How Did Leibniz's God Create the World?

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I show that Leibniz's account of divine concurrence is constrained in a surprising way by his commitment to the Principle of Sufficient Reason, where a sufficient reason for the existence of an entity or a state of affairs is understood to be the totality of requisites for its existence. I argue first that Leibniz endorses, in both his early and late metaphysics, the 'totality of requisites' conception of sufficient reason. I then show that this conception gives rise to a distinctive and underappreciated logical redundancy problem. Finally, I show that the logical redundancy problem can be sidestepped if we attribute to Leibniz the view that the states of any created substance are caused by God in a single act. On this view, God's concurrence with creaturely activity is irreducibly *plural*: the natural effects or states of any created substance are brought about together, as a collective. I show that there are both philosophical and textual grounds for attributing such a view to Leibniz.

Leibniz's doctrine concerning divine concurrence is central to his metaphysics. God, on Leibniz's view, chooses to create, sustain, and actively participate in the best of all possible worlds, where a possible world is a collection of possible substances.[1] While there has been much scholarly discussion concerning God's

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1. This standard account of creation in Leibniz is his 'Divine Choice Theory', so dubbed by Adams (1974). But Leibniz also has an alternative account: the doctrine of striving

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reasons for choosing to create one possible world over another, less attention has been paid to the question of *how*, and specifically *in how many acts*, God creates and sustains the world that he deems to be the best of all possible worlds.[2] Yet, as I will argue, an answer to this latter question falls out of Leibniz's commitment to the Principle of Sufficient Reason ('PSR'), where a 'sufficient reason' for Leibniz consists in the totality of requisites for existence. I will show that Leibniz's PSR commits him to the view that God creates and concurs with all states of any created substance in a *single act*.[3]

Like many other medieval and early modern philosophers, Leibniz provides an account of the relationship between divine and creaturely activity. Leibniz rejects *occasionalism*, the view according to which God is the only causal agent and created substances have no causal efficacy. He also rejects *mere conservationism*, according to which while both God and created substances are causally efficacious, God is only an indirect cause of a state of a created substance, in virtue of the fact that God merely conserves such substances and their causal powers in existence after creation.[4] Leibniz instead subscribes to *concurrentism*, the view

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possibles. On this alternative account, all possible substances strive for existence, and the collection of substances that 'wins' the battle for existence is actualized. Leibniz presents the striving possibles account primarily in his 1697 essay *On the Ultimate Origination of Things* (*De rerum originatione radicali*).

2. The question 'why does our world exist?' may be asked in a rational or a causal mode. When asked in the rational mode, the standard Leibnizian answer is that our world exists because it is the best of all possible worlds, and it is in God's nature to create the best world. But when asked in the causal mode, the answer is that our world exists because God created it. In the rational mode, the question is a demand for *reasons*, whereas in the causal mode, it is a demand for a *cause* of the world's existence. Both answers constitute sufficient reasons for the existence of the world, for Leibniz, in their respective modes. This paper concerns the question asked in the causal mode.

3. A similar view has also been defended by Whipple (2010), but on very different grounds. Whipple argues that at the 'deepest level of reality' God creates and conserves substances in a single act. Whipple's argument relies heavily on Leibniz's views on continuity (Whipple 2010: 869; Whipple 2011). My argument comes apart from Whipple's both in motivation and conclusion: I show that it is Leibniz's account of the PSR that commits him to the view that God creates and sustains the world in a single act, and I do not restrict the single-act account of divine action to only the deepest level of reality.

4. See, for example, Freddoso (1991) for a standard characterization of occasionalism and mere conservationism. As Freddoso (1991: 554) writes, according to occasionalism 'God alone causes effects in nature' and 'there is no creaturely or "secondary" causation in nature', whereas, according to mere conservationism, 'God contributes to the ordinary course of nature solely by creating and conserving natural substances and their accidents, including their active and passive causal powers. For their part, created substances are genuine secondary causes which can and do causally

on which God does not merely create and preserve created substances and their causal powers, but continually participates in the activity of such substances, so that natural effects are caused directly by both God and created substances.[5] Divine concurrence has been notoriously difficult to pin down as a position, for it walks a fine line between occasionalism and mere conservationism.[6] Yet, my goal in this paper is *not* to provide a complete account of Leibniz's concurrentism or to argue for its coherence. Instead, I will argue that Leibniz's commitments to the PSR, to his account of sufficient reason as a totality of requisites for existence, and to divine concurrence together motivate a commitment to the view that God creates and concurs with all states of any created substance in a *single act*, and so causes *plurally* all states of a created substance. Let us call this view *Plural Causation*.[7] I will show that while Plural Causation does not itself constitute an account of Leibniz's doctrine of divine concurrence, it nevertheless places a significant constraint on that account. Two caveats before I proceed. First, while my project is interpretive in that it seeks to uncover Leibniz's commitments, it is also in part reconstructive, for it is not primarily concerned with whether Leibniz himself was aware of his commitment to Plural Causation. Leibniz's stated views—and thus explicit commitments—enable us to infer Leibniz's other commitments, where the latter may be such that Leibniz was not aware of them, but which are nevertheless philosophically significant in their own right.[8] Second, my aim in the paper is not merely to show that Leibniz is committed to Plural Causation, but that the commitment to Plural Causation *flows from* Leibniz's conception of a sufficient reason as the totality of requisites for existence, along with his other commitments. This intimate connection between Leibniz's conception of a sufficient reason and Plural Causation has gone largely unnoticed in the literature.

In what follows, I first show that Leibniz's conception of a sufficient reason as the totality of requisites—a conception which Leibniz seems committed to during a period that ranges from his very early metaphysics (c. 1671) through to his mature metaphysics (early 1700s)—rules out an underappreciated variety of

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contribute to natural effects on their own, given only that God preserves them and their powers in existence. When such substances directly produce an effect, they alone are immediate causes of that effect, whereas God is merely an indirect or remote cause of the effect by virtue of His conserving action.'

5. Cf. Freddoso (1991: 555).

6. See Lee (2004) for an insightful and thorough exposition of this tension in Leibniz's views.

7. There is a limit case of Plural Causation: one can cause a collection plurally even if the collection has only a single member.

8. I do not mean to suggest that Leibniz was *not* aware of a commitment to Plural Causation, and as I will discuss later, there is some textual evidence to suggest that he was aware of it. But the success of my argument in this paper does not require that Leibniz himself *endorses* (rather than is simply committed to) Plural Causation.

redundancy: given Leibniz's 'totality of requisites' conception of sufficient reason, no state of a substance can have requisites that lie outside the totality that constitutes the sufficient reason for the state. Let us call this variety of redundancy 'logical redundancy'. Second, I show that a standard interpretation of Leibniz's continual creation doctrine—the doctrine whereby 'God continually produces all that is real in creatures'[9]—requires a view on which God stands in a distinct causal relation to each state of a substance. I will show further that this standard reading commits Leibniz to logical redundancy, and thus an inconsistent set of views. Third, I argue that reconstruing Leibniz's continual creation doctrine in terms of Plural Causation not only renders Leibniz consistent and gives us clear philosophical grounds to attribute such an account to Leibniz, but also that, to my knowledge, we have no textual evidence that tells against such an account, and at least some evidence that supports it.

The question of how Leibniz's account of sufficient reason as the totality of requisites rules out logical redundancy, and how this constrains his account of divine concurrence, has gone largely, if not entirely, unexamined. Yet, extant accounts of divine concurrence offer a variety of solutions to a seemingly related worry generated by apparent *causal* redundancy: on Leibniz's view, a natural effect is caused directly by both God and created substances, where God participates fully (and so apparently redundantly) in the activity of the substance.[10] However, I will argue that the worry concerning logical redundancy in Leibniz is distinct in kind from the worry raised by the possibility of causal redundancy, and demands a structurally different solution.

I proceed as follows. In Section 1, I discuss in detail Leibniz's conception of sufficient reason, on which a sufficient reason for the existence of something consists in the totality of its requisites. In Section 2, I show how Leibniz's commitments to the causal efficacy of substances, divine concurrence, and the 'totality of requisites' conception of sufficient reason commit him to logical redundancy if we assume that Leibniz endorses *Singular Causation*: the view that God participates in the activity of a substance through multiple causal acts, one for each natural effect or state of a created substance. In Section 3, I argue that we should eschew the assumption that Leibniz endorses Singular Causation in favor of the claim that he endorses Plural Causation on both philosophical grounds—for it resolves the apparent inconsistency in Leibniz's commitments—and textual

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9. G IV.588f, quoted from Adams (1994: 95).

10. Note that saying that God is an immediate sufficient cause of a state of a created substance does not, on its own, commit Leibniz to causal *overdetermination* as opposed to mere redundancy (on the assumption that the state is also immediately caused by the created substance). This is because if God ceased to concur with the created substance's activity, the substance would also cease to bring about any effects. Cf. Lin (2014: 182, note 26).

grounds. In Section 4, I discuss how logical redundancy can arise on prominent interpretations of divine concurrence that seem to address the causal redundancy worry, and thus highlight the need for a structurally distinctive solution to logical redundancy in the context of Leibniz's doctrine of divine concurrence. I conclude in Section 5.

Section 1. The Totality of Requisites

In an early argument Leibniz presents for the PSR—an argument he writes between 1671 and 1672—he characterizes the sufficient reason for the existence of a thing as the totality of its requisites. This argument goes as follows:[11]

> Proposition:
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> *Nothing is without a reason*, that is, whatever is has a sufficient reason.
> Definition 1. A sufficient reason is that by virtue of which, if it is posited, a thing is.
> Definition 2. A requisite is that by virtue of which, if it is not posited, a thing is not.
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> Demonstration:
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> [1] Whatever is has all its requisites
>   For if one is not posited, the thing does not exist (by def. 2)
> [2] If all the requisites are posited, the thing exists.
>   For if it does not exist, something will be lacking which keeps it from existing, that is, a requisite.
> [3] Therefore, all the requisites are a sufficient reason (by def. 1)
> [4] Therefore, whatever is has a sufficient reason. Q.E.D. (A VI.ii.483)

There is some ambiguity in the argument with respect to the notion of 'requisite': does Leibniz take a requisite to be a mere necessary condition, or a necessary condition that is explanatorily prior to that which it is a condition for? A mere necessary condition for the existence of something need not be explanatorily

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11. This argument, quoted from Della Rocca (2021: 1105–106) is from Leibniz's *Demontratio Propositionum Primarum* ('Demonstration of Primary Propositions') in the Akademie edition. The argument also occurs in *Confessio Philosophi* ('The Philosopher's Confession',33), in *De Existentia* (from 1676; De Summa Rerum, 110–13), and in Leibniz's last letter to Clarke (Letter V, paragraph 18, G VII.393; LC 60). Unlike Della Rocca, Adams (1994: 68) translates 'requisitum' as 'requirement'.

prior to it (for example, the existence of the *Mona Lisa* is a necessary condition for the existence of the *Mona Lisa*).[12]

As defined in the argument, a requisite is 'that by virtue of which, if it is not posited, a thing is not.' This definition does not involve explanatory priority. On the face of it, a requisite is thus a mere necessary condition. If a requisite is a mere necessary condition, the argument entails that no existing entity can fail to have a sufficient reason: any existing entity must have a sufficient reason for existing, for if it lacked a sufficient reason, it would lack a requisite for existing (by [2]), and thus not exist after all (by def. 2). If this argument goes through, then the PSR is not empirically falsifiable: one cannot show that the PSR is false by pointing to an entity and attempting to show that it lacks a sufficient reason for existence. But the argument also does not render the PSR *trivially* true: it does not follow merely from the definition of 'sufficient reason' that any existing entity has a sufficient reason; it follows from definitions 1 and 2, and claim [2].

However, if a requisite is a mere necessary condition, then the resulting PSR sits oddly with its reputation as a thesis that concerns explanation. A mere necessary condition need not be explanatory. If the status of the PSR as a thesis about explanation is to be maintained, then the notion of requisite must be restricted to just those requisites for the existence of a thing that are explanatorily prior to it. And indeed, in the 1680s, Leibniz defines a 'requisite' as follows: 'If A is not, then B is not, and if A is prior by nature to B, then A is a *requisitum*, B is a *requirens*.'[13] According to this definition, a requisite is a necessary condition that is 'prior by nature' to that which it is a requisite for.[14] But what does 'prior by nature' mean? Leibniz characterizes priority in nature in terms of both conceptual priority and priority in reason (or explanatory priority): A is prior in nature to B, if A contains the reason for B.[15] If Leibniz's notion of requisite picks out an *explanatorily prior*

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12. In his discussion of this early argument for the PSR, Della Rocca (2021) writes: 'As it stands, [2] may appear to be trivially true in a way that Leibniz certainly does not intend. Thus, *x*'s existence itself may seem to be a requisite of *x*. After all, *x*'s existence is such that if it is not given, then *x* does not exist.'

13. A VI.4.871, translation from Rutherford (2008).

14. See also Adams (1994: 117). In discussing the contrast between the sustaining and the requirement relations in Leibniz, Adams writes: 'The requirement relation, however, is asymmetrical, and is therefore defined with an additional proviso of natural priority: "A *requirement* [*requisitum*] is a sustainer that is naturally prior" (C 417).' See Di Bella (2005) for further discussion of Leibniz's notion of a requisite.

15. See, for example, A VI.4.181 (1679): 'Et proinde Natura prius est, cujus possibilitas facilius demonstrator, seu quod facilius intelligitur. Ex duobus statibus quorum alter alteri contradicit, is est tempore prior qui est prior natura.' In English: 'And that is prior by nature whose possibility is demonstrated more easily, or which is understood more easily. From two states of which one contradicts the other, that one is prior in time which is prior by nature.' And A VI.4.563 (1683–1685): 'Porro ex

necessary condition, then the argument becomes considerably weaker. Someone inclined to reject the PSR could simply insist that an entity could fail to exist even if all its explanatory requisites obtained, thereby rejecting [2], if some logical requisites did not obtain. The argument cannot be criticized in this way if a requisite is a mere necessary condition, for the totality of necessary conditions for something's existence is logically equivalent to a sufficient condition for its existence.[16] Likewise, one could argue that something can exist even if it has *no* explanatorily prior necessary conditions, and so no requisites of the relevant kind. Again, Leibniz's argument cannot be criticized in this way if a requisite is a mere necessary condition, for the existence of a thing entails that all the mere necessary conditions for its existence obtain. My interest, however, does not lie in defending this early argument for the PSR, but in the notion of sufficient reason that it employs. As per claim [3], the sufficient reason for the existence of an entity consists in 'all its requisites', or the totality of its requisites.[17]

There is a further ambiguity in Leibniz's claim that 'all the requisites are a sufficient reason' [3]. Let us say that a requisite for x is 'direct' just in case its being a requisite for x does not depend upon its being a requisite for some other requisite for x; a requisite for x that is not 'direct' is 'indirect'.[18] Now, by 'all the requisites', does Leibniz mean to capture *all* the requisites for the existence of an entity—its direct and indirect requisites—or simply the ones that are direct? Suppose, for example, that y is the sole direct requisite for x's existence. By Leibniz's conception of sufficient reason, if y exists then x exists. But does the sufficient reason for x also include the requisites for y? Leibniz's definition of a requisite as 'that by virtue of which, if it is not posited, a thing is not' does not seem to

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duobus statibus contradictoriis ejusdem rei, is prior tempore est, qui natura prior est, seu qui alterius rationem involvit, vel quod eodem redit, qui facilius intelligitur.' In English: 'Again, from two contradictory states of the same thing, that one is prior in time which is prior by nature or which involves the reason of the other, or, which comes to the same thing, which is understood more easily.' In these passages, Leibniz characterizes priority in time by priority in nature, which is in turn characterized by explanatory priority.

16. Adams (1994: 68), Della Rocca (2021: 1106) and Look (2011: 204) raise this worry for Leibniz's argument, but they (on my view, mistakenly) suppose that Leibniz is susceptible to this criticism even if a requisite is taken to be a mere necessary condition.

17. My use of the term 'totality' here and in the rest of the paper does not presuppose that a totality of requisites constitutes a set.

18. I use the terms 'direct' and 'indirect' instead of the more standard terms 'immediate' and 'mediate', because Leibniz uses the latter to mark a different distinction in type of requisite. For Leibniz, immediate requisites consist in parts, boundaries, and, more generally, those things which are 'in' a thing, whereas mediate requisites include causes and, more generally, requisites that must be investigated through reasoning (see A VI.4.627).

restrict the relevant requisites to just the direct ones. Indeed, if a requisite for *y* were not posited, then by Leibniz's definition, *y* would also not be posited, and so *x* would not exist. This suggests that for Leibniz, the sufficient reason for the existence of an entity includes its ultimate requisites (i.e., its most indirect requisites). For Leibniz, these ultimate requisites will be found in God, or perhaps more precisely, will consist in facts about God's existence and actions.

Leibniz alludes to a version of his early argument much later in his last letter to Clarke.[19] There Leibniz writes:

> These arguments are very obvious; and 'tis very strange to charge me with advancing my principle of the want of a sufficient reason, without any proof drawn either from the nature of things, or from the divine perfections. For the nature of things requires, that every event should have beforehand its proper conditions, requisites, and dispositions, the existence whereof makes the sufficient reason of such an event.[20]

The claim here is that the sufficient reason for an event consists in its requisites, which Leibniz here seems to run together with 'proper conditions' and 'dispositions'. Hence, there is reason to think that Leibniz's commitment to a view on which a sufficient reason for existence of an entity consists in the totality of requisites for its existence survived even in his mature work. In the next section, I argue that this conception of sufficient reason is logically inconsistent with a scenario on which there are explanatory conditions for the existence of a thing that do not belong to its sufficient reason. Yet, on the assumption that Leibniz endorses Singular Causation—the view on which God brings about each state of

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19. See also Adams (1994: 117).
20. Letter V, paragraph 18, G VII.393; LC 60. See Lodge (2018) for a helpful discussion of this passage. The adverb 'beforehand' (*prealablement*) might be taken to specify a temporal order that requires that requisites exist prior in time to that for which they are requisites. Yet, Leibniz's view that the defining or essential properties of a thing are among its requisites puts pressure on a temporal reading of 'beforehand': the defining or essential properties of a thing are not necessarily temporally prior to its existence. Cf. Adams (1994: 117): 'There are also logically necessary conditions, however, and it is clear that Leibniz thought of the defining or essential properties of a thing as among its requirements, its *requisita*. After all, they too are such that if they are not posited, the thing is not. 'A definition', Leibniz says, 'is nothing else than an enumeration of requirements' (A VI.iii.133; cf. A VI.iii.462f.573; C 60; G III.247; G VII.293). While Adams notes that this notion of a requirement is clearly present in the texts of 1676 and 1679, it is not obvious that Leibniz does away with it in his mature period. Thus, the term 'beforehand' should not, without further argument, be taken to imply temporal priority. Many thanks to an anonymous referee for raising this worry about how to construe Leibniz's use of 'beforehand'.

a substance through distinct acts—Leibniz is committed to just such a scenario. A primary task of the paper will be to elucidate, and ultimately resolve, this tension.

Section 2. The Trouble with Requisites

To see how Leibniz's metaphysics is inconsistent if he endorses Singular Causation, let us begin with the claim that if the sufficient reason for the existence of a thing consists in the totality of its requisites, then nothing can have more than one sufficient reason. This claim is true because there can be only one *totality* of requisites for the obtaining of any particular fact. Suppose *for reductio* that an entity had more than one sufficient reason for existence. Then given that a sufficient reason is a totality of requisites, it would have two totalities of requisites. But then neither 'totality' would qualify as a totality of requisites, since neither would include all the requisites. If the sufficient reason for the existence of the entity consists in the totality of requisites for its existence, it also follows that there cannot be a requisite that is not itself part of the sufficient reason. If there were, then there would be a requisite outside the totality of requisites, and so the totality would not be a genuine totality after all. The first claim in our argument is thus:

> **(1)** No entity can have a requisite for its existence that does not also belong to the sufficient reason for its existence.

As we saw earlier, on Leibniz's view, created substances are causally efficacious. Leibniz departs from Malebranche and other occasionalists in maintaining that created substances have causal powers of their own. Consider, for instance, the following passages:

> But if, indeed, the law God laid down left some trace of itself impressed on things, if by his command things were formed in such a way that they were rendered appropriate for fulfilling the will of the command then already we must admit that a certain efficacy has been placed in things, a form or a force, something like what we usually call by the name 'nature,' something from which the series of phenomena follow in accordance with the prescript of the first command.[21]

> I grant in some way…that God continually produces all that is real in creatures. But I hold that in doing it he also continually produces or conserves in us that energy or activity which according to me constitutes the nature

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21. G IV.507; AG 158–59.

of substance and the source of its modifications. And so I do not grant that God alone acts in substances, or alone causes their changes, and I believe that that would be to make the creatures totally futile and useless.[22]

In what way are substances causally efficacious? Leibniz denies that there is any causal interaction between substances. Each created substance is, for Leibniz, 'like a world apart, independent of all other things, except for God'.[23] The causal efficacy of created substances is thus restricted for Leibniz: such a substance is causally efficacious only to the extent that it causes its own future states. As Leibniz writes in the *Monadology* §22:[24] 'And since every present state of a simple substance is a natural consequence of its preceding state, the present is pregnant with the future'[25] For the purposes of my argument, I will focus on simple created substances, putting aside the question of what causation looks like, according to Leibniz, for complex created substances, such as bodies and aggregates.

There is some disagreement between those who think that, for Leibniz, the states of a created substance are caused by prior states of that same substance and those who think that, on Leibniz's view, the substance itself (rather than prior states of the substance) causes its future states.[26] Some of those who defend the former view think that Leibniz is speaking loosely when he says that a substance causes its states. As Jolley (1998: 605) writes: 'Although Leibniz may say that it is substances which produce their states, this is only a loose way of speaking; in strictness, it is perceptual states which causally produce other perceptual states of the same substance'. By contrast, some of those who defend the latter view claim that Leibniz is speaking loosely when he talks as if the states of a substance are efficiently caused by its prior states.[27] The argument of this paper is officially neutral on the question of what exactly Leibniz thinks causes the states of a created substance. In what follows, I will often talk as if the states of a substance are caused by preceding states of the substance, but nothing in my argument hangs on this choice: my argument goes through, *mutatis mutandis*, even if we suppose the opposing view to be true.

If a preceding state of a substance causes a future state of that substance, it is a requisite for that future state. As Leibniz says: 'A cause is a requisite according

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22. G IV.588f, quoted from Adams (1994: 95).
23. G IV.439–40; AG 47.
24. See also, for example, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, §14 (G IV.439–40; AG 47), *On the Ultimate Origination of Things* (G VII.302; AG 149), and *Principles of Nature and Grace, Based on Reason*, §8 (G VI.602; AG 210).
25. G VI.610; AG 216.
26. Cf. Jorati (2015: 393). For versions of the former view, see Sleigh (1990a), Kulstad (1993), Jolley (1998), Rutherford (2005; 2013), Carlin (2012), and Bolton (2013). For the latter view, see Bobro and Clatterbaugh (1996) and Jorati (2015).
27. See, for example, Jorati (2015: 394).

to that mode by which the thing is produced'.[28] The passage suggests that, for Leibniz, causes are requisites.[29] This gets us the second claim in our argument:

(2) Any state of a substance is a requisite for the existence of the state that follows it.

If we were to suppose that it is the substance (rather than one of its states) that brings about a subsequent state of the substance, than the substance itself would qualify as a requisite for the existence of its states.

As mentioned earlier, Leibniz holds that God acts on the world continuously, actively participating in bringing about the existence of each state of every substance that makes up the world, and that this action is consistent with the causal activity of substances. Let us say that a causal relation is direct just in case it is not indirect, and that *x* indirectly causes *z* just in case it causes *z by* causing *y*, which in turn causes *z*. The following passages support the view that Leibniz takes God to stand in a *direct* causal relation to every state of a substance. In the *New Essays*, Leibniz writes:

[God] operates immediately [opere immediatement] on all created things, continually producing them[30]

And in *Causa Dei* §11:

God's *concurrence* (even the ordinary, nonmiraculous concurrence) is at the same time immediate and special. It is *immediate* since the effect depends upon God not only for the reason that its cause originates in God, but also for this other reason, that God concurs no less nor more indirectly in producing this effect than in producing its cause.[31]

These passages, among others, support the view that God directly—rather than indirectly—causally contributes to every state of a created substance. On the

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28. A VI.4.629; Cf. Di Bella (2005: 78).
29. See also Adams (1994: 117): 'A "requirement," in the indicated sense, may be what we would ordinarily call a *cause*, or more precisely a *causally* necessary condition, particularly if it is what Leibniz calls a "requirement for existence" (A VI.iii.584.118). Requirements seem to function as causes in a proof of the principle of sufficient reason developed in the early 1670s (A VI.ii.483; iii.118) and repeated in 1716 in Leibniz's last letter to Samuel Clarke (LC V.18).'
30. *New Essays*, A vi.6.222. My use of the term 'directly' maps onto Leibniz's use of 'immediatement'. See also A vi.6.443; G IV.483; AG 143, and *Discourse on Metaphysics*, §14 (G IV.439–40; AG 46; AG §30; G IV.454; AG 61).
31. English translation by Schrecker (1965: 115).

assumption that Singular Causation is true, God's acting on the world directly and continuously means that God stands in a distinct (token) causal relation to every state of a substance that belongs to the collection of substances that make up the world. God thus concurs with a substance in *multiple acts*, one for each of the substance's states. I take acts to be individuated by their *relata*, such that God's bringing about a state *a* of a substance constitutes a distinct act from God's bringing about another state *b* of the substance, even if God acts in a temporally continuous way.[32] We are now in a position to affirm the third claim in our argument:

(3) God stands in a distinct and direct causal relation to each state of a substance.

But to what extent is the existence of each state of a substance brought about directly by God? Does God explain the existence of a state merely partially, thus leaving room for some causal work to be done by the substance or one of its preceding states? Let us begin with the possibility that God brings about only part of an effect (i.e., a state of a substance), leaving the remainder to be caused by the preceding state of the substance. Leibniz argues that such a view would lead to an unacceptable regress.[33] The problem arises because divine concurrence requires that created substances depend on God not only for their continued existence, but also for their actions.[34] God must *concur* with a substance's state bringing about another state. As Leibniz writes in *Causa Dei* §9:

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32. One might argue that God could act on a substance continuously, but nevertheless in a single act, and thus not stand in distinct causal relations to each state of a created substance. McDonough (2007) attributes such a view to both Suarez and Malebranche. He writes, for example: 'Suarez's considered position is that—miracles and such aside—conservation is a continued creation in the sense that God creates and conserves through a single continuous act that, as it were, begins at the moment a creature comes into existence *ex nihilo* and ceases the moment that it is annihilated' (2007: 47). However, as I am using the term 'act' (i.e., as individuated by its *relata*) it is not sufficient for something to be a single act that it is temporally continuous, for a temporally continuous act could involve a series of distinct *relata* (e.g., a series of states of a substance) that are such that God stands in an independent causal relation to each one separately. By contrast, Plural Causation involves a single act, since God stands in one causal relation to a collective or plurality of states.
33. Gr 275; A 6.4.1382. See also McDonough (2007: 44) for a reconstruction of Leibniz's argument.
34. Cf. Adams (1994: 97): 'What God (directly) produces, we may say, is not just the creature's nature or substantial form or *capacity* to produce, and not just the creature's nature *and* its affections and actions, but the creature's nature "operating" and thus *producing* its affections and actions.'

Actual beings depend upon God for their existence as well as for their actions, and depend not only upon his intellect but also upon his will. Their existence depends upon God, since all things have been freely created by God and are maintained in existence by him.

And in §10:

In their actions all things depend upon God, since God concurs in their actions in so far as these actions have some degree of perfection, which must always come from God.[35]

However, the claim that God concurs with the actions of a substance generates a regress if we suppose that God concurs by only *partially* bringing about a given state of a created substance, leaving the remainder to be caused by its preceding state. Given that God is involved in every action of a substance, God also concurs with the bringing about of the remainder, and likewise the bringing about of the remainder of the remainder, *ad infinitum*.[36] Thus, it cannot be that God only partially causes any state of a substance. Thus, insofar as God stands in a direct causal relation to each state of a substance, God *completely* brings about the existence of the state.[37] We can therefore conclude:

(4) God *completely* causes the existence of every state of a created substance.

We can now see how Leibniz's conception of a sufficient reason as the totality of requisites is in tension with some of Leibniz's other commitments if we suppose

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35. G VI.437–60; English translation by Schrecker (1965: 115), emphasis Leibniz's.
36. Leibniz writes: 'Qui bis rem dimidiam producit, integram producit; vel clarius qui rem dimidiam producit et residuae dimidiae rursus dimidiam, et residuae dimidiae a dimidia rursus dimidium in infinitum, is producit integram.' (Gr 275) In English: 'He who produces half the thing, and in turn, half of the remaining half, and, in turn, half of the remaining half of the preceding half – to infinity – produces the whole.' (Translation from McDonough (2007: 44).) As McDonough notes, it is not clear from Leibniz's notes on a conversation with Steno whether Leibniz is here making a new argument or is repeating an argument he got from Steno or someone else.
37. While McDonough takes the above regress argument as evidence that Leibniz does not endorse a model of concurrence whereby God causes a proper part of an effect, and the created substance (or its state) the remainder, Leibniz's argument nevertheless strongly implies that God's causal contribution is pervasive. As Bobro (2008: 319) puts it, 'God is immediately and directly causally present in every aspect of the universe, even in those effects normally attributed to created substances', and Lin (2014: 182, note 26) writes that '[t]he concurrentist denies partial causation because God is causally sufficient all by himself.'

that Leibniz endorses Singular Causation. God's activity, plus other requisites for that activity (such as God's existence) constitute a direct and complete cause of—and thus the totality of requisites for—the existence of each state of a created substance. Yet each state of a created substance (with the exception of its first state) is also brought about by a preceding state of the substance. We now have a contradiction: there is a requisite for the existence of a state of a substance that lies outside the totality of requisites for its existence.

We arrive at the same contradiction if we suppose that it is the substance itself, rather than one of its states, that causes a subsequent state of the substance. If a substance brings about one of its states, it is a requisite for that state. But on the assumption that Leibniz endorses Singular Causation, God also stands in a distinct causal relation to the state, and completely causally explains its existence. The state would then have a requisite that lies outside the totality of requisites for its existence, a totality that is exhausted by God's activity and other requisites for that activity.

Leibniz's metaphysics thus seems internally inconsistent, unless we do away with one or more central assumptions. All but one of the commitments that give rise to this inconsistency are backed by overwhelming textual evidence. Leibniz clearly subscribes to the PSR throughout his career, and as I have shown, to the conception of sufficient reason as the totality of requisites. Leibniz also clearly thinks that God both conserves created substances and directly concurs with their actions, at least in his mature years.[38] Finally, Leibniz clearly holds that created substances are causally efficacious. I thus propose that we give up the assumption that Leibniz endorses Singular Causation. We should instead allow that for Leibniz, the states of any given substance are caused *plurally*: God causes the existence of the plurality of all states of a substance directly in one act, and each state is thereby caused derivatively (though directly), as a member of the plurality that is caused. That is, we should attribute to Leibniz the thesis of Plural Causation.

In the next section I argue that we should attribute Plural Causation to Leibniz over Singular Causation. In the final section, I situate the worry about logical redundancy in the context of some prominent extant accounts of divine concurrence.

Section 3. Plural Causation

I argued at the beginning of Section 2 that Leibniz's conception of sufficient reason as the totality of requisites precludes (on logical grounds) both the

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38. Cf. Bobro (2008), who writes that Leibniz consistently endorsed concurrentism from at least 1686, when he wrote the *Discourse on Metaphysics*.

possibility that something has more than one sufficient reason for its existence and the possibility that there are requisites for its existence that lie outside the sufficient reason for its existence. Yet, if we suppose that Leibniz is committed to Singular Causation, then the existence of any state of a substance has logically redundant requisites: God is a complete and direct sufficient reason for its existence, but the preceding state of the substance also plays a role in bringing about its subsequent state and is thus a requisite for that state.

No clear textual or philosophical grounds suggest that Leibniz must endorse Singular Causation. Indeed, if anything, textual evidence seems to point in the other direction (even if not definitively). In a discussion of salvation in the *Theodicy*, Leibniz writes:

> God grants his sanction to this sequence only after having entered into all its detail, and thus pronounces nothing final as to those who shall be saved or damned without having pondered upon everything and compared it with other possible sequences. Thus God's pronouncement concerns the whole sequence at the same time; he simply decrees its existence. In order to save other men, or in a different way, he must needs choose an altogether different sequence, seeing that all is connected in each sequence. In this conception of the matter, which is that most worthy of the All-wise, all whose actions are connected together to the highest possible degree, there would be only one total decree, which is to create such a world. This total decree comprises equally all the particular decrees, without setting one of them before or after another.[39]

While the above passage seems to concern God's act of creation rather than his concurrence *per se*, it nevertheless suggests that God brings about the whole sequence or series of states of the world, and thus states of substances, through one act, a single pronouncement, where for God to make a pronouncement or decree something is for it to be done: there is no gap between God's pronouncement or decree and God's action. Moreover, if Leibniz subscribes to Plural Causation, then God plausibly both creates a substance and concurs with its states in a single act.

If Leibniz were committed to Singular Causation, then God would stand in a distinct and direct causal relation to each state of a substance. But then if God's act of causing a given state of a substance is also an act of decreeing its existence, then God's decrees—like the states of a substance—would be ordered: some decrees would come after other decrees. Yet, Leibniz writes (above) that

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39. T 84; H 168. (T = text of the *Theodicy* in G VI; cited by section number).

the 'total decree comprises equally all the particular decrees, without setting one of them before or after another.'[40]

If the states of a substance are caused plurally by God in one act, each one is caused *derivatively* by God: each state is brought about in virtue of the fact that it is a member of a plurality that is (non-derivatively) brought about by God. On this view, God does not stand in a distinct causal relation to each state of a substance but rather stands in a single causal relation to *them*, the plurality of states. He brings about their existence in a single act. Consider the following (imperfect) analogy. When I throw a snowball and it flies through the air, each water molecule that makes up the snowball also flies through the air; but only the snowball is *thrown*: I stand in the *throwing* relation only to the snowball. Any particular molecule is thrown in only a derivative sense, in virtue of being a part of the collection of all molecules that make up the snowball. Likewise, according to Plural Causation, God stands in an irreducible, non-derivative causal relation only to the plurality or collective of states of a substance, not to each individual state of a substance.

If we take Leibniz to endorse Plural Causation, we can make sense of Leibniz's claim in the above passage in the following way: God stands in a derivative causal relation to each state of a substance in virtue of non-derivatively, yet plurally causing the existence of all states of a substance in one act. These derivative causal relations correspond to particular decrees, where these decrees are on par with one another in terms of priority, in virtue of being derivative upon the total decree in the same way.

How might a commitment to Plural Causation resolve the tension between Leibniz's conception of sufficient reason as the totality of requisites and his commitments to divine concurrence and creaturely activity, and thereby sidestep logical redundancy? If the states of a substance are caused to exist plurally, then no state of the substance can be caused to exist unless they are *all* caused to exist (plurally). Thus, if a state of a substance is caused to exist plurally, a condition on its existence is that the other states of that substance also exist. However, this does not entail that all states of a substance must come into existence *at the same time* for any of them to exist. If it did, Leibniz could not endorse Plural Causation if we suppose that on his view, the future states of a substance do not *already* exist when the substance is created (even though the predicates corresponding to them are contained in the substance's notion or complete individual concept).[41] According to Plural Causation, it is the mere existence of all other states of a

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40. Additionally, as Whipple (2011) also notes, Leibniz's formulation of the continual creation doctrine in paragraph 385 of the *Theodicy*, where he affirms the continual creation doctrine in his own voice, does not refer to the creation of a successive series of instantaneous states.

41. By contrast, Whipple (2010) argues that finite substances are atemporal at 'the deepest level of Leibniz's ontology' (2010: 872). If Whipple is right, then it does not make

substance—each in its own time—that is required in order for a given state S to be caused plurally by God, and not their synchronous existence.

Yet not every necessary condition for the existence of a state of a substance is a *requisite* (in Leibniz's sense) for the existence of that state, for a necessary condition need not be explanatorily prior to the existence of the state. However, I contend that the existence of other states of a substance constitutes an explanatorily prior necessary condition for the existence of state S that belongs to the substance, for the existence of these other states *helps to make it the case* that S exists. To see why, recall that, for Leibniz, any requisite of a requisite for S's existence is itself a requisite for S. Now a requisite for S's existence is that God causes S. But, as per Plural Causation, God cannot cause S without also bringing about all other states of the created substance. And a requisite for God's bringing about all other states of the substance is that those states exist. The totality of requisites for God bringing about S therefore includes the existence of all other states of the substance. We are now in a position to see why there is no tension between Leibniz's conception of sufficient reason as the totality of requisites and his commitments to divine concurrence and creaturely activity, if we take Leibniz to endorse Plural Causation. Because the existence of every other state of the substance is a requisite for God's causing state S, the state of the substance that precedes S is not a requisite for S that lies outside the totality of requisites for God's causing S. There is thus no requisite that lies outside the totality of requisites for the existence of S.

Leibniz sometimes suggests that if a state is prior in nature, then it is prior in time.[42] On the face of it, this claim is in tension with Plural Causation. As we have seen, if Plural Causation is true, then the existence of a later state of a substance is a requisite for an earlier one, yet a requisite is prior in nature to that which it is a requisite for. However, once we attend to the distinction between causal and non-causal requisites in Leibniz, it becomes clear that only *causal* requisites must be prior in time to that which they are requisites for. Leibniz clearly endorses both causal and non-causal requisites.[43] A causal requisite of a state S, as opposed to a non-causal one, is an explanatorily and temporally prior, causal necessary condition. For Leibniz, temporal relations are posterior to causal relations.[44] By contrast,

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sense to draw a distinction between earlier and later states of a created substance at the level of simple substances in Leibniz's ontology.

42. See, for example, A VI.4.181 (1679) and A VI.4.563 (1683–1685) (text provided in note 11).

43. See, for example, Adams (1994: 117) for a helpful discussion of causal and non-causal requisites.

44. See, for example, A VI.iv.398. Leibniz writes: 'Ex ordine et consequentia simul sumtis, nascitur causa et effectus. Inde porro Mutatio, unde tempus, temporeque priora, posteriora et simul.' In English: 'From order and consequence taken together arises cause and effect. From them, in turn, comes change [*Mutatio*], and then time' Partial translation from Futch (2008: 108).

non-causal requisites need not track a temporal order, and so a non-causal requisite that obtains in the future may be a requisite for an entity that exists now.

Is a later state of a substance a non-causal requisite for an earlier one? I contend it is. While God is a causal requisite for any given state of a substance, other conditions, such as God's existence, God's causal powers, and God's bringing about the other states of the substance (including any later states) qualify as non-causal requisites for the given state, for even though they are requisites, they are not part of the *cause* that brings about the state.

Moreover, for Leibniz, the essential and defining properties of an entity count as its requisites.[45] But there is no requirement that the essential and defining properties of an entity be temporally prior to it (or involve other entities that are temporally prior to it). There is also, to my knowledge, no textual evidence that suggests that Leibniz thought that there could not be defining or essential properties of an entity that were temporally posterior to the existence of that entity (or involved entities that were temporally posterior).

I close this section by discussing two potential worries with attributing Plural Causation to Leibniz. First, Plural Causation seems to commit Leibniz to a violation of the asymmetry of explanation: if Plural Causation is true, then each state of substance is a requisite for every other state of that substance. Yet, it is not clear that this violation is of a problematic variety for Leibniz. First, insofar as there are textual and philosophical grounds to attribute Plural Causation to Leibniz, if Plural Causation entails a violation of the asymmetry of explanation in specific contexts, we should take Leibniz to endorse such violations in the relevant contexts in the absence of any evidence that suggests otherwise. Second, even if Leibniz cannot endorse a violation of asymmetry of the form where a is a sufficient reason (i.e., the totality of requisites) for b, while b is a sufficient reason for a, it is far from obvious that a requisite c could not figure as one of many requisites for d, while d figures as one of many requisites for c. Indeed, for Leibniz, each state of a substance can be known from other states of that substance, which suggests that c entails d, and vice versa.[46] If these entailments are also explanatory, such that any state of a substance at least partially explains why another state of that substance has the features it does, then c and d qualify as requisites for one another.

Second, one might worry that Plural Causation obliterates the causal power of creatures, because it renders what are for Leibniz real causal relations between the states of a substance into merely ideal causal relations.[47] As mentioned above, Leibniz rejects the view that there is real causation between substances but nevertheless endorses *intra*substantial causation: created substances

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45. Cf. Adams (1994: 117).
46. Cf. A VI.iv.180.
47. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this objection.

(and their states) are really causally efficacious. However, I contend that for this objection to get off the ground, it must be the case that the states of a created substance are causally relevant *only* as requisites of God's causal activity. However, Plural Causation does not entail that the states of created substances are deemed causally relevant *only as* requisites of God's causal activity. As requisites, states of substances play a dual role: on the one hand, they are non-causal requisites for God's causal activity; on the other hand, they are causal requisites of states that follow them and stand in real causal relations to those states. Nothing in Leibniz rules out the possibility of requisites playing this type of dual role.

Insofar as Plural Causation both resolves the apparent inconsistency in Leibniz's metaphysics discussed in Section 2 and enjoys some textual support, I contend that we should attribute it to Leibniz over Singular Causation. Plural Causation places a significant constraint on candidate accounts of Leibniz's concurrentism. In particular, it rules out any account on which God stands in a distinct non-derivative causal relation to every state of a created substance. Such accounts include some prominent interpretations of Leibniz's continual creation doctrine.[48] If Leibniz is taken to endorse Plural Causation, textual evidence that supports Leibniz's commitment to continual creation must be understood differently. Whipple (2010), who also endorses the view that Leibniz's God creates and sustains the world in a single act—albeit on very different grounds—argues that we should take Leibniz to affirm the continual creation doctrine at the level of appearances, but not at the level of deep metaphysical reality. Unlike Whipple, I have argued that we can make sense of how God creates and conserves in a single act even at the level of phenomena or appearances, where substances and their states are temporal. On such a view, God creates and sustains the world in a single act whose effects unfold over time.

Section 4. Logical Redundancy Revisited

I have been arguing that, on the assumption that Leibniz is committed to Singular Causation, his conception of sufficient reason as the totality of requisites is inconsistent with his doctrine of divine concurrence and commitment to creaturely activity. The inconsistency stems from the fact that the foregoing commitments entail an impermissible variety of logical redundancy: they entail that a state of a created substance has a requisite that lies outside the totality of its requisites. Yet, one may wonder whether extant accounts of divine concurrence already have the resources

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48. See, for example, Adams (1994) and Lee (2004). While these views differ with respect to several important issues, both take Leibniz to endorse a straightforward commitment to the continual creation doctrine.

to address the worry without committing Leibniz to Plural Causation. In what follows, I survey some prominent interpretations of Leibniz's doctrine of divine concurrence and show that it is not obvious that they have the resources—absent a commitment to Plural Causation—to rule out problematic logical redundancy.

At least one way of classifying accounts of divine concurrence is in terms of whether they attribute efficient or productive causal power to created substances. As Bobro (2021) notes, Leibniz uses the terms 'efficiently cause' and 'produce' synonymously, and so I will use them interchangeably here.[49] I will begin by discussing two candidate interpretations that attribute productive causal power to created substances. Sleigh (1990a) appeals to a distinction between a conservative cause and a productive cause, writing that 'even if God's will were the only real creative cause of the initial state of every substance and also the only real conservative cause of every non-initial state of every substance, still there may be room for creatures to function as real productive causes of non-initial states of substances.'[50] On such an interpretation, apparent causal redundancy is rendered innocuous, for the causes involved are distinct in kind and thus *non-competing*: one is conservative and the other productive. Bobro (2008) also defends a cooperative model of concurrence on which both God and created substances have efficient or productive causal power. As Bobro puts it, 'created substances possess genuine causal powers even while God's own causal power is flexed everywhere in creation, including that of created substances and their states.'[51] But how exactly do God and a created substance act together to bring about a natural effect? Bobro advocates a view on which God's activity with respect to the production of natural effects is to be understood as *emanatory*. As Bobro writes: 'We can attribute to Leibniz the following view: God's role in intrasubstantial causation, besides that which is implied by miraculous intervention, is an emanatory one. An emanative mode of causal activity is one in which the cause includes, in some "eminent" or higher form, what it gives to its effect, without losing the ability to produce the same kind of effect in the future.'[52] Importantly, God's emanative activity does not *exclude* the productive agency of created substances.[53] Thus, this interpretation too seems to render any causal redundancy unproblematic.

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49. Cf. *New Essays*, A vi.6.228: 'It must be admitted that in saying that "efficient cause" is what produces and "effect" is what is produced, you are merely dealing in synonyms'.
50. Sleigh (1990a: 174).
51. Bobro (2008: 320).
52. Bobro (2008: 323). See also Mercer (2001: 325; 366f).
53. As Bobro (2021) writes: 'An emanative mode of causal activity is one in which the case includes, in some "eminent" or higher form, what it gives to its effect, without losing the ability to produce the same kind of effect in the future. But a substance, undergoing this kind of intervention of causal process, need not lose its natural causal efficacy.

Consider also Sleigh (1990b)'s claim that the causal contribution of a created substance to its states consists in producing its imperfections, whereas God contributes by producing its perfections.[54] A significant virtue of Sleigh's claim is that it allows Leibniz to hold that only a created substance, and not God, is responsible for (at least some) sin and evil.[55] It thus permits Leibniz a response to the question of how creatures could be held responsible for sin even if God concurs with all creaturely activity. On Leibniz's view, a created substance (rather than God) can be held responsible for certain features of an effect. God concurs with all creaturely actions—including sinful ones—for to do otherwise would be to fail to discharge his duty to create, sustain, and actively participate in the best of all possible worlds.[56] But, for Leibniz, this concurrence does not make God responsible for sin.[57] God's causal activity does not exclude the causal work of a created substance, which plays a distinctive role in capturing the moral responsibility of creatures.

We are now in a position to see how a solution to the worry about *logical redundancy* does not obviously fall out of such interpretations of Leibniz's divine concurrence. The above interpretations of Leibniz's divine concurrence must attribute to Leibniz either the view that God is directly sufficient for bringing about any state of a created substance, or the view that God is not directly sufficient for bringing about any state of a created substance.[58] If God is directly sufficient, and thus constitutes the totality of requisites for any state of a created substance, the worry about logical redundancy emerges. If, on the other hand, God is not directly sufficient, one must explain *how* God and the (prior state of the) created substance are each insufficient to bring about the state of a created substance, but jointly sufficient, while showing that this joint causal contribution is not susceptible to the regress generated by supposing that God concurs by only partially bringing about a given state of a created substance, leaving the remainder to be caused by its preceding state (see Section 2 for a discussion of this regress). This explanatory demand generates a distinctive challenge that any adequate account of God's concurrence must satisfy.

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54. Cf. Sleigh (1990b: 183–85).
55. See Lee (2004) for a discussion of the drawbacks of Sleigh's account.
56. Cf. McDonough (2007: 45).
57. See, for example, McDonough (2007: 45): 'God could, of course, prevent creatures from sinning by withholding his causal assistance, but only at the cost of violating his perfect duty to create the best of all possible worlds; he would be like a soldier who prevents his friend from committing a minor offense at the cost of abandoning his own post in a time of danger.'
58. The qualification specified by 'directly' here is important, for it pulls apart the question of what constitutes the ultimate sufficient reason for any state of a substance from what constitutes the immediate or direct sufficient reason for it (see Section 1 for a characterization of what it means for a requisite—and by extension a totality of requisites—to be 'direct' in this context).

This challenge is distinctive, for it is not entailed by the need to avoid causal redundancy. In particular, God and the created substance could be non-competing (and so non-exclusive) causes for the state of the substance, even if God constitutes a direct *sufficient* cause for the state of the substance. Thus, a solution to the causal redundancy worry does not entail a solution to the logical redundancy worry, because a solution to the latter (but not the former) requires that facts about God alone (as opposed to facts about God *and* facts about the existence and activity of created substances or their states) do not exhaust the totality of requisites for the existence of a given state of a created substance.[59] Absent further argument, it is not clear that the views canvassed above can avoid logical redundancy.[60]

Not every reading of Leibniz's divine concurrence attributes productive or efficient causality to both God and created substance; some readings simply deny that created substances are efficient causes. I will discuss one such reading. Leibniz distinguishes between different types of causes and describes causation within substances both in terms of final causation and efficient causation. For Leibniz, an efficient cause is a productive cause, whereas the final cause is the end for which an event occurs.[61] Lee (2004) argues that created substances, for Leibniz, are not efficient causes, and that only God is capable of efficient causation. The causal force of created substances is thus non-productive: created substances contribute causally only as a formal or final cause.[62] It is not obvious that this interpretation of Leibniz's doctrine of divine concurrence succeeds in avoiding the logical redundancy worry, as it is not clear that formal and final causes would not qualify as requisites for a natural effect for Leibniz. If they do qualify as requisites, then logical redundancy cannot be avoided, for there would

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59. Even if (apparent) causal redundancy is rendered unproblematic by isolating distinctive and non-competing causal roles and types of cause, logical redundancy of the variety that has been my focus in this paper cannot be rendered innocuous in the same way: if facts about God's actions exhaust the sufficient reason for the state of any created substance, on pain of logical contradiction, there cannot be a requisite for the state outside of God's actions (since God's actions, as the sufficient reason, constitute the totality of requisites for the state). It does not help to say that the requisites in question are 'non-competing': for Leibniz a sufficient reason for the state of a created substance is a totality of *all* the state's requisites, there is simply no logical room for a requisite that lies outside that totality, even if that requisite is a different type of cause or otherwise special.

60. I do not mean to suggest that the views discussed above fail to avoid logical redundancy, but rather that they bear the burden of showing that they do avoid it, and that it does not suffice to show merely that they can avoid causal redundancy.

61. See Jorati (2015: 391) for a discussion of the distinction between efficient and final causation in Leibniz.

62. As Lee (2004: 223) writes: 'Rational determination or the force of creatures, then, on my account, turns out to be a fusion of two types of nonproductive causation: formal and final.'

be a requisite outside the totality of requisites (a totality exhausted by facts about God) for a natural effect.[63]

The problem of causal redundancy raised by Leibniz's doctrine of divine concurrence and addressed by prominent extant accounts of Leibniz's doctrine therefore comes apart from the problem of *logical* redundancy that has been the focus of the paper: a solution to the first problem is not automatically a solution to the second problem. I hope to have shown that an interpretation of divine concurrence that avoids logical redundancy requires a structurally different solution and that attributing Plural Causation to Leibniz offers a promising solution of the right kind.

Section 5. Concluding Remarks

I have argued that a consistent interpretation of Leibniz requires that we attribute to him the view that God causes the states of each substance plurally, i.e., that we take him to endorse Plural Causation. I have also shown that aside from philosophical considerations, there are textual reasons—even if non-conclusive—for attributing Plural Causation to Leibniz. Plural Causation does not provide an account of divine concurrence in Leibniz, but it does place a significant constraint on that account: it requires that any such account accommodate that, for Leibniz, God brings about the states of a substance plurally—in one act—rather than singularly in multiple distinct acts.

Leibniz's commitment to Plural Causation does not necessarily entail that *all* created substances are brought about by God in a single act as members of one collective or plurality. My argument shows at most that the states of any particular created substance are caused to exist plurally by God in a single act and that we should attribute this view to Leibniz in order to avoid logical inconsistency. However, Plural Causation is nevertheless consistent with the view that the states of all created substances for Leibniz are explained plurally as members of a single plurality.[64]

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63. A thorough discussion of Lee's fascinating and important interpretation goes beyond the scope of this paper. However, I will note here that *contra* Lee, many considerations support the view that there is efficient causation within created substances: final causation generally goes together with efficient causation, and the view that there is no efficient causation within created substances threatens to collapse into occasionalism, a view Leibniz clearly rejects. See, for example, Jorati (2015: 392).

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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