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The Reception of the *Theodicy* in England*

By

LLOYD STRICKLAND (MANCHESTER)

Introduction

In Leibniz's lifetime, the reception of his *Theodicy* (1710) in France, Germany and the Netherlands was generally speaking a warm one. For example, the book was reviewed quite sympathetically in key journals such as *Nouvelles de la Republique des lettres*[1], *Mémoires pour l'histoire des sciences & des beaux-arts* [2], and *Acta Eruditorum*[3]. Moreover, the *Theodicy* garnered considerable praise from a number of learned figures across the continent,

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1* This paper was originally written for delivery at the *Caroline bringt Leibniz nach London* workshop of 24/25 July 2014, and benefitted greatly from the comments of those present. I would also like to thank Daniel J. Cook, Nora Gaedeke, Pauline Phemister, Julia Weckend, and the for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

Nouvelles de la Republique des lettres (September 1710), pp. 314-342.

2 *Mémoires pour l'histoire des sciences & des beaux-arts* (July 1713), pp. 1178-1199.

3 *Acta Eruditorum* (March 1711), 110-21, and (April 1711), pp. 159-168.

including Louis Bourguet[4], Nicolas Malebranche[5], and Bartholomew des Bosses[6], with the latter even preparing a Latin translation from the original French to ensure the book enjoyed an even wider reach. Meanwhile, the broadly positive response from members of the main religions of continental Europe, namely the Lutheran, Calvinist and Catholic, led Leibniz to exclaim in 1712 that the *Theodicy* "is accepted by theologians of the three religions of the empire, with greater applause than I was expecting"[7].

What, though, of its reception in England during Leibniz's lifetime? This is the question with which we shall be concerned in this paper. As we shall see, the response in England was mixed, for while the *Theodicy* received positive reports in the journals, the reaction from key individuals was more lukewarm. When assessing the reception of the

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4 See Bourguet to Leibniz, 20 October 1712, GP III 556.

5 See Malebranche to Leibniz, 14 December 1711, GP I 358-9.

6 See des Bosses to Leibniz, 6 January 1711, GP II 414f. English translation: *The Leibniz-Des Bosses Correspondence*, trans. and ed. B. C. Look and D. Rutherford (New Haven, 2007), 191.

7 Leibniz to Friedrich Wilhelm Bierling, 14 January 1712, GP VII, 503. See also Leibniz to Christoph Joachim Nicolai von Greiffencrantz, 2 May 1715, GP VI, 12-13, and Leibniz to Philip Muller, 1711, durchgesehene Transkription, Akademie-Ausgabe Leibniz-Edition, Leibniz-Archiv / Leibniz-Forschungsstelle Hannover (Änderungen bis zur endgültigen Edition möglich), no. 306, p. 389, http://www.gwlb.de/Leibniz/Leibnizarchiv/Veroeffentlichungen/Transkriptionen1711.pdf (accessed 16 October 2014).

Theodicy in England it is worth bearing in mind that there were factors present in England that were absent elsewhere in Europe. For example, the *Theodicy* contained a lengthy appendix ("Remarques sur le livre de l'Origine du mal, publié depuis peu en Angleterre") devoted to a critical examination of *De origine mali* (1702) by William King, the Archbishop of Dublin[8]. Leibniz was himself concerned that his criticisms of the work of a senior Anglican figure had the potential to harm the reception of the *Theodicy* in England[9]. Moreover, in the final years of his life, Leibniz's reputation in England was severely damaged by the priority dispute with Sir Isaac Newton over the invention of the calculus. This led in 1712 to Leibniz's condemnation as a plagiarist at the hands of Newton and the Royal Society (of which Newton was President), and thereafter to a bitter exchange of letters and pamphlets, the content and tone of which did little to help Leibniz's cause in England. Nor, arguably, did Leibniz's fractious exchanges with Newton's friend and associate, Samuel Clarke, in 1715 and 1716. (I note in passing that the *Theodicy* looms large over the Leibniz-Clarke

8 At the time of writing the appendix, Leibniz was apparently unaware of King's status within the Anglican Church, for upon the publication of the *Theodicy* he confided to one correspondent "I am afraid that it may fall into the hands of an Archbishop of the Anglican Church, namely Mr King, who published some years ago a book *De origine mali*. He was at that time Bishop of Derry, and I thought he still was, but I understand that he is now Archbishop of Dublin. I found myself more or less compelled to discuss his book and his opinion, and although I am not always of his mind, I hope I have written in a way that will not offend him." Leibniz to Charles Ancillon, 12 December 1710, LBr. 12, Bl. 85.

9 Shortly before the book's publication he expressed to Thomas Burnett his hope that the *Theodicy* "will not displease in England" especially on account of the appendix on *De origine mali*. See Leibniz to Burnett, 30 October 1710, Dutens VI:1, 285.

correspondence[10], for in the ten letters, five on each side, the *Theodicy* is explicitly mentioned nine times. On each occasion it is Leibniz who mentions it[11]; Clarke does not mention the book at all[12], though some of the references he makes in his letters reveal an acquaintance with it[13]).

But perhaps an even more important factor in the English reception of the *Theodicy* was that, while Leibniz could count on a number of influential supporters in France,

10 Although at the time Leibniz's principal disagreement with Newton and his followers was squarely mathematical, on account of the priority dispute over the calculus, it has been suggested that he deliberately reframed it as a debate about natural religion and the content of the *Theodicy* – topics he knew to be close to the heart of Caroline, Princess of Wales – in order to win Caroline's sympathies and support. See G. Brown: "'[...] et je serai tousjours la même pour vous': Personal, political, and the philosophical dimensions of the Leibniz-Caroline correspondence", in: *Leibniz and His Correspondents*, ed. P. Lodge (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 274-275. Following this line of thinking, it is possible that Leibniz's many references to the *Theodicy* in the letters to Clarke were aimed more at Caroline than they were at Clarke. Domenico Bertolini Meli seems to argue this way; see D. B. Meli: "Caroline, Leibniz, and Clarke", in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60:3 (1999), p. 481, and D. B. Meli: "Newton and the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence", in *The Cambridge Companion to Newton*, eds. I. B. Cohen and G. E. Smith (Cambridge, 2002), p. 459.

11 Leibniz refers to the *Theodicy* twice in his second letter to Clarke (GP VII 355, and 355-356), once in his fourth letter (GP VII 372) and six times in his fifth letter (GP VII 389, 390, 407, 409, 412, and 414).

12 Clarke's failure to mention the *Theodicy* throughout the correspondence did not escape Leibniz's attention; to one correspondent he complained that Clarke "has almost pretended to

Germany, and the Netherlands, the same was not true in England. This is clear from how and to whom the book was distributed there. Shortly before the publication of the *Theodicy* Leibniz took steps to ensure it would get into the hands of some of England's intelligentsia, by instructing the book's printer, Issac Troyel, to send copies to Thomas Burnett, John Toland, and Gilbert Burnet, the Bishop of Salisbury[14]. All were long-time acquaintances and correspondents of Leibniz's; however, neither Burnett nor Toland could be considered especially influential (indeed, Toland was largely marginalised in England for his perceived atheist views), and while Burnet surely was influential, his correspondence with Leibniz had ended four years earlier, in 1706, so his favours could scarcely be relied upon. Leibniz's list of English recipients of the *Theodicy* is in fact rather pitiable compared with his list of French recipients, which included royalty (the Dauphin, the Duke of Orleans), key journal editors (Abbé Bignon, Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle[15]), and philosophers (Nicolas Malebranche,

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be unaware of my *Theodicy*." Leibniz to Nicole Remond, 19 October 1716, GP III 678.

13 For example, in his first letter he refers to Leibniz's description of God as a "supra-mundane intelligence" (GP VII 354), which is to be found in *Theodicy* §217 (GP VI 248) but not in Leibniz's first letter of the debate, to which Clarke is responding.

14 See Leibniz to J. W. Schele (after 21 October 1710), durchgesehene Transkription, Akademie-Ausgabe Leibniz-Edition, Leibniz-Archiv / Leibniz-Forschungsstelle Hannover (Änderungen bis zur endgültigen Edition möglich), no. 258, p. 287, http://www.gwlb.de/Leibniz/Leibnizarchiv/Veroeffentlichungen/Transkriptionen1710.pdf (accessed 25 October 2014).

15 Editors of the *Journal des Sçavans* and l'Histoire de l'Académie des Sciences de Paris *respectively.*

Jacques LeLong[16]). No doubt in a concerted effort to ensure that the *Theodicy* reached at least some key English figures, Leibniz also asked Troyel to send six copies of the book to a friend, Johann Caspar von Bothmer, for him to distribute when he travelled to England[17]. This had a positive outcome in at least one case, for Bothmer gave one of his copies to John Sharp, the Archbishop of York, and Leibniz later discovered that Sharp had read the Latin appendix, the *Causa Dei*, and "approved it very much"[18]. Leibniz's lack of what might be called "a friend in high places," that is, a well-placed supporter in English circles who could assist him

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16 See Leibniz to C. R. Hasperg September 1711, durchgesehene Transkription, Akademie-Ausgabe Leibniz-Edition, Leibniz-Archiv / Leibniz-Forschungsstelle Hannover (Änderungen bis zur endgültigen Edition möglich), no. 217, p. 269, http://www.gwlb.de/Leibniz/Leibnizarchiv/Veroeffentlichungen/Transkriptionen1711.pdf (accessed 25 October 2014).

17 See Leibniz to Isaac Troyel, 12 December 1710, durchgesehene Transkription, Akademie-Ausgabe Leibniz-Edition, Leibniz-Archiv / Leibniz-Forschungsstelle Hannover (Änderungen bis zur endgültigen Edition möglich), no. 309, p. 357, http://www.gwlb.de/Leibniz/Leibnizarchiv/Veroeffentlichungen/Transkriptionen1710.pdf (accessed 25 October 2014).

18 Leibniz to Burnett, 18 October 1712, Dutens VI:1, 287/GP III 324. About a year later Leibniz informed Burnett that "The Archbishop of York has very much approved my book also," though it is unclear whether Sharp's approval now extended to the *Theodicy* as a whole (as Leibniz appears to suggest), or was still confined to the *Causa Dei*. Leibniz to Burnett, 23 August 1713, Dutens VI:1, 291/GP III 329.

with promoting and distributing the book, was to change following the Hanoverian succession, which led to one of his most enthusiastic supporters, Caroline of Ansbach, becoming the highest-ranking female royal in England following her investiture as Princess of Wales on 27 September 1714. By her own admission Caroline had read and approved the *Theodicy*[19], a fact of which Leibniz did not tire repeating to his correspondents[20]. She also shared Leibniz's desire that the book reach a wide audience and to that end made efforts to promulgate it herself, as we shall see later in the paper.

Another factor that likely impacted on the *Theodicy*'s reception in England was the lack of an English translation. Leibniz and Caroline were both aware of the need for one, and shared the desire to see an English translation made; this was in fact to become a recurring theme in their correspondence throughout 1715 and 1716. Much of their discussion concerned possible translators: Leibniz's first suggestion was Michel de la Roche[21], who was at the time editor of an English journal called *Memoirs of Literature*, about which I will have more to say in what follows. For her part, Caroline revealed that the Bishop of Lincoln had recommended Samuel Clarke as translator[22]; although the recommendation was made before Leibniz and Clarke began their correspondence, neither Caroline nor Leibniz was

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19 By her own admission; see for example Caroline to Leibniz, 30 December 1715/10 January 1716, Klopp XI, 72.

20 See for example Leibniz to Count Bonneval, 21 September 1714, Klopp XI, 14-15. For further examples, see note 67.

21 Leibniz to Caroline, 29 March 1715, Klopp XI, 36.

22 Caroline to Leibniz, 3/14 November 1715, Klopp XI, 50.

comfortable with the suggestion, because Clarke was a known associate and sympathiser of Newton, who was at that point highly antagonistic towards Leibniz because of the priority dispute. Both Leibniz and Caroline continued to discuss a possible English translation of the *Theodicy* until their correspondence was cut short by Leibniz's death in November 1716[23].

There were, then, numerous factors that may have affected the reception of the *Theodicy* in England during Leibniz's lifetime. Let us now examine this reception in greater detail. My thesis shall be the modest one mentioned earlier, that the reception of the *Theodicy* in England – from the time of its publication in 1710 to Leibniz's death in 1716 – was a mixed one; while it received positive reports in the journals, the reaction from key individuals

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23 And of course, despite Leibniz's wishes, and Caroline's efforts, an English translation of the *Theodicy* was not to happen in his lifetime, and indeed, it did not happen until 1951, almost 250 years after Leibniz's death. See *Theodicy*, trans. E. M. Huggard (London, 1951). It has been suggested that although Leibniz had a good working knowledge of English and was able to read English works, he was not sufficiently confident in his ability to write in the language (or therefore to translate into it himself). See N. Rescher: "Leibniz and the English language", in: *The Leibniz Review* 23 (2013), pp. 7-11. This accords with Leibniz's own assessment, as he explains to Thomas Burnett "I would like to have been capable of writing it [the *Theodicy*] in English, for the English are quite competent judges on these matters". Leibniz to Thomas Burnett, 30 October 1710, Dutens VI:1, 285/GP III 322. There are some suggestions from Leibniz's contemporaries that his knowledge of English may have been even better; for example, in his very first letter to Leibniz, John Toland writes "I take the liberty of writing to you in English, because you understand it as well as any liveing tongue besides yr own". Toland to Leibniz, 6 October 1708, LBr 933 Bl.12. But while Toland always wrote to Leibniz in English, Leibniz always replied in French.

was generally lukewarm. To show this, I shall focus first on the journal *Memoirs of Literature*, edited by Michel de la Roche, and second, on the report on the *Theodicy* prepared in 1715 by the Bishop of Bristol, George Smalridge.

Memoirs of Literature

We begin, then, with Michel de la Roche (c. 1680-1742), a French Huguenot who had settled in England at a young age. He became an Anglican in 1701 and went on to make his name as a journal editor, and it is in this role that he is of interest to us. In 1710 he started a journal entitled *Memoirs of Literature*, which ran from March 1710 to September 1714, and then again between January and April 1717[24]. It is perhaps best described as a broadsheet than a journal, as each issue was printed on a single quarto sheet, though I shall continue to refer to it as a journal[25]. Each issue contained the following kinds of content:

1. Reports of non-English books; sometimes descriptive, and sometimes consisting entirely or almost entirely of extracts, translated into English
2. Letters (some anonymous, some credited)
3. Eulogies of important figures in the Republic of Letters
4. Information from the Republic of Letters

24 In 1725 de la Roche relaunched the journal as the *New Memoirs of Literature*, which ran until December 1727. In 1730 he tried again, this time publishing under the title *A Literary Journal, or a Continuation of the Memoirs of Literature*; this came to an end in 1731.

25 De la Roche typically refers to each individual issue as a “sheet”.

5. Brief details of forthcoming books being published out of Europe's major cities.

(Each issue contained one or more of 1 – 4, while all issues ended with 5.)

The focus of the journal was extremely broad: one finds in it reports on books on all manner of subjects, such as mathematics, theology, philosophy, anatomy, astronomy, China, botany, diseases, geography, and so on, though there is a clear bias in favour of theology. When leafing through, we find that Leibniz is very well represented, in fact more so than any other thinker, which gives some indication of the regard in which he was held by de la Roche. To be more specific:

The very first issue of the *Memoirs*, dated 13 March 1710, contains, on the final page, a notice of Leibniz's forthcoming book. Under the heading "Amsterdam," de la Roche writes that "'Tis said that a Book of *M. Leibnitz*, entitled, *Essays concerning the Goodness of God, Free-Will*, *and the Origin of Evil*, is to be printed here"[26].

26 *Memoirs of Literature* I (13 March 1710), p. 4. This was not the earliest notice of the *Theodicy*, however, since the work had already been mentioned in the 17 February 1710 issue of the *Journal des Sçavans*, albeit again without mention of *Theodicy* as its title. The notice there reads: "A book should soon be printed which will have as its title, *Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man, & the Origin of Evil*. It is a work of Mr Leibniz, in which he undertakes to respond to the difficulties that Mr Bayle has formed on these three points of theology". *Journal des Sçavans* (17 February 1710), p. 111. While the *Memoirs of Literature* correctly stated that the book was to be published in Amsterdam, the *Journal des Sçavans* mentioned only Holland.

The fourth issue of the *Memoirs* is entirely devoted to a French book that de la Roche refers to as *A Dissertation concerning the History of Balaam*. The book itself consists of a number of essays, one by Leibniz on the history of Balaam (the Biblical prophet related in the book of Numbers), and the rest by Hermann von der Hardt on various other biblical figures. De la Roche provides English translations of Leibniz's essay and one of those by von der Hardt[27]. Although Leibniz is not mentioned by name as the author of the Balaam essay, de la Roche does state that it had been written by "a Gentleman of that Countrey [Germany], Famous for his Universal Knowledge"[28], which suggests he knew it was Leibniz.

The 43rd issue of the *Memoirs* is entirely devoted to the first volume of the *Miscellanea Berolinensia* (1710), the journal of the Berlin Academy of Sciences, which Leibniz had edited[29]. De la Roche gives a general overview of the contents of the journal, with most of the report focusing on Leibniz's many contributions, in particular his essay on the origin of languages, his essay on the origin of phosphorous, his letter to Spener about a crocodile fossil, and a number of essays on mathematical topics.

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27 Later issues of the journal contained translations of parts of two more of von der Hardt's essays from this book: translated extracts from an essay on the jawbone of an ass that Samson used to kill Philistines can be found in *Memoirs of Literature* VI (17 April 1710), pp. 23-24, while those from an essay on Elijah's ravens can be found in *Memoirs of Literature* VII (24 April 1710), pp. 25-26.

28 *Memoirs of Literature* IV (3 April 1710), p. 13.

29 *Memoirs of Literature* XLIII (1 January 1711), pp. 169-171.

Issue 60 is the first of four devoted to the *Theodicy*[30]. In this issue, de la Roche focuses on the preface to the *Theodicy*, and his report alternates between describing the contents of the book, and quoting long passages from it.

Issue 61 is the second of the four devoted to the *Theodicy*[31]. This time the focus is the preliminary discourse, and again the report contains both exposition and long quotations.

Issue 65 is the third of four devoted to the *Theodicy*[32]. The focus here is on Leibniz's explanations for the origin of evil.

Issue 66 is the fourth on the *Theodicy*[33]. In this issue, de la Roche paraphrases the mythical account of Pallas and Theodorus that closes the *Theodicy*[34].

It is worth noting that de la Roche's keenness to promote Leibniz's work did not stop at printing reports on and extracts from the *Theodicy*: in later issues of the *Memoirs of Literature* he included English translations of some letters exchanged between Leibniz and

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30 *Memoirs of Literature* LX (30 April 1711), pp. 237-239.

31 *Memoirs of Literature* LXI (7 May 1711), pp. 241-243.

32 *Memoirs of Literature* LXV (11 June 1711), pp. 257-259.

33 *Memoirs of Literature* LXV (18 June 1711), pp. 261-263.

34 In addition to the extracts from the *Theodicy* translated by de la Roche, further translated extracts were later made (this time by Samuel Clarke) for the appendix to *A Collection of Papers which Passed between the Late Learned Mr. Leibnitz, and Dr. Clarke, in the Years 1715 and 1716* (London, 1717), pp. 375-399.

Nikolaus Hartsoeker[35], an English translation of Leibniz's essay entitled "Philosophical reflections occasioned by some letters published at Trevoux in 1703", first published in the *Journal de Trévoux*[36], and a further short extract from the *Theodicy* on the subject of witchcraft[37]. De la Roche was clearly an admirer of Leibniz's: no other thinker was discussed so often in the *Memoirs*, or given as many column inches as he was.

35 *Memoirs of Literature* (2ed), 4 (1722), pp. 452-467 and 5 (1722), pp. 62-64. The letters in question had first been published in the *Memoires pour l'histoire des sciences & des beaux Arts* [a.k.a. *Journal de Trévoux*] 12 (1712), pp. 494-512, and pp. 676-679. In one of these letters Leibniz had attacked the notion of action at a distance that he attributed to Newtonians, and the publication of this letter in the *Memoirs* attracted the ire of Newton, who wrote a vindication of his position and sent it to de la Roche, requesting that it too be published in the *Memoirs*. It was not, however, published there. See Newton to the editor of the *Memoirs of Literature*, c. May 1712, in: I. Newton, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. A. Janiak (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 114-117.

36 *Memoirs of Literature* (2ed), 5 (1722), pp. 273-276.

37 *Memoirs of Literature* (2ed), 4 (1722), pp. 387-388.

It is clear that de la Roche had a high regard for the *Theodicy* in particular[38]. In the first of his four reports on the book he explains that it deals with some of the most important topics in philosophy and divinity, and was written by a man "eminently qualified" to treat of them[39]. (It is interesting to note that throughout the reports on the *Theodicy*, Leibniz's name is never mentioned; instead, de la Roche refers to the author as "Theodicaeus"[40]. However there

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38 Only Richard Simon's *Bibliotheque critique, ou recueil de diverses pieces critiques*, 4 vols. (Amsterdam 1708-1710) enjoyed a more extensive treatment, being the focus of no fewer than seven issues of the *Memoirs of Literature*, namely: XXXV (6 November 1710), pp. 137-40; XXXVI (13 November 1710), pp. 142-144; XXXVII (20 November 1710), pp. 145-148; XXXVIII (27 November 1710), pp. 149-152; LXII (14 May 1711), pp. 245-248; LXXIV (13 August 1711), pp. 293-296; and LXXXII (8 October 1711), pp. 325-328. But one should bear in mind that while there were four volumes of Simon's book, there was only one of the *Theodicy*.

39 *Memoirs of Literature* LX (30 April 1711), p. 237.

40 He was not the only reviewer to do this: Jacques Bernard referred to Leibniz as "Theodicée" throughout his review of the book in the *Nouvelles de la Republique des lettres*. However, in Bernard's case this appears to have been a case of mistaking the title of the book for the pseudonym of its author, for he writes: "The renowned author speaks so often of his other productions, to which he refers the reader, that one would have to be a foreigner in the Republic of Letters not to recognize who he is when one reads this new book. However, as he has not deemed it appropriate to put his name to it, and as he has adopted that of *Theodicée*, we shall call him by that name". *Nouvelles de la Republique des lettres* (September 1710), pp. 314-342, at p. 314. The second part of Bernard's review was published the following

is little doubt that he knew of Leibniz's authorship[41]). In the third report, de la Roche outlines the long-standing difficulties about the origin of evil which Leibniz tackles in the *Theodicy*, and informs the reader that Leibniz, "far from being afraid of sinking under the Weight of those Difficulties, discovers a sort of Confidence not unbecoming so great a Philosopher" in framing his answer[42]. He goes on to praise Leibniz's reconciliation of human freedom and

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month: (October 1710), pp. 363-396.

41 Quite why de la Roche credited the *Theodicy* to Theodicaeus is something of a mystery. It is certainly true that the first edition of the *Theodicy* did not carry Leibniz's name, but it is scarcely credible that de la Roche did not know that Leibniz was its author. As already noted, the very first issue of the *Memoirs of Literature* had carried an announcement of Leibniz's book, credited to Leibniz; moreover, in the first report of the book from issue 60, de la Roche describes the *Theodicy*'s author thus: "*Theodicaeus*, tho' a Lay-man, is well skill'd in Divinity. He is an Excellent Philosopher, a Mathematician of the first Rank, a good Philologer, well vers'd in History and the Learned Languages; in a word, there is hardly any Man of a more Solid and Universal Learning". *Memoirs of Literature* LX (30 April 1711), p. 237. It is scarcely credible that de la Roche would have offered such a detailed description – which quite obviously picks out Leibniz – if he had not known who the author was. In all likelihood, de la Roche knew all along that Leibniz was the author of the *Theodicy*, but because the book was published anonymously he decided not to reveal the author's identity in his reports on it, even though he had to all intents and purposes already done so many months earlier when announcing the forthcoming appearance of the book. In any case, when the first run of issues of the *Memoirs of Literature* was subsequently reprinted in 1722, de la Roche replaced all references to "Theodicaeus" with either Leibniz's name, or "the author".

God's foreknowledge[43]. The fourth report begins with praise about the clarity of Leibniz's explanations, and his ability to express himself in a popular manner[44]. There is in the whole series of reports on the *Theodicy* just a single moment when de la Roche indicates possible disagreement: at the end of the third report he says that Leibniz's treatment of the topics of Election and Reprobation "perhaps will not appear so satisfactory as several others"[45], though no reason for this apparent disapproval is given.

One can only imagine that Leibniz would have been thrilled with the reports of his book in the *Memoirs*. Unfortunately, however, his knowledge of them was very much imperfect. It was only in late 1712 that Leibniz became aware that the *Memoirs* had included reports on the *Theodicy*, after having been informed of it in person by Samuel Urlsperger, a Lutheran preacher who had spent time in London. Later, in January 1713, and at Leibniz's request[46], Urlsperger copied out part of the first report on the *Theodicy* (from issue 60 of the *Memoirs*[47]). While this would have given him some idea of what the journal had done, as far

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42 *Memoirs of Literature* LXV (11 June 1711), p. 257.

43 *Memoirs of Literature* LXV (11 June 1711), p. 259.

44 *Memoirs of Literature* LXV (18 June 1711), p. 261.

45 *Memoirs of Literature* LXV (11 June 1711), p. 259.

46 See Samuel Urlsperger to Leibniz, 4 January 1713, LBr 948 Bl. 1-2. I would like to thank Julia Weckend for transcribing and translating Urlsperger's letter for me.

47 See Samuel Urlsperger to Leibniz, 4 January 1713, LBr 948 Bl. 3-4.

as I can tell Leibniz did not get to see any of the issues of the *Memoirs of Literature*, and so was almost certainly unaware of the extent of the attention he had received in it, as well as the extent of de la Roche's admiration of him[48].

It happens that the *Memoirs of Literature* also provided the occasional cause for Leibniz's initial desire to have the *Theodicy* translated into English. To understand this, we need to consider issue 61 of the journal, and specifically de la Roche's quotation of §18 of the Preliminary Discourse to Leibniz's *Theodicy*:

"*Theodicaeus* informs us, that the Lutherans 'do not approve the Doctrine of Consubstantiation or Impanation, and that it cannot be ascribed to them, but by those who are not well acquainted with their Opinion: For they do not admit the Inclusion of the Body of Christ in the Bread, nor any Union between both, but only a Concomitancy, whereby those Two substances are received at the same time'"[49].

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48 Though Leibniz was at least informed that de la Roche was an admirer. For example, Brandshagen advised him that "Mons. de la Roche is the gentlemen who writes the Memoirs of Lithiature, and who has a great veneration for your Excellency". Elisabeth Brandshagen to Leibniz, 18 April 1714, durchgesehene Transkription, Akademie-Ausgabe Leibniz-Edition, Leibniz-Archiv / Leibniz-Forschungsstelle Hannover (Änderungen bis zur endgültigen Edition möglich), no. 137, p. 164, http://www.gwlb.de/Leibniz/Leibnizarchiv/Veroeffentlichungen/Transkriptionen1714.pdf (accessed 25 October 2014).

49 *Memoirs of Literature* LXI (7 May 1711), p. 242. I here give the passage following de la Roche's own translation. The original passage from the *Theodicy* can be found GP VI, 60-61.

Leibniz was made aware of this passage by Urlsperger and became concerned that the Anglican attacks on the Lutheran doctrine of the Eucharist were politically motivated, being undertaken by those opposed to the Hanoverian succession[50]. A passage from Leibniz's letter to Thomas Burnett of 18 October 1712 is very instructive and worth quoting at length:

"A young German theologian who returned from England told me that the author of *Memoirs of Literature* has made a review of my *Theodicy*, and very aptly remarked, among other things, that I have corrected the mistake that the (ill-informed) Reformers ordinarily make about those of the Augsburg Confession, in attributing to them a *consubstantiation* of terrestrial symbols with the body of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, or rather an *impanation*; whereas I made it clear that our theologians require only a *comperception*, such that when one receives a terrestrial thing, one receives the celestial at the same time, without any inclusion of the body of Jesus Christ in the bread. The same young theologian told me that some of your Anglican Church objected to him that we have an *impanation* and *consubstantiation*, which is scarcely better than the transubstantiation of the Papists. But he referred them to my book and to the *Memoirs of Literature*. I think that this accusation presently being made against our side comes from the bad intention of those who favour the Papists and the Pretender, and who would like to blacken our name. This is why it would perhaps be good for my book to be translated into English[51]".

50 Leibniz was apparently unaware that the same passage from the *Theodicy* was quoted again in a later issue of the *Memoirs of Literature*. In 1713, de la Roche included a report of a book entitled *Remarks upon a late Discourse of Free-Thinking*, which as its title suggests was a response to Anthony Collins' *A Discourse of Free-Thinking*. In the course of his report, de la Roche quoted a short passage from Collins about the Lutheran doctrine of the Eucharist: "The *Lutheran Priests* ... contrary to the Testimony of Mens Senses, make their Followers believe, that the Body and Blood of Christ are superadded to the Bread and Wine". (A. Collins, *A Discourse of Free-Thinking* (London, 1713), pp. 24-25.) Immediately after quoting that, de la Roche reminded his readers of a passage from §18 of the Preliminary Discourse to Leibniz's *Theodicy* that he had quoted in issue 61, before proceeding to repeat it verbatim. See *Memoirs of Literature* (2ed) 6 (1722), pp. 182-183.

51 Leibniz to Thomas Burnett, 18 October 1712, Dutens VI:1, 286-287.

An English translation of the *Theodicy* was not the only proposal Leibniz put forward for defending the intelligibility of the Lutheran position on the Eucharist (and thereby shoring up the Hanoverian succession). In a letter to Sophie written 4 March 1713, he explains that a passage from the *Theodicy* was quoted in the *Memoirs of Literature* to clear up the confusion surrounding the Lutheran doctrine on the Eucharist, and then makes the following recommendation:

"It will perhaps be fitting if a theologian of ours puts together a small work in order to justify my explanation, and to show through passages from our most renowned theologians that we have always rejected this doctrine of impanation, or consubstantiation[52]".

Leibniz goes on to recommend the superintendent of Harburg, Heinrich Ludolf Benthem, for the task ("because he knows the English"[53]), though like so many of Leibniz's plans it appears it was never carried out. Nevertheless, two years later Leibniz effectively completed the task himself, in a pamphlet called *Anti-Jacobite*, which he published anonymously in 1715[54]. The aim of the pamphlet was to defend the Hanoverian succession

52 Leibniz to Sophie, 4 March 1713, LBr 948 Bl. 5.

53 Leibniz to Sophie, 4 March 1713, LBr 948 Bl. 5.

54 [G. W. Leibniz]: *Anti-Jacobite ou Faussetés de l'Avis aux proprietaires anglois* ([Hanover], 1715). It is reprinted in Dutens V, 575-604. As the pamphlet was published anonymously, Leibniz responded with calculated bewilderment to those who suspected it to be his work. For example, he writes one correspondent "I am astonished that the *Anti-Jacobite*, which was not published at Hanover, has been attributed to me." Leibniz to Johann

against various possible Jacobite objections, one of which was that George I, as a Lutheran, would hold a very different view of the Eucharist than would an Anglican. In the *Anti-Jacobite* pamphlet Leibniz responded thus: "One ought to be aware that the theologians of the Augsburg Confession reject – openly and in express terms – any impanation and any transubstantiation of the body and blood of Jesus Christ[55]". To support this claim, the Anti-Jacobite pamphlet urged the reader to consult an issue of the *Memoirs of Literature*, namely the one that contained the extract from the *Theodicy* on this subject[56]. So in the end Leibniz surreptitiously used his own work as the authority on the Lutheran doctrine of the Eucharist rather than that of Lutheran theologians!

By way of a slight digression, it is worth noting that Leibniz's perceived need to defend the Hanoverian succession even after George I had taken the throne may go some way towards explaining why he came to propose an English translation of the *Theodicy* to

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Philip Schmid, 4 July 1715, Dutens V, 532. According to Dutens, however, there is little doubt about Leibniz's authorship. See also N. Harding: *Hanover and the British Empire, 1700-1837* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 50f.

55 *Anti-Jacobite*, Dutens V, 594.

56 Or at least, that presumably was his aim. If so, Leibniz's reference was wrong. He wrote: "For clarification on this, one has only to see *the Memoirs of Literature* of Mr de la Roche, vol. I num. LX page 237." *Anti-Jacobite*, Dutens V, 594. This in fact points the reader to the first report of the *Theodicy* in the *Memoirs of Literature*, whereas the material about the Lutheran doctrine of the Eucharist is to be found in the second report, that is, issue LXI (7 May 1711), p. 242.

Caroline[57]. It is notable that Leibniz's first thought as a translator is de la Roche. He writes Caroline on 29 March 1715:

"To translate my book into English, I think Mr de la Roche would be appropriate. He is a Minister, a refugee, who has put together in England a kind of journal entitled *Memoirs of Literature*. It is true that I would prefer an Anglican theologian to undertake the translation[58]".

The suggestion is a shrewd one, since an Anglican theologian as translator would effectively suggest Anglican approval of the work[59]. However the wish is not repeated in the

57 It is also possible that Leibniz had a less honourable motive for desiring the translation made. By his own admission it is clear that he desired the position of court historiographer in England in order to boost – in the midst of the priority dispute – his own honour along with that of Hanover and Germany, and in order that he might be perceived to be Newton's equal. See Leibniz to Caroline, 10 May 1715, Klopp XI, 38. It would no doubt be possible to build a narrative in which his stated desire over the last two years of his life for an English translation of the *Theodicy* was motivated by similar aims, especially since the plan was to have it dedicated to Caroline, who was at that time the highest ranking female royal in Britain. But I make no such claim here.

58 Leibniz to Caroline, 29 March 1715, Klopp XI, 36.

59 It is not entirely clear from Leibniz's remark whether he takes de la Roche to be suitable as translator because he is an Anglican theologian, or whether he thinks an Anglican theologian would be preferable to de la Roche. I am inclined to the former interpretation (since de la Roche certainly was an Anglican, and Leibniz clearly thought he was a Minister, even though he was not); Gregory Brown appears to endorse the latter; see his "'[...] et je

subsequent discussions between Caroline and Leibniz about the possible translation of the *Theodicy*, nor indeed is de la Roche's name, though Leibniz evidently kept him in mind, since in December 1715 he tells another correspondent that de la Roche is still his first choice as translator, so long as his English is up to the task[60].

To return to the thread of the discussion: it was suggested earlier that the English journal reports on the *Theodicy* were very positive, and we have seen that this was certainly the case with the *Memoirs of Literature*. As it happens, in England at the time this was the only journal that would have concerned itself with the *Theodicy*. Of the other journals, the *Philosophical Transactions* was concerned with natural philosophy, which is not the subject matter of the *Theodicy*, and *The Spectator* didn't include reviews of books. So the *Theodicy* got about as much attention (and by extension, positive attention) from the English journals as it could have done.

In addition to receiving positive write-ups in journals, Leibniz clearly wanted the *Theodicy* to be accepted and admired by Anglican churchmen and other notable figures in England. He was even active in getting copies of the book to them: we have already noted that he had Bothmer take copies of the *Theodicy* with him to England, to distribute to key figures. Leibniz's efforts paid off, to some extent at least. Although some of those from

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serai tousjours la même pour vous'", p. 273.

60 "I do not know whether the Frenchman Mr de la Roche (who has written the *Memoirs of Literature* in English) writes English well enough in the judgement of connoisseurs for the task [of translation] to be entrusted to him. If he does, I think he would be the man to take it on". Leibniz to Nicole Remond, 6 December 1715, Dutens III, 449. Leibniz goes on to suggest the theologian and linguist William Wotton (1666-1727) as a possible alternative.

whom he desired feedback, such as Gilbert Burnet[61], and the philosopher Catharine Trotter[62], appear not to have provided any, nevertheless, as we have already seen, he was made aware in 1712 that the Archbishop of York, John Sharp, had formed a favourable opinion of the book, or at least of the appendix, the *Causa Dei*. And in the last year of his life Leibniz was also informed that the Bishop of Lincoln, William Wake, admired the book[63]. But as far as one can tell, neither of these divines made any kind of in-depth study of the book, or produced written comments on it, which is ultimately, one feels, what Leibniz was hoping for. And ironically, the one divine that *did* go to the trouble of making written comments on the book, namely George Smalridge, the Bishop of Bristol, was also the most critical. It is to him that we now turn.

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61 See Leibniz to Burnett, 18 October 1712, Dutens VI:1, 287/GP III, 324.

62 Leibniz does not mention Trotter by name. Instead he writes: "This young lady, whose *Apology for Mr Locke* you have mentioned to me, would also be in a very good position to form a judgement of it [sc. the *Theodicy*], if she understands French". Leibniz to Burnett, 30 October 1710, Dutens VI:1, 285/GP III 322. Leibniz is referring here to Trotter's *A Defence of Mr. Lock's Essay of Human Understanding* (London, 1702).

63 See Caroline to Leibniz, 30 December 1715/10 January 1716, Klopp XI, 72, and Caroline to Leibniz 15/26 June 1716, Klopp XI, 115. Wake became Archbishop of Canterbury in December 1715. There was little direct communication between Leibniz and Wake, just a single letter written by Leibniz shortly before his death, and the *Theodicy* is not mentioned in it. See Leibniz to Wake, 16 October 1716, Göttingen StUB Ms.Phil. 138 Bl. 110-111.

Bishop of Bristol

There appears to have been no direct communication between Smalridge and Leibniz. Smalridge's report on the *Theodicy* was sent not to Leibniz but to Caroline, in a letter of 4 March 1715. At the start of his letter, Smalridge outlines the circumstances that led him to write it. Evidently Caroline had given Smalridge a copy of the *Theodicy* while he was in London, and she had asked him for his views on it. Shortly after he returned to his home in Oxford, Smalridge obliged with a letter containing his opinion of Leibniz's book.[64] It is also clear that Caroline forwarded Smalridge's letter on to Leibniz, because he responded to it in a letter to her of 29 March 1715[65]. In what follows we shall look at Smalridge's letter in some detail, as well as Leibniz's response to it.

Although Smalridge does offer some praise for the *Theodicy*, as we shall see, it is rather faint and guarded, and much of his letter is devoted to criticisms, though it is notable that his criticisms are not so much about the book's philosophical or theological content as about its stylistic features[66]. In his letter, Smalridge notes early on that Caroline herself has complained that the *Theodicy* is obscure (and it also seems that she had not been shy about

64 This letter is published for the first time in an appendix to this paper.

65 Leibniz's letter of 29 March 1715 can be found in Klopp XI, 35-36. However, enclosed with the letter was a separate appendix containing a point-by-point rebuttal of Smalridge's criticisms; this is not published in Klopp.

66 It might be wondered whether Smalridge's negative verdict of the *Theodicy* may have been motivated, at least in part, by the priority dispute, which did wonders to blacken Leibniz's name in England, but I have found no evidence to suppose that it was.

who she told, as Smalridge claims to have heard this from Lady Nottingham[67]). When writing his own opinion on the *Theodicy*, Smalridge may well have been consciously or unconsciously guided by what he took to be Caroline's view; certainly of the six negative comments Smalridge goes on to make in his letter, five seem intended to support Caroline's assessment that the book is obscure, with only one making a different point.

Smalridge's first complaint is that in the *Theodicy* Leibniz uses a great many Scholastic terms, such as absolute and hypothetical necessity, and the consequent and antecedent will of God. Such terms, Smalridge claims, are "mere jargon, empty words without any meaning, and utterly unintelligible"[68].

The second complaint is that Leibniz "hath also inserted several citations, from Greek & Latin authors, which he hath not translated into the language in which he writes, & which therefore a reader, who is not acquainted with Greek & Latin, can make nothing of"[69].

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67 It is not unreasonable to suppose that Leibniz may have been surprised – and perhaps hurt – to hear that Caroline found the *Theodicy* obscure. He was often keen to inform correspondents that Caroline had read the *Theodicy* repeatedly, and had approved it. It is notable that Leibniz continued to make these claims to correspondents even after learning that Caroline found the *Theodicy* obscure. See for example Leibniz to Bourguet, 3 April 1716, GP III 593: "You are right to think, Sir, that Madam the Princess of Wales must have a wonderfully elevated mind, since she goes so deeply into matters so sublime. To confirm this I will tell you that she has read the *Theodicy* more than once, and with appreciation, and that she laughed at those who had wanted to turn her away from this reading under the pretext that things in it were too abstract". See also Leibniz to Christian Wolff, 23 December 1715, in: *Briefwechsel zwischen Leibniz und Chr. Wolf*, ed. C. I. Gerhardt (Halle, 1860), pp. 180-181.

The third complaint is that Leibniz often makes use of examples from mathematics or the sciences, which are not helpful to anyone unschooled in those subjects:

"The author doth in severall places illustrate what he delivers by similitudes or examples, taken from mathematics or naturall philosophy; which resemblances, tho' to persons skill'd in those sciences they may make the matters treated of clearer, yet to others unacquainted with those parts of learning, or who have not searcht into the depths of them, they must necessarily render what is said rather more, than less, obscure[70]".

Smalridge's fourth complaint about the *Theodicy* is that Leibniz apparently expects the reader to be familiar with, and have access to, his past output, as he often alludes to his previously-published works:

"The author doth in severall places allude to books, which he had before publish'd, & which he supposes the reader of this to be well acquainted with; but it may happen that some readers may have never seen, or never

68 Smalridge to Caroline, 4 March 1715, LH 4, 4, 1 Bl. 2v. It is notable that, in his fifth letter to Leibniz (probably written after Leibniz's death), Samuel Clarke also complained about Leibniz's use of the term "hypothetical necessity": "Necessity, in Philosophical Questions, always signifies absolute Necessity. Hypothetical Necessity, and Moral Necessity, are only Figurative Ways of Speaking, and in Philosophical strictness of Truth, are no Necessity at all". GP VII, 423.

69 Smalridge to Caroline, 4 March 1715, LH 4, 4, 1 Bl. 2v and 3r

70 Smalridge to Caroline, 4 March 1715, LH 4, 4, 1 Bl. 3r.

consider'd those former discourses of his, & therefore may be the less prepar'd, & the less able to understand what is advanced in this[71]".

The suggestion that Leibniz alludes in the *Theodicy* to his previously-published *books* is clearly overdrawn, but he certainly does refer to a number of his journal articles.

Smalridge's fifth complaint is that the *Theodicy* suffers from too many digressions:

"The author hath in the prosecution of this subject made many, & sometimes very long digressions, which tho' in themselves perhaps very usefull & instructive, yet, as they are brought in here, do interrupt the thread of the discourse, & thereby make it more difficult for the reader to carry on the pursuit of the principall subject in his thoughts[72]".

For all five of these reasons, according to Smalridge, the *Theodicy*, or at least great parts of it, will appear to many readers as "difficult and obscure"[73]. It is unclear whether this is how Smalridge himself sees the book, or whether he is just seeking to support Caroline's assessment that the book is obscure. Nevertheless, he goes on to say that readers who pay careful attention – and presumably that includes him (and Caroline!) – will find in the *Theodicy* many excellent thoughts, great erudition, solid reasoning and judgement, and a true spirit of piety. Smalridge is short on specifics here; of all the issues Leibniz addresses in the *Theodicy*, Smalridge mentions only that of whether evil can be an objection to God's

71 Smalridge to Caroline, 4 March 1715, LH 4, 4, 1 Bl. 3v.

72 Smalridge to Caroline, 4 March 1715, LH 4, 4, 1 Bl. 3v.

73 Smalridge to Caroline, 4 March 1715, LH 4, 4, 1 Bl. 4r.

goodness and holiness. On this matter, Smalridge claims that Leibniz's assertions will "appear satisfactory to all unprejudic'd and well-disposed minds"[74], although he also notes that there may still be objections that can be raised to which Leibniz has no adequate response. He explains that this is not because opponents have the better arguments, merely that in our current state of imperfection it is impossible to clear away all conceivable doubts that may be raised in the matter. However, Smalridge does state that "the objection against the goodness of God drawn from the permission of evil" has been "consider'd, and answer'd by Archbishop Tillotson" in one of his sermons (namely that on "The goodness of God"[75]). Although he does not say it outright, Smalridge is clearly comparing Leibniz's treatment of evil in the *Theodicy* with that of Tillotson in his sermon, and intimating that, of the two, Tillotson's is the stronger. The comparison is certainly not unreasonable; indeed, there is much overlap between Tillotson's explanation for evil and Leibniz's. Tillotson claims, for example, that all created things are necessarily imperfect, but that it is good that there be a great variety of them[76]; he says also that our sufferings are either the effects of our own sin, or are divine punishments for them[77], and that nevertheless, sufferings contribute to the increase

74 Smalridge to Caroline, 4 March 1715, LH 4, 4, 1 Bl. 4v.

75 Smalridge to Caroline, 4 March 1715, LH 4, 4, 1 Bl. 4v and 5r. Tillotson's sermon is based on Psalm 145.9, and can be found in J. Tillotson, *The Remaining Discourses, on the Attributes of God*, 7 vols. (London, 1700), VII: pp. 51-80.

76 Tillotson, *The Remaining Discourses*, VII: p. 58.

77 Tillotson, *The Remaining Discourses*, VII: p. 62.

of our happiness[78]. All these are doctrines one can also find in the *Theodicy*. Yet as befits a churchman, Tillotson spends most of his time not with theoretical explanations of why God would allow evil, as Leibniz arguably does; instead, Tillotson is especially concerned to show that certain events recorded in the Bible, such as the universal deluge, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the extermination of Canaanites and the destruction of Rome, are not objections to God's goodness (as they might initially appear to be) so much as evidence of that goodness in action[79]. Leibniz does no such thing in the *Theodicy*: he is concerned with the more abstract question of why God would have permitted evil at all rather than the more concrete one of why the Christian God would have carried out specific actions which superficially look to be evil in nature[80]. Possibly this is why Smalridge – no doubt approaching the issue from a churchman's perspective rather than a metaphysician's – offers Leibniz only guarded praise, and shows a marked preference for Tillotson over Leibniz in the matter of God's goodness in the face of evil.

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78 Tillotson, *The Remaining Discourses*, VII: p. 65.

79 Tillotson, *The Remaining Discourses*, VII: pp. 71-80.

80 The closest he comes is in *Theodicy* §275 (GP VI, 281), where he examines scriptural passages which might initially suggest that God commits evil rather than just permits it. But nowhere in the book does he consider biblical events such as God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the extermination of Canaanites etc., and so he does not attempt to show how such God's bringing about such events might be consistent with his goodness.

Following his praise for Tillotson, Smalridge indicates some disapproval of the efforts of Leibniz (and others) to show how God and evil could co-exist, which we might take to be his sixth and final complaint about the *Theodicy*. Smalridge claims that even though Leibniz and others have some measure of success in showing how the existence of evil may be consistent with God's goodness and holiness,

"[...] still there may remain some difficulties not to be solv'd whilst we are in this state of imperfection, but reserv'd, till we are translated to a state of greater illumination.
In the mean-time it will become all humble, serious, & sober-minded Christians, rather to apply themselves to the diligent & conscientious practise of known duties, than to perplex their minds with an over-curious search into hidden & mysterious truths[81]".

In other words, one's energies should be directed into one's Christian duties rather than the sort of metaphysical speculation found throughout the *Theodicy* (and to a lesser extent, in Tillotson's sermon on God's goodness). Of course, Leibniz would not have seen his metaphysical speculations as separate from his Christian duties, one of which is to seek out and spread the truth, especially edifying truths about God's conduct. Smalridge, however, had a very marked preference for sticking to the word of Scripture, and for what could be easily (and hence safely) inferred from it[82]. He did not generally attempt to draw

81 Smalridge to Caroline, 4 March 1715, LH 4, 4, 1 Bl. 5v and 6r.

82 See for example his sermon entitled "The use of reason in religion" in: G. Smalridge, *Sixty Sermons Preach'd on Several Occasions Publish'd from the Originals* (Oxford, 1724), pp. 338-348.

inferences from the nature of God, as Leibniz frequently did, and was clearly wary of such an approach[83].

All in all, Smalridge's assessment of the *Theodicy* is rather disappointing given that there is minimal engagement with the philosophical content of the book. This in itself is unsurprising, as Smalridge's works (which are mostly in the form of sermons) suggest he had little to no interest in philosophical issues and questions: his focus was instead on theology and the governance of the church. He therefore would probably have felt out of his depth having to give his opinion on a book like the *Theodicy*.

Caroline subsequently forwarded Smalridge's letter on to Leibniz, who very quickly prepared a rebuttal, which he sent to Caroline in a later dated 29 March 1715. In his response, Leibniz addresses Smalridge's concerns one by one. It is clear that he was stung by the charge of obscurity, and he does his utmost to show that it has no basis. This is a summary of how he deals with the five complaints that together ground Smalridge's charge of obscurity:

Smalridge's complaint	Leibniz's response 29.iii.1715
Leibniz uses too many Scholastic terms which are devoid of sense	The terms are not devoid of sense at all, since they are given intelligible definitions.
Leibniz quotes Latin and Greek but does not translate them.	Admits to being "guilty" of this.

83 Smalridge did occasionally do this, however; e.g. inferring from God's justice that some sinners would be punished more harshly in the future life than would others, depending on the severity of their crimes, and the extent to which they had already been punished in this life. See Smalridge, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 477.

Leibniz uses too many examples from mathematics and physics.	The examples are useful to those who understand these disciplines; those who do not may pass over the examples without detriment. (Also, such people may benefit from meditating on the examples.)
Leibniz often refers to previously-published work which a reader may not have access to.	N/A [no response made]
Leibniz often digresses.	The digressions are not so long that the reader loses the thread. Besides, others find the digressions a pleasing feature of the book, in that they enliven the discussion.

In addition, Leibniz reminds Caroline that she herself does not find the obscurity of the *Theodicy* to be too great, and he also notes that none of those who have reviewed the book in the various European journals and broadsheets have complained of its obscurity[84]. On the contrary; Leibniz insists that the *Theodicy* has in fact been praised for bringing clarity to obscure matters. In other words, Smalridge is in a minority of one. Leibniz also tells Caroline that he hopes an expanded version of the *Theodicy* will be produced, which would allow him to clarify whatever obscurities are brought to his

84 On the list of journals that had not complained of the *Theodicy*'s obscurity, Leibniz included the *Memoires pour l'histoire des sciences & des beaux Arts* [a.k.a. *Journal de Trévoux*]. However, it was rather disingenuous of him to do this, as he was well aware that the editor of that journal had found some things in the book obscure, having been informed of this by a correspondent, Barthélémy des Bosses. See *The Leibniz–Des Bosses Correspondence*, p. 447. And Leibniz clearly acknowledged the charge, for to Des Bosses he wrote "I should very much like to know as soon as possible what the criticisms were from the *Mémoires de Trévoux* concerning the things that might appear erroneous or obscure in my book". Leibniz to des Bosses, 21 April 1714, GP II, 486/*The Leibniz-Des Bosses Correspondence*, p. 327.

attention, as well as give him space to explain the Latin and Greek quotations. (Such an edition did not, of course, ever appear.)

In his letter of 29 March, Leibniz responds also to what he takes to be Smalridge's final complaint, which is that in our present state of imperfection some objections about God's goodness will always remain. However Leibniz construes Smalridge's complaint as being simply that he [Leibniz] does not resolve all the objections. This leads him to say in response that while he has tried to be thorough, he would welcome being informed about any objections he has overlooked. But it is, he says, no objection that he cannot go into great detail about the reasons for permitting evil. In Leibniz's own words:

"It seems he [Smalridge] believes there are objections I have still not resolved. I have endeavoured not to leave any out, and I will always be obliged to those who advise me of new ones. But one should not count as objections the oft-made complaints about the obscurity of the interior of things. For example, when reducing the objection against the permission of evil into form and responding to it, it is enough to show that God can have, and even does have, just reasons to permit it, but it is not necessary to explain these reasons in detail; and to exaggerate the extent of its impenetrability is not to make an objection. Every objection can be reduced into good form, and to give a form to this so-called objection, one would have to start with this false maxim: everything I cannot know, is not[85]".

There are parallels here with Leibniz's attitude towards the Christian mysteries, namely the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, which he holds cannot be rationally demonstrated but can be shown to be coherent and defended against objections. Reason thus goes some way towards defending the Mysteries, and that is all that can be

85 Leibniz to Caroline, 29 March 1715, LH 4, 4, 1 Bl. 8r.

asked of it: it is no objection that reason cannot actually demonstrate the Mysteries. To Caroline, Leibniz suggests that much the same applies with evil as well: reason cannot furnish the explanation for God's permission of it in any given case, but it is capable of removing the objections to God's goodness drawn from the permission of evil, and this should be sufficient for our purposes[86]. As interesting a response as this is, I think it misses Smalridge's point entirely; his complaint is not that the *Theodicy* fails to provide great detail about God's reasons for permitting evil, but that there are objections that simply cannot be resolved while we are in our present state, and given that, the sort of metaphysical speculation Leibniz engages in is pointless. It is unfortunate that Leibniz did not respond to this charge, though if he had I suspect he would simply have denied Smalridge's assumption that there are objections we cannot resolve while we are in our present state.

Conclusion

By way of bringing our study to a close, I would briefly like to speculate on what Leibniz himself would have thought about the reception of the *Theodicy* in England in the years leading up to his death. I think he would have been generally disappointed about its reception among the sort of key individuals whose approval he sought. While the book was received well by some of these individuals (Sharp, Wake), others appear not to have

86 Leibniz argues the same way in a letter to Jacquelot, 6 October 1706, Grua I, 65-6.

read it at all (Burnet, Trotter), and some of those who had read it said little to nothing about it (Clarke). As a result, detailed studies of the book were few and far between, and when one was made it was philosophically insubstantial (Smalridge). But while the *Theodicy*'s reception among key individuals was not what Leibniz would have wanted it to be, we may suppose that he would have been happier with the response it got from the journals, or rather from the *Memoirs of Literature*, which was at the time the only English journal that would have reported on it. There it was subject to no fewer than four reports across four different issues, and it got several other mentions as well. The reports were clear and accurate, and above all positive, and their tone always respectful. It is just a shame that Leibniz probably only knew of them second-hand, and never got to read them himself.

Appendix: George Smalridge, Bishop of Bristol to Caroline (4 March 1715)

Manuscript: LH 4, 4, 1 Bl. 1r

Madam,

The book, which Your Royall Highness was pleas'd to put into my hands, when I was in town, I did, soon after my return to this place, peruse & consider with the best

attention & the best application I could; and when I had gone through it, I did intend in obedience to Your Highnesses Commands to do my self the honour of giving You my thoughts concerning It. But I was taken with first a great heaviness, and afterwards an acute pain in my head, which hath for some weeks indespos'd me for writing, & which is not yet quite remov'd, tho' I thank God it is in great measure abated. Were my head never so clear, I should not hope to write any thing worthy of Your Highnesses view; as it is now more than ordinarily weak and confus'd, I should be unpardonable in preferring to trouble Your Highness with my crude thoughts, if it were not still more inexcusable not to write at all, after Your Highness had condescended both to permit me so to do, & to signifie, that you expected to have heard from me.

My Lady Nottingham, when she first mention'd this book to me from Your Royal Highness, told me that you complain'd of the obscurity of it. I cannot but think that there is great reason for that complaint, for though it doth not become me to measure the extent of Your Highnesses abilities by the common standard, yet I believe I may, without too much presumption, say, that there is scarce any other person of your sex, who can thoroughly understand all the parts of this book.

The subject it self, of which the learned author treats is very nice & intricate, such as hath puzzled the wisest and ablest heads in all ages, and such as those who have most maturely weigh'd & consider'd, have most readily acknowledg'd to be attended with great, if not insuperable, difficulties. The author in treating of this subject hath employ'd many school-Forms, & metaphysical distinctions (such as *absolute* and *hypotheticall* necessity; the necessity of *consequence*, & of the *consequent*; the *antecedent* & *consequent* will of God; science of *simple intelligence*, of *vision*, & a *middle* science

between these two; the *physicall* & *metaphysicall* communication of the soul with the body; and the like) which terms to persons not vers'd in the peculiar idiom & language of the Schools must of necessity be, what ever by some, who have been sufficiently skill'd in this sort of learning, they have been declar'd to be, mere jargon, empty words without any meaning, and utterly unintelligible.

The author hath also inserted several citations, from Greek & Latin authors, which he hath not translated into the language in which he writes, & which therefore a reader, who is not acquainted with Greek & Latin, can make nothing of, & you ought to know, not merely for the sake of the citations themselves, but also because without the understanding of these, what goes before or follows after cannot be well understood.

The author doth in severall places illustrate what he delivers by similitudes or examples, taken from mathematics or naturall philosophy; which resemblances, tho' to persons skill'd in those sciences they may make the matters treated of clearer, yet to others unacquainted with those parts of learning, or who have not searcht into the depths of them, they must necessarily render what is said rather more, than less, obscure.

The author doth in severall places allude to books, which he had before publish'd, & which he supposes the reader of this to be well acquainted with; but it may happen that some readers may have never seen, or never consider'd those former discourses of his, & therefore may be the less prepar'd, & the less able to understand what is advanced in this.

The author hath in the prosecution of this subject made many, & sometimes very long digressions, which tho' in themselves perhaps very usefull & instructive, yet, as they are brought in here, do interrupt the thread of the discourse, & thereby make it more difficult for the reader to carry on the pursuit of the principall subject in his thoughts.

For the reasons which have been alledg'd, & for many others, which might be offer'd, this book must to the generality of readers, at least in some parts of it, appear difficult and obscure.

But however, it is very easie for any intelligent reader with the least degree of attention to discover in it many excellent thoughts, a great compass of knowledge and learning, a close way of reasoning, a solidity of judgment, much candour towards those from whom the author differs & against whom he writes, & which must render it still more valuable to all serious and devout Christians, a true spirit of piety, an ardent zeal for the glory of God, for the vindicating his attributes, for inspiring the reader with a Love of Him, & for rectifying those falser notions of reason or about religion, which must have a very bad influence upon mens practise.

What this author hath at large alleg'd to prove that the permission of evil, & even of sin, is consistent with the goodness, wisdom, & holiness of God, will, I believe, appear satisfactory to all unprejudic'd and well-disposed minds; but still there will be room for cavils from those who are irreligiously inclin'd; & even sober, and pious persons, who are firmly persuaded of the divine attributes, may not be able fully & clearly to answer all the objections which may be brought against them.

Your Royal Highness will find the objection against the goodness of God drawn from the permission of evil consider'd, and answer'd by Archbishop Tillotson in the 3rd sermon of the 7th volume of the sermons publish'd after his death[87].

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87 Tillotson's sermon ("The goodness of God") can be found in J. Tillotson, *The Remaining Discourses, on the Attributes of God*, 7 vols. (London, 1700), VII: pp. 51-80.

The answers given there by the Archbishop, & more at large by the author of the learned book, which Your Royal Highness put into my hands, appear to me very solid, but were they less satisfactory than they are, I should not at all be stagger'd in my firm belief of the divine wisdom and goodness, tho' I were not able to reconcile these with the sufferance of evil.

For since it is evident from experience, that God doth permit evil; & since it is demonstrable by reason & by revelation, that God is holy & good, these truths must be consistent one with the other, whether I by my shallow reasoning can make out their consistency or not.

The attempt of learned men to reconcile all appearances of repugnancy between such undoubted truths, as do seem to interfere with each other, is extremely laudable; and the reasons which they have offer'd to prove the permission of evil & the goodness of God to be fairly consistent, are much stronger than any which are brought to prove them repugnant; but still there may remain some difficulties not to be solv'd whilst we are in this state of imperfection, but reserv'd, till we are translated to a state of greater illumination.

In the mean-time it will become all humble, serious, & sober-minded Christians, rather to apply themselves to the diligent & conscientious practise of known duties, than to perplex their minds with an over-curious search into hidden & mysterious truths; as considering, that *secret things belong to the Lord our God; but that those things which are reveal'd, belong to us, that we may do all the words of the law*.

That God would direct Your Royal Highness by his Holy Spirit in the true knowledge of Him & of his Word; that He would confirm & strengthen you in all goodness, & pour

down upon Your Regal Person & Family the choisest of his blessings, is the earnest prayer of,

Madam,

Your most dutifull, most obedient, &

most obliged servant

Christ-Church, Oxford

Mar. 4th 1714[88] George Bristol

88 It was English convention at the time to treat the months of January through March as belonging to the previous year. I would like to thank Monika Meier for pointing this out to me.