

TWO NECESSITIES. Leibniz contrasts absolute necessity and hypothetical necessity. We may state the contrast thus: 193

- (1-1) a. A proposition P is absolutely necessary ('really, truly' necessary) if not- P leads to a contradiction.
- b. A proposition P is hypothetically necessary (and 'really' contingent) if not- P leads to a contradiction only when combined with some further non-trivial proposition R .

Example 1. Absolutely necessary propositions are, 'The sum of the angles of the triangle is 180° ', 'God exists'. Hypothetically necessary propositions are, 'SB is teaching metaphysics today', 'Napoleon existed', indeed, every other proposition true in our actual world.

This is meant to capture the thought that necessity is attached to mathematical/logical truths and divine existence, but that everything empirical is created by God and is off-limits to necessity. That's because God is not 'compelled' (how can He be?) to create the world and its contents, but chooses to create freely.

FREEDOM AND DETERMINISM. There is a further claim, too. Events in the actual world are contingent not simply because they are consequences of God's (free) choice. They are so also because their mutual dependence is not a logical truth: their negation (to speak in linguistic terms) is not resolved, at least by a finite mind, into a contradiction. This, Leibniz says, is a central characteristic of a voluntary, free action. 194

On the other hand: choices *are* determined ('certainly true', as he says). Not only God, but also a perfectly wise person will always choose the best. Less wise people will follow the strongest inclination (possibly a passion). In this way we reconcile freedom (which now means 'freedom from necessity') with determinism, the idea that every event has a 'determining reason'. 194

Leibniz then reassures us that determinism, strictly speaking, applies to our *present* choices. As for the future choices, they are to a very great extent up to use. That's because we can educate, habituate ourselves to be more or less attentive to certain thoughts and behaviours. 195

Question 2. How does this last claim hold up?

Remark 3. The passage 'Moreover [...] all the others' alludes to monadology, the more esoteric part of Leibniz' metaphysics that needn't detain us in this discussion of freedom.

FOREKNOWLEDGE. Leibniz then addresses foreknowledge: 'The present is pregnant with the future etc.' Everything in the world is interconnected. We can't discern these connections, including between the present and the future, simply because we are weak in reason and perception. So foreknowledge is a comparatively trivial implication of this metaphysical outlook. 195

Question 4. Would the possibility of foreknowledge threaten freedom, according to Leibniz?