The Ethics of Monadic Identity in Leibniz's Thought

Marius CUCU[1],
Oana LENȚA[2]

[1] Lecturer Ph.D., Stefan cel Mare University, Suceava, Romania. mariuscucu35@yahoo.com
[2] Associate lecturer, Ph.D., Stefan cel Mare University, Suceava, Romania, oanalenta@yahoo.com

Abstract: *The system of pre-established harmony proposed by Leibnizian ontology gives perspective to a Universe thought of as a perfect machine, or as a "perfect kingdom, governed by an absolute Prince". In this „best of all possible worlds", the occurrence of evil requires an extremely thorough justification. With regard to the prospective motivation and argument in favor of existence of evil in the world, the ethical positioning of the human soul, conceived of as a superior monad, capable of true understanding and a reflection of divine grace, can also be outlined. What place, therefore, does evil occupy in the Leibnizian universal equation and how is it possible to embody it from the perspective of free will? In a system of such predetermined order, what possibility is there for the existence of freedom? In this universal order, what place does absolute necessity, hypothetical necessity and moral necessity occupy? And what is their connection with the essential cosmic logical, geometrical and metaphysical principles? Do reason, will, and power, as absolute features of the Godhead, contribute to guaranteeing the ethical responsibility of higher monads? How does Leibniz bring together the predetermination and typology of fatality expressed through the paradigms: fatum mahometanum, fatum stoicum and fatum christianum? "Divinity as the first agent and man as the patient and second agent" - is a Leibnizian interpretation of the relation of predetermination. Evil and free will are recognized only in the framework of hypothetical necessity.*
So, therefore, in the present work we will analyze, among other things, the Leibnizian interpretation of the ratio of predetermination, recalling the difference between being inclined and being forced in making a decision.

Keywords: *preordained harmony; „the best of all possible worlds"; free will; monad; ethics.*

Propaedeutic elements.

We all know that Leibniz was a visionary thinker, with complex and original theories.

> " Some scholars have suggested that Leibniz should be regarded as one of the first thinkers to envision something like the idea of artificial intelligence (cf. Churchland 1984; Pratt 1987) […]Leibniz's view that human cognitive processes follow determinable axioms of logic, and the picture that emerges is one according to which the mind operates, at least when it comes to intelligible reasoning, by following implicit algorithmic procedures. Regardless of whether or not Leibniz should be seen as the grandfather of artificial intelligence, he did conceive of human cognition in essentially computational terms."(Kulstad & Carlin, 2000)

Leibniz envisioned an algorithmic system of combining human thoughts, based on clear rules, a universal language for symbolizing concepts, and their logical recombination could generate new thoughts or ways of understanding the human mind. This theory of the automated reading of symbolized thoughts can be found in the dissertation "On the Combinatorial Art", (1666). (dissertation that can be accessed at https://www.math.ucla.edu/~pak/hidden/papers/Quotes/Leibniz-Arte Combinatoria.pdf) As well, Marquis et al. (2014) have sustained

> "Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) has not only been the philosopher that everybody heard about, and one of the father of the infinitesimal calculus (without mentioning many other works in mathematics, in physics, and in history). Indeed he also has an important role in the evolution of logic […]which has been rediscovered lately, due in particular to his search for a universal language (*lingua characteristica universalis*) that enables the formalization of the thought and an algorithmic logical calculus (*calculus ratiocinator*), thus anticipating the project of Frege. He is also at the origin of the idea of "possible worlds", and was interested in issues in legal and deontic reasoning"

Regarding brain and minds, algorithms, computing and artificial intelligence, we recommend a few of the works of some researchers such as Parr and Friston (2018), Graham (2023), Richards and Lillicrap (2022),

Safron (2022, 2020), Hipólito (2022), Safron et al (2022), etc., specialists who are able to sustain and develop relevant theories and to pronounce on the issue, respectively the implicit semantics.

From the multitude of research directions that Leibniz developed, we will briefly present only his approach to the ethics of monadic identity, calling in some places to the interpretation of Luciano Floridi (2022) on this topic.

Leibniz and the progressive symbiosis of mathematics, logic, metaphysics and morality

Where mathematics and logic, metaphysics and geometry, all meet, the system of preordained harmony proposed by Leibniz (Leibniz, 1997, p.119), a harmony in which the efficient causes of matter are correspondent to the spiritual (Dumitrescu, 2012) ones, gives the image of an organized Universe to the entire occidental culture, in which good represents the central ontological axis sustained by the universal demiurgic reason, the divine Creator. In this mechanism of the *best of all possible worlds*, evil holds the differentiating role of the exception which serves in confirming the rule (Dumitrescu, 2012, p. 40). Faced with the devastating effects of accepting and internalizing evil, the human faith can be destabilized in a universal mechanism governed by an eternal noble conscience. But for Leibniz, the limitations of human knowledge create such a skeptical perspective. We are not capable of seeing and understanding the greatness of the entire universe, respectively the eventual purposefulness of the divine plan. From this extremely rudimentary and restrictive gnoseological position, the temptation of regarding the evil as stronger than the good can be justified, divine justice being inexistent or extremely weak. In fact, human consciences don't possess the superior abilities of seeing and knowing the totality of the world and the finality of choices, positive and negative options. In the absence of full data, in the absence of advanced knowledge, the drama of human existence may seem incomprehensible, but in a perfect universal mechanism, each element, no matter how tiny, has its place and role. In the Leibnizian mechanism of preordained harmony, evil holds the statute of a presence which contributes, finally, to the perfection of consciences that call for self-correction from the deviant path. But we always have to make a difference between nature-base evil and *moral* or human-made evil:

> "Evil plays a leading role in all cultures and civilisations, from the first cuneiform tablets, which speak of unpaid debts, to the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Odyssey. There is no Dante,

Shakespeare, or Goethe without evil as a great actor in human affairs. Evil is a constant in history. It is also the object of study of ethics, which investigates its nature and causes, why it exists, and how it can be countered. Philosophers agree on the nature of evil insofar as they distinguish two kinds: the nature-based and the human-made" (Floridi, 2022).

The concept of the monad, the good and the evil in the metaphysical-ethical structure proposed through the system of preordained harmony

In the paradigm proposed by Leibniz, human souls are monads, meaning distinct spiritual units, closed within themselves. In the development of the concept of the monad, Leibniz was influenced, as some interpreters of his works believe, by the baroque architecture which exploited the qualities of the darkroom, through which light penetrates unidirectionally, thus the sight of the interior being impossible from the outside (Deleuze, 1992, p. 28). God is the supreme monad (Râmbu, 1997, p.13), the creator and guarantor of the existence of the other monads and of the entire universe (Niță, 1998, pp.18-19). He is the primordial source of the ontic essences due to the exercise of His absolute will and the generating base of the existences He sustains and governs through His perfect intellect. It is assumed that the divine intellect, which is above the divine will, knows all possible variants of the universe, all scenarios of worlds and existential configurations which can be taken into account. But it will choose the one which contains the highest degree of good, will opt for the variant of the universe which includes the vastest quantity of good, evil being only a means to the final confirmation of the good. Thus, out of all possible worlds, God has chosen the one that had been activated or, to use an Aristotelian concept, He has brought the version of the world which contains the highest presence of good from potency into act. Thus, according to Leibniz, the world in which we live, if God has chosen it from an infinity of potential worlds, that means that it is *the best of all possible worlds* (Leibniz, 1997, p. 40). This characteristic does not exclude, therefore, the presence of evil in the world. For Leibniz, a typology of evil spread over three layers which correlate with each other (Leibniz, 1997, p. 100) can be addressed. As such, a metaphysical evil which devolves from the finitude of creatures, from their initial gene, exists. The second type of evil is a natural result of the first. It is in fact an occurrence on the fond and disposition generated by the first layer. Man, holding, for example, the status of creation, is subject to the intellectual, but also volitional, finitude. Thus,

his knowledge and will are limited, which opens the possibility of incapacity of constantly maintaining himself in report to the divine Principle, the possibility of moving away and straying from it at the level of conscience. This distancing is the essence of what theology calls sin. So, moral evil would be the result of the conditions generated by the evil of the metaphysical genesis. Like a consequence of a causal chain in which two forms of evil are intertwined, sickness and death, the dramas and historical tragedies of humanity, but also of man as an individual entity, follow. This is the physical evil (Niță, 1998, p. 19). Basically, the fall of human conscience to the state of material encapsulation implicates its insertion into a plane of dissolution, which irreversibly leads to suffering and the death of corporality. This typology of the presence of evil in the world does not oppose the Leibnizian affirmation that we are in the best of all possible worlds. On the contrary, evil represents exactly the element which contributes, finally, to the fulfillment of the universal good, being extremely reduced in its exercise and impact in relation to the constant, generalized action of good. Evil confirms the final victory of good through secondary duality. At the same time, it can't fully contradict the existence of God as a Being who is perfect in goodness and knowledge. On the contrary, the presence of evil in the world confirms the divine goodness in the sense of the acceptance of free will, of freedom of choice (Leibniz, 1997, p. 141). If evil did not exist, then how could the choice of good happen? Leibniz believes that God is the deficient cause of evil and not its efficient cause, that is to say the Divinity allows evil, tolerates it for a certain amount of time and at the level of a controlled intensity. Leibniz brings as an example the fact that a man, in a normal lifetime, has episodes of sickness or pain, but a big part of this life is lived in their absence. Of course, there are people who suffer from certain illnesses their entire lives, but an attentive analysis will show that the number of the ill is greatly reduced in relation to that of those who do not suffer terribly, benefitting from an acceptable state of health or, more precisely, the lack of majorly traumatizing affections. His conclusion is that evil, no matter how intensely and dramatically it may manifest itself in our world, remains isolated and manifests itself sporadically in relation to the Divine plan, which overcomes temporality and utilizes it for the purpose of moral perfection. Thus, individual suffering purifies the conscience and can bring it closer to the supreme Monad which is God, and the tragedies of war can correct certain general moral deficiencies, certain deviations in relation to the axis of constant comparison to the divine Being. Evil cannot be, therefore, regarded as opposing the goodwill of the Creator, its presence in the world cannot negate this goodwill, on the contrary, it is confirmed through the acceptance

of everyone's choice between the movement of bringing oneself closer or further away from God. Floridi (2022) pointed out extremely well that the Leibnizian approach must be seen in the historical and cultural context in which it was made and that

> "[…] as science and technology advance, natural evil does not remain fixed, but is translated more and more into moral evil. That is, if things end badly, it is no longer God's fault, but Humanity's alone. For example, Hegel died of malaria, like Dante. It was a natural evil at the time, but today dying of malaria is an entirely human responsibility. It has morphed into a moral evil. In 2020, there were 241 million cases of malaria worldwide and an estimated 627,000 deaths. Like them, the deaths caused by the Lisbon earthquake today would be a human crime, not something for which to doubt the existence of the God of Christianity."

Free will, ontological bipolarity, the rational miracle and the efficient-final cause duality

The system of preordained harmony could easily contradict the idea of freedom. If all is predetermined, then the possibility of free will, the capability of individual choice, would be excluded. But for Leibniz, the universal order does not assume an excessive, tyrannical and fully implicated in each component of the universal creation, determinism. Free will is not annulled, rather only framed in the parameters of a strictness which cannot be omitted or avoided. Human consciousnesses as monads which must reflect and express the light of the supreme monad (Leibniz, 2001, p.133), of the divine being, hold intelligence and the ability of choosing and acting individually, in accordance with each one's personal choice. In this context, Leibniz makes the distinction between the metaphysical necessity and the moral one (Niţă, 1998, p. 20). Thus, the metaphysical one could contradict the principle of individual free will. If there are major constraints at the ontic level of man's presence in the world, then his free will could be questioned. But, a margin or a scale of human free will can be brought into discussion, the metaphysical necessity being restricted to a few basic principles and laws. In contrast, the moral necessity does not contradict free will because this type of necessity imposes the imperative of approaching God, as the prime source of eternal life but also of freedom. The fact that man is morally obliged to constantly compare himself to the divine being does not mean that his freedom is injured. On the contrary, the closeness to the absolute

monad which is God represents closeness to the origin of freedom, therefore the closer to the proximity of its Creator the human conscience is, the freer and more unrestrained it will feel. On the contrary, distancing oneself from the divine presence generates constriction and the loss of free will. For Leibniz, this distancing or departure is equivalent to a discord between a secondary monad and the perfect monad, between heeding the principle of absolute good and omitting or rejecting it. They are two diametrically opposite tendencies, two contrary movements: one approaches the divine axis, the other distances from it. For the first movement, the end is a similarity or capability of reflecting the divine perfection as high as possible, while for the second, the end mark is represented by opaqueness, the incapability of reflecting any ray offered by the Creator's absolute. Of course, the system of preordained harmony proposed by Leibniz implies multiple dilemmas, especially moral ones. In his work *Theodicy Essays*, he took on the analysis and attempt at answering a big part of this interrogation and open theme. The idea of an active organization of the entire universe, a cosmic order in which each event and presence has its place and meaning, all the components of the world, whether material or spiritual, all tightly linked in correlation and communion which cannot be ripped apart (Leibniz, 1997, p. 277), constitutes the foundation of the entire conceptual complex described by Leibniz. The monads, as units of spiritual force, hold the principle of their own movement internally, they are not influenced or determined in the dynamic of their activity by exterior forces. Thus, they don't influence each other, therefore each is acting independently in relation to one another. In this universe of perfect order, which is established from the beginning, monads tune each other, generating the monadic harmony (Flonta, 1998, p. 89), they are correlated and subject to a universal mechanism of perfect equilibration and distribution. There are eternal laws of the universe and none of its components, so including the superior monads or human souls, can exist or act outside of these divine imperatives (Leibniz, 1972, p. 512). Free will is not excluded but, on the contrary, it manifests itself as a universal law which cannot be broken (Niță, 1998, p. 80). Free will is maintained in this system as one of the most important axioms for the rapport between the human consciousness and Divinity. According to a universal constitution, nothing that happens can be random, all manifestations have a well- defined cause. *Wonders*, miraculous events, are nothing but situations which our reason cannot explain, occurrences which overwhelm our capability of understanding (Leibniz, 1997, p. 149). Leibniz does not exclude the existence in itself of events which we generally call by the name *miracle*, but he supports the idea that these events, too, hold their

own rational causes and mechanisms, but to the scale of the absolute, divine reason, which closes our possibility of fully understanding them, especially to the level of their primordial foundations and final purpose. On the other hand, Leibniz believed that, if there were a physical law which would not be subject to reason, for example, a law which imposes circular motion for all bodies, then it could only be active through a continuous miracle, through a perpetual epiphanic intervention of the Divinity or of the angelic forces (Leibniz, 1997, p. 279). In this case, the term wonder or miracle would detach from reason and would approach the sense given by the Christian religious tradition. The ontological bipolarity announced by Plato at the dawn of occidental philosophy, through the postulation of two worlds, one of imperfect copies and another of perfect Ideas, one of the caves of materiality and corporal sensation, the other of the Spirit, makes its presence felt in the system of preordained harmony as well, Platonism being an important source of Leibnizian thinking (Mercer, 2001, pp. 174-175). Leibniz proposes the existence of two registers, the one of nature and the one of grace and, in regards to this duality, the recognition of two types of causes, the efficient ones and the final ones, is imposed. Divinity represents the supreme authority that generated and established these absolute laws, God being the architect of the natural world and the sovereign of the spiritual one, sovereign over the material structures but also judge of the manifestations of the monadic consciences.

The three fundamental triads of the preordained harmony system: the triad of necessities, the triad of principles and the triad of Divine characteristics

For Leibniz, what Aristotle named *potentia* holds monad, which means force, capability of manifesting itself, of dynamically projecting itself into existence. It is an interior principle of action and for the superior monads, the ones of the human consciences, this principle implies the capability of choosing between good and evil, which in Leibnizian terms would mean the possession of the possibility of being in accord or disaccord with the Divinity, of approaching the absolute being by reflecting its light and perfection or by departing from it, rendering less and less of the divine glow, until the state of opaqueness and complete darkness is reached. In the system of the preordained harmony which establishes three types of necessities, which are, the absolute necessity, the hypothetical one and the moral one (Niță, 1998, p.80). The first, for Leibniz, represents the axiom of the essential logical, geometric and metaphysical principles. The

accomplished functioning of the universe of nature is targeted here, the perfection of its mechanisms, which can be compared to a clock whose accuracy is infallible. The second necessity permits the relativity of certain consequences which stern from hypothetical premises. Thus, it is possible that, in a hypothetical existential situation, a different result than the one anticipated will appear. This contingency of causality does not mean that certain results can be undetermined or unpredictable through the divine intellect. On the contrary, the variables of contingency themselves, of randomness, are already integrated in a universal harmony which includes them as possibilities, the Divinity already knowing them in their potentiality format, as possible scenarios. The moral necessity is the highest law from the Leibnizian system's perspective (Russell, [1992], 2005, p.81). According to it, the world in which we live is the best of all possible worlds and the humans and angelic beings choose the version of existence and action that is the closest to the absolute good, the formula through which good is fulfilled and the closeness to the divine being is total. God Himself does not break this moral necessity in the sense that He will always choose the best of all possible worlds. The ethical principle of superior monads consist precisely of this constant undertaking of the movement of approaching and reflecting the divine perfection, in the image of the cosmic harmony proposed by Leibniz even the departure from the supreme monad which is God having the role of confirming the perfection of its creation and of the sovereignty of good, evil being only a means to confirming it. Leibniz noted, in this conceptual context, the defining characteristics of the divine presence, which are *reason*, through which it knows the infinity of all possible worlds, *will*, through which it chooses the best of all possible worlds and *power* through which it fulfills what it has chosen and decided (Niță, 1998, p. 67). As the origin of all ideas, in the Platonic sense, as Leibniz calls them, the divine intellect opens up and leads towards the truth, the divine will generates existence and leads to good and power, as a founding factor of universal support, leads to Being. Thus, the ethics of the monad-consciences can only sum up to these records and impose, as a moral imperative, the constant rapport and approach of the supreme divine monad. If it is the source of ideas, the spring of existences and foundation of essences, if it opens up and offers the way towards truth, good and Being, then to the human conscience, as understood by Leibniz as a monad, in the sense of a unity of rational spiritual force, is left only the correct use of free will and the choice of the formula which fully resonates with the natural tendency of the entire universe in relation to its demiurgic architect.

Good as the final consequent intention of the divine will, and evil as a factor allowed by the antecedent divine will

The divine will is in constant relation to the divine reason so that it can only wish for that which is in accord with the perfect reason's axioms. The fact that everything it wants is already under the rules of reason does not exclude divine free will. God thinks, wishes and acts in a wholly free manner, but does not break His own regulations postulated at the same time as the universal genesis. Leibniz differentiates the antecedent divine will from the consequent one. In fact, it is only a scale of the intensity of permission. Thus, the antecedent will permit evil and wishes for the fulfillment of good. The consequent will is superior and wishes only for good, evil being permitted only under the final status as a means through which this *better* can be fulfilled. The consequent will can also be regarded as a final and complete will. through which the moral fulfillment of the entire system of monads through the complete undertaking of the better and final rejection of evil, is wished for. While the antecedent will is a transitory stage, in which evil is permitted but the constant achievement of good in its particular, sequential forms is envisaged, the consequential will pursues, as its final interval, the achievement of better and the end of approaching the divine being, the supreme monad, through the instauration of this complete level of the better and through restraining the action of evil only at an intermediate middle level, of medium term, meant to contribute to the final glorification of absolute good and of the Divinity as the direct source of it. Thus, the system of the preordained harmony can be confirmed and the ethical state of the superior monads, of consciences, can reach fulfillment. The consequential or total of the Divinity allows, thus, evil or sin only under the title of hypothetical necessity, of a corrective factor and confirmation of the preordained harmony in which the principle of *the better* is sovereign (Niță, 1998, p. 68). Through His permissive nature in relation to the presence and action of evil, God confirms His autonomous nature but also confirms the autonomy of choice and decision of the superior monads. If He rejected the possibility of evil as an active reality, He would break the principle of free will which would transform the spiritual universe into a material one in which souls would be directed and moved like the lifeless celestial bodies. Through the protection of free will, each conscience is respected to the level of its own capability of choice, but the fact that it may choose evil does not mean that it will not long, even against its own will, for a general and final good. Basically, this universal movement towards good

could be directly fulfilled, through the following and undertaking of the recommended moral values and imperatives.

We sustain what Luciano Floridi (2022) have said:

> "So, Leibniz's idea could be updated in the following version: this is not yet the best of possible worlds, but we are getting there, and in the future, natural evil could be a memory, leaving only human intelligence, freedom, and responsibility to prevent, avoid, minimise, or eradicate evils in the world. In the presence of moral evil, the theological solution is to excuse God and charge humanity with the mistaken use of its freedom. Evil would be an utterly immanent problem, a human problem. Perhaps this is the best of all possible worlds, after all, because it offers humanity the opportunity of removing any natural evil."

The metaphysical-theological problem of damnation and salvation from the perspective of the Leibnizian rejection of two argumentative syllogisms proposed by P. Bayle

Leibniz, by analyzing two argumentative syllogisms by P. Bayle (Niță, 1998, p. 69), one of his correspondents, claims that, apparently, God fully loves his whole wisdom, and it doesn't allow Him to wish for the salvation of man. Each conscience, each superior monadic identity, has free will, thus must be responsible for its choices and be punished or rewarded according to its option. This requirement seems to be dictated by the equity imposed by divine wisdom at the scale of the entire universe. But divine wisdom is also the one which postulates not only freedom for all creation, but also the freedom of choice for its own divine being. As such, according to the divine wisdom, the divine will can wish for the salvation of man, its love for him being greater than the universal reason which sustains only the compensating equity. Leibniz has also rejected another thesis sustained by Bayle, according to which God, constantly listening to His own wisdom, can only wish for the damnation of sin and sinners. But, as man is under the primordial, adamic sin, only a small part of us may be saved, the majority being incapable of liberation from the specter of sin. Therefore, God can only wish, according to the records of His supreme reason, for the damnation of most humans. Leibniz rejects this argument, resuming the distinction between the *metaphysical necessity* and the *moral necessity* (Niță, 1998). As such, according to the metaphysical necessity, a mathematical, exact, cold necessity, sin is part of human nature, therefore only an exceptional effort could erase it from this nature. The great majority of people do not have

such spiritual resources, capable of extinguishing the mark of sin from their conscience, which means that, not only to they maintain its stigma, but they always tend to its resumption, they constantly collapse under its dark specter, they rise towards the absolute divine landmark and even then, return to the dynamic of the sin inscribed in their soul's substance. Therefore, the metaphysical necessity would impose the natural damnation of most people. But Leibniz claims there is a *moral necessity*. According to it, God loves all humans and wishes for their salvation, not damnation (Leibniz, 1997, p. 35). As such, even the greatest sinner of all humans is offered, before the perspective of damnation, that of salvation, of returning and approaching the divine being. Moral necessity does not negate the possibility of applying the metaphysical necessity, but it is superior to it. Therefore, although the mechanics of souls indicate an obvious rapport of causality between sin and damnation, it can be overcome through the moral necessity of the universe, through the divine law of love which offers salvation through grace and revelation. In relation to the adamic sin, the divine will operates, then, in Leibniz's opinion, through the moral necessity. The ethic conduit of monadic identities consists of the acceptance and undertaking of this divine grace and revelation which meets humans by offering them an alternative much higher than the mechanical effect of the causal rapport between sin and eternal damnation.

The false contingence. The physical, moral and metaphysical good

In the Leibnizian ontological system, objects, beings and events only exist and manifest themselves under the sign of contingence, if we analyze them on their own. Randomness seems to be the only law which can govern them from within their isolated interiority. As such, they are ephemeral and don't have a con-substantial purpose (Niță, 1998, p. 70). As such, chaos would be the only sovereign element in the universe. But we also observe that harmony, order and law permanently meet us in the vast expanse of the cosmos. Although the elements of the universe do not have a rationality of their own existence within their own being, they are still correlated in a perfect general order. Therefore, the law of their existence is an exterior one and the reason for the entire world through which it is harmoniously governed and sustained can only be under the care of a supreme architect, a necessary absolute being, which is God. Builder of the natural world and guarantor of the moral order, He is the supreme cause who holds the perfect intellect and whole will. What He wishes is materialized and nothing that is fulfilled can be so without divine agreement. He knows all variations of

possible worlds but chooses the best one which goes from potence into act. He allows each superior monad its free will and, regardless of its choice, knows all the options for which it could opt, understanding the moral evolution of each human in all possible life scenarios. He indicates, inspires thought and the right choice, but does not intervene directly, obliging the human conscience to make a certain choice. As such, moral freedom is guaranteed in the system of preordained harmony, it being one of the eternal truths which can only be guaranteed through the constant action of a divine creative force.

The Leibnizian proposition for a perfect world, a complete cosmic harmony, could not have avoided confrontation with the problem of evil's evident existence. In Leibniz's opinion, the three forms of evil mentioned above do not have their origin within the divine will. Leibniz composes a typology of good which mirrors the separation of evil into three distinct stages. As such, good also acts as three distinct categories (Leibniz, 1997, p. 207). There is, therefore, a *physical good*, a *moral good* (Leibniz, 2003, p. 169) and a *metaphysical good* (Niță, 1998, p.74). The physical good is the range of corporal lusts and comfort states. Health is such an overall good which we can say we cherish, for we become aware of its value when it disappears or is absent. When we are not sick, we are actually well, that is to say, we are under the incidence of this first category of good, the physical one. Situated on a superior level, the spiritual pleasures are much more subtle than the physical ones, but they can confer a state of advanced joy which lasts longer and is more intense. They compose the state of moral good and are generated by our virtuous actions, by the multitude of acts done out of compassion for our neighbor and veneration in rapport to the divine being. Finally, the metaphysical good is related by Leibniz to the problematic of essence. The more perfection there is, the more metaphysical good there is, and the higher quantity of essence there is, the more perfection there is. Essence, in the sense conferred to the concept by Leibniz, means a concentration and joining of all possible characteristics at the highest possible degree of existence and manifestation. Actually, the theory at play is related to the intensity of reality. The more essence there is, the more reality there is, or intensity of being. Thus, God being perfect, holds an infinite amount of essence and, as such, is described as infinite reality. Evil is part of the system of preordained harmony as a tolerant element and placed in the ultimate service of good. Therefore, it is limited, containing a determined essence and a secondary reality, less intense than that of good. It can generate good, but it cannot remove it and can't diminish the perfection of the entire mechanism of preordained harmony. On the contrary, it

contributes to its imperturbable functionality. The natural question Leibniz must confront here is what could, yet be the source of evil, where does it come from, how did it occur in the mechanism of the universal creation. Leibniz responds to this dilemma by claiming that the source of evil in the world is man himself, his will, the erroneous choices he has made. Therefore, the origin of evil lies within free will, the free choice of man which God, according to His perfect will and absolute moral laws, does not wish to negate or disrespect (Niță, 1998, p.76).

The problem with predetermination and the typology of fatality: fatum mahometanum, fatum stoicum, fatum christianum.

The allowing of free will and even its wrongful use does not hinder the system of preordained harmony; on the contrary, it contributes to its good functioning, good being confirmed through counter-position. Another problem which results from the Leibnizian conceptual position is that of negative fatality. If everything is preordained, there is no point in fighting to avoid certain situations and fulfilling others. The future becomes, in this context, a scenario already constructed in detail which one can only follow without hesitation. Leibniz introduces a classification of conceptions of the fatality of destiny. Thus, in his opinion, there is a *fatum mahometanum* interpretation, perspective according to which any tragedy is already set to happen, will happen, so one cannot fight with his humanly efforts against it. Just like the name indicates, this vision belongs to the Mohammedans who would blindly go into battle and misery, believing that they must inevitably happen. A second interpretation is *fatum stoicum*. The stoics, unlike the Muslims, appeal to the permanent state of peace, more precisely peace of the conscience in relation to the course of destiny. According to their opinion, man must not think of future events, for he cannot influence them. He must not hope for excessive happiness, but neither is it indicated to set himself up for going into possible misery that may appear with no discernment. The third perspective, supported by Leibniz as well, *fatum christianum*, accentuates the idea that the entire universe, the physical but also spiritual world are governed by God, who wishes for the universal good, but also for the good of each conscience (Niță, 1998, pp.76-77). Thus, whatever happens has an ultimate positive purpose, but the limited human knowledge cannot anticipate it. The divine being perfectly holds goodness and wisdom and, thus, man must not revolt or oppose the events in his destiny, everything having a thorough rationality of occurrence and manifestation. Nothing can be by chance, but the limits of our understanding prevent our access to the

universal truth, at least at the stage in which we are in our corporal and spatial-temporal life. Our concern must be centered around the way in which we are capable of choosing good and rejecting evil, having to suffer the ulterior consequences of our choice, depending on what it was. We must, therefore, as superior monadic entities, tend to approach the supreme monad by following the revelation of its absolute truth, revelation which suggests we should permanently opt for thinking, living and appealing to good. In Leibniz's opinion, God and man alike have freedom. But man can only look ahead as an ontic agent, but also as a patient, in the sense that he can choose but is restricted in options by his own limitations. His finite nature, his creature substance does not permit complete freedom. Imperfection, relativity of physical and spiritual capabilities, instability of experiences, all these traits block access to absolute freedom. Only God is agency, Him being the one who influenced without being influenced, the instance which formats without being formatted, cause without the property of being Himself an effect of a superior cause (Niță, 1998, p.77). As the supreme agency, He has absolute freedom, a freedom which cannot be restricted by any constraints, whether they be physical, metaphysical or moral. Being the Creator of these rules and constraints, it is true that He will only violate His own configuration to the extent that it provides the possibility. It's the case of miracles, which deem to break the cosmic laws, at least the physical ones, but in Leibniz's opinion, they also have a rational explanation but those are related to the divine rationality, inaccessible to the creatures. Although subject to a multitude of constraints, man cannot be forced to fulfill good or evil, he can at most be influenced, guided, led by the divine grace towards good.

> "Over time, on the ethical scale, the plate of natural evil is becoming lighter and that of moral evil heavier. Human responsibilities are increasing, not only for the many wrongs we cause — just think of climate change — but also because of the natural evils we can but do not prevent, minimise, or eliminate. Here too, science, technology, and, more generally, human intelligence make a huge difference, for better or for worse" (Floridi, 2022).

Thus, free will remains the stone of resistance for the human while he takes the responsibility of his acts, the fundament of his ethic as a superior monad, destined to reflect the divine majesty by constantly approaching it. As aforementioned, in Leibniz's opinion, human freedom

consists of intelligence, spontaneity and contingency (Niță, 1998, p. 80). In order to truly choose, a clear knowledge is then needed, a comprehensive understanding of the variants from which to choose, a state of naturalness and active presence, that is, of decisional firmness and an undertaking of non- involvement of an external constricting factor, a compulsoriness which cannot be avoided or rejected. The ability of knowing is the defining trait for the superior monads, but spontaneity indicates the independence of these monads in relation to other external influences and constraints. Human freedom is not chaos, an existential and gnoseological indetermination, on the contrary, this freedom is only active in pre-established parameters through its creation and postulation in the system of preordained harmony. Divine predetermination founded on the grounds of absolute foreknowledge does not exclude, thus, free will, but frames it within some clearly established rules of functionality. The laws, the moral necessity, cannot, as such, be ignored or rejected, it is applied in the case of free will as well, this freedom being built on certain criteria which cannot be broken. Therefore, when it comes to free will, God does not act in a metaphysical necessity, but in a hypothetical one (Niță, 1998). The ethical responsibility of man is confirmed, as he is part of a universal mechanism of preordained harmony in which any choice determines positive or negative consequences. Antognazza (2015) said that

> „Leibniz draws a fine line between being 'limited' and being 'finite'. Strictly speaking, creatures for him are *limited* rather than *finite* since, through its confused perceptions, each individual substance involves the infinite. The crucial feature which seems to keep created substances from matching the "absolute infinity" of God is not, after all, indivisibility or simplicity but the lack of pure positivity which comes with any limitation. Only a being *beyond all determinations* but *eminently embracing all determinations* – or, as at one point Leibniz puts it, the hyper-categorematic infinite -- can enjoy the pure positivity of what is truly infinite while constituting the ontological grounding of all things (*omnia*)." (p. 20)

The contemporaneousness of the Leibnizian view on universal harmony. Conclusions

The view of the cosmic harmony, which man must be a part of and imitate, was an idea also proposed by other classic authors of the historical era of Leibniz. But through the system of preordained harmony and through

the introduction of the concepts of monad and monadic harmony, he succeeded in a more complex and exact rendering of this view of renaissance origins. Looking, after centuries, at its durability and capacity of transposition, an attentive resumption of the investigation of its conceptual, but also with an impact on the level of the entire social dynamic of humanity, consequences, is imposed (Copleston, 2011, p. 254). Being part of a century quite distant from our times, the Leibnizian idea that supported the existence of a universal harmony needs to be analyzed and updated more than ever.

In conclusion, the thesis according to which the universe functions as a system of harmony in which unity, multiplicity, coordination, difference, conjunction and disjunction all reunite and compensate each other, has been placed by Leibniz at the foundation of a vision of ł a world of peace and universal collaboration, in which nations would act in the likes of pieces of one mechanism that functions without the risks of self-destruction.

Once again, we appeal to Floridi's (2022) idea that

> "innovation and development must support both *Paideia* and *Nomos* to make us Socratically intelligent and Hobbesianly good. The tricky bit is to reach an equilibrium that is also *tolerant* of individual preferences and choices (Floridi, 2022). Which is a somewhat philosophical way of saying that society can hope to improve only if it invests in science and technology, to eliminate natural evil or translate it into a moral one, and in education and rules, to reduce moral evil, and perhaps even eliminate it one day, to make any negative impact of an act of God a thing of the past."

References

Antognazza, M.R. (2015). The Hypercategorematic Infinite. *The Leibniz Review*, *25*, 20. https://www.pdcnet.org/leibniz/free/25

Copleston, F. (2011). *Istoria filosofiei. Vol. IV. Raționaliștii. De la Descartes la Leibniz.* ALL Publishing House.

Deleuze, G. (1992). *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque.* University Of Minnesota Press.

Dumitrescu, M. (2012). Tema creației continue în Eseurile de teodicee ale lui Leibniz. *Logos, Universality, Mentality, Education, Novelty, Section: Philosophy and Humanistic Sciences,* I(1), 49-66.

Flonta, M. (1998). *Descartes și Leibniz. Ascensiunea și posteritatea raționalismului.* Universal Dalsi Publishing.

Floridi, L. (2022). How to Counter Moral Evil: *Paideia* and *Nomos*. *Philosophy & Technology, 35*, 18. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-022-00515-5

Graham, D. J. (2023) Nine insights from internet engineering that help us understand brain network communication. *Frontiers in Computer Science, 4*, 976801. https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomp.2022.976801

Hipólito, I. (2022). Cognition Without Neural Representation: Dynamics of a Complex System. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, 643276. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.643276

Kulstad, M., & Carlin, L. (2020). Leibniz's Philosophy of Mind. E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2020 Edition). Stanford Encyclopedia. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/leibniz-mind/

Leibniz, G. W. (1972). *Monadologia, Opere filozofice*, Vol. 1. Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică Publishing.

Leibniz, G. W. (1997). *Eseuri de teodicee*. Polirom Publishing.

Leibniz, G. W. (2001). *Scrieri filosofice*. ALL Publishing.

Leibniz, G. W. (2003). *Noi eseuri asupra intelectului omenesc*. All Educational Publishing.

Marquis, P. Papini, O., & Prade, H. (2014). Some Elements for a Prehistory of Artificial Intelligence in the Last Four Centuries. T. Schaub, et al. (Eds.), *Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence and Applications, 263,* (pp. 609-614). IOS Press Ebooks. https://doi.org/10.3233/978-1-61499-419-0-609

Mercer, C. (2001). *Leibniz's Metaphysics. Its Origins and Development*. Cambridge University Press.

Niță, A. (1998). Leibniz. *Serie monografică*. Paideia Publishing.

Parr, T., & Friston, K. J. (2018). The Anatomy of Inference: Generative Models and Brain Structure. *Frontiers in Computational Neuroscience, 12*, 90. https://doi.org/10.3389/fncom.2018.00090

Râmbu, N. (1997). *Studiu introductiv la Leibniz, G. W. Eseuri de teodicee*. Polirom Publishing.

Richards, B. A., & Lillicrap, T. P. (2022). The Brain-Computer Metaphor Debate Is Useless: A Matter of Semantics. *Frontiers in Computer Science, 4*, 810358. https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomp.2022.810358

Russell, B. [1992] (2005). *The Philosophy of Leibniz*. Routledge.

Safron, A. (2020) An Integrated World Modeling Theory (IWMT) of Consciousness: Combining Integrated Information and Global Neuronal Workspace Theories With the Free Energy Principle and Active Inference Framework; Toward Solving the Hard Problem and Characterizing Agentic Causation. *Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence, 3*, 30. https://doi.org/10.3389/frai.2020.00030

Safron, A. (2022). Integrated world modeling theory expanded: Implications for the future of consciousness. *Frontiers in Computational Neuroscience, 16*, 642397. https://doi.org/10.3389/fncom.2022.642397

Safron, A., Klimaj, V., & Hipólito, I. (2022). On the Importance of Being Flexible: Dynamic Brain Networks and Their Potential Functional Significances. *Frontiers in Systems Neuroscience, 15*, 688424. https://doi.org/10.3389/fnsys.2021.688424