

Review of: "A Priori Arguments for Determinism/Universal Necessity – and the Leibnizian Theodicy"

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The author of this book arrives with a great expenditure of logical symbolism to conclude something that a large part of the critical literature had known for some time, at least since the time of Russell's valuable monograph on Leibniz, namely that the difference between the system of Leibniz and that of Spinoza is more an illusion and wishful thinking of the first of these two thinkers than an objective datum. If anything, it would be interesting to ask whether those aspects of Leibniz's position which logically lead it to outcomes similar to those of Spinoza are or are not essential to a theistic perspective: the author avoids explicitly asking the question and therefore seems after all to imply that the answer would be affirmative. But then theism would be refuted once and for all in favour of pantheism. In particular, it is a question of ascertaining whether (1) one can think of a freedom of choice – first of all divine, but then also human – which disregards the principle of sufficient reason without being arbitrary or irrational and whether (2) the very concept of "best of all possible worlds" is really plausible, since a finite perfection is something that by its nature can always be surpassed by a greater perfection.