuch as these laws are the laws that *would* obtain if that state were actual. Thus the concept of the initial state could be seen as the primitive concept of the individual substance, in which everything else is contained by an intrinsic connection.

What is the ground of the intrinsic connection between the initial state and the laws? For Leibniz it must be the principle of sufficient reason, as it governs God's decisions. Given that initial state, these are the best laws; and from that plus the divine wisdom and goodness it follows that God would chooose these laws, if creating that initial state. Thus the principle of sufficient reason determines the relation of the state to the laws, and that relation determines everything else. This is certainly a deterministic scheme, and it may seem necessitarian too. Sleigh rightly remarks that "had Arnauld grasped the full scope of the principle of sufficient reason in Leibniz's philosophy, Arnauld would have been convinced that" Leibniz could not give "a proper account of God's freedom in creation" (Sleigh [1990], 46). So how is the consideration of possible divine decrees supposed to save contingency and the freedom of God?

The first and most fundamental point is that making connections dependent on what God *would* freely decree makes them dependent on the divine wisdom and goodness. I believe that what is most important for Leibniz in God's freedom is that in acting freely God is not compelled by anything but the wisdom and goodness of the divine nature. But this is not a complete explanation, for by 1686 Leibniz also accepted contingency as a necessary condition of free choice (Adams [1994a], 11); so we need an account of how the merely possible divine decrees are relevant to contingency. Moreover, while dependence on God's wisdom and goodness has an obvious direct relevance to *God's* freedom, it is hard to see how it would be relevant to *human* freedom (which also concerns Leibniz) except by way of a grounding for contingency.

Two possible explanations claim our attention here; neither is explicit in Leibniz's letters to Arnauld. The simpler one is that what God *would* decree, if creating a given individual substance, depends on God's will, and God's will is "the source [*principium*] of contingency," as Leibniz says in a text roughly simultaneous with his correspondence with Arnauld (Gr 311). I think this account of contingency is neither well worked out nor a permanent part of his philosophy (Adams [1994a], 40–42).[7] There is a later text in which Leibniz rejects it as circular (Gr 348, 353); and there are many more texts in which he places the source of contingency in the objects of God's choice rather than in the faculty of choice. Still this first explanation of contingency is the one that would most naturally have occurred to Arnauld on reading what Leibniz wrote him in July of 1686 about possible divine decrees; and it is not impossible that Leibniz favored it at that time. Sleigh describes it as "the doctrine expounded in the Discourse and correspondence" (Sleigh [1990], 88, 67), but I don't think it is explicit there as a claim about the ultimate ground of contingency.

The other possible explanation involves the famous infinite analysis theory of contingency. One of Leibniz's most persistent beliefs about modality is that what is necessary is what is demonstrable. Demonstrability is a proof-theoretical property, and Leibniz came to think that only what can be proved by an analysis of *finite* length is demonstrable. Contingent truths, then, will be those in which the predicate is indeed contained in the subject concept but any analysis will go to infinity without proving it. Truths that depend on what laws God would choose will be contingent if that dependence prevents a finite demonstration; and there is more than one way in which it might do that. Leibniz came to believe that it is contingent which of all possible worlds is the best, because it would take an infinite analysis to determine that (Adams [1994a], 23–25); he would probably see similar reasons for thinking it contingent which would be the best laws (and hence, which laws God would choose) to govern a world, given the initial state of a particular substance. Even given a set of laws, moreover, the complete concept of the initial state of any individual substance that would interest Leibniz will be infinitely complex, so that it may take an infinite analysis to derive from it subsequent states, or facts about other created substances (C 18f./MP 98f.). So far as I can see, this is the most adequately developed answer that Leibniz's philosophy

affords to the questions how merely possible divine decrees can be relevant to contingency, and how connections can be contained in the concepts of individual substances without being necessary. In this way, as Sleigh affirms, "Leibniz saw the doctrine of infinite analysis [when he had developed it] as putting the free decree defense on firm, noncircular footing" (Sleigh [1990], 67).

Sleigh is not in a position to appeal to this explanation in interpreting the Leibniz-Arnauld correspondence itself, however, for he "doubt[s] that Leibniz was ... in possession of the doctrine" of infinite analysis by "14 July 1686 when debate [between Leibniz and Arnauld] closed on the topic of freedom and contingency" (Sleigh [1990], 88). Sleigh's doubt is based on the fact that Leibniz does not use the doctrine in his debate with Arnauld; but this does not convince me. I suspect that the doctrine was already an important basis, not acknowledged to Arnauld, of claims that Leibniz made in his letters. As Sleigh points out, we have documentary evidence that he had worked out a (probably experimental) version of the infinite analysis theory by some time in 1686, but the clearest evidence does not determine whether he had it by 14 July. There is at least one formulation of the doctrine, however, that I think there is reason to date before the crucial letter to Arnauld (Adams [1994a], 44f.). The fact that Leibniz does not present the infinite analysis doctrine to Arnauld proves little, in my opinion. It was certainly in the background of his thinking in many later documents in which it was not presented (or, more rarely, presented in a very fragmentary way) to his public or his correspondents. I know of no document written for any eyes but Leibniz's own in which the doctrine is stated fully enough to make clear how thin a sense of contingency it affords. Sleigh himself surmises that Leibniz was not eager to share the doctrine with Arnauld at a later point in the correspondence because he "knew that Arnauld would not be attracted to [certain] features of Leibniz's new doctrine" (Sleigh [1990], 88).

One further question deserves comment in this context. Which are the connections that will be intrinsic to an individual created substance, but contingent, by virtue of the possible divine decrees? Among them, certainly, will be all connections of that substance with other created substances, where each substance is conceived purely in terms of its internal, nonrelational properties, and the relational properties are the connections to be explained. Not only would it take more than a finite analysis to prove these connections, for reasons noted above. It seems on balance that Leibniz thought nothing but the divine wisdom and goodness keeps God from creating a substance with any set of internal properties without creating the other substances with which it would be related according to the best of laws (Adams [1994a], 106; cf. Sleigh [1990], 180–82). Thus these connections are subject to God's free choice.

Much the same can be said about the connections between successive internal states of one and the same created substance, though a little hesitation, or at least a complication, should be registered here. The connections between distinct created substances are caused by God alone, on Leibniz's view. He insists, however, that succeeding internal states of such substances are caused by the substances

themselves and by their previous states. *This* does not limit God's freedom, or cause the regulation of the connections between such states to escape God's control; for Leibniz never suggests that these connections are metaphysically necessary, and he holds that their realization requires God's concurrence (Sleigh [1990], 183–85; G II,295). In Leibniz's view, however, the laws governing these connections are built into forces that are part of the earlier states of the created substance, so that God can sustain the spontaneity of the created substance only by concurring in the causation of subsequent states in accordance with precisely those laws. And Leibniz seems to have supposed that the transtemporal identity, and even the substantiality, of created substances depend on their spontaneity, and on a continuous chain of causal connections between their successive internal states (Sleigh [1990], 126–32; Adams [1994a], 99–102). There may therefore be limits to the extent to which Leibniz's God could tamper with the causal connections between these states without failing thereby to create substances at all; but I think the texts do not compel us to suppose that such limits would be narrow or terribly constraining.

The connections most frequently characterized as intrinsic but not necessary in Sleigh's interpretation of Leibniz are between an individual substance and various facts about that substance. Sleigh is supported in this by much of the phrasing of the Leibniz-Arnauld correspondence, but there is a serious problem here for Leibniz. This is a point at which the issue of counterfactual or "transworld" identity of individuals arises. There is no doubt that Leibniz maintains in the correspondence that, for any actual individual x, nothing *would* have been x if it differed in the slightest from the actual properties, history, and relations of x. So the connection is intrinsic. And the infinite analysis theory of contingency will leave it contingent in Leibniz's view; he seems in general to think that it would take an infinite analysis to derive an intuitively accidental property from a substance's complete individual concept. This contingency will not be *theologically interesting*, however, unless Leibniz can say that nothing but the divine wisdom and goodness kept God from creating the very same individual substance x with different properties; and it is not so clear that he is in a position to say that.

He can make the analogous claim about the connections between different substances and between different instantaneous states of the same substance because those substances and states are distinct metaphysical building blocks of a Leibnizian universe, which divine omnipotence can arrange in accordance with divine wisdom and goodness. But the individual identity, thisness, or haecceity of a substance is no such building block for Leibniz. His principle of the identity of indiscernibles allows no primitive, pure, or irreducible thisness in the universe. The identities of individuals must rather be constructed from, and reducible to, their other properties. This leaves God no separate choice about the identities of created substances, beyond the choice of their properties. There is for Leibniz no heavenly treasury of haecceities from which divine wisdom could select the best identity to go with a set of properties; the properties must already determine the identity.

What then are the properties that determine in this way the individual identities of created substances? Most 20th century interpreters of Leibniz have taken him to espouse a logical construction of identity, including counterfactual identity, that essentially involves *all* the properties of any individual substance. This interpretation, which seems to be supported by important texts from the mid-1680s (DM 8; LA 54; Gr 311), makes the connection between a created individual's identity and its properties independent of God's (actual or possible) choice of the best. We get a different result if we define the created substance's individual identity solely in terms of its *initial state*. Then the connection of the individual's identity with its later states and its intersubstantial relations will be up to God's wisdom and goodness in the same way as the connection of its initial state with those other states and relations is. But the dependence of the former on what God would choose follows trivially from the dependence of the latter, and adds nothing substantial to it, on this account. And it is hard to find a textual basis for ascribing to Leibniz the initial state account of individual identity, except that it looks like his best shot at obtaining a theologically interesting contingency for the connection between an individual substance and most of its properties.

Notes

[1]In apparent agreement with Sleigh [1990], 190, I am not counting as part of this correspondence a letter (LA 129f.) which was in any event not sent and may have arisen from a separate discussion with Ernst. It discusses much more ecclesiastical issues, and does so from a perspective plainly arising from the reunion proposals of the Catholic ecumenist Cristobal de Rojas y Spinola, which I will treat below.

[2]Our texts do discuss questions of grace and free will, which were sometimes a topic of controversy between the churches; but these issues, in the seventeenth century, were even more hotly debated *within* the Protestant and Catholic camps, and Leibniz makes no effort here to show that his position on this subject settles outstanding ecclesiastical issues.

[3]This paragraph summarizes longer discussions in Adams [1994a], 194–202, and [1994b], 536–41.

[4]A I,iv,320f., as translated in Sleigh [1990], 20f.

[5]I rely here on the formulations of Sleigh [1990], 57. Properties, or their possession, might be indexed to times, and 'nothing ... would be ...' should be taken as implying 'nothing ... would have been ...' Sleigh discusses the first of these points (p. 203, n. 27), but is silent on the second.

[6]I am indebted here, for inspiration, to the rich and carefully argued discussion in Carriero [1993,1995], though I have some significant disagreements with him.

[7]Sleigh ([1990, 67) agrees, but thinks the relevant parts of the correspondence with Arnauld are based on this account because Leibniz had not yet developed the other one.

References

Works of Leibniz

The works of Leibniz are cited by the following abbreviations. All works are cited by page number unless otherwise noted below. Entries separated by a slash refer to the original and an English translation of the same passage. Except as noted, I am responsible for the English translations in my quotations, though I have consulted published English translations.

A = Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, edition of the Berlin Academy (Darmstadt and Berlin, 1923–), cited by series, volume, and page.

C = *Opuscules et fragments inédits de Leibniz*, ed. by Louis Couturat (Paris, 1903; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1966).

DM = *Discours de métaphysique* [*Discourse on Metaphysics*], ed. by Henri Lestienne, new edition (Paris: Vrin, 1975), cited by section number.

G = *Die philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, ed. by C. I. Gerhardt (Berlin, 1875–90; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1965), cited by volume and page.

Gr = Leibniz, *Textes inédits*, ed. by Gaston Grua (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948).

LA = The correspondence between Leibniz and Antoine Arnauld, cited by pages of G II, which are given marginally in *The Leibniz-Arnauld Correspondence*, ed. and trans. by H. T. Mason (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967).

MP = Leibniz, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. by Mary Morris and G.H.R. Parkinson (London: Dent, 1973).

T = Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Theodicy*, trans. by E.M. Huggard (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951; La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1985).

VE = Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Vorausedition zur Reihe VI–Philosophische Schriften–in der Ausgabe der Akademie der Wissenschaften Berlin*, bearbeitet von der Leibniz-Forschungsstelle der Universität Münster. Fascicles 1–10, 1982–1991.

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