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Deliberation and Self-Improvement in Leibniz

For those looking for a right direction in their lives, Leibniz's moral philosophy has got to offer both good and bad news. The good news is that it is possible to gain a tremendous amount of pleasure of the mind and reach happiness if you follow his perfectionism and act virtuously. The bad news is that this is a very difficult task indeed. In this paper I shall take a look at Leibniz's views on deliberation and the ways he thought one can improve himself or herself in moral deliberations. I shall argue against some commentators that the will has an essential, although indirect role in this process.

The most complete passage we have of deliberation by Leibniz can be found in *New Essays on Human Understanding* II, xxi, §67:

"To employ the art of consequences, we need an art of bringing things to mind, another of estimating probabilities, and, in addition, knowledge of how to evaluate goods and ills; and we need to be attentive, and, on top of all that, to have the patience to carry out calculations through. Finally, we need to be firmly and steadily resolved to act on our conclusions; and we need skills, methods, rules of thumb, and well-entrenched habits to make us true to our resolve later on, when the considerations which led us to it are no longer present to our minds."¹

Here Leibniz distinguishes five different components which are needed in deliberating well. One needs to select the appropriate things from memory to be able to evaluate the components in the question. With help of recollection one can consider with care which components in the situation are to be noted and which are to be ignored. One should be attentive and alert enough to complete these considerations and finally, one should have strength of will which helps one to hold on to the conclusions drawn.

The art of bringing things to mind or recollection is discussed in the preface to *New Essays*. According to Leibniz, we cannot be aware of the whole of our memory or ways of habitual acting all the time. The ideas and images can persist in the memory, being dispositions of past impressions, both in the soul and the body. We are unaware of these "traces" except when the memory has a use for them.² They are awoken by some circumstance, as when hearing the opening words of a song brings to mind the rest of the words.³ In this manner the soul is capable of attending things without itself and reflecting them.⁴

No less important in deliberation is the estimation of probabilities of different proposed courses of action. The agent should, first, estimate the goodness of some proposed course of action and second, whether the consequences of that act are adequate in respect to the general good or perfection. There may also be several ways to bring about a desired end. Some of these may be more acceptable than others. Thus the agent should evaluate the sum total-probability of proposed courses of action and choose the one, which, all things considered, is the best.

It is also essential to consider the gains and losses of different parties. In the *Monadology* Leibniz argues that God enters into the republic with spirits, who are images of himself, and care for their happiness.⁵ This is why in rational decisions it is essential to prefer the will of God. One should choose the option which best contributes to the good of mankind, since this choice is the most pleasant to God. Leibniz seems to think that if the interests of mankind are not involved, one should

¹ NE II, xxi, §67; A VI, 6, 207; RB, p. 207.

² NE II, x, §2, A VI, 6, p. 140.

³ "...souvent nous nous les remettons aisement dans l'esprit à quelque occasion legere qui nous en fait souvenir, comme il ne nous fait que le commencement d'une chanson pour nous faire ressouvenir du reste." NE, preface, A VI, 6, p. 52.

⁴ See A VI, 6, p. 79. I do not have the time or space here to discuss attention, but I believe its role in deliberation is more important than is commonly thought.

⁵ See the *Monadology* §83-84.

prefer higher animals to lower animals, animals to inanimate things and so on, according to the hierarchy of monads.⁶

Passions and deliberation

The problems in deliberation do not concern only probabilities. Leibniz distinguishes between real and apparent goods. Judgment concerns the apparent good while right reason concerns the real good. According to Leibniz, something is an apparent good if it is believed to produce pleasure, and a real good if it in fact does produce pleasure.⁷ Apparent goods will satisfy only temporary needs while real goods produce more lasting pleasures. While God is moved only by true and good reasons, men can be moved by both true and good reasons and passions.

Being virtuous is not easy. It is hard to ignore sensual pleasures and concentrate on intellectual ones. Wrong actions derive from the errors of understanding and only virtuous life which consists in a gradual enlightenment through the acquisition of more knowledge brings about happiness.⁸

Human cognition is always composed of different-level perceptions. In deliberation different kinds of perceptions give rise to inclinations whose conflict forms the complete volition. Usually there are both conscious volitions and unconscious appetitions. These inclinations may be united if they lead in the same direction. If they are of equal strength, but lead in opposite directions, they are mutually exclusive. If they lead in different directions, the strongest ones are victorious.

"Various perceptions and inclinations combine to produce a complete volition: it is the result of the conflict amongst them. There are some, imperceptible in themselves which add up to a disquiet which impels us without our seeing why. There are several which join forces to carry us towards or away from some object, in which case there is desire or fear, also accompanied by a disquiet but not always one amounting to pleasure or displeasure."⁹

Passions are formed by minute perceptions which combined form temporary inclinations. They are perceived as feelings of pleasure or pain. The passions are analogous to the moral instinct in us. While the moral instinct is a permanent disposition which strives for joy and avoids sorrow, passion is a minute and a sudden instinct.¹⁰ While the moral instinct is the basis of our moral action, the passions are regarded as harmful in human deliberation. Leibniz argues that the clearer and more distinct our perceptions are, the freer, more spontaneous and active our mind is.

The passions are often related to sensuous pleasures which may be signs, images or smells etc. which have much more vivacity than the ideas of the understanding. In order to act virtuously, however, one must prefer long-term goods to quick pleasures which hinder us from reaching genuine happiness.

⁶ "Les animaux, dont quelques uns sont élevés au degré des plus grands animaux par le moyen de la conception, peuvent être appelés spermaticques; mais ceux d'entre eux, qui demeurent dans leur espèce, c'est à dire la plupart, naissent, se multiplient, et sont détruits comme les grands animaux, et il n'y a qu'un petit nombre d'Elus, qui passe à un plus grand theatre." The *Monadology* §75; GP VI, p. 620.

⁷ See NE, II, xxi, §31f.

⁸ "La perception confuse de quelque perfection fait le plaisir des sens, mais ce plaisir peut estre <> d'imperfections plus grandes qui en naissent, comme un fruit de non goust et de bonne odeur peut cacher un venin. C'est pourquoy il faut se defier des plaisirs des sens, comme on se defie d'un inconnu, ou plutost d'un ennemi qui flatte." (*La Félicité*) IIIa, p. 579-580.

⁹ NE II, xxi, §39; RB, p. 192.

¹⁰ "Pour ce qui est des combats qu'on suppose entre le corps et l'ame ce n'est autre chose que la diversité des penchans des pensées distinctes ou des pensées confuses, c'est-à-dire des raisons ou des instincts et passions: l'instinct estant ainsi dire une passion durable et née avec nous, et la passion estant comme un instinct passager et survenu; à quoy on pourroit joindre l'accoustumance qui tient le milieu entre ces deux sortes d'inclinations estant plus durable que la passion, mais non pas née avec nous comme l'instinct." (*Addition à l'Explication du système nouveau touchant l'union de l'ame et du corps, encoyée à Paris à l'occasion d'un livre intitulé Connoissance de soy même*). GP IV, p. 116-77.

In deliberation there are present several inclinations to the good, of which only one or few represent real goods and the right course of action in the situation. In addition to these real goods, there are several other goods which may represent a right action, but in some other situation. For example, talking in loud voice is a right action when speaking to a person who has a hearing problem, but it is a wrong action in a religious ceremony. The conflict of these different goods may lead to other than optimal action, as Leibniz explained to Bourguet:

"The co-operative action of all tendencies towards good has produced the best, but since there are goods which are not compatible together, this co-operation and this result can bring about the destruction of some good, and consequently some evil."¹¹

The confused elements in judgment may predominate and as a result, the mind may follow passions instead of clear and distinct ideas. If the judgment follows these confused perceptions, and the will inclines to them, there may develop a habit which constantly leads the agent in wrong directions.

"We can miss the right road by trying to follow the shortest one, just as the stone by falling straight down may too soon encounter obstacles which prevent it getting at all close to the center of the earth. This shows that it is reason and will that lead us towards happiness, whereas feeling and appetite lead us only towards [sensuous] pleasure."¹²

The rational analysis of problems can affect our voluntary acts by diminishing the effect of confused perceptions in deliberation. Once we learn to develop our reasoning, we can better discern clear and distinct ideas from confused ones, although it is not possible for men to completely avoid confused elements in judgment. Reasoning is the root of our freedom – it gives us the possibility to control our goals.¹³

In *New Essays*, II, xxi, §8 Leibniz distinguishes between two kinds of freedom: freedom to do and freedom to will. The latter is divided to two senses, where the first stands in contrast with the imperfection or bondage of the mind which is an inner constraint, comparable to the effects of passions. In the first sense there is a clear difference between men and God:

"The Stoics said that only the wise man is free; and one's mind is indeed not free when it is possessed by a great passion, for then one cannot will as one should, i. e. with proper deliberation. It is in that way that God alone is perfectly free, and that created minds are free only in proportion as they are above passion; and this is a kind of freedom which pertains strictly to our understanding."¹⁴

The second sense of freedom of the will is employed when freedom is contrasted with necessity. This freedom refers to will alone and that is why this kind of freedom is known as decision of choice (*le franc arbitre*). The freedom of the will in this sense is related to the recommendations for action which the intellect presents to the will. These incline the will but do not necessitate it.

"... It is in this sense that I am accustomed to say that the understanding can determine the will, in accordance with which perceptions and reasons prevail, in a manner which, although it is certain and infallible, inclines without necessitating."¹⁵

Weakness of the Will

There is more bad news. Even if one's understanding is developed to an advanced state where he or she can mostly discern the clear and distinct ideas from the confused ones, it is still possible to err deliberately. Leibniz discusses deliberate wrong-doing in book II of *New Essays*. From the discussion one can infer that moral wrong-doing can happen in two ways. In the first case the deliberator is unable to discern the real goods from the apparent goods. The minute perceptions blur our judgment and make us believe that the wrong act is right in a given situation. This case is not

¹¹ GP III, p. 558.

¹² NE II, xxi, §41. A VI, 6, 194; RB, p. 194.

¹³ F. Piro, Leibniz and Ethics: the Years 1669-72 in *The Young Leibniz and his philosophy (1646-76)*, ed. S. Brown, Dordrecht, 1999, p. 165.

¹⁴ NE II, xxi, §8; A VI, 6, p. 175; RB, p. 175.

¹⁵ Ibid.

deliberate wrong-doing or weakness of the will, properly speaking, but sheer inability (ignorance or error) to discover the real good in question.

"Confused thoughts often make themselves clearly sensed, whereas our distinct thoughts are usually only potentially clear: they could be actually so, if we would only apply ourselves to getting through to the senses of the words or symbols; but since we do not do that, through lack of care or lack of time, what we oppose lively feelings with are bare words which are too faint."¹⁶

In the second, more serious case, the real good, although it is present and apperceived, is rejected – it does not act as the motivational factor. This kind of case represents akratic action. The weak-willed agent judges one course of action as involving the greater good, but is inattentive to it, while he or she is sensitive to the good involved in the worse course of action.¹⁷ These apparent goods are often spiced by lively sensual qualities, which arise from minute perceptions, such as colour, smell, taste and other sensual pleasures. This is why the apparent goods are more desirable to a weak-willed person than the real goods, which can be less tempting. Leibniz maintains that the struggle between flesh and spirit is nothing but a conflict between two different kinds of endeavors – those which come from confused thoughts and those which come from distinct ones (NE II, xxi, §35).¹⁸ If the intellect is drawn to the less good option, the will usually follows it and executes it, ignoring the greater good available although it is noticed. As we shall see later, the will is only rarely active – the weakness of the will is in fact a weakness of the intellect.

"It is a daily occurrence for men to act against what they know; they conceal it from themselves by turning their thoughts aside, so as to follow their passions. Otherwise we would not find people eating and drinking what they know will make them ill or even kill them."¹⁹

The real goods in deliberation, such as virtue, perfection and afterlife are present in the form of symbols or blind thoughts which are faint in comparison to more concrete, lively images of food, drink or sensual pleasures which accompany the minute perceptions.

"Sometimes they have the idea of an absent good or evil, but only very faintly, so it is no wonder that it has almost no influence on them. Thus, if we prefer the worse it is because we feel the good it contains but not the evil it contains or the good which exists on the opposite side...the finest moral precepts and the best prudential rules in the world have weight only in a soul which is as sensitive to them as to what opposes them."²⁰

The good is present as blind thoughts or other non-sensory information, but it does not act as a motivational factor for the akratic person. There is always a possibility for theoretical *akrasia*: the good may be outweighed by more vivacious images or symbols which represent some lesser good, although the moral agent is aware of the real good present in the situation.

A proper volition is also endangered by a case of conditional will or *velleitas*. The concept was used by some medieval scholars²¹ and refers to a case where the agent would will something if a greater evil or even a greater good were not feared or hoped in an opposite case. Leibniz defines it as an imperfection or a defect in the will which prevents it from rising to full power.²² Because of the condition in question, the will is divided and the volition is not complete – it contains some

¹⁶ NE II, xxi, §35; A VI, 6, 186-87; RB, 186-187. Leibniz is not entirely clear here. By thoughts he seems to mean perceptions and by the term clear he seems to mean some kind of vividness or attractiveness.

¹⁷ E. Vailati, *Leibniz on Locke on Weakness of Will*, *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 28 (1990), 2, p. 219. The process is similar to Augustinus' theory of the birth of sin in *De Trinitate*: first a suggestion (*suggestio*) is made, in this case by appetitions, then a pleasure (*delectatio*, in Leibniz's case sensuous pleasure) is formed – the first stage of desire – and finally the will accepts the suggestion (*consentio*). See S. Knuttila, *The Emergence of the Logic of Will in Medieval Thought*, in G.B. Matthews (ed.), *The Augustinian Tradition*. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1999, p. 211.

¹⁸ To use Leibniz's example, a person who perceives the smell of fresh cookies rejects his diet and gives in to his or her desire despite his or her earlier commitment. See NE II, xxi, §35; A VI, 6, p. 187.

¹⁹ NE I, ii, §11; A VI, 6, p. 94; RB p. 94.

²⁰ NE II, xxi, §35; A VI, 6, p. 186; RB, p. 186.

²¹ Leibniz cites as a source St. John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa* II 29 in a letter to Spanheim, but argues elsewhere that the distinction can be found in writers before Damascene. G. Parkinson, Leibniz on Human Freedom, *Studia Leibnitiana, Sonderheft 2*. Steiner, Wiesbaden 1970, p. 30, n. 25.

²² *Nouveaux essais*, II, xxi, §30, A VI, 6, p. 183.

imperfection (for example, it may cause harm to someone I know) and this is why the best possible action is not chosen.²³ In this case the motive is not inclining, because it represents no true possibility. It is more of a conditional willing - a case of "I would if I could." (*liberet si liceret*).²⁴

Manipulating oneself

When the intellect cannot properly recommend the best course of action, choosing the wrong course of action may develop into a habit and the real goods are continually ignored: the agent can manipulate the mind to believe that an apparent good is in fact a real good. For example, although my doctor has forbidden me to eat chocolate, I can make myself believe that the chocolate is good for my health and I may end up eating a lot of chocolate daily. In this manner the decisions are manipulated and volitions are produced.

However, this manipulation can also be done to the contrary direction. The deliberator can reflect his or her own decisions and analyse the effect of confused perceptions in them. In the future the deliberator can prepare himself or herself in advance for similar problematic situations. Since the will commonly follows the recommendations of the intellect, one has to develop the intellect in order to deliberate better. The stronger the "voice" of reason is, that is, the more clearly one perceives, the less the passions affect our decisions.

"Men choose the objects through will, but they do not choose their present volitions; they spring from reasons and dispositions. It is true, however, that one can seek new reasons for oneself, and with time give oneself new dispositions, and by this means one can also obtain for oneself a will which one had not and could not have given oneself forthwith."²⁵

Thus one can develop the mind in order to resist passions in the same manner as in self-deception, but to the opposite direction. The *akrates* must be cured by reducing the power of the minute perceptions. This happens by improving our reasoning and gaining better knowledge. By training the mind and preparing it in advance for future temptations, one can learn to withdraw from action and pause to contemplate whether the action should be performed or not (NE II, xxi, §47).

"What is required is that the mind be prepared in advance, and be already stepping from thought to thought, so that it will not be too much held up when the path becomes slippery and treacherous."²⁶

Good judgment and good decisions can be achieved by self-perfection, by increasing one's knowledge of the world and its creator and by learning to distinguish the true goals from the mere temporary ones. The inclinations and their directions can be modified by methods by which we can develop the clearness of our perceptions and improve our attention, thus gaining control over the minute perceptions. In his critique of Descartes' *Principia philosophiae (Animadversiones in partem generalem Principiorum Cartesianorum)*, Leibniz provides a few methods for errors of judgment:

"The remedy for our errors is the same as that for errors in calculation - to pay attention to the matter and form, to proceed slowly, to repeat and vary our operations, to introduce tests and checks, to divide longer chains of reasoning into parts so that the mind gets a breathing spell, and to confirm each part in turn through special proofs. And since we are sometimes in a hurry to act, it is an important matter to have acquired presence of mind through practice, as do those who are still able, in the midst of noise and without written calculations, to compute very large numbers."²⁷

We should also not take past perceptions and memories of our experiences for granted, but repeat experiments if possible and try to form an adequate judgment of the thing in question.

²³ The will in itself is always directed to the good, as judged by the intellect: "...je ne voudrais pas qu'on crût ... qu'il faille abandonner ces anciens axiomes, que la volonté suit le plus grand bien, on qu'elle fuit le plus grand mal, qu'elle sent." NE II, xxi, §35; A VI, 6, p. 185.

²⁴ See *Theodicy* §404, GP VI, p. 357.

²⁵ (*Rexflexions sur l'ouvrage que N. Hobbes a publié en Anglois, de la liberté, de la Necessité et du Hazard*) GP VI, p. 404; H, p. 396-396.

²⁶ NE II, xxi, 47; A VI, 6, p. 195-96; RB, p. 195-96.

²⁷ (*Animadversiones in partem generalem Principiorum Cartesianorum*); L, p. 388.

possible.²⁸ The right decision will bear fruit in later deliberations just as a sentiment of perfection creates anticipation for future sentiments of the same kind. Thus understanding can be developed by practical devices.

We can try to substitute our bad habits with good ones. In *New Essays* Leibniz argues that men should make themselves laws and rules for the future and carry them out strictly, avoiding situations which are capable of corrupting them. They should render their conceptions of real goods more vivid by useful activities the philosopher recommends. These include farming, gardening, collecting curiosities, making experiments and inquiries, conversation or reading. Idleness is to be avoided (II, xxi §35). Good company can help in developing virtue, since perfection is intensified from reflecting other's perfections.

Remedies for strong passions, for example love or addiction, can be found in change (such as a voyage) or gradual withdrawal from the object that causes the passion.²⁹ As an example Leibniz mentions Francisco Borgia, the general of the Jesuits, who was given to drinking heavily when he was a member of fashionable society.

"... He retrenched gradually to almost nothing, by each day letting a drop of wax fall into the flagon which he was accustomed to emptying."³⁰

Gradual withdrawal from the object of passion and replacing bad activities with good ones bring about pleasure of the mind and eventually happiness. Leibniz considers happiness to be a process instead of a state. Whereas the Stoics thought that one should get rid of the passions once and for all, Leibniz thought that living virtuously is a question of a gradual process, acquiring good habits, getting to know God and his perfections better.³¹

The role of the will in self-perfection

According to Leibniz, the will is a constant tendency towards increasing perfection in the world. Leibniz holds that the will in the soul is a striving which aims at clearer perceptions instead of the more confused ones.³² The relationship between the intellect and the will in Leibniz's views follows the opinions of Thomas Aquinas, and for the most part Leibniz can be seen as a follower of the intellectualist tradition. Opposing the voluntarists, Leibniz maintains that the most important element in the deliberation is the intellect which judges by the present perceptions and produces recommendations for action. The will follows the recommendations of the intellect. Thus it would seem like the will has no active part in our moral action. In fact, in his remarks on the will in *New Essays* Leibniz clearly allows that the will does not affect our deliberations directly.

"We certainly speak very incorrectly when we speak of willing to will. We do not will to will, but rather will to do; and if we did will to will, we should will to will to will, and so on *ad infinitum*. However, we must recognize that by our voluntary actions we often indirectly prepare the way for other voluntary actions; and that although we cannot will what we want to, just as we cannot judge what we want to, we can nevertheless act ahead of time in such a way that we shall eventually judge or will what we would like to be able to judge or will today."³³

However, by willing we can affect indirectly to future deliberations, since the will is always directed to the good. Being virtuous is a constant process and each decision counts in it. In his

²⁸ (*Animadversiones in partem generalem Principiorum Cartesianorum*) GP IV, p. 362.

²⁹ E. Vailati, *Leibniz on Locke on Weakness of Will*, p. 227.

³⁰ NE II, xxi, §35; A VI, 6, p. 187; RB, p. 187.

³¹ In general Leibniz regards Stoicism as an insufficient position, although he is willing to agree with them in several points, especially concerning the tranquillity of mind. "Il est vray que les enseignemens de Stoïciens (et peutestre aussi de quelques Philosophes celebres de nostre temps) se bornans à cette necessité pretendue, ne peuvent donner qu'une Patience forcée..." (*Theodicy*, préface). GP VI, p. 30.

³² See *New Essays* II, xxi, §29f.

³³ NE II, xxi §23; A VI, 6, 182; RB, 182. For a similar argument, see also *Theodicy* §51.

memoir on the controversy between Hobbes and Bishop Bramhall Leibniz comments on Hobbes' example of hunger as follows:

"At the present it does not depend on my will to be hungry or not; but it rests with my will to eat or not to eat; yet for the time to come, it rests with me to be hungry, or to prevent myself from being so at such and such an hour of day, by eating beforehand. In this way it is possible often to avoid bad volitions."³⁴

Thus the will is not necessitated to accept the recommendations for action by the intellect – they only incline it. The will can either accept or reject them. The strength of will is an essential part of becoming virtuous. Although we can will only what the intellect finds to be good, by not giving in to temptations we can manipulate the intellect to work more efficiently and more carefully.

"... We can only will what we think good, and the more developed the faculty of understanding is the better are the choices of the will. And, in the other direction, in so far as man wills vigorously, he determines his thoughts by his own choice instead of being determined and swept along by involuntary perceptions."³⁵

In some cases Leibniz also allows the will to become active by its own right. This happens when an agent suspends his or her action in cases where there is no sufficient reason to choose one particular course of action.³⁶ This happens by direct intervention of the will.

"We can and very frequently do suspend choice, particularly when other thoughts break into our deliberations. So that, although the action about which we are deliberating must exist or not exist, it does not follow at all that we must necessarily decide on its existence or non-existence; for its non-existence may come about for want of a decision."³⁷

By suspending action we can evaluate the situation anew and repeat the deliberation, taking into account all present elements. Thus the will may in a sense reject the recommendation of the intellect and force it to reconsider, especially when some new element in the situation is introduced. One might also assume this to be the case when the recommendation of the intellect is "weak", that is, there is no clear recommendation available, such as in the case of *velleitas*, discussed above. Although the intellect inclines the will, it is the will which ends the deliberation and makes the final decision. The will can be considered as an active part of deliberation, not a mere passive and mechanical act of approval of whatever the intellect presents to it, as some recent commentators seem to suggest.³⁸ By willing vigorously we may be able to make better judgments and affect the following deliberations, since the pleasure of the mind which is received in right action motivates us to virtuous action.

³⁴ *Reflexions sur l'ouvrage que M. Hobbes a publié en Anglois, de la Liberté, de la Necessité et du Hazard*, §5; G VI, p. 404; H, p. 397.

³⁵ NE II, xxi, §19; RB, 180. Compare (*Animadversiones in partem generalem Principiorum Cartesianorum*) L, p. 184-85: "This one thing we recognize to be within the power of will – to command attention and exertion. And so the will, though it does not bring about any opinion in us, can nevertheless contribute to it obliquely. Thus it happens that men often finally come to believe what they will to be true, after having accustomed the mind to attend most strongly to the things which they favour."

³⁶ This method was popularized by Jean Buridan and also employed by Locke in the second edition of the *Essay*.

³⁷ NE II, xxi, §23; A VI, 6, p- 181; RB, p. 181.

³⁸ S. Greenberg has recently argued that Leibniz's conception of the mind leads him to locate freedom in intelligence alone. See his article Leibniz Against Molinism, in D. Rutherford & J. Cover (eds.), *Leibniz. Nature and Freedom*, Oxford University Press, 2005. See also J.D. Davidson's article Video Meliora Proboque, Deteriora Sequor: Leibniz on the Intellectual Source of Sin in the same volume, page 242, where he argues that by 1700, Leibniz gave up strong intellectualism (and the thought that the will is a form of thought) and adapted weak intellectualism, where the reason for sin does not always involve cognitive error. Even if this change of views in Leibniz is granted, I think the passages cited from *New Essays* show that even though the will may be led astray (ref. weakness of the will), it can be considered as an active part in deliberation. Thus I find Greenberg's view exaggerated. Compare also Theodicy 151, where Leibniz says: "...We do not always follow the latest judgement of practical understanding when we resolve to will: but we always follow, in our willing, the result of all the inclinations that come from the direction both of reasons and passions, and this often happens without an express judgement of the understanding." GP VI, p. 130; H, p. 131. Leibniz seems here to refer to a case where some new element, such as a passion, breaks into deliberation after the intellect has recommended some course of action. Thus this description may apply to weakness of the will: the agent has a considered recommendation for an action, but a sudden passion leads the will astray if it has not the required strength.

In deliberation the constantly changing conflict of different inclinations towards the different apparent goods in the intellect represents the multiplicity whereas the will is a unity in the soul, which stands for the constant tendency to the good, that is, increasing perfection which is the goal of all moral action.