Philosophy 203
History of Modern Western Philosophy

Russell Marcus
Hamilton College
Spring 2012

Class #11
Leibniz on Theodicy, Necessity, and Freedom
with some review of Monads, Truth, Minds, and Bodies

Business

- Comments on last Thursday's class?

- First panel presentation on Thursday

- All panel preparation sessions take place in the seminar room of the Philosophy Building

- Tonight at 7 in KJ Aud: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

- On Thursday, you may want to come to class ten minutes early for a short video on Leibnizian relationalism.

- Second panel presentation is next week.
  - ‣ Will, Jim, Sam, Shyreik, and Ben D.

- Leibniz this week

- Locke next week

- Midterm the following week

- Then spring break!

Leibniz Overview

- Leibniz rejects:
  - Hobbes's materialism
  - the atheism/naturalism of Hobbes and Spinoza
  - Spinoza's determinism
  - Galileo's rejection of final causes
- Leibniz defends:
  - multiplicity of substance
  - final causes
  - free will and God's foreknowledge
  - a parallelist solution to the problem of interaction

Our Approach to Leibniz's Work

The *Monadology* and the *Discourse on Metaphysics*.

1. Monads;

2. The Complete-World View of Substance;

3. The Mind/Body Distinction;

4. Theodicy;

5. Freedom and Harmony;

6. The controversy with Newton over space and time.

I'll say a little about 1-3 about which you talked with Emir last Thursday.

Substance and Simplicity

- Substance Review
  - ▸ For Descartes, there are two kinds of substance, each with its own essential trait: mind (consciousness) and body (extension).
  - ▸ For Hobbes, there are only bodies.
  - ▸ For Spinoza, there is only one instance of a substance: God, or Nature.
- Leibniz accepts multiplicity.
  - ▸ There must be simple substances, some basic elements, which he calls monads.
- The difference between atoms and monads is striking.
  - ▸ For the atomists, the simple objects are essentially undifferentiable; they are all alike.
  - ▸ Each monad is an active, rather than passive, unity.

Two Arguments Against Atomism

1. Machines can not think.

▸ Atoms are little machines, governed by Galilean mechanistic laws.

▸ "*Perception*, and what depends on it, *is inexplicable in terms of mechanical reasons*, that is, through shapes and motions" (M17, 276b).

▸ There must be some essentially active, essentially perceptive, component to the basic elements of the world (entelechies).

2. The fundamental stuff (substance) must be diverse, rather than uniform.

▸ God's goodness is incompatible with atomist uniformity.

• Leibniz uses cosmological and ontological arguments for the existence of God, with improvements on those in Descartes.

• Put those arguments aside.

▸ Perceptions of monads will distinguish them, thus denying the atomist's uniformity.

Machines Can Not Think
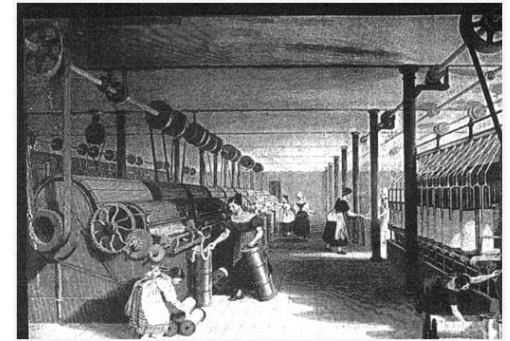
- "*Perception*, and what depends on it, *is inexplicable in terms of mechanical reasons*, that is, through shapes and motions" (M17, 276b).

- Leibniz considers walking inside the mechanical parts of a thinking substance, like a brain.
  - All we would see would be moving parts.
  - We would see no memory, no thought.

- The Chinese Nation

- Leibniz concludes that such contraptions could not support thought.

- "When inspecting its interior, we will only find parts that push one another, and we will never find anything to explain a perception" (M17, AW 276b).

- Monads are entelechies, essentially active, essentially perceptive, components to the basic elements of the world.
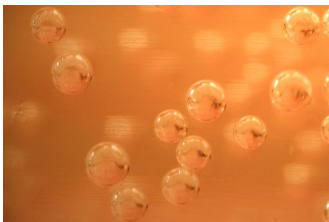
Diversity

- There can be no two objects that do not have some internal difference: the identity of indiscernibles (II).
  - ‣ "It is also necessary that each monad be different from each other. For there are never two beings in nature that are perfectly alike, two beings in which it is not possible to discover an internal difference, that is, one founded on an intrinsic denomination" (M9, AW 276a).

- II follows, Leibniz argues, from his two great principles, contradiction and sufficient reason.
  - ‣ "Our reasonings are based on *two great principles, that of contradiction*, in virtue of which we judge that which involves a contradiction to be false, and that which is opposed or contradictory to the false to be true...And *that of sufficient reason*, by virtue of which we consider that we can find no true or existent fact, no true assertion, without there being a sufficient reason why it is thus and not otherwise, although most of the time these reasons cannot be known to us..." (M31-2, AW 278a).

Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) and Conceptual Containment

- PSR follows from Leibniz's conception of truth as a claim in which a predicate is contained in a subject.
  - "All true predication has some basis in the nature of things and...when a proposition is not an identity, that is, when the predicate is not explicitly contained in the subject, it must be contained in it virtually" (D8, AW 228).

- All true propositions are divided into basic ones, in which the predicate is explicitly contained in the subject, and derived ones, which follow by analysis.
  - Finite analysis gets to necessary truths
  - Infinite analysis is required for contingent truths, so can only be completed by God.

- The identities are known according to PC; their denial is an explicit contradiction.
  - M. David is a married bachelor.
  - M'. David is a married unmarried man.

- Analysis is the foundation of twentieth-century analytic philosophy, having been adopted by Frege, and later Russell, Wittgenstein, and the logical positivists.

- From the theory of truth as conceptual containment, Leibniz argues, we can derive PSR.
  - If some effect did not have a cause, if some truth had no reason, then there would be a claim whose subject did not contain its predicate.

From PSR to II

II1. If there were two indiscernible individuals, a and b, in our world, W, then there must also be another possible world, W*, in which a and b are "switched".

II.2. But then God could have had no reason for choosing W over W*.

II3. God must have a reason for acting as he does, by PSR.

IIC. Therefore, there are not two indiscernible individuals in our world.

Simple substances must have distinct properties.
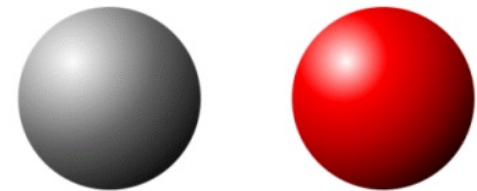
Monads and Minds

- Monads are representative in character; they express the way the world is.
- All monads are mind-like
  - ‣ "One can call all simple substances or created monads entelechies, for they have in themselves a certain perfection...; they have a sufficiency...that makes them the sources of their internal actions, and, so to speak, incorporeal automata (M18, AW 276b-277a)".
- Only some monads have sense perception and memory; these we can call minds, or souls.
- But all monads, being simple substances, have internal causes, independence from other monads.
- They are the causes of their own activity; they are not merely passive receptors.
- Their changes are representations, or perceptions.
- These perceptions are pre-arranged by God, in harmony with the perceptions of all other monads.
- They express the nature of the entire universe.
  - ‣ "Since every present state of a simple substance is a natural consequence of its preceding states, the present is pregnant with the future" (M22, AW 277a).

Predicate Containment and Complete Concepts

- Truth: to say of what is that it is

- The concept of any substance has to contain all the properties that might be predicated of it, in order for there to be true predications.
  - "We can say that the nature of an individual substance or of a complete being is to have a notion so complete that it is sufficient to contain and to allow us to deduce from it all the predicates of the subject to which this notion is attributed" (D8, AW 228a)

- The substance of Alexander the Great must correspond to a complete concept which will differentiate it from other substances.
  - His substance contains all of the attributes of Alexander.
  - The concepts may be analyzed down to true predications.
  - "When we consider carefully the connection of things, we can say that from all time in Alexander's soul there are vestiges of everything that has happened to him and marks of everything that will happen to him and even traces of everything that happens in the universe, even though God alone could recognize them all" (D8, AW 228b).
  - "Every substance is like a complete world and like a mirror of God or of the whole universe, which each one expresses in its own way" (D9, AW 229a).

Voltaire on the World-View of Monads

"Can you really believe that a drop of urine is an infinity of monads, and that each of these has ideas, however obscure, of the universe as a whole?" (Voltaire, *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 22, p. 434)

Causation

- The problem of interaction (between mind and body) is a special case of a general problem of causal interaction.

- Four kinds of causal interactions:
    CI1. Body-body (e.g. when one curling stone transfers momentum to the next)
    CI2. Body-mind (e.g. when one's body is harmed and the mind feels pain)
    CI3. Mind-body (e.g. when I decide to take a walk, and my body gets up and goes)
    CI4. Intra-mental (e.g. when I think about my children and that causes me joy)

- CI2 and CI3 are obviously problems for the dualist.

- Many of the moderns thought that there was also a problem with CI1.

The Problem of Transeunt Causation

interaction among substances
e.g. body-body causation

CI1. Body-body
CI2. Body-mind
CI3. Mind-body
CI4. Intra-mental

- CI1 is a problem for the Cartesian.
  - ▸ God both creates and preserves the universe.
  - ▸ No one moment in any way necessitates the next.

- Bodies are passive, and thus can exert no force on each other.
  - ▸ When I see one ball strike another, my eyes … seem to tell me, that the one is truly the cause of the motion it impresses on the other… . But when I consult my reason I clearly see that since bodies cannot move themselves, and since their motor force is but the will of God that conserves them successively in different places, they cannot communicate a power they do not have and could not communicate even if it were in their possession. For the mind will never conceive that one body, a purely passive substance, can in any way whatsoever transmit to another body the power transporting it. (Malebranche, *The Search for Truth and Elucidations of the Search for Truth*, p 660).

- Communication of motion among substances is thus impossible.

- Bodies can do nothing but respond to the will of an active substance.

The Occasionalist Solution

CI1. Body-body
CI2. Body-mind
CI3. Mind-body
CI4. Intra-mental

- Whenever a body is affected, there must be an agent to manage that interaction.

- Occasionalism solves the problems with CI1-CI3.
  - ‣ In the case of body-mind events, CI2, God intervenes to create a mental events whenever the body is affected.
  - ‣ God always does the moving.

- Some people read Descartes as an occasionalist.

- Leibniz sternly rejects the occasionalist's recourse to appeals to God to guide every interaction.
  - ‣ "In solving problems it is not sufficient to make use of the general cause and to invoke what is called a *Deus ex machina*. For when one does that without giving any other explanation derived from the order of secondary causes, it is, properly speaking, having recourse to a miracle" (*New System of Nature*, AW 273a).

Leibniz Against Transeunt Causation

- Leibniz agrees that individual substances can not affect each other.
  - ‣ Monads are independent.
    - • Recall Spinoza's claims about the independence of substance.
  - ‣ "Nothing ever enters into our mind naturally from the outside; and we have a bad habit of thinking of our soul as if it received certain species as messengers and as if it has doors and windows...The mind always expresses all its future thoughts and already thinks confusedly about everything it will ever think about distinctly" (DM 26, AW 240b).

- The isolation of each monad is essential to their completeness.
  - ‣ "There is also no way of explaining how a monad can be altered or changed internally by some other creature, since one cannot transpose anything in it, nor can one conceive of any internal motion that can be excited, directed, augmented, or diminished within it, as can be done in composites, where there can be change among the parts. The monads have no windows through which something can enter and leave" (M 7, AW 275b)

Bodies

- The rainbow analogy
  - ‣ Bodies are phenomena arising from real things, as the rainbow is just a phenomenon arising from the rain drops.
  - ‣ We think of bodies as coherent wholes, but they are really just accidental unities of real substances.

- Haecceity: the thing which underlies or collects all its properties

Revenge of the Problem of Interaction

CI1. Body-body
CI2. Body-mind
CI3. Mind-body
CI4. Intra-mental

- The denial of the real existence of bodies entails that C1-C3 are all moot.

- Leibniz holds on to CI4, arguing that while there is no transeunt causation, there is internal, or immanent, causation.

- Immanent causation is guided by the will.

- Leibniz's problem of interaction is to explain why, given the laws governing the series of perceptions and representations in the monad is there a parallel series in the appearances of the monad (i.e. the body) which are governed by strict physical laws.

- He should explain why there appear to be transeunt, efficient-causal interactions when there are only immanent, final-causal sequences of perceptions.

- But, the physical world is all just rainbows anyway.

Leibniz and Pre-Established Harmony

See *New System of Nature*, 273a-b

- "The soul follows its own laws and the body also follows its own; and they agree in virtue of the harmony pre-established between all substances, since they are all representations of a single universe" (M78, AW 282a).

- God puts the universe in motion in such a way that the mind and body seem to affect each other, and such that monads seem to affect each other.

- But, the truth is that the appearance of transeunt causation is an illusion.

- Immanent causation, the relations among perceptions of a monad, are not impugned, here.

- But the relations among monads are just the effects of the pre-established harmony.

- The appearance of transeunt causation is, as it was for Spinoza, an illusion.

- Pre-established harmony undermines the freedom of the will, by positing a determined sequence of events, it also makes that freedom easier to describe, since interactions among bodies need not be taken as governed by external laws.

Theodicy

Theodicy

1. God is omnipotent and omniscient and benevolent and the free creator of the world.

2. Things could have been otherwise—i.e., there are other possible worlds.

3. If this world is not the best of all possible worlds, then at least one of the following must be the case:
    3a. God was not powerful enough to bring about a better world; or
    3b. God did not know how this world would develop after his creation of it; or
    3c. God did not wish this world to be the best; or
    3d. God did not create the world.

4. 3a-3d all contradict 1.

5. Therefore, this world is the best of all possible worlds.

What is a Best World?

- We might wonder how worlds get ranked in order of goodness, what the criteria of goodness are.

- Spinoza worried about our anthropocentric projections, especially of the nature of goodness, onto God.

- Leibniz takes the universality of mathematics as paradigmatic, using simplicity and richness as criteria.

- "God has chosen the most perfect world, that is, the one which is at the same time the simplest in hypotheses and the richest in phenomena, as might be a line in geometry whose construction is easy and whose properties and effects are extremely remarkable and widespread" (D6, AW 227a-b).

The Voltaire Objection

we can imagine better possible worlds

- We might agree with Spinoza in thinking that everything non-contradictory is possible.

- No obvious contradiction arises from the concept of a world just like this one but with, say, less famine and war.

- Thus, there seem to be other possible worlds better than this one.

- Against Modal Realism
  - Spinoza thought that everything non-contradictory is possible.
  - David Lewis, in the 20th Century argued for modal realism: all possible worlds exist.
  - But, Leibniz insists that the possibility of some event alone does not entail its compossibility with other events.
  - Thus, alternative worlds appear possible, but only because we are seeing them incompletely.

Possibility and Compossibility

- This world is the result of God's maximizing various factors which are in tension, even if the tension is not apparent.
  - "Just as the same city viewed from different directions appears entirely different and, as it were, multiplied perspectively, in just the same way it happens that, because of the infinite multitude of simple substances, there are, as it were, just as many different universes, which are, nevertheless, only perspectives on a single one, corresponding to the different points of view of each monad... And this is the way of obtaining as much variety as possible, but with the greatest order possible, that is, it is the way of obtaining as much perfection as possible" (M58, AW 280b).

- Leibniz's view recalls Descartes's claim that the perfection of the whole is not apparent from the view of the finite individual.
  - A world without disasters would be a world with irregular laws, in which science and engineering would be impossible.
  - A world without sin would be a worse world, even if it does not appear to be worse.

Two Accounts of the Illusion

- Leibniz is arguing that the imperfections we see are illusory.
- One typical way to defend the compatibility of evil or error with God's goodness is to value the freedom of the will over goodness.
  - ‣ If error is the result of free choice, then the world could only be improved if free will were eliminated.
  - ‣ Leibniz does not pursue this route.
- Leibniz defends the creation of our error-filled world by claiming that it is the best alignment of compossibles.
- Leibniz is thus presenting a logical claim, rather than a moral one.

Free Will

Other Worlds are Possible

- Leibniz's work is motivated in part by a rejection of Spinoza's necessitarianism.
  - ‣ Every decision is determined, since God instantiates every possibility
- Leibniz believes that, for some actions, I could have done otherwise.
  - ‣ If there are other possible worlds, then we must have had the freedom to choose this one, rather than another.
  - ‣ The existence of this world is contingent on our free choice, rather than necessary.

But Nothing Happens without Sufficient Reason (PSR)

- PSR entails that God has foreknowledge of all of our actions.

- Any truth can be discovered by analyzing the complete concept of a substance into its component parts.

- By analysis, we will either find a given predicate inside the original concept, or find a contradiction arising from that predication.

- Either a property is true of a substance or it is not, both in the future and in the past.

- The status of any claim can be evaluated by analyzing the concept of any monad at any time.

- There seems to be no room for free choice, for denying that one can act other than one does, that the world can be other than what it is.

Leibniz's Solution

- Leibniz distinguishes between certain truths and necessary ones.
  - ‣ "Everyone grants that future contingents are certain, since God foresees them, but we do not concede that they are necessary on that account" (D13, AW 230b).

- "The one whose contrary implies a contradiction is absolutely necessary; this deduction occurs in the eternal truths, for example, the truths of geometry. The other is necessary only *ex hypothesi* and, so to speak, accidentally, but it is contingent in itself, since its contrary does not imply a contradiction. And this connection is based not purely on ideas and God's simple understanding, but on his free decrees and on the sequence of the universe" (D13, AW 231a).

- It is certain that I have two children; God can see that fact.

- But, it is not necessary that I have two children, since this fact depends on my free choice.

- "It is not impossible for what is foreseen not to happen; but it is infallibly sure that it will happen" (*Theodicy* ~407).

The Problem of Contingent Truths

- Leibniz thinks that other worlds are possible.
  - ▸ If there are other possible worlds, then we must have had the freedom to choose this one, rather than another.
  - ▸ The existence of this world, as against other possible worlds, is contingent on our free choice, rather than necessary.
  - ▸ Leibniz's work is motivated in large part by a rejection of Spinozan necessitarianism, the claim that every decision is determined, since God instantiates every possibility.
  - ▸ So, Leibniz believes that, for some actions, I could have done otherwise.

- Leibniz holds, as a basic and fundamental principle, that nothing happens without sufficient reason (PSR).
  - ▸ PSR entails that God has foreknowledge of all of our actions.
  - ▸ Any truth can be discovered by analyzing the complete concept of a substance into its component parts.
  - ▸ By analysis, we will either find a given predicate inside the original concept, or find a contradiction arising from that predication.
  - ▸ Either a property is true of a substance or it is not, both in the future and in the past.
  - ▸ The status of any claim can be evaluated by analyzing the concept of any monad at any time.

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Three Hints

1. While Leibniz states that this is the best of all possible worlds, he does accept that such other worlds are possible.

2. Contingent claims can by discovered only by infinite analysis, while necessary truths are discoverable by finite analysis.

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On Other Worlds

- Leibniz's weakest claim about other possibilities, and our freedom to create them, is that they are merely chimerical.

- It looks to us as if the world which is just the same as it is, except that Hamilton College is located on a small Caribbean island with fruited mango trees and sea breezes on campus all year around, is possible.

- But, Leibniz argues, to make even one change in the world entails changing other factors in that world.

- What seems possible in itself may not be compossible with other changes that moving Hamilton would entail.

Compossibles and Counterparts

- We can see the problem of compossibility clearly when we recall Leibniz's complete-concept view of the monad.

- If Hamilton were located, say, in the Caribbean, none of us would be members of its community.
  - ‣ There would be people somewhat like us attending and teaching at that school.

- We do not know what other properties of those people would have to be different from us in order to construct a system of compossibilities.

- We could call the people in the Caribbean-Hamilton world our counterparts, but they would not be us.
  - ‣ "These worlds are all here, that is, in ideas. I will show you some, 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 that 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. You will find in one world a very happy and noble Sextus, in another a Sextus content with a mediocre state, a Sextus, indeed, of every kind and endless diversity of forms" (Theodicy, ~416).

Counterparts and Trans-World Identity

- Do we exist in other possible worlds?
  - ‣ Saul Kripke: We stipulate other possible worlds.
  - ‣ Names are rigid designators.

- Or, do we merely have counterparts there?
  - ‣ David Lewis: There are counterpart relations among me and all my dopplegangers in other possible worlds.
  - ‣ Exploring the nature of other possible worlds involves specifying those counterpart relations.
  - ‣ We might identify our selves with the set of our counterparts: embracing our mathematical essence!

Axioms of Counterpart Theory

C1. $(\forall x)(\forall y)(Ixy \supset Wy)$
‣ worlds are the containers of objects

C2. $(\forall x)(\forall y)(\forall z)[(Ixy \bullet Ixz) \supset y=z]$
‣ individuals can only exist in one world

C3. $(\forall x)(\forall y)[Cxy \supset (\exists z)Ixz]$

C4. $(\forall x)(\forall y)[Cxy \supset (\exists z)$
‣ all counterparts exist in worlds

C5. $(\forall x)(\forall y)(\forall z)[(Ixy \bullet Izy \bullet Cxz) \supset x=z]$
‣ there are no distinct counterparts in any given world

C6. $(\forall x)(\forall y)(Ixy \supset Cxx)$
‣ a thing is the counterpart of itself

C7. $(\exists x)[Wx \bullet (\forall y)(Iyx \equiv Ay)]$
‣ there is a world which contains all and only actual things

C8. $(\exists x)Ax$
‣ the actual world exists

Wx: x is a world
Ixy: x is in world y
Ax: x is actual
Cxy x is a counterpart of y

Three Hints

- In a finite analysis, we can unpack a complex concept until we reach what Leibniz calls an identity statement.
  - $3^2 = \sqrt{81}$
  - 3 x 3=9
  - 3 x 3=3 x 3
  - Later, we will call such claims analytic truths.
- Similarly, given a false statement, we will arrive at some kind of contradiction by analysis.
- Consider: 'Russell has two children'.
  - According to the doctrine of conceptual containment, my concept contains my having two children.
  - Nevertheless, there are possible worlds in which I don't have two children.
  - Correspondingly, when we analyze the concept 'Russell', we will not be able to unpack the claim that I have two children.
  - God could do so, but we can not.

Infinite Analysis and Finite Analysis

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Certainty and Necessity

- "The one whose contrary implies a contradiction is absolutely necessary; this deduction occurs in the eternal truths, for example, the truths of geometry. The other is necessary only *ex hypothesi* and, so to speak, accidentally, but it is contingent in itself, since its contrary does not imply a contradiction. And this connection is based not purely on ideas and God's simple understanding, but on his free decrees and on the sequence of the universe" (D13, AW 231a).

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Julius Caesar

"If someone were able to carry out the whole demonstration by virtues of which he could prove this connection between the subject, Caesar, and the predicate, his successful undertaking, he in fact be showing that Caesar's future dictatorship is grounded in his notion or nature, that there is a reason why he crossed the Rubicon rather than stopped at it and why he won rather than lost at Pharsalus and that it was reasonable, and consequently certain, that this should happen. But this would not show that it was necessary in itself nor that the contrary implies a contradiction... For it will be found that the demonstration of this predicate of Caesar is not as absolute as those of numbers or of geometry, but that it supposes the sequence of things that God has freely chosen, a sequence based on God's first free decree always to do what is most perfect and on God's decree with respect to human nature, following out of the first decree, that man will always do (although freely) that which appears to be best. But every truth based on these kinds of decrees is contingent, even though it is certain; for these decrees do not change the possibility of things...it is not its impossibility but its imperfection which causes it to be rejected. And nothing is necessary whose contrary is possible" (D13, AW 231b).
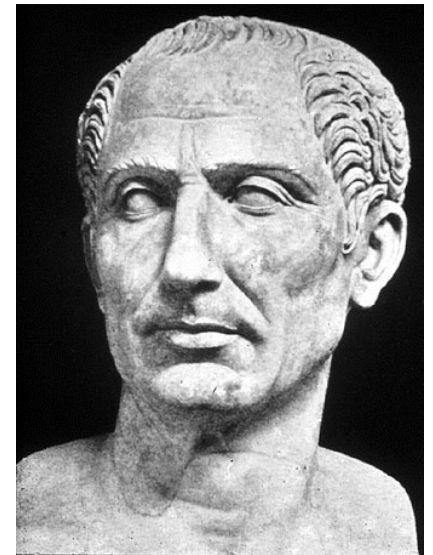
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Freedom and God's Will

- Leibniz takes active, thinking things as elemental.

- The life of the monad consists of the unfolding of its perceptions.

- When these perceptions are conscious, as in a person, they are called apperception.

- But they are always self-determined, according to laws of final causes, as Leibniz denies any transeunt causation.

- The activity of a monad corresponds to the distinctness of its perceptions
  - "The action of the internal principle which brings about the change or passage from one perception to another can be called *appetition*; it is true that the appetite cannot always completely reach the whole perception toward which it tends, but it always obtains something of it, and reaches new perceptions" (D15, AW 276b).

- As the monads of persons have both conscious experience (distinct perception) and memory, we apperceive our appetition.

Human Freedom

- Leibniz takes active, thinking things as elemental.

- The life of the monad consists of the unfolding of its perceptions.

- When these perceptions are conscious, as in a person, they are called apperception.

- But they are always self-determined, according to laws of final causes, as Leibniz denies any transeunt causation.

- The activity of a monad corresponds to the distinctness of its perceptions
  - "The action of the internal principle which brings about the change or passage from one perception to another can be called *appetition*; it is true that the appetite cannot always completely reach the whole perception toward which it tends, but it always obtains something of it, and reaches new perceptions" (D15, AW 276b).

- As the monads of persons have both conscious experience (distinct perception) and memory, we apperceive our appetition.

Freedom, sort of

- Human freedom, like God's freedom, is restricted.

- God understands what is best, and freely chooses it; what is possible is independent of God's will, but not his understanding.

- Our freedom, like God's, is the name we give to our faculty for striving, for unfolding the internal principles of our essence.

- We strive for future states, even if they are states of pain and unhappiness, as these are preferable to the alternative, which is non-existence.