

LEIBNIZ ON SPONTANEITY: A SKETCH OF FORMAL AND FINAL CAUSATION¹

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According to a standard picture of Leibniz's mature views on creaturely causation, Leibniz held what some interpreters have described as his 'thesis of spontaneity': "every non-initial, non-miraculous state of every created substance has as a real cause some preceding state of that very substance."² Evidence for this thesis is abundantly available throughout Leibniz's mature work and here are some prominent instances:

"Every present state of a substance occurs to it spontaneously and is only a consequence of its preceding state" (*Discours de Métaphysique*, GP IV 440)³.

"We must say that God originally created the soul (and any other real unity) in such a way that everything must arise for it from its own depths, through a perfect *spontaneity* relative to itself, and yet with a perfect *conformity* relative to external things" (GP IV 484; AG 143).

"[T]he present state of each substance is a natural result of its preceding state" (GP IV 517)⁴.

That Leibniz was a realist about the causal powers inherent in creatures is beyond dispute. But what is not so obvious is how we are to understand these 'real causes', which Leibniz so emphatically and distinctively claims to be at the basis of the "very substance of things" (GP IV 503/AG 159). What is it to be a real creaturely cause for the mature Leibniz? And in what sense of 'cause' is some preceding state of a substance a real cause of its subsequent state? These are some of the questions I wish to pursue in this paper.

In the first section of the paper, I will argue against what might initially appear as a natural reading of the real causation underlying the spontaneity passages. The reading I have in mind is one that takes genuine creaturely causation for Leibniz be a kind of *efficient* causation. My goal is to criticize this reading but, since efficient causation seems to mean different things for different people, I will consider the different senses of efficient causality that might be attributed to

¹ I thank Paul Lodge and the participants of the Oxford Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy (October 2004), at which an earlier version of this paper was presented. Donald Rutherford provided very helpful comments through correspondence, for which I am grateful. I owe special thanks to Robert Adams for many illuminating discussions on this topic.

² This statement of the thesis is Robert Sleigh's. See his "Leibniz on Malebranche on Causality", in *Central Themes in Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. by J. Cover & M. Kulstad, Indianapolis 1990, p.162.

³ Hereafter abbreviated as 'DM' followed by section as in GP IV, 427-463. The translation is from *Leibniz. Philosophical Essays*, trans. by R. Ariew and D. Garber, Indianapolis 1989, p. 47 (hereafter abbreviated as 'AG' followed by page number).

⁴ Quoted from *Leibniz. Philosophical Papers and Letters*. trans. & ed. by L. Loemker, Dordrecht 1969, p. 495 (hereafter abbreviated as 'L' followed by page number).

Leibniz on this reading. I hope to persuade the reader that the reasons for thinking that the most fundamental type of creaturely causation for Leibniz is efficient in nature are fairly weak.

In the remaining portions of the paper, I will argue for the reading of genuine creaturely causation that might best be described as a fusion of *formal* and *final* causation. My central proposal will be that the present state of a creature causes its future states by the dual force of *determination* and *demand*. On the one hand, the present state’s determination of the future state by fully specifying the exact future state of the creature is the *formal* causal element of the present state. On the other hand, the current state’s representation of the future states as good and worthy of existence and the creature’s urge to persist in the very way prescribed in this representation will turn out to be the *final* causal element of the present state. This reading, I hold, will show how central the ‘antiquated’ notions of formal and final causation are to Leibniz’s causal realism about the forces of simple substances.

Real Causes as Efficient Causes

One initially appealing way of reading the causality expressed in the Spontaneity passages might be to take it as a type of efficient causality.⁵ The appeal or naturalness of this reading – hereafter abbreviated as ‘ECI’ (for “efficient causation interpretation”) – appears to be connected to the inclination to take efficient causation to be the archetype or default mode of genuine causal efficacy. Leibniz clearly is adamant about the genuine efficacy of causal powers in creatures, and since efficient causality *exemplifies* genuine causal efficacy, the causality in creatures must be that of efficient causality, or so the thought goes.⁶ Additional support might be thought to come from the widely acknowledged fact that early modern philosophy emerges as the distinctive ‘new’ philosophy, in part, in its rejection of formal and final causation as remnants of obsolete Scholastic metaphysics. We know that many early modern philosophers, in contrast to their predecessors, attempted to provide accounts of change in natural phenomena based on mathematically rendered laws governing the world of pushpin mechanics.

Persuasive as this may be, for Leibniz the story cannot be this simple. First of all, it is an equally well known fact that the mature Leibniz bucked the aforementioned trend in a crucial respect: while he did endeavor to present his own physics along the lines of the new mechanistic science, he also was not averse to identifying himself with the Scholastic tradition in incorporating into his system such conceptions as “substantial forms”.⁷ It is, therefore, not at all obvious that the mature Leibniz would have partaken in this kind of privileging of efficient causation over other modes of causation at a metaphysically fundamental level. But, perhaps, the more important issue in evaluating the viability of ECI is how we are to understand the efficient causality that is alleged to be the fundamental type of causation for the mature Leibniz. It is not clear what *sort* of causation efficient causation is supposed to be. Moreover, efficient causation appears to

⁵ For instance, Laurence Carlin, in his “Leibniz on Final Causes” (forthcoming in the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*), argues that final causation is a species of efficient causation. Donald Rutherford, in his “Leibniz on Spontaneity” in *Leibniz: Nature and Freedom*, ed. by D. Rutherford and J. Cover, Oxford 2005, p. 166, appears to be holding a similar view.

⁶ Rutherford, for example, seems to be making such an inference in Rutherford 166.

⁷ For instance, in the *Discourse on Metaphysics*, he claims that “the thoughts of the theologians and philosophers who are called scholastics are not entirely to be disdained” (DM 11).

mean different things for different people. Therefore, given that our project is to *clarify* the nature of real causation for Leibniz, we cannot simply stop at saying that the causation is efficient.

So, what does one mean when one says that the causal forces of monadic substances are *efficient* in character? If one had in mind what Leibniz typically means by “efficient causation”, then it seems rather unlikely that the most fundamental causal forces for Leibniz would be aptly referred to by this term. For, as many commentators have noted, the textual grounds are overwhelmingly supportive of the view that for Leibniz efficient and final causation are distinctive modes of causation, one governing the realm of bodies or physical objects, while the other the realm of souls or mind-like entities. Among the many different expressions of Leibniz’s thesis of pre-established harmony is the harmony between these two distinctive types of causation, one operative in the kingdom of “efficient causes”, a system of mechanical causation operating in the phenomenal, corporeal world, and the kingdom of “final causes”, a system of teleological causation operating within the monads.⁸ The causation we are interested, of course, is not at the phenomenal level of corporeal objects, but rather at the fundamental level of simple, mind-like substances or monads.

More important, perhaps, is the fact that what Leibniz paradigmatically describes as instances of efficient causation are not cases of genuine causation at all. Efficient causal relations for Leibniz are typically instantiated ‘inter-substantially’ rather than ‘intra-substantially’. In other words, efficient causality is typically thought to describe causal interaction that occurs between numerically distinct substances rather than refer to the causation that occurs within the states of a single substance. And we know that the mature Leibniz firmly and famously rejected genuine inter-substantial causal interaction. In fact, we have good reason to think that the term “efficient causation” for Leibniz is rather reserved for *quasi*-causal relations between numerically distinct (physical) objects, and not for the rock bottom *intra*-substantial causal forces that are the subject of our discussion. So based on these texts concerning pre-established harmony along with Leibniz’s denial of causal interaction between distinct substances, I think we can be pretty sure of what the causal powers of simple substances are *not*. They are not what Leibniz himself typically describes as efficient causal powers.

But that the causal powers are not efficient by Leibniz’s lights does not itself entail that they are not efficient in some other sense. Given that “efficient causation” is actually more like a term of art for Leibniz, reserved specifically for the type of mechanical causation going on at the phenomenal level of bodies, the proponents of ECI might be thinking of something else. There is indeed a different type of cause within Leibniz’s ontological framework, one that might be best described as a kind of *productive* cause. The productive cause I have in mind, of course, is God, who brings about the actual *perfections* or *reality* in the world in the sense that God is the productive *source* of the perfection (or reality) within these natural effects. Might creatures be efficient causes in the sense that they are productive causes like God?

In a previous paper, I have argued extensively against the possibility that for Leibniz the basic causal force intrinsic to creatures is ‘productive’ in the sense just specified.⁹ In addition to pointing to the textual evidence against it, I argue that this proposal faces a serious problem when

⁸ This description comes from R. Adams: *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist*, Oxford 1994, p. 83. For expressions in Leibniz, see *Principles on Nature and Grace Based on Reason* (GP VI, 598-606; AG 207-213); *Specimen Dynamicum* part I, part. 14 (GM VI 239-40; AG 126-127).

⁹ See my “Leibniz on Divine Concurrence”, *Philosophical Review*, vol. 113:2, April 2004, pp. 204-248.

viewed against a core theological and metaphysical component of Leibniz’s mature ontology, namely, his divine concurrentism.¹⁰ A divine concurrentist is committed to the claim that divine causal activity is immediately and directly present in every aspect of the world, including those effects allegedly brought about by creatures. For God and creatures *concur* in bringing about every natural event. So, any proposal that identifies a productive causal power in creatures, in the sense that we just specified, runs into a rather serious problem: if the creature is the productive source of the reality or perfection of an actual effect, then insofar as that very effect is concerned, the creature appears to have powers that can do without God’s immediate and direct contribution and subsequently any causal contribution on the part of God is at most indirect or remote. In other words, the proposal that creatures have a productive causal power is incompatible with a central, minimal requirement of divine concurrence.¹¹ Moreover, Leibniz identifies this very problem early on in his career in a short note in his *Conversation with Steno* from 1677.¹² Thus, it seems extremely unlikely that Leibnizian creatures are real *productive* causes in the sense just specified.

Of course, there is the following possibility we have yet to consider: Leibniz could have been thinking that the genuine causal powers of creatures are efficient causal powers but they are neither mechanical nor productive in the sense specified. The thought would be that they are real efficient causal powers in that they really bring about change and are genuinely efficacious, but this bringing about neither is mechanical in nature nor takes the form of producing the realities or perfections constitutive of the effects. At this point, however, I wonder how useful it is to understand this power of change as an *efficient* causal power, when the very nature of this efficient causality is left unexplained and rather obscure. Are we simply to think that whatever brings about real change in a substance is *ipso facto* an efficient cause for Leibniz? Should we think this when it is clear that Leibniz himself does not describe the spontaneous powers of creatures as efficient nor seems to think of efficient causal powers in this way? Moreover, given that there are other candidates that Leibniz himself introduces and employs to describe the real causation involved, i.e. formal and final causation, the interpretative stance that real causal powers ought to be thought as efficient causal powers seems rather unmotivated. We all agree that Leibniz was committed to causal realism about the powers of creatures. To identify this power as an efficient causal power and then to explain the nature of this efficient causality simply as a real causal power to bring about change does not advance the project of trying to understand the nature of genuine causation for Leibniz.

¹⁰ I follow Robert Adams and Robert Sleigh in taking Leibniz’s commitment to divine concurrentism to be a cornerstone of his mature ontological framework. Though I disagree with their accounts of Leibnizian divine concurrence, I am in full agreement with their common methodological approach that any interpretation of Leibniz on real creaturely causation must take his views on divine concurrence as an important consideration/constraint. See R. Adams 1994, pp. 94-9 and R. Sleigh, *Leibniz and Arnauld: A Commentary on their Correspondence*, New Haven 1990, pp.183-5.

¹¹ The commitment to the directness and immediacy of divine causal involvement in every state of affairs is typically expressed by the endorsement of the ‘conservation is but continuous creation’ thesis, which was accepted by the vast majority of theists of the Middle Ages and early modern period, including Descartes and Leibniz. For a more detailed version of this argument, please see Lee: “Leibniz on Divine Concurrence”, 212-220.

¹² See Grua 275/A VI, iv 1382. Also see my “Leibniz, Divine Concurrence, and Occasionalism in 1677” (forthcoming).

Leibnizian Real Causes as Formal Causes

If efficient causation is not really helpful in explaining the nature of the spontaneous powers of creatures, how should it be thought of? An early hint comes from the *Discourse on Metaphysics*. In response to the difficult question of how to distinguish the actions of God from those of creatures in §8, in §14, Leibniz provides a somewhat puzzling answer to this question:

“What happens to each is solely a consequence of its complete idea or notion alone, since this idea already contains all its predicates or events and expresses the whole universe. In fact, nothing can happen to us except thoughts and perceptions, and all our future thoughts and perceptions are merely consequences, though contingent, of our preceding thoughts and perceptions” (DM 14; AG 47).

All interpreters agree that this is another expression of Leibniz’s commitment to some sort of genuine causal efficacy working within the substance. What exactly this causality consists of is the issue, of course, but the idea of an complete individual concept doesn’t tell us much about how or even why we should think that “all our future thoughts and perceptions are consequences of” our preceding thoughts and perceptions.

What is clear, however, is that whatever may be doing the distinctive causal work on the creaturely side, it can’t literally be the complete individual concept. For insofar as the concept is complete in the relevant sense, it is not a concept that is in any finite mind. In fact, the complete individual concept is best understood as the idea that God has of any individual creature. So if it turned out that God’s idea of the creature were bringing about the relevant states in the creature, then Leibniz’s account of creaturely action would ultimately be more occasionalist than concurrentist, a clearly unacceptable consequence.

But, as commentators have noted,¹³ while the verbal emphasis clearly is on the complete individual concept, it also seems true that Leibniz here is pointing to something inherent in the substance itself, in virtue of which the complete individual concept holds of it. In other words, there appears to be some concrete correlate within the substance that gives expression to or corresponds to the complete individual concept that is in God’s mind.

In fact, this concrete correlate to the complete individual concept seems to be what Leibniz is referring to when he heeds us to reevaluate the notion of “substantial forms” in §10 of the *Discourse*. We see this identification of the concrete correlate, which provides the basis for attributing activity to the creature, with the substantial form of the substance emerge again when Leibniz holds that “the principle of actions, or primitive force of acting, from which a series of various states follows, is the form of the substance”(GP VII,316f.)¹⁴. This rehabilitation of substantial forms actually proceeds to the point where, in the *Theodicy*, Leibniz actually seems to *identify* created substances with substantial forms: “all Souls, Entelechies or primitive forces, substantial forms, simple substances, or Monads, by whatever name one may call them, cannot be born naturally, nor perish”¹⁵. The central question, then, is how does this nexus of causal activity,

¹³ See Adams 79-80; C. Broad: *Leibniz: An Introduction*, London 1975, p.24f.; D. Garber: “Leibniz and the Foundation of Physics: the Middle Years”, in K. Okruhlik and J. R. Brown (eds.): *The Natural Philosophy of Leibniz*, Dordrecht 1985, pp.60-66.

¹⁴ Quoted from *Philosophical Writings*, ed. & trans. by M. Morris and G. Parkinson, London 1973, p.84.

¹⁵ *Essais deTheodicée* GP VI sections 395-96; trans. by E. Huggard, La Salle, IL 1985.

which is the concrete correlate to the complete individual concept and apparently is best captured by the traditional conception of substantial form, provide the basis for genuine causation in simple substances?

That Leibniz uses the notion of substantial form to describe this concrete correlate is highly suggestive. In my view, the concrete correlate, as the creature’s substantial form, is causally efficacious in the production of its series of states in that it is, in part, the *formal* cause of these states. In other words, genuine creaturely activity partly consists in its formal determination of the particular states that make up the creature. Consider the following passage from the 1712 essay from the *Mémoires pour l’Histoire des Sciences et des Beaux Arts*:

“God in willing rest wills that the body be at the place A, where it was immediately before, and for that it suffices that there be no reason to prompt God to the change. *But when God wills that afterwards the body be at the place B, there must needs be a new reason, of such a kind as to determine God to will that it be in B and not in C or in any other place... . It is upon these reasons for the volitions of God, that we must assess the force and the reality existent in things*”.¹⁶

The nature or substantial form of the substance possesses a force in that it provides the reason for why a particular state is to continue the series over others and here it is precisely in this formal causal capacity of rationally determining the series of states that the simple substance is said to possess a force. Further textual evidence for this interpretation comes from the mid-1690’s, where Leibniz describes change within a created substance as follows:

“Change [*transitio*], or variation, which is called action when joined with perfection, and passion when joined with imperfection, is nothing but a complex of two states which are immediate and opposite to each other, together with a force or [*seu*] reason for the change, which itself is a quality” (C 9; Morris and Parkinson 134).

Here Leibniz explicitly takes the reason for the subsequent state, constituting part of the change within the creature, to be equivalent to the force within the creature responsible for the change. This identification of the *reasons* for change as *forces* would be implausible, were one not serious about the force of reasons and their genuine causal efficacy consisting in the determination of the outcome.

But how plausible is this suggestion when we take into consideration the actual make up of simple, soul-like substances for the mature Leibniz? A good guide to this makeup is the famous passage at the end of his June 30, 1704 letter to De Volder: “there is nothing in things but simple substances, and in them perception and appetite” (G II 270/AG 181). Even if we bracket the issue of how appetites fit into my account, we are still left with the question of how it is that a given state provides a reason for and thus formally causes the subsequent state, when the states in question are perceptions? How is that a state that is fundamentally *perceptual* does this work of formal causation?

I think the key to this answer depends on bringing to mind another key metaphysical commitment of the mature Leibniz with regard to the nature of simple substances, namely, universal

¹⁶ *Mémoires pour l’Histoire des Sciences et des Beaux Arts*, July 1712, p. 1237. I follow Huggard’s translation except for the last sentence and the emphasis is mine. For a more detailed analysis of this text, please see my “Leibniz on Divine Concurrence” 221.

expression.¹⁷ Leibniz’s commitment to the thesis of universal expression guarantees that within the current perceptual state is the representation or expression of the next perceptual state that is yet to exist. In fact, each perceptual state of a simple substance forever encodes and expresses its past, present, and future states, not to mention those of all other substances within the world. The crucial step, then, is to get from expression to causation and I believe that it is an advantage of my proposal that by the understanding of the relevant causation to be formal, this move is rendered more plausible.

The present state’s representation or perception of its subsequent state is distinctive in that it picks out a particular, unique state that ought to belong to the simple substance in question in a designated order. When the subsequent state comes into existence, the reality or perfection constituting this subsequent perceptual state does not have its source in the simple substance itself, because the requirements of an adequate account of divine concurrence, I have argued, forbid this. But the current state provides or contains very specific information, as it were, about what perceptual state is to come next, and this specification or determination of the state to follow, among infinite possibilities, is what I take to be the causal role of the present state. Of all of the infinitely many possible, i.e. internal consistent, perceptual states that might have been conjoined to the present state, one is uniquely identified as that which belongs to this very simple substance, and herein lays the causation of formal determination.

Understanding the causal role of present perceptual states in this way, we then have a nice way of understanding the rather perplexing claim Leibniz makes when he suggests in 1709 that “perception is the operation proper to the soul, and the nexus of perceptions, according to which subsequent ones are derived from the preceding ones, makes the unity of the perceiver” (GP II 372/L 599) The latter half of the claim expresses the view that the perceptual states that make up the series of perceptions are what constitute the simple substances themselves in terms of their identity. But this unity for Leibniz is also ultimately grounded in the activity of the simple substance itself. Given that each perception, as it occurs, formally determines the next perception to follow, in its rational determination of selecting or picking out a unique subsequent state, it is no wonder that Leibniz describes perception to be the basic *operation* or activity of simple substances.

Appetition, Primitive Forces, and Final Causes

Suppose one were to grant this account of formal causation to be a fundamental feature of the causal makeup of Leibnizian simple substances. How does this picture of formal causation fit in with the other crucial component of simple substances for the mature Leibniz, i.e. appetites or appetitions? This is the last question I will consider in this paper.

We might begin with the question, what are appetites for Leibniz? According to the *Mondadology*, an “appetition” is “the action of the internal principle which brings about the change or the passage from one perception to another” (GP VI 609; AG 215). The internal principle here, I take it, is what I have been describing as the concrete correlate of the complete individual concept or the substantial form of the simple substance. But what are we to make of this “action” of the internal principle, which seems distinct from the “internal principle” itself? Given my pre-

¹⁷ For more on Leibniz on universal expression, see DM 8-9, 33; GP II, 47, 57-8, 74-75, 95-96, 113-114.

ceding account of the formal causality within simple substances, one might think that the action of this internal principle would just be its *formal* causal activity discussed in the previous section. This, however, has the unfortunate consequence of having Leibniz regard formal causation as an activity that is fundamentally *appetitive*. This doesn't seem right, since providing a reason for the subsequent state by fully perceiving and, thus, specifying what the next perceptual state is to be, does not in itself appear to contain any genuinely appetitive feature. Therefore, in order to do justice to the characterization of this activity of the internal principle as appetitive, I think there must be a way to both distinguish it from the activity of formal causation and account for why this distinctive activity is fundamentally appetitive.

At the beginning of the paper, I had suggested that the spontaneous causal force of a simple substance, at a fundamental level, has a dual character in that the force was a fusion of formal and final causation. So my view is that the appetitive activity being discussed here is best considered under the rubric of final causation. The topic of final causality in Leibniz is a complex and difficult one. I will not be able to do justice to the richness of Leibniz's thought here but I think we can make some headway by identifying what I take to be two strands of thought involved his discussion of final causation. The two strands I have in mind share the common thread of expressing Leibniz's commitment to the explanatory force of *reasons* and *values* but they are distinct in that they point to different agents to whom these reasons and values are operative.

One strand is the final causality involved in *God's* actions. Consider the main line of Leibniz's theodicy: his 'best possible world' defense holds that the best of all possible worlds is chosen and actualized by God because it is the best. This implies that the alternatives to be chosen are presented to the agent as reasonable possibilities to be actualized. They are all worthy of choice in some respect and as such have features which provide the basis for the choice involved. The relevant feature, of course, is that each alternative is good or worthy in that it retains a primitive value. By having this value, each of these alternatives can demand or have a pleading force, as it were, to be reckoned with. So, on this account, the goodness of states of affairs can be thought to provide a reason for God to continuously produce those states and God, in turn, is the kind of rational agent to whom such things of value are motivating. It is in this sense that, broadly speaking, goodness is a final cause for God.

So how does this account of final causation relate to the appetite or appetitive force of *creatures* identified earlier? Does this account make sense of how Leibniz appears to be saying that the creature itself is striving or demanding, as in the following from *On the Ultimate Origination of Things* (1697)?

[T]here is a certain urge [*exigentia*] for existence or (so to speak) a straining toward existence in possible things. ... Furthermore, all possibles, that is, everything that expresses essence or possible reality, strive with equal right for existence in proportion to the amount of essence or reality or the degree of perfection they contain." (GP VII 303;AG 150).

We have seen how the creature's present representation of the goodness of the future state provides a reason for *God* but this merely reaffirms the fact that God is the kind of agent that is motivated to bring about the objective good. But that the good is an end of God does not tell us how the *creature itself* is striving for or demanding a certain outcome, which is certainly what the passage above and others like it suggest. So the responsiveness of the creaturely agent to

goodness or value, I think, ought to be identified as another, second strand of Leibniz’s thought concerning final causality.

In fact, it is this second strand of final causality in Leibniz, i.e. the valuing of the good as an end *by the creature* that helps us capture the sense in which the *creature itself* is striving for a certain outcome and exerts an appetitive force. If one way of understanding an appetitive force is to think of it as a force that strives to make actual some yet-to-be realized state of affairs that is objectively good, then Leibniz’s appetitive forces intrinsic to simple substances is appetitive precisely in this fashion. For, based on the representation of the goodness or value of the future state, there is a force within the present state that strives to realize it by demanding or urging its production over others. It is this demanding, striving force aimed at realizing the value or goodness of the subsequent state that allows us to identify an appetition-oriented final causality in creatures.¹⁸

This account, of course, has the consequence that every state of a substance, including painful ones, is in fact one that the creature strives for, which seems rather counterintuitive. But here the standard story of how each actual individual substance, being a member of the best of all possible worlds, possesses the maximally perfect states that that individual could have, might provide some explanation as to how there is an appetitive force in me that actually strives for the subsequent state of feeling pain. If my not feeling pain entails that I no longer exist, insofar as that subsequent pain state is partially constitutive of my identity, then given that all simple substances for Leibniz strive to *persist*, it does not seem un-Leibnizian to think that there are appetitions for such unfortunate states. In other words, if one thinks that the most basic of creaturely appetitions is that of the individual’s persistence or endurance, then the most basic appetite of any creature would be for whichever state that guarantees its persistence, come what may.¹⁹

Some brief concluding remarks. So on my account of Leibniz on the real causality of simple substances, creatures are causally forceful in a dual sense. In one sense, the present state of the substance, by perceiving its subsequent states, fully *specifies* the particular future state that God is to bring about and, in this sense, *determines* the subsequent state of the substance. This is the sense in which the creature is the formal cause of its states. But the present state is also forceful in another sense, in that the present state also *demands* that this particular state be brought about.

¹⁸ A potential problem of this way of thinking about final causation is that this account seems to presuppose the reality of future, non-existent ends as motivating the agent. This aspect of final causation frequently is grounds for complaints against realism about final causes. But, if my rational determination model of Leibnizian final causation is right, then Leibniz doesn’t seem to face this problem. For, on my account, it is not the future ends but past and present features of the creature that provide reasons for both God to act and the creature to strive. Consider the kind of causal role the present perceptual state plays in the realization of the subsequent perceptual state. When the present perceptual state represents its subsequent state, not only does this representation fully specify and determine what the state is like in terms of its properties, it also represents the goodness or value of this state as its reason for existence. Thus, the goodness of the future state ‘pre-exists’, as it were, since they are *presently* perceived and thus represented in the present perceptual state. This present perception of the future good is what provides the basis for the final causality operative in both God and the creature. Of course, the perception or representation of the good itself does not fully account for motivating force of the good, i.e. why the agents are motivated to pursue the good. But this is just to say that not all cognizers of the good need be subject to the reality of final causation. Moreover, that agents are genuinely moved by some value or goodness does not entail that the good in question is a non-existent, future good. I thank Robert Adams for helpful discussion on this point.

¹⁹ For an interesting discussion of how such an account could fit with a rational agent’s conscious avoidance of pain as an apparent evil, see Rutherford 170f.

By presenting the goodness or value of the state as a reason for God to bring it into existence over others, there is an *urges* in the present state for the subsequent states. Moreover, the creature itself, as a matter of its persistence, *strives for* the subsequent state and there is an appetitive force within the present state that wants the subsequent state to come into existence. It is in these ways that the present state is final cause of its subsequent states. Rational determination or the force of simple substances, then, on my account, turns out to be a fusion of the two types of causation that most of the moderns shied away from, namely, formal and final causation. So, on my reading, Leibniz appears to be truly an untimely modern in that his rehabilitation of 'Scholastic' philosophy reaches the core of his mature ontology.

Might the causality in my reading of Leibniz seem too abstract and insufficiently robust? Perhaps, to some of our contemporaries, who have bought into the assumption that genuine causation, if it occurs in the world at all, is exemplified by the mechanical interaction of physical objects through contact collision. But this is surely not an assumption that someone who, in presenting his mature metaphysics, expresses the desire to "advance a great paradox" by restoring "the almost banished substantial forms to their former place" (DM 11), or so I have argued.