

Phil 216, Spring 2013: Road Map to Leibniz

For purposes of this course, there are three main topic areas in Leibniz that I want you to know about. Each topic is discussed in many different places, so this road map will direct your attention to some of the main places to look.

First, here's a list the works I'll be referring to, listed alphabetically by title:

- D *Dialogue on Human Freedom and the Origin of Evil* (1695), PDF posted to the Assignments web page.¹ We may or may not get around to assigning the *Dialogue*, but it's a really interesting and short read.
- DM *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686), pp. 224-47. References are to numbered sections (e.g., DM 8 refers to section 8 of the Discourse, which starts on p. 228).
- M *Monadology* (1714), pp. 275-83. References are to the numbered paragraphs (e.g., M 11 refers to section 11 of the *Monadology*, on p. 11).
- PT *Primary Truths* (1689), pp. 265-8.
- NSN *A New System of Nature* (1695), pp. 269-74.

By the time we finish with Leibniz I want you to have read all of the above works (if assigned) all the way through. However, as we go along I will be focusing on these main topics and on the texts listed, in the following order (I mean: we will look at these *topics* in this order; we'll skip around some in the texts):

1. Leibniz's picture of the Universe, i.e., the existence and nature of monads:

Monads exist, are indivisible, don't interact, etc.: M 1-11; PT p. 267 (left column); NSN pp. 272 (3rd paragraph)-273.

We all obey internal programming, & our perceptions arise from it: M 11-18; DM 8-9, 13-14; PT (all; esp. 265-6).

Pre-established harmony of the universe (also called the "hypothesis of concomitance"): DM 14-15, 19, 22, 26, 32-33; NSN pp. 273-4; PT p. 267; M 48-55, 78-81.

That each monad is therefore a sort of mirror of the universe: DM 9, M 56-62.

2. Leibniz's notion of God, and what follows from it:

God's existence:

Causal arguments: M 31-39 (argument from sufficient explanation); NSN pp. 274 (coordination argument).

Ontological arguments: DM 23; M 40-45.

That this is the best possible world, even though there is evil in it: DM 1-7, 14; M 46, 51-55; PT p. 266 (4th paragraph); D (second half).

That this is an orderly world: DM 6, 7, 16.

3. Us & our freedom: D (the first part); DM 8, 13, 30; NSN pp. 273 (last paragraph)-274; PT p. 266.

¹ The *Dialogue* covers its two topics—human freedom, and the origin of evil—in order. Freedom is discussed from the beginning to "God is content with our good will when it is sincere and ardent" (p. 2). Evil is discussed from "This is very good advice" to the end.