Theodicy, Metaphysics, and Metaphilosophy in Leibniz

Paul Lodge
University of Oxford

ABSTRACT. In this paper I offer a discussion of chapter 3 of Adrian Moore's *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics,* which is titled "Leibniz: Metaphysics in the Service of Theodicy." Here Moore discusses the philosophy of Leibniz and comes to a damning conclusion. My main aim is to suggest that such a conclusion might be a little premature. I begin by outlining Moore's discussion of Leibniz and then raise some problems for the objections that Moore presents. I follow this by raising a Moore-inspired problem of my own and offer a possible response. The response is based on a little-known essay of Leibniz's called "Leibniz's Philosophical Dream" and leads me to consider Leibniz's deepest motivations for engaging in philosophical reflection.

In this paper I want to offer a discussion of chapter 3 of *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics,* which is titled "Leibniz: Metaphysics in the Service of Theodicy." Here Moore discusses the philosophy of Leibniz and comes to a damning conclusion. My main aim will be to suggest that such a conclusion might be a little premature.

The core of Moore's discussion of Leibniz has three components. He begins by telling the reader something about the value that Leibniz accorded to metaphysical inquiry. From there he turns to some of the key methodological commitments that place significant constraints on the metaphysics that Leibniz offers. The rest of the

chapter then consists of an elaboration of Leibniz's views, which is centered on the way in which Leibniz deals with the problem of evil. It is here that the main thesis of the chapter appears. Moore argues that Leibniz's methodological commitments lead him to construct a theory that has the existence of a traditional Christian God at its center, and that Leibniz does not provide the resources to make the existence of God rationally compatible with certain kinds of evil that are found in the world. In light of this, Moore concludes that Leibniz's metaphysical project fails because its fruits leave him unable to respond to a crucial problem that is largely of the enterprise's own making.

I will begin by outlining Moore's discussion of Leibniz, and then raise some problems for the particular objections that Moore raises. I will follow this by raising a Moore-inspired problem of my own and offer a possible response. The response will take us into somewhat speculative territory. The discussion here will be based on a little-known essay of Leibniz's called "Leibniz's Philosophical Dream" and will lead me to consider Leibniz's motivations for engaging in philosophical reflection. I will finish with some methodological reflections based on a tension between the account of Leibniz that I offer and Moore's apparent rejection of Leibniz as a philosopher worthy of serious attention.

I. THE VALUE OF METAPHYSICS

Moore begins his account of Leibniz by noting that of the three most famous seventeenth-century rationalists (Descartes and Spinoza being the other two), Leibniz should be seen as coming "closest to seeing the value of metaphysics in exclusively non-instrumental terms" (*EMM* 67). He supports this claim in two ways. The first is textual, and through an appeal to a passage in Leibniz's letter to Von Hessen-Rheinfels of November 1686, in which Leibniz says that our knowledge of "necessary and eternal truths, above all those which are the most comprehensive and which have the most relation to the sovereign being" is "alone good in itself" with "all the rest mercenary" (*GP* II, 103/*M* 170).[1] The second is more complex and, in turn, seems to depend on two claims. First, Moore suggests that Leibniz "took it as something close to a basic datum that things made sense" (*EMM* 67); second, he observes that our having that capacity to "strive to discern the most general sense" (i.e., engaging in the practice of metaphysics) was regarded by Leibniz as "a mark of our very humanity" (*EMM* 68).[2] The inference from this to the intrinsic value of our striving to make sense is not made clear. However, I take it that Moore thinks that Leibniz regarded the exercising of this capacity as an expression of human nature, and intrinsically valuable (at least for humans) on these grounds.

This conception of what we might regard as Leibniz's metaphilosphical concerns does not play a significant explicit role in Moore's own discussion. Nonetheless, it does frame his conception of what Leibniz is doing in important ways. For the

discussion of Leibniz's project that follows seems to present it as an attempt to provide a theoretical account of the basic features of reality that has as its primary goal a representation of things which is to be privileged because it is true in a relatively naïve way, i.e., because it presents the world as it is in itself. I should say at the outset that this doesn't by any means strike me as an inadmissible interpretation of Leibniz. However, one of my contentions below will be that there might be other admissible interpretations that show Leibniz's philosophy and the available responses to Moore's challenge in a different and, to me at least, more philosophically interesting and productive light.

II. SOME METHODOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS

So far my characterization might lead one to think that Moore sees Leibniz's conception of the value of metaphysics in a way that is independent of the way in which it is practiced. However, Moore goes on to introduce some crucial constraints that Leibniz places on engaging in metaphysics. More precisely, two principles are presented as constituting "a kind of boundary condition on all attempts to make sense of things" (*EMM* 68). These are *the principles of sufficient reason* (*PSR*) and *the principle of contradiction* (*PC*). Moore offers two passages that characterize PSR. The first, taken from the *Metaphysical Consequences of the Principle of Reason,* states *"that there is nothing without a reason"* (*MP* 170); the second, from the *New Essays,* claims that "nothing unintelligible happens" (*NE* 381). PC is represented by the following passage, which appears as a marginal note on the manuscript of a piece called *Introduction to a Secret Encyclopaedia,* "nothing can at the same time be and not be, but everything either is or is not" (*A* VI 4, 530/*MP* 9). Moore suggests that taken together these play a significant role in determining the method for metaphysical theorizing. On the negative side, PC implies that when formulating her results, the metaphysician must "have due regard for consistency" (*EMM* 68). But, on the positive side, PSR implies that there is always sense to be made, if we understand sense-making in terms of the provision of consistent reasons or the rendering of phenomena consistently intelligible—and here I take it that for Moore's Leibniz these two things are equivalent.

With these points in play Moore moves to his initial characterization of the fruits of Leibniz's own metaphysical endeavors. Here again methodological issues arise, however. For, as well as operating within these very general constraints, Leibniz is presented as relying on two kinds of sense-making in order to generate his results. The first, based on the assumption that it is in the nature of humans to try to make sense of things, is a willingness to take seriously that which metaphysicians of the past have handed down. The second is a reliance on "proof" (*EMM* 69) as a means to establish metaphysical theses. The results of these further constraints, according to Moore, are twofold: (1) that Leibniz "tried above all to draw on the more recent scholastic legacy handed down to him in the form of

mainstream Christianity" (ibid.), in particular, the conception of "an omniscient, perfectly good God . . . responsible for all that is contingently the case" (ibid.); and (2) that with such a conception in hand, Leibniz went on to prove the existence of such a being, and, crucially, the proposition that what is actually the case is a result of a choice by God to create the single best world from a range of possible worlds. Moreover, as Moore observes, the conception of the best that Leibniz relied on in this context was one whose "criteria . . . were firmly embedded in the large-scale structure of things and were not dependent on the will of anyone, not even on the will of God" (ibid.).

III. THE PROBLEM OF THEODICY

There is clearly a sense in which Moore regards Leibniz's grand metaphysical effort as impressive. Indeed, he suggests that "if it was a success, then it was as great a success as any attempt could be. For to show that things are how they are because, there is, cosmically, no better way for them to be is a kind of apotheosis of making sense of things" (*EMM* 69). However, Moore himself does not think that it succeeds. For, according to him, the big picture suffers from a serious problem. And, while Moore's Leibniz engages in yet further metaphysical theorizing in order to try to deal with this problem, for Moore, it is a failure. Indeed, it is worse than this, for we are told that Leibniz fails to escape from the fact that "his metaphysical story seems to be a repellent lie about what our actual lives are really like" (*EMM* 70).

As I noted above, the problem that Moore has in mind is not peculiar to Leibniz and is a form of one of the oldest problems in philosophy, namely the problem of evil. Despite Leibniz's assurance that this is the best of all possible worlds, as Moore puts it, "the existence of better possible worlds seems . . . to be a basic datum" (ibid.). Indeed, one might think, as Moore himself does, that it is a datum that "imping[es] on us every bit as forcefully . . . nay, through our various trials and afflictions, altogether more forcefully" than any set of principles and concepts that might lead one to believe otherwise. Thus, as Moore expresses it, the problem seems somewhat analogous to the problem posed for the skeptic by his namesake G. E. Moore when he directs us to the experience we have of the existence of our hands in order refute any hypothesis that might lead us to external world skepticism.[3] For A. W. Moore appears to want to direct us to the experience we have of the badness of the world we live in order to refute any combination of premises and reasoning that might lead to skepticism about the claim that things could have been better.

In explaining how Moore does this, I want to preserve some of the rhetorical force that he employs. Thus, I shall leave out for now the way in which the denouement of the chapter on Leibniz directs us both to a peculiar form of badness and to a peculiar way in which one might think things might have been better, even if one gave Leibniz all the resources that Moore thinks he [Leibniz] has available within

his account of the nature of reality. In fact, one of the things I am going to argue below is that Leibniz actually has quite a lot more to say about the relevant issues, some of which is essential for a proper assessment of the force of the challenge that Moore poses.

Before that, I am going to begin with the detailed account of Leibniz that we find in chapter 3 of *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics.* However, there are two more aspects of Moore's case against Leibniz that I want to bring out before I do this. In order to meet Moore's challenge, Leibniz must provide an account of the nature of things that allows us to see that the appearance of improvability is just that. But, as Moore is surely right to point out, in order to prosecute this in a satisfactory way Leibniz must flesh out his understanding of what it is for this to be the best world in a way that leads us to acknowledge that it is. And this requires that we "can see what it [i.e., bestness] really means" (*EMM* 70). If the thought that this is the best possible world is to be part of the theory that allows us to make sense of things, it will have to be the case that we have a positive understanding of what makes it the best which itself makes sense to us. Finally, it is also important to notice at this point that, with the problem of theodicy exposed, Moore wishes to add another component to his characterization of the purpose of Leibniz's metaphysics. As we have seen, Moore thinks that engaging in metaphysics should in part be regarded as having intrinsic value for Leibniz. But there is a twist. For this value can only be pursued if Leibniz pursues another aim, namely that of providing a theodicy as an attempt "to deal with [the] fallout" (ibid.) of the big picture that emerges from his foundational commitments.

IV. LEIBNIZ'S SYSTEM IN MORE DETAIL AND HIS SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF THEODICY

In order to decide whether Leibniz's metaphysics is adequate Moore presents additional features of the system that Leibniz develops which are central to his theodicy and "[Moore's version of] the story proceeds as follows" (*EMM* 71).

The ultimate constituents of the world created by God (and God himself) are immaterial individual substances, or monads, included among which are human beings. There is "an infinity" (ibid.) of these monads whose nature is mind-like, in that they each "represent the world in some way" (ibid.). Space and time by contrast are merely "features of how reality appears to certain of these monads" (ibid.), and, thus, "Leibniz is an idealist" (ibid.). Moore also notes that it is important to notice that Leibniz is committed to the "finitude" of created monads (*EMM* 84) and the fact that this implies that "We see the world in a limited, perspectival way" (ibid.).

In order to begin to see the structure of Leibniz's theodicy, it is necessary to consider the nature of creation. Thus Moore observes that, while Leibniz's God exists necessarily, the existence of the monads that he creates is contingent and

"whatever He creates He could have refrained from creating" (*EMM* 72). Furthermore, for any non-Divine, i.e., finite, monad that does exist, "there are other possible worlds in which it does not exist," and "there are other possible worlds in which non-Divine monads exist that do not exist in this world" (ibid.). Indeed, Moore points out, there are good reasons to think that Leibniz's monads exist in one and only one possible world. In short, "God's creative act is to actualize some, but not all 'possible monads'" (ibid.).

But, as we have already seen, God does not create a world comprised of just any set of possible monads. Rather he creates the best world. The obvious question at this point is how Leibniz develops his metaphysics in order to account of the "bestness" of this world. Here Moore tells us that there are two distinct desiderata that constrain God's choice. First, there must be no monads that "are not in harmony with one another" (*EMM* 76), where Moore explicates the notion of harmony as follows: "Call the relation that obtains between two possible monads when their representations cohere *harmony*" (*EMM* 75). While he does not explain what he means by cohere, it seems that Moore thinks of the representations of two monads as coherent when their representations of what would be actual if they existed have the same content. In other words, they are monads that represent each other as coexisting and in a world that contains the very same things.[4] As Moore points out, the desire for harmony alone would not provide God with a sufficient reason to create, since not creating at all would yield a world in which every monad was vacuously in harmony with every other (*EMM* 76). Thus, given Leibniz's foundational principles, there must be at least one more desideratum.

Moore initially identifies this additional desideratum with Leibniz's commitment to "the value of sheer existence" (ibid.), and together they yield the proposition that "God actualizes as much as He can, subject to the constraint that there should still be harmony" (*EMM* 77). However, beyond this Moore investigates the issue of whether there may be more constraints at work. Here he highlights the fact that there are passages, such as sections 17 and 18 of the *Résumé of Metaphysics,* in which Leibniz "seems to acknowledge beauty, order, and their perception by intelligent beings as further determinants of creation" (ibid.). But, while Moore briefly pursues the issue of whether these are really distinct factors, he is happy to leave this unresolved given the fact that "the exegetical waters are deep" (ibid.) and his belief that there is already enough available in his account for the key issues to be expressed in more general terms. Moore puts the point as follows:

> All that matters for our purposes is that there are, if not two desiderata influencing God's creative act, then two broad categories of desiderata, one essentially quantitative and the other essentially qualitative, and these are in conflict with each other, so that what God needs to achieve in creation is a balance between the two, maximizing each to the least detriment of the other. (*EMM* 77–78)[5]

The bestness of the best possible world thus consists in the fact that "balance is struck," or to use Leibniz's words in the fact that this world is "the most perfect,

that is to say, the one which is simultaneously simplest in theories and richest in phenomena" (*Discourse on Metaphysics,* section 6, *A* VI 4, 1538/*M* 11).

V. THE FAILURE OF LEIBNIZ'S SOLUTION

According to Moore, the broad outline of Leibniz's metaphysics allows us to see that it generates a significant problem, namely that it "furnishes a proof that this is the best of all possible worlds—which it appears, pertinaciously, not to be" (*EMM* 83). With the added details that I have sketched above, Moore also thinks that it is "patent what Leibniz needs to do" and that "it is patent, for that matter, how his metaphysical story equips him to do it" (ibid.). Unfortunately, however, it seems equally patent to Moore that Leibniz's answer is not satisfactory. He offers two main lines of objection, although the first is discussed in very little detail, since he thinks that the second "is completely immune to . . . any . . . response at Leibniz's disposal" (*EMM* 85).

As Moore notes, for his theodicy to succeed, Leibniz needs primarily to explain away the apparent fact that it seems like the world could have been better than it is.[6] Furthermore, Moore thinks that Leibniz's metaphysics is "perfectly suited to account for the general possibility of a mismatch between how things appear and how they ultimately are" (*EMM* 84). After all, our finitude entails that, even though we accurately represent all that there is, our perspective on this is limited and "we can never achieve that infinite insight into the whole that shows how everything is for the best; how there is nowhere a complexity in theories or poverty in phenomena that is not worth enduring for the sake of a richness in phenomena or a simplicity in theories elsewhere" (ibid.). Thus, although "we may think we see possibilities for improving the world" this is wrong, since "in fact, we are just fastening on to isolated 'evils' and failing to grasp the implications of their elimination" (ibid.). The basic point is simple. Given our finite capacities, the complexity of the world, and the fact that the bestness of the world is a function of that complexity, it is unsurprising (perhaps even inevitable) that we will not be able to see that this is the best world by appeal to our experience of the world itself.

At this point Moore defers to a longish passage from the essay *On the Ultimate Origination of Things,* which he presents as an illustration of Leibniz's commitment to this. It is worth quoting in full.

> We have knowledge of a tiny part of the eternity which stretches out immeasurably . . . And yet out of so little experience we rashly make judgments about the immeasurable and the eternal . . . Look at the most lovely picture, and then cover it up, leaving uncovered only a tiny scrap of it. What else will you see there, even if you look as closely as possible, and the more so as you look from nearer and nearer at hand, but a confused medley of colours, without selection, without art! And yet when you remove the covering, and look upon the whole picture from the proper place, you will see that what previously seemed to you to

> have been aimlessly smeared on the canvas was in fact accomplished
> with the highest art by the author of the work. . . . [Similarly, the] great
> composers frequently mingle discords with harmonious chords so that
> the listener may be stimulated and pricked as it were, and become, in a
> way, anxious about the outcome; presently when all is restored to order
> he feels so much more content. (*GP* VII, 306–7/*MP* 142)

Moore suggests that, with this kind of statement, it may seem that Leibniz has said all that he needs to say, since "he seems to have shown adequately how we may think we see possibilities for simpler theories or richer phenomena overall when really all we see are such possibilities in the small" (*EMM* 85). However Moore is not convinced. He insists that Leibniz can only be thought to have succeeded if "that is why we think things could have been better" (ibid.), and it is clear that Moore does not think that this second condition is satisfied.

The first problem that Moore sees is that "Leibniz uses standards of assessment that are foreign to us" (ibid.). And, to make the point clearer, he offers us David Wiggins's observation that "a world could furnish the greatest possible variety of forms yet be brutally indifferent to all human concerns and moral purposes" (Wiggins 1996, 126). This objection is relatively simple. Even if one accepted that this was the best world in Leibniz's sense, that would do nothing to alleviate the problem of evil. For whatever positive attributes a world that was maximally harmonious in Leibniz's sense might have, they seem to be independent of whether such a world would be a good or bad one in a morally relevant way. For what relevant difference could it make to be told that there is the greatest unity in diversity when faced with the question of why God created a world containing the horrendous evils that history tells us of, or indeed, the commonplace tragedies of everyday life, such as the loss of a child?

Moore acknowledges at this point that Leibniz is not oblivious to this kind of worry, and notes that, in *The Ultimate Origination of Things,* "Leibniz tried to forestall any such objection by urging that his standards take due account of 'the good of individual people'" (*EMM* 85) on the grounds that "[our] afflictions are . . . for the time being bad, but in effect good, since they are short cuts to a greater perfection" (ibid., quoting *MP* 143–44). However, Moore does not pursue this line of reasoning any further, since he is convinced that any such defense is futile in the face of another form of essentially the same objection, the one which is "completely immune either to this or any other response at Leibniz's disposal" (ibid.).

In order to articulate this second problem, Moore turns to Dostoyevsky and the voice of Ivan Karamazov in *The Brothers Karamazov.* In the passage in question Ivan discusses the problem of evil with his brother Alyosha and contemplates the torture of innocent children—focusing in particular on the case of an eight-year-old deliberately torn apart by hunting dogs in front of his mother on the command of a nobleman for a minor misdemeanor. Ivan takes it to be "beyond a shadow of doubt what [he has] to say" (Dostoyevsky 1958, 286) in response to this. As Moore interprets Dostoyevsky, "[Ivan's] protest is really that if *this* is the price that has to be paid to attain the best version of a world such as ours, then . . . it would have been

better had nothing been created at all" (*EMM* 85). And, while acknowledging that Leibniz might retort that this "protest ignores the larger picture," Moore's rejoinder is that "no larger picture can be relevant—save insofar as a blank canvas counts as a bigger picture" (ibid.).

Moore ends his discussion by drawing the problem of theodicy into his own conception of metaphysics. While Leibniz's metaphysics might have "seemed to achieve the ultimate prize: a way of coming to terms with how things are" (*EMM* 86), for Moore it fails because it does not "engage properly with what we antecedently recognize as coming to terms with how things are" (ibid.). It simply does not connect adequately "what [Leibniz] says matters in the end and what matters now to us" (ibid.). The moral import of our actual experiences of evil are such that any account that might lead us to think that this is the best way things could have been should be treated with such suspicion that we ought to reject it. The final word is given to Bernard Williams: Leibniz fails in his metaphysical endeavors because "Like some other . . . metaphysical geniuses . . . [he is] capable of being ethically very crass" (Williams 2006, 184 n.39).

VI. SOME RESPONSES TO MOORE'S OBJECTIONS

In the remainder of the paper I intend to act as something of an apologist for Leibniz. One of the ways in which I shall do this will focus on the first of Moore's objections. Here I want to say a little more about how Leibniz thought that his account of what it is that makes this the best of all possible worlds is supposed to tie in with "the good of individual people" (*EMM* 85). Whatever our ultimate judgment, I think we can be confident that Leibniz himself would have been unimpressed with the kind of challenge offered by Wiggins, which appears to appeal to Moore. Consider another passage from *On the Ultimate Origination of Things,* the work which Moore himself quotes at length:

> In case someone may think moral perfection or goodness is here being confused with metaphysical perfection or greatness, and may admit the latter while denying the former, it should be pointed out that it follows from what has been said not only that the world is the most perfect physically, or if you prefer it, metaphysically . . . but also that the world should be the most perfect morally. (*GP* VII, 306/*MP* 141)

In this passage, it is clear that Leibniz had moral considerations at the forefront of his mind when thinking about what it is that makes the actual world the best of all possible worlds. And, to the extent that this is elided in Moore's account, it leaves us with a distorted view of the role that considerations of harmony play in this, and of the extent to which they were driving Leibniz's conception of why God chose to create the actual world. In light of this, I want to say a little more about why Leibniz thought that the actual world is as morally as perfect as it could have been. My account will only scratch the surface. But I think even this much will be

enough to offer a significant response to the Wiggins-Moore charge on Leibniz's behalf. My consideration of Moore's second objection will take me into a somewhat different direction. Here I shall be mainly concerned to point out the extent to which Leibniz himself was aware of the kind of worry that is posed and sketch some features of Leibniz's metaphysics that Moore does not present, but which allow us to see how Leibniz might have responded.

The final part of my paper will be somewhat different. Here I will present a third objection of my own that I consider to be Moorean in spirit and offer a defense of Leibniz that will depend on a reading of Leibniz's 'metaphilosophy' that is quite different from the one on which Moore bases his discussion. At this point, I'll be presenting views that are somewhat speculative, and I suspect somewhat idiosyncratic. But I shall point to texts that are suggestive enough for me to think that it is worthy of association with Leibniz's name.

VI.1 MORAL PERFECTION IN THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS

In responding to Moore I want first to delve a little deeper into the ways in which Leibniz himself understands the relationship between the harmonious nature of the world and its moral perfection. For, while it is true that Moore does not deny that Leibniz has things to say about this, the plausibility of his rejection of harmony as a moral good stems, I think, in no small part from his not providing the reader with more of the story. And, while it is true that his case against Leibniz does not rest on this objection, it seems to me to play a significant rhetorical role. For, to the extent that the reader is persuaded by Moore, she is left thinking that what Leibniz finds most valuable about the best possible world is an abstract feature that really does seem to have no connection with our moral lives. And, in this state, I suspect the reader is much more ready to accept the supposed killer blow that is to follow.

In his more considered writings, Leibniz distinguishes between three kinds of goodness or perfection. Typical in this regard are sections 29–32 of his *Causa Dei*, from 1710:

> [G]ood . . . is of three kinds, metaphysical, physical and moral. *Metaphysical* good . . . in general consists in the perfection and imperfection of all creatures, even those that are not endowed with intelligence . . . *Physical* good . . . is understood as applying especially to the advantages and disadvantages of intelligent substances . . . Moral good . . . is applied to the virtuous . . . actions of these substances. (*GP* VI, 433/*SS* 120)

Leibniz says little here about the three different kinds of good, or perfection, but it should be enough to start.

I want to begin with what Leibniz says about moral goodness or perfection. In the *Causa Dei* passage above this is connected with virtue and restricted to a subset of the substances (i.e., monads) that God creates, namely those "with intelligence." This restriction makes sense set against the tripartite division that Leibniz provides in his conception of monads as evidenced in sections 19 and 29 of the *Monadology*,[7] according to which there are the most basic monads, whose features are restricted to unconscious perception and appetition, souls, which also

have sensation and memory, and self-conscious minds, which also have the capacities for abstraction, the exercise of reason and self-reflection, and among which Leibniz places human beings.

Leibniz defines virtue as "the habit of acting in accordance with wisdom" (*Gr* 579/*SLT* 167), where wisdom is in turn defined as "the science of happiness" (ibid.). We can see then that Leibniz thinks of the moral perfection of the world in terms of action that accords with knowledge of happiness. Thus, although the notion of virtue is invoked in Leibniz's account, it turns out to be essentially related to happiness. Elsewhere the connection between morality and happiness is perhaps even clearer. In an important letter that Leibniz wrote to Christian Wolff in 1715, he observes:

> In morals I set up our happiness as an end; this I define as a state of enduring joy. Joy I define as an extraordinary predominance of pleasure, for in the midst of joy we can sense certain sorrows, but sorrows which are hardly to be considered in comparison with the pleasures, as, for example, if somewhere a kingdom were granted to an ambitious person suffering hopelessly from the gout.[8] Moreover, it is necessary that the joy be enduring, so that it not be withdrawn by a subsequent greater sadness by chance. (*LW* 171–72/*AG* 233)

Here Leibniz claims that happiness is "an end" of morals. And in this passage we also learn that to be happy requires more than a fleeting state of mind. It requires that one be in a state in which pleasure predominates over an extended period of time, and which is robust enough to withstand sadness that might arise "by chance." Thus, the moral perfection of the world is essentially connected to the existence of beings that have the capacity to sustain this "extraordinary predominance of pleasure." Furthermore, while it is not explicit in the passages we have examined so far, it is clearer in the continuation of the passage from *On the Ultimate Origination of Things* cited above that Leibniz conceives of the actual world as the one in which the greatest amount of happiness that was possible obtains. Thus, he writes:

> Hence the world is not only the most wonderful machine, but also in regard to minds, it is the best commonwealth, by whose means there is bestowed on minds the greatest possible amount of felicity or joyfulness; and it is in this that their physical perfection consists. (*GP* VII, 306/*MP* 141)

The natural question that arises at this point concerns what it is that Leibniz thinks minds derive pleasure from, and, thus, in what their happiness consists. The answer to this can be found in the next sentence from the 1715 letter to Wolff quoted above. Here Leibniz observes: "Furthermore, pleasure is the sensation of perfection" (*LW* 171–72/*AG* 233), though it is important to notice that elsewhere Leibniz uses the expression "perception of perfection" (*GP* VII, 291) and that he allows for pleasure that is derived from intellectual cognition as well as sensory experience.

We can see then that happiness and perfection go hand in hand for Leibniz. But we are still left without an account of the conception of perfection that is at play here. Fortunately, Leibniz continues his letter to Wolff as follows:

> Perfection is the harmony of things, or the state where everything is worthy of being observed, that is, the state of agreement or identity in variety; you can even say that it is the degree of contemplatability. Indeed, order, regularity, and harmony come to the same thing. You can even say that it is the degree of essence, if essence is calculated from harmonizing properties, which give essence weight and momentum, so to speak. (*LW* 172/*AG* 233)

Here Leibniz suggests that perfection is to be understood in terms of "agreement or identity in variety."

Unlike the passage from the *Discourse on Metaphysics* which Moore picks out,[9] the letter to Wolff contains no reference to the thought that this identity in variety involves simplicity, which lends itself to an interpretation on which the perfection of the world consists in its being maximally diverse and yet unified according to some very simple rule. Rather it seems that it is the fact that the world includes the greatest possible number of distinct cases of unity in diversity that is the central point. These differences are interesting and would clearly require consideration if one wished to wade in really deep exegetical waters. But without going too deep, we can see that the kind of perfection that Moore focuses his discussion upon is, for Leibniz, essentially connected to a notion of ethical perfection that falls squarely within the eudaimonistic tradition.[10] For Leibniz, the world in which God does the best according to criteria of considerations of unity and variety is also the world in which the happiness of minds (a category to which we ourselves belong) is maximized.

Of course, a lot more would need to be said before we were in a position to decide whether Leibniz's account of reality provides us with a conception of things that looks like it contains as much happiness as there could have been. But answering the Wiggins-Moore challenge requires much less than this. For even the sketch above should make it clear that Leibniz intends to present a conception of what makes this the best world that is not exhausted by the kind of abstract and impersonal notion of perfection that we find in section 6 of the *Discourse*. Furthermore, that which he adds to this account is essentially connected with our happiness, something which has at least some claim to be regarded as "what matters now to us" (*EMM* 86).

At this point, Moore might well point out, as I noted above, that he acknowledges that Leibniz has more to say, but passes it over because there is a much bigger problem waiting in the wings, namely the challenge that he finds in Dostoyevsky. This may well be right. But it seems a little quick to move on to this problem without at least making it clear that Leibniz is offering us a conception of a world in which there is said to be the most happiness that there could possibly have been.

VI.2 WHY DID GOD CREATE THE BEST POSSIBLE WORLD RATHER THAN NOTHING?

Moore's second, and main, complaint against Leibniz boils down to the thought that there are at least some features of the actual world, of the kind described by Dostoyevsky, that are sufficiently bad that any attempt to make sense of them along

Leibniz's line should leave us thinking that it would have been better had the world not existed at all. Thus, were there a Leibnizian God, he ought not to have (and hence would not have) created anything, even if it conformed to the best possible way to create a world. The fact that there is a world at all stands then as a *reductio* of Leibniz's metaphysics.

On the face of it this is indeed a significant challenge to the conception of the world that Leibniz offers. And one can see why Moore might regard it as trumping any claim that Leibniz might make to the effect that this world is the best possible world morally. For even on the assumption that this world is the happiest there could have been, one might think it contains events whose horror cannot be compensated by any amount of happiness. The salient feature of Dostoyevsky's example here seems to be that it depicts extreme suffering of an innocent, rather than the seemingly savage and disproportionate punishment for a minor misdemeanor that is described. And, to recap, for Moore "no larger picture can be relevant" (*EMM* 85) when it comes to working out whether the creation of a world that contains such an event is morally acceptable.

In responding this way, Moore implies that Leibniz's only available response to the challenge of innocent suffering is a version of what Robert Sleigh has called "the greater good defense" (*CP* xxxii). On this kind of view, it is the fact that the big picture is the best big picture that could have been that justifies the nastiness of some of its constituent events. In a sense, this has to be correct. However, the way in which this is turned against Leibniz here strikes me as somewhat odd. For, without any real explanation, Moore seems to invite—perhaps even implore—us to shut our ears to any attempt that might be made by Leibniz to articulate a conception of the greater good that might undermine the sense of repugnance that would lead to the *reductio* that Moore endorses.

But it seems natural to me to wonder what happens if we give Leibniz the chance to speak. Again, the story here is very complex, but has relatively superficial elements that suggest a serious attempt on Leibniz's part to engage with Moore's intuitions about the horror of the suffering of innocents. In fact, this should come as no surprise at all. For Leibniz is drawn into this problem more deeply than many twentieth-century readers might be, given that he is explicitly trying to confront such things as the seventeenth-century commonsense belief that innocent children might receive eternal damnation were they to die outside the church. Leibniz's response to this particular problem evidences his more general view that God does not in fact punish the innocent, and, as such, is of little help in the kind of case envisioned by Moore.[11] For in the case that Ivan describes it seems that innocence and punishment, or rather its permission by God, go hand in hand.[12] But if we look a little further, it becomes clear that Leibniz does have resources at hand that go beyond merely stating that the suffering contributes to a greater good that comprises the perfection of the best possible world.

Leibniz's basic answer to the problem of suffering is expressed succinctly in section 241 of the *Theodicy,* where he states: "It is true that one often suffers through the evil actions of others; but when one has no part in the offence one

must look upon it as a certainty that these sufferings prepare for us a greater happiness" (*GP* VI, 261/*H* 276). The crucial move here is to focus the attention squarely on the relationship between those who suffer and the perfection of the world in which they suffer. What Leibniz is suggesting is that the compensation for the kind of physical evil suffered by the child in Dostoyevsky's novel is suffering that will enable greater happiness *for that very individual* than would have been otherwise available.

At this point it is clear that more metaphysical theory is needed in order to begin to make sense of how this could be the case. But it is also clear that Leibniz has at least some of the basic elements available. Thus, he believes that he has a demonstration that all created beings continue to exist indefinitely once they have come into existence.[13] Furthermore, he defends the somewhat richer claim that each substance is always associated with some organic body or other, with which it comprises an embodied animate being.[14] And in the case of rational beings, this embodied survival is accompanied by memories of past lives sufficient to constitute the moral identity required for immortality, by which Leibniz means the survival of a unique self-conscious person.[15] Thus, with all the elements of Leibniz's metaphysics in place there is much greater scope for the claim that the evils that are suffered by particular individuals might be compensated in the future.

I do not intend to try to defend the position that Leibniz adopts here. My aim is a more limited one: First, I want to make it clear that Leibniz thought hard about the kinds of problems that Moore presents, and that he believed that his metaphysics provided him with some answers; second, and more importantly, once we begin to consider some of these additional details it seems hard to accept that we can reasonably dismiss the kind of picture that Leibniz is sketching, with as little discussion as Moore offers, on the grounds that no such picture could ever be compelling. It is true that further examination of what Leibniz has to say throws up all kinds of questions and potential sources of objection. But it is also the case that Moore's claims against Leibniz seem to set the bar for response on Leibniz's behalf rather low. We have to remember that Moore's claim is that his brief discussion of the Dostoyevsky scenario provides us with an objection that "is completely immune . . . to any . . . response at Leibniz's disposal" (*EMM* 85). For my part, I cannot see that we have been led to a position where this is what we should conclude.

I think these considerations should give us serious pause for thought as we decide how to think about Leibniz's metaphysics on reading Moore's account of it. But there is another component of Leibniz's metaphysics which I want to discuss that presents a prima facie obstacle to Moore's critique. In his rendition of Dostoyevsky's complaint, one of Moore's central intuitions is that a truly benevolent God would have created nothing at all rather than the best imperfect world that we find ourselves inhabiting. With this in mind, even if Leibniz succeeded in his quest to show that it is reasonable to believe that suffering will always lead to the greater happiness of the innocent sufferer, one might still wonder whether nothing at all would have been better than a world with horror and subsequent

compensation. Indeed, it seems to me that it is this thought that ultimately leads Moore to reject Leibniz's views. But although there is clearly something to the worry that Moore articulates here, it seems equally clear to me that this is not a worry that Leibniz would have shared. For it makes sense only on a reading of what was possible for God that Leibniz would reject.

In describing Leibniz's views on creation, Moore quite rightly points out that for Leibniz "God . . . is different from all other monads in the following crucial respect. He exists necessarily whereas they exist contingently" (*EMM* 71). Moreover, Moore is right to say that Leibniz holds that "God's creative act is to actualize some, but not all, 'possible monads'" (*EMM* 72). But, appearances notwithstanding, it is not true in what seems to be the relevant sense, that Leibniz holds that "whatever He creates, He could have refrained from creating" (ibid.). Leibniz's accounts of contingency and divine freedom also lead us into murky waters when we start to examine them in any depth. However, the kind of contingency that Leibniz admits, and the sense in which God could have chosen and created otherwise than he did, go hand in hand with a thoroughgoing determinism.

Leibniz was very keen to defend the claim that God's creative act was free. But in doing so, all that he attempted was to explain how it is that the creative act could be thought to have satisfied the conditions that are regarded as necessary and sufficient for freedom more generally. These are expressed in passages like the following, from the *Theodicy*:

> [F]reedom . . . consists in intelligence, which involves a clear knowledge of the object of deliberation, in spontaneity, whereby we determine, and in contingency, that is, in the exclusion of logical or metaphysical necessity. . . . The free substance is self-determining and that according to the motive of good perceived by the understanding, which inclines it without compelling it . . . It is nevertheless well to point out that . . . the infallible determination that is involved in our contingency, destroy neither freedom nor contingency. (*GP* VI, 288/302–3)

God's free act of creation is one of self-determination in accordance with his omnipotence, perfect knowledge of what is the best, and perfect goodness. And while Leibniz insists that this self-determination is not "compelled" by the good, he is at pains to point out that the determination is "infallible." The lack of compulsion is to be cashed out not in terms of there being a logical moment in which God was radically free to choose something other than what he in fact chose. Rather it is the contingency of God's act that preserves its freedom.

Leibniz account of contingency is complex and appears to have evolved over time. At one point he was attracted to the view that this could be sustained as long as God possessed ideas of things that were "possible in themselves," but which failed to stand in relations appropriate to make them part of the best possible creative act. Later his account of contingency came to depend more on his so-called infinite analysis account of necessity and possibility—whereby a true proposition is necessary if and only if it can be demonstrated in a finite number of steps and contingently true where such a proof would, *per impossibile,* extend indefinitely.

While there is a lot of debate about the details, what is clear is that the contingency that underwrites the freedom that was involved in creation does nothing to support the kind of reading that Moore needs. Leibniz's God may not have been "necessitated" to create this world. But the sense in which he could have done nothing is not a sense that allows that failing to create was really open to God.[16]

Thus, at the heart of Leibniz's metaphysics is a constraint that Moore seems to miss, and which has a profound effect on the way in which Leibniz approaches the problem of evil. For Leibniz it is a problem that arises in a world that we are rationally compelled to conceive as the only way things could really have been. And his claim that this is the best of all possible worlds is one that he wants to maintain in the face of this thoroughgoing determinism. The fact that Leibniz wants to maintain that this is consistent with the contingency of creation, like many other aspects of Leibniz's thought, is very puzzling. But it seems to me to dispel the thought that not creating at all was an option for God in the way that the current objection trades on.

To summarize, so far I have presented the version of Leibniz's metaphysics that Moore provides in chapter 3 of *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics* and, in particular, the problematic place that Leibniz accords to Leibniz's theodicy within this. My suggestion to this point has been relatively simple, namely that there's a lot more going on in Leibniz's philosophy than one might dream of if one read Moore's version, and that this should at least give us pause for thought when it comes to relying on Moore's claim that Leibniz's metaphysics is to be condemned to the flames on the grounds that it is ethically crass. In the next section, however, I want to pose an additional problem for Leibniz. This may be the problem that Moore is ultimately trying to get at. Certainly, it seems to me Moorean in spirit. Again, I'm going to suggest that there are elements of Leibniz's thinking that mean that this challenge may not be as decisive as it initially seems.

VII. ANOTHER PROBLEM FOR LEIBNIZ?

The additional problem that I want to raise for Leibniz requires us to return to the basic methodological commitments that Moore attributes to Leibniz at the beginning of his chapter. The responses to Moore's objections that I have raised so far all rely on considerations of additional components of Leibniz's philosophy that Moore does not discuss in any detail. And whatever force they may have is predicated on the thought that the pursuit of the kind of metaphysical theorizing in which Leibniz engages is appropriate in the face of the kind of suffering that Dostoyevsky presents. But one can perhaps imagine Ivan's character responding as follows to a Leibniz who claimed that we were rationally compelled to understand the existence of suffering as an unavoidable consequence of the deterministic structure of a world that could not have been otherwise: "If it is the case that engagement in rational inquiry conditioned by PC and PSR leads one to a

conception of reality on which such suffering becomes acceptable, then one ought to abandon these principles and the inquiry based on them." In fact, it seems to me that Moore is hinting at this kind of worry in the final sentence of the chapter when he suggests that while "what [Leibniz] says need not be untrue, it will still be untruthful" if it cannot speak to "what matters to us now" (*EMM* 86). I do not want to underestimate the significance of this challenge. However, I want to finish by considering how Moore's Leibniz, and the Leibniz that we find in at least some of his writings, might have responded to it.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Moore begins by saying something about the grounds for Leibniz's interest in pursuing metaphysics, and it seems to me that he isolates two core components: First, he observes that, for Leibniz, to engage in metaphysical theorizing, with this conceived as a thinking that adheres to rules such as PC and PSR, is to express human nature—i.e., it is simply what we do when we are being genuinely human; but, secondly he seems to suggest that Leibniz regards the end product of such theorizing—i.e., the true conception of the way things are—as intrinsically valuable and hence a source of motivation for engaging in theorizing.

This kind of account allows us to make sense of the dialectic in Moore's discussion. For, according to Moore, the problem of evil is one that arises once Leibniz has argued himself into belief in a world created by a God whose attributes correspond to those of traditional Christianity. Furthermore, it sits comfortably with a conception of Leibniz that is a natural one to adopt from a reading of his most popular works, and from the conception of Leibniz that we find in the standard readings of the history of seventeenth-century philosophy. And, when characterized this way, Leibniz might plausibly be thought to prioritize the theoretical approach to life in a way that leads him to ignore the very real challenges of everyday existence.

I have suggested that even at the theoretical level, Leibniz is less oblivious to these things than Moore's account might lead one to believe. But there are places in which Leibniz seems to be suggesting that his deepest motivations for engaging in theory construction are different from those that Moore presents. In particular, I want to draw attention to, and discuss, a little-known essay which is also explicitly connected with his attitude toward the problem of evil. I certainly don't intend to argue that this essay provides us with definitive evidence of how Leibniz conceived of his enterprise. However, it offers a different kind of perspective that I find interesting, both as an interpreter of Leibniz, but also with an eye to the problem of evil/suffering itself.

The essay I want to discuss, and from which I will quote extensively, was given the title "Leibniz's Philosophical Dream" by an early keeper of Leibniz's papers.[17] The date of the piece is uncertain, but Donald Rutherford, on whose translation of the essay I will draw, notes the editors of the Akademie edition of Leibniz's writings suggest that it may have been composed in 1693.[18] The essay, presumably by design, is very evocative of Plato's famous allegory of the cave. It begins with a

putative autobiography, in which Leibniz describes his struggle to cope with the kinds of ills that typically motivate the problem of evil, and then moves on to the way in which he was ultimately liberated from this by a vision in a dream.

At the start of the essay Leibniz portrays himself as someone who "naturally loved to act well and to know the truth," but also observes: "I was satisfied with what I was among men, but I was not satisfied with human nature" (*LH* 108). He describes the problem as arising because he "often considered with chagrin the hardships to which we are subjected" (ibid.). The particular hardships that Leibniz mentions at this point are "the shortness of our life, the vanity of glory, the improprieties that are born of sensual pleasure, the illnesses that overwhelm even our spirit; finally, the annihilation of all our greatness and all our perfections in the moment of death, which appears to reduce to nothing the fruits of our labors" (ibid.). Leibniz then adds: "these meditations left me full of melancholy," and that "it appeared that I punished myself unnecessarily, that a successful crime was worth more than an oppressed virtue, and that a madness that is content is preferable to an aggrieved reason" (ibid.).

The suggestion here appears to be that Leibniz was tempted to turn away from acting well and the pursuit of truth, given the despair he suffered when contemplating the stark truths of a finite human existence and the fact that acting well was less well-rewarded than "successful crime." Next we are told that, at this point in his life, he "resisted these objections and directed [his] mind on the right course by thinking about the divinity who must have given a good order to everything and who sustained my hopes with the expectation of a future capable of redressing everything" (ibid.). But he goes on to suggest that this alternate focus of attention was of limited help:

> This conflict was renewed in me by the sight of some great disturbance, either among men, when I saw injustice triumph and innocence chastened, or in nature, when hurricanes or earthquakes destroyed cities and provinces and caused thousands to die without distinguishing the good from the wicked, as though nature cared no more for us than we trouble ourselves about ants or worms that we encounter in our path. I was greatly moved by these spectacles and could not stop myself pitying the condition of mortals. (Ibid.)

What follows next is a description of a dream which is said to have occurred "one day" when Leibniz found himself "fatigued from these thoughts" (ibid.).

The dream comprises a situation in which Leibniz found himself in a "dark place which resembled an underground cavern" with large numbers of people pursuing "luminous trifles they called 'honors', or glittering little flies they called 'riches'" and by "many who searched the ground for bright bits of wood they called 'sensual pleasures'" (*LH* 108–9). The fate of those following these "evil lights" varied. Some switched from one evil to another; some are said to have "quit the chase altogether because of exhaustion or despair"; some "who ran blindly and often believed they had reached their goal fell into crevasses"; and some "were bitten by scorpions and other venomous creatures that left them wretched and often mad"

(*LH* 109). But not only does the dreamscape contain people who are drawn to worldly pursuits and suffer as a consequence, they are people who appear bound to this fate. For Leibniz adds:

> Yet neither these examples nor the arguments of persons better informed stopped others from chasing the same hazards and even entering into fights in order to forestall rivals or keep themselves from being forestalled. (Ibid.)

In the world of the dream, the tendency to fall prey to the horrors that befall those who choose worldly pursuits is portrayed as impervious both to the observation that it yields misery and to the persuasion of those who might be able to provide reasons for behaving otherwise.

It is natural to ask at this point where Leibniz positions himself in this scenario. But this is only possible once we add his description of the ultimate escape route.

> In the vault of this huge cavern there were little holes and almost imperceptible cracks. Here a trace of daylight entered; yet it was so weak that it required careful attention to notice it. One frequently heard voices which said, "Stop you mortals, or run like the miserable beings you are." Others said, "Raise your eyes to the sky." (Ibid.)

Leibniz suggests that "no one stopped" on account of these additional features. But this is not meant to imply that no one paid attention, since he quickly adds, "I was one of those who was greatly struck by these voices. I began often to look above me and finally recognized the small light which demanded so much attention" (ibid.)

As the dream continues, the light becomes the focal point of attention. Leibniz tells us that

> It seemed to me to grow stronger the more I gazed steadily at it. My eyes were saturated with its rays, and when, immediately after, I relied on it to see where I was going, I could discern what was around me and what would suffice to secure me from dangers. (Ibid.)

At this point, Leibniz is told that the light signifies "what is called 'intelligence' or 'reason' in us" by a "venerable old man who had wandered for a long time in the cave and who had had thoughts very similar to mine" (ibid.).

In conjunction with the passage above, we can see that Leibniz is telling a story, whether derived from an actual dream or not, according to which he chances upon the faculty of reason, is drawn to and overcome by it, and then relies on it. Three benefits accrue from relying on reason: Leibniz could (1) see where he was going; (2) see what was present in his environment; and (3) see what would protect him from danger. Leibniz then describes himself, as time goes on, exploring the ways in which reason might operate. Here he starts to make more of the fact that there is more than one hole through which the light shines, and talks of "chang[ing] position in order to test [them]" (ibid.), presumably with regards to the benefits mentioned above. These experiments led him to discover situations in which "several beams could be seen at once from their true point of view," and

he observes that in cases such as these "I found a collection of rays which greatly enlightened me. This technique was of great help to me and left me more capable of acting in the darkness."

Finally, Leibniz tells us, he "was led by my good fortune" to a position that "was unique and the most advantageous in the cave, a place reserved for those whom the divinity wished to remove completely from this darkness" (*LH* 109–10). At this point he became "surrounded by a bright light shining from all sides [and] the whole cave and its miseries were fully disclosed to [his] eyes" (*LH* 110). Next Leibniz goes on to describe a more enlightened state to which he is led by "a young man [with] a majesty about him, which produced a veneration mixed with apprehension" who is also described as "a celestial messenger" (ibid.).[19] The messenger tells him to "Give thanks to the divine goodness which releases you from this madness," and takes him beyond the cave altogether to "a high mountain, which revealed to [him] the face of the earth" (ibid.). Here Leibniz finds he has a kind of telescopic vision available which allows him to focus on any part of the world and magnify it so that he can "see it as though it were next to [him]" (ibid.).

Leibniz mentions two consequences of occupying this new position with the abilities that he has acquired: First it "gave me a marvellous pleasure"; but, in addition, it "emboldened me to say to my guide: 'Mighty spirit—for I cannot doubt that you are of the number of those celestial figures who make up the court surrounding the sovereign of the universe—since you have wanted to clarify so my eyes, will you do as much for my mind?'" (ibid.). The celestial figure then grants the wish, given that he believes that Leibniz "holds wisdom above the pleasure of those vain spectacles the world presents to [his] eyes," (ibid.) with the following promise:

> However, you will lose nothing that is substantial in those same spectacles. You will see everything with eyes clarified in a completely different way. Your understanding being fortified from above, it will discover everywhere the brilliant illumination of the divine author of things. You will recognize only wisdom and happiness, wherever men are accustomed to find only vanity and bitterness. You will be content with your creator; you will be enraptured with the vision of his works. Your admiration will not be the effect of ignorance as it is with the vulgar. It will be the fruit of knowledge of the grandeur and marvels of God. Instead of scorning with men the unravelled secrets, which in earlier times they regarded with astonishment, you will find that when you are admitted into the interior of nature your raptures will go on growing the farther you advance. For you will only be at the beginning of a chain of beauties and delights that go on growing into infinity. The pleasures that enchain your senses and that Circe of your legends who changes men into beasts will have no hold on you, so long as you attach yourself to the beauties of the soul, which never die and never disappoint. You will belong to our fold and will go with us from world to world, from discovery to discovery, from perfection to perfection. With us you will pay court to the supreme being, who is beyond all worlds and fills them without being divided. You will be at once before his throne and among those who are distant from it. For God will establish his siege in your soul and heaven follows him everywhere. (*LH* 110–11)

What Leibniz depicts here is an initiation into a mode of being in which he obtains a divinely inspired capacity for intellectual perception of an endlessly rich universe which is ruled over by a "supreme being." But, what appears to count in favor of the journey on which Leibniz has been taken is not the truths that he discovers, but the joy that it brings and a freedom from the pleasures of the senses that allows Leibniz to "attach [him]self to the beauties of the soul, which never die and never disappoint." Furthermore, it is important to notice that Leibniz's initiation into this mode of being begins in the cave through an accidental lighting upon the faculty that will bring this unending joy, where the initial justification for its use is based not so much on the truth that it brings, but drawn from the fact that it presents the world in such a way that Leibniz found himself "secure . . . from dangers," and where the justification for its continued use is the promise of a being whose credentials are not given any independent rational grounding. Leibniz trusts his guide and is led to a state where a previously unfound happiness is obtained with the promise of more to come if he continues in this way.

The piece that I have discussed clearly contains much that is more poetic and metaphorical than is usual in Leibniz's writings. However, another essay "On the Secrets of the Sublime," which is dated 11 February 1676, expresses similar views regarding the connection of the use of a God-given faculty of reason and human happiness.[20] In both cases, what is presented is a promise of happiness if one uses reason, which is itself grounded in something other than the use of reason, namely a trust in an outside agency as the provider of a means by which genuine happiness may be obtained. And in neither case does it seem that it is the obtaining of a true account of the nature of things that is the ultimate prize on offer. Indeed "On the Secrets of the Sublime" provides another passage that suggests that the ultimate significance of the metaphysical views that Leibniz suggests we will adopt once we avail ourselves of the faculty of reasons is, for Leibniz himself, existential. And, in addition it connects up directly with the problem of evil. Speaking of the sketch of his metaphysics that he has just offered, Leibniz observes:

> Whoever understands these things correctly cannot fail to be happy and content, trusting God and loving God, whatever evils into which he falls. I know of no one happier than I am, because God gave me this understanding, as a result of which I envy no king; and I am certain God has taken special care of me, that is, that he has destined my mind for immense joys, in that he has opened to me such a certain and easy way of happiness. (*DSR* 31)

In pointing to these passages I certainly don't take myself to be making a full scholarly case for the rejection of Moore's claim that Leibniz regarded metaphysics as intrinsically valuable, or of the more traditional conception of Leibniz as concerned with offering the true picture of reality. But what I do want to suggest is that there may be more going on here than meets the eye as far as Leibniz's ultimate justification for his adoption of the reason-based worldview goes. And, in the present context, it is especially important to notice that the problem of evil is not

an artefact of Leibniz's rational inquiry in these texts. Rather it is the very problem which is presented as being alleviated through engaging in such inquiry.

Leibniz's dream is the story of the way in which someone struck by the miseries of human existence stumbles upon their capacity to reason. The exercise of this capacity is attractive at the outset primarily because it provides Leibniz with the ability to act and cope in this hostile environment. As time proceeds, Leibniz relies on the faculty of reason more and more until, by chance, he finds himself with a highly developed instrument that presents the truth of things in such a way that he is given "raptures [that] will go on growing the farther [he] advance[s]." While reason is here presented as a truth-generating faculty, it is important to recognize that truth itself is not presented as intrinsically valuable. Rather it seems that both the use of reason, and the account of reality that is generated in this way are in the service of something else, namely the attainment of happiness.[21]

If we see Leibniz's project in this light, it starts to throw up all kinds of questions—most notably, it looks at this point as though a disturbingly egoistic ethics might be emerging. And while I think it is clear that Leibniz is well aware of these kinds of issues, I am not even going to begin to address those in the present paper. My aim here is merely to open up a different way of reading Leibniz that offers a response to the deepest kind of worry that my reading of Moore seems to open up for Leibniz, along perhaps with the thought that there might be lots of philosophically rich ideas to be had if we used this kind of approach as a hermeneutic thread.

VIII. CONCLUSION

In this paper I've been concerned to establish a rather minimal thesis. I've argued primarily that Leibniz has more to offer in response to the problem of evil than Moore allows him. This in itself is certainly not intended to constitute a defense of Leibniz's position. Indeed, I have not tried to develop a systematic alternative reading of Leibniz to the one that Moore proposes. But I hope I have at least opened up the door to thinking further about the relationship between Leibniz metaphysics, and Leibniz's thinking more generally on the problem of evil than Moore's discussion encourages. The crucial question at this point, however, is why it's worthwhile going to the trouble of doing this. And, in closing I want to consider this question, which will, in turn, lead me to reflect further on one of the things that Moore may have unintentionally encouraged by presenting Leibniz in the way he does in the context of a grand narrative about the history of modern metaphysics.

To this end, I want to think about where a reader who took Moore as a reliable guide to Leibniz would end up at the end of chapter 3 of *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics.* The answer is, I think, quite simple. She would probably endorse, as Moore himself seems to do right at the end of his chapter, the view of Bernard Williams that Leibniz is "capable of being ethically very crass" (2006, 184 n.39). But let us also consider what the reader of Moore's chapter might do as a result of this.

I suspect that the answer would be that she would turn her philosophical energies in other directions, on the assumption that it would be better spent on those who might offer a more humane outlook. As an introduction to Leibniz it would almost certainly serve to do the opposite, namely lead her away.

Whatever else might be true of the ethical import of Leibniz's thought, I would hope that the brief sketch that I have offered will suggest to the reader that Williams's and Moore's is a harsh judgment. Moore spends a little more time and exposition to reach this conclusion than Williams (for whom a nod to Voltaire without quotes or page references seems to suffice).[22] But, nonetheless, Moore is willing to give us a rather damning account of Leibniz's philosophy that sidesteps the task of providing an interpretation that does justice to the complexity of the primary texts. This in itself might leave us wondering about the reliability of Moore as a guide, especially given that it is done in a way that self-consciously suggests that these details are mere details and can do nothing to make Leibniz's approach respectable. Furthermore, it seems to me that this evasion is compounded by the fact that it occurs at precisely these points that Leibniz's ethical thinking begins, and where the application of his metaphysical ideas starts to generate what seem to me to be some of its most interesting consequences.

For it is precisely at these points that he shows himself sensitive to some of the deepest of philosophical problems and to have a lot more to say about them. This is true even when one reads the Leibniz corpus that is most readily available and in relatively standard ways. The Leibniz that emerges here is one who is concerned with the presentation of a reason-generated true conception of reality, at the heart of which is a central concern for ethical problems. But, I have also offered the thought that, if one asks Leibniz yet further questions about the grounds for his philosophical practice, the resources are there to begin to take one even further and in directions that are more fundamentally at odds with both Moore's and the traditions conception of Leibniz, and which place the existential question of how we might go on in precisely the world that Ivan deplores.

More than anything else, the difficulty that I find with Moore's treatment of Leibniz is that it continues a tradition of silencing someone who strikes me and many others as one of the most interesting voices in the Western philosophical canon. The damage that was done by the supporters of Newton, then Voltaire, and closest to our own time Bertrand Russell, is repeated. But not only is Leibniz again presented as the slightly ludicrous figure whose metaphysical excesses are of their baroque time and completely irrelevant to "our" concerns, he is portrayed as the purveyor of a "repellent lie" (*EMM* 70).

After around twenty years spent reading and thinking about Leibniz over and over again, it seems to me that, on the contrary, he is interested in precisely the issues that we care about and offers an extremely subtle and sophisticated attempt to provide himself (and by extension his careful readers) with ways to deal with how we might go on in a world in which we are surrounded by the appearance of evil. In all of this, it is of course crucial to remember that Leibniz need not be read

as someone with whom one agrees in order to be immensely valuable. He might serve simply as an interlocutor who is struggling with similar issues. The message that seems to come across from Moore, however, is that we should stay well away from Leibniz. I'm not entirely sure why Moore wants to send out this message, but I hope at least to have gone some way toward suggesting that he might be worth getting to know after all.

NOTES

1. Where quotations are those used in *EMM,* I follow the translations cited by Moore.
2. Moore refers readers to section 22 of Leibniz's *Résumé of Metaphysics* (*GP* VII 291/*MP* 147) in support of this claim.
3. See Moore 1939.
4. As Moore notes two pages earlier (*EMM* 73), Leibnizian monads are "windowless" in the sense that "neither substance nor accident can enter [them] from without" (*GP* VI, 607/*MP* 179). But they nonetheless "mirror" the whole world (*GP* VI, 616/*MP* 187) in light of the fact that their successive states are spontaneously produced representations that "exactly represent the whole universe," i.e., one another, with differences between monads explained by the fact that they each represent from a different "point of view" (*GP* IV, 484/*MP* 122). The notion of a point of view is to be further explained in terms of the degrees of distinctness with which individual monads represent the universe (cf. *GP* VI, 616–17/*MP* 188).
5. As Moore notes, the claim that these are two competing desiderata has been challenged in the literature (*EMM* 78n28).
6. See *EMM* 83–84.
7. See *GP* VI, 610/*AG* 215 and *GP* VI, 611/*AG* 219.
8. It is probably not coincidental that Leibniz himself suffered from gout in his later years. Indeed, I shall make more of the personal experience that I think underwrites Leibniz's response to the problem of evil later in the paper.
9. See *EMM* 78.
10. Though, as Donald Rutherford points out, the conception of happiness that Leibniz invokes "blurs distinctions central to ancient eudaimonism" (2003, 71).
11. See *Theodicy* sections 93–94 (*GP* VI, 154–55/*H* 174–75).
12. This is not to say that Leibniz's position on eternal damnation is entirely palatable. Officially he claims that, due to their eternal hatred of God, the damned will suffer without alleviation (see Strickland 2009). However, it is interesting to note that toward the end of his life, the strength with which Leibniz asserted this view weakened to the point where it seems possible that he may have been doing no more than showing that such a position was not contradictory (see Lodge, forthcoming).
13. For example, see *Principles of Nature and Grace Based on Reason,* section 2 (*GP* VI, 598/*AG* 207) and *Monadology,* sections 1–4 (*GP* VI, 607/*AG* 213).
14. For example, see *NE* 232.
15. See *NE* 236.
16. For a helpful account of the evolution of Leibniz's views on necessity and contingency, see Adams 1994, 9–52.
17. *LH* 108–11.
18. http://philosophyfaculty.ucsd.edu/faculty/rutherford/Leibniz/translations/Dream.pdf accessed 11/12/2015. The essay was also translated by Mary Morris (see *MM* 253–57), but the Rutherford translation is more reliable. It is interesting to note that this piece was left out of *MP,* which was a revised version of *MM,* by the new editor, G. H. R. Parkinson.

19. While it is tempting to think that Leibniz intends this figure to be identified with Christ, this is undermined by the fact that the figure suggests later in the dream that they will both "pay court to the supreme being, who is beyond all worlds" (*LH* 111).

20. See *DSR* 21–33.

21. It is perhaps worth noting at this point that the passage which Moore quotes to support his contention that Leibniz regards the pursuit of metaphysics in "exclusively non-instrumental terms" (*EMM* 67) contains a significant ellipsis. For Leibniz does not claim, as Moore suggests, simply that knowledge of "necessary and eternal truths, above all those which are the most comprehensive and which have the most relation to the sovereign being" is "alone good in itself" (*GP* II, 82–83/*M* 170–71). He qualifies this with the claim that these truths are the ones "that are able to make us more perfect" (*GP* II, 83/*M* 170). Furthermore, the contrast that he draws is between knowledge of this kind and the practical knowledge that allows us to operate machinery or the beliefs that are gained from others that allow us to attain immediate goals.

22. See Williams 2006, 169 and 184 n.39.

REFERENCES

ABBREVIATIONS OF LEIBNIZ'S WORKS

A = *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe,* ed. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften. Darmstadt and Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1923–. Cited by series, volume, and page.

AG = *Leibniz: Philosophical Essays,* ed. and trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989.

CP = *G. W. Leibniz, Confessio philosophi: Papers Concerning the Problem of Evil, 1671–1678,* ed. and trans. Robert C. Sleigh Jr. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005.

DSR = *G. W. Leibniz: De Summa Rerum: Metaphysical Papers, 1675–76,* ed. and trans. G. H. R. Parkinson. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992.

GP = *Die Philosophische Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz,* 7 vols., ed. C. I. Gerhardt. Berlin, 1875–90. Cited by volume and page.

Gr = *G. W. Leibniz: Textes inédits d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque provincial de Hanovre.* Paris, 1948.

H = *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man, and the Origin of Evil,* ed. Austin Farrar, trans. E. M. Huggard. La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1985.

LH = *Die Leibniz-Handschriften,* ed. E. Bodemann. Hannover und Leipzig, 1895.

LW = *Briefwechsel zwischen Leibniz und Christian Wolf,* ed. C. I. Gerhardt. Halle, 1860.

LST = *G. W. Leibniz, The Shorter Leibniz Texts,* ed. and trans. Lloyd Strickland. London: Continuum, 2006.

M = *Leibniz: Basic Writings,* trans. G. R. Montgomery. La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1902.

MM = *The Philosophical Writings of Leibniz,* ed. and trans. M. Morris. London: Dent, 1934.

MP = *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: Philosophical Writings,* ed. G. H. R. Parkinson, trans. M. Morris and G. H. R. Parkinson. London: Dent, 1973.

NE = *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, New Essays on Human Understanding,* ed. and trans. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

SS = *Leibniz: Monadology and Other Philosophical Essays,* trans. P. Schrecker and A. Martin Schrecker. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

OTHER WORKS CITED

Adams, R. M. 1994. *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. 1958. *The Brothers Karamazov,* trans. D. Magarshak. London: Penguin.

Lodge, P. Forthcoming. "Eternal Damnation, Universal Salvation and Pragmatic Theology in Leibniz." In *Tercentenary Essays in the Philosophy and Science of G. W. Leibniz,* ed. L. Strickland, E. Vynckier, and J. Weckend. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

Moore G. E. 1939. "Proof of an External World." *Proceedings of the British Academy* 25: 273–300.

Strickland, L. 2009. "Leibniz on Eternal Punishment." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 17: 307–31.

Rutherford, D. 2003. "*Patience sans Espérance*: Leibniz's Critique of Stoicism." In *Hellenistic and Early Modern Philosophy,* ed. J. Miller and B. Inwood, 62–89. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wiggins, D. 1996. "Sufficient Reason: A Principle in Diverse Guises, Both Ancient and Modern." In S. Knuuttila and I. Niiniluoto, eds., *Methods of Philosophy and the History of Philosophy, Acta Philosophica Fennica* 61: 117–32.

Williams, B. 2006. "Plato: The Invention of Philosophy." In *Bernard Williams: The Sense of the Past: Essays in the History of Philosophy,* ed. M. Burnyeat, 148–86. Princeton: Princeton University Press.