

**Leibniz' *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice*:
A Reply to Andreas Blank**

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To mark the 300th anniversary (1703-2003) of the composition of Leibniz' most important mature writing on justice, the *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice*, I published an interpretation of this work in *The Leibniz Review* (vol. 13, 2003). But Dr. Andreas Blank, dissatisfied with my Platonizing "reading" of the *Méditation*, published his own commentary in the same *Review* (Vol. 14, 2004)—treating not just my 2003 article but also my *Leibniz' Universal Jurisprudence: Justice as the Charity of the Wise* (1996) and several smaller writings from the period 1972-2002. Since Andreas Blank is a good Leibniz-scholar who deserves a reply, I want to attempt an answer; and to avoid any possible misrepresentation, I want to quote the beginning of his article, word-for-word.

As Leibniz points out in *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice*, justice—defined as charity of the wise and universal benevolence—belongs "to the necessary and eternal truths about the nature of things, as [do] numbers and proportions." According to the interpretation of Patrick Riley, from this perspective the two manuscripts usually regarded as belonging to the *Méditation* should be seen as complementary parts of a unitary Platonizing work. According to Riley, the manuscript that now constitutes the first part of the *Méditation* is concerned with definitions of ethical concepts viewed as "quasi-mathematical, demonstrable 'eternal verities,'" whereas the manuscript that now constitutes the second part of the *Méditation* is concerned with "Platonic 'ascent,' in the manner of *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, which recommends the transition from mere negative forbearance from harm to doing positive good. In formulating these claims, Riley uses scare quotes to indicate that he uses the terms "eternal verities" and "ascent" in an unusual way that diverges from the views of the historical Plato. According to his interpretation, Leibniz's modifications of Platonism are restricted to (epistemologically) peripheral parts such as the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul or Pythagorean components such as the doctrine of metempsychosis. Therefore, Riley claims that when Leibniz is talking about knowing eternal truths, what he has in mind is literally the view that we know the same truths as the truths that the gods know and love but do not cause or change.

The Leibniz Review, Vol. 15, 2005

“Although this interpretation (Blank goes on to say) nicely captures the Platonic terminology of the *Méditation*,”

it all too well warrants Riley’s conclusion that Kant’s verdict to the effect that Leibniz’s philosophy was a ‘dogmatism’ that ‘said more than it knew’ was basically right. The present paper argues that there is more to the epistemology of the concept of justice in the *Méditation* than can be described in traditional Platonic terms. In particular, the view of the nature of definitions of ethical and mathematical concepts in the first part of the *Méditation* should be seen against the background of Leibniz’s earlier modifications of the Platonic view of the nature of definitions. According to Leibniz, definitions of philosophical concepts are not abstract objects but rather make implicit presuppositions of rational thought explicit. Moreover, Leibniz’s modified theory of definitions has consequences for the nature of the Platonic ascent in the second part of the *Méditation*. What Leibniz does there should be seen against the background of his earlier use of sorites arguments to show that a conception of universal justice as *caritas sapientis* is implicitly contained in our everyday conception of justice.

And finally Blank adds, a little later that Leibniz’ jurisprudential thought

...does not amount to a full-blown version of Platonism. Although juridical and arithmetical axioms and definitions in some sense are said to be eternal, they are this not in the way of abstract objects, but rather in the way of being the foundation of conditional truths. In this sense, they belong to the nature of rational beings...¹

For Blank the defining “background” to the 1703 *Méditation*, it soon turns out, is *not* (as one might have thought) the contemporaneous, all-surrounding *Nouveaux essais*, but instead the set of very early Leibnizian writings on justice and jurisprudence from 1666 to 1670-71—from *De Arte Combinatoria* (1666) and the *Nova Methodus* (1667) to the *Elementa iuris naturalis* (c. 1670-71)—in which, according to Blank, a “broadly Aristotelian” definition of justice is urged by Leibniz (with some reservations); and this Aristotelian defining, this “early modification” of “the Platonic view,” for Blank, is the *relevant* “background” to the *Méditation*, despite his own admission that the language of the 1703 work is indeed Platonic: “[Riley’s] interpretation nicely captures the Platonic terminology of the *Méditation*.”² How can a “broadly Aristotelian” definition of justice (from the just-out-of-his-teens Leibniz) count as the relevant “background” to the ardently Platonizing, *Euthyphro*-quoting *Méditation* (by the nearly sixty-year-old Leibniz)

if the common view that Aristotle is Plato's greatest critic and most knowledgeable detractor is correct (as it arguably is)? How can "broadly Aristotelian" definition be the correct "background" if, at the very moment of writing the *Méditation*, Leibniz was also working on the *Preface* to the *Nouveaux essais*, describing himself as (roughly) Platonic and Locke as (roughly) Aristotelian, and saying that Locke (as "Aristotelian" partisan of a *tabula rasa*) "destroys" what is philosophically "most important" by being "*directement opposé à la philosophie platonicienne*"?³ (It isn't only the Goethe of *Theory of Colors*, after all, who views Plato and Aristotle as the greatest exponents, for all time, of diametrically opposed, agonistic rationalism and empiricism;⁴ and this isn't irrelevant to Blank's final claim, at the end of his article, that Leibniz' "everyday" theory of justice is "more *descriptive*"—and presumably therefore more "Aristotelian"—than some (e.g. Kant) have thought.)

Blank is right that Leibniz gives great weight, empirically or "descriptively," to the claims that ordinary people ordinarily make, in everyday practical language, about justice and injustice; indeed I stressed this myself in *Leibniz' Universal Jurisprudence*.⁵ In this sense he is partly right that "justice as *caritas sapientis* is implicitly contained in our everyday conception of justice." But for full, complete justice as "wise charity"—the published definition of justice in the 1693 *Codex Iuris Gentium (Praefatio)*, which for Blank himself is Leibniz' *definitive* definition of justice⁶—one needs a metaphysics and a theology which is not so ordinary and "everyday": for *caritas* is love, and love is (for Leibniz) a *sentiment de perfection* ("*La Félicité*," 1694-1698),⁷ and perfection is the over-arching metaphysical-theological principle which (first of all) necessitates God (since the *ens perfectissimum* actually, Anselmianly exists *ex necessitate*); and love of God (the *sentiment* of his perfection) then spreads or expands into neighbor-love, as in St. John, St. Augustine, and St. Paul ("the greatest of these is charity")⁸, or alternatively as in Cicero's love for *caritas naturalis* in *On the Nature of the Gods*.⁹ So in Leibniz' *jurisprudencia universalis* there is a synthesizing fusion of the "everyday" and the not-so-common: indeed the very term "common notion" in *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice* is precisely not *common*—since it is a technical Euclidean mathematical term which Leibniz (in the *Nouveaux essais*) leaves in non-everyday Greek.¹⁰

Leibniz' reflections on justice stretch along an infinitely graded *continuum*, with (at the "descriptive" end) what people ordinarily say in everyday complaints about injustice, but with (at the non-everyday end) Platonizing arguments about

sublimated “wise love” and quasi-geometrical jurisprudential “demonstration”—as well as extra-Platonic notions of perfection(ism) and of *sentiments de perfection*. One must consider the entire Leibnizian *continuum*, and not just magnify the descriptively “everyday” by saying (with Blank) that Leibnizian juridical definitions are merely “in some sense *said* to be eternal” but really are only “the foundation of conditional truths.” (In fact, given the “sorites” perspective which Blank is fond of, no *single* point on the *continuum* can be “decisive”—by definition.)

In the pages that follow, I shall consider Andreas Blank’s treatment of the 1703 *Méditation* from seven standpoints; I shall take up, in order, (1) Blank’s notion of “background” in the history of philosophy; (2) Blank’s view that the *relevant* background to the 1703 *Méditation* is a group of “broadly Aristotelian” early writings from 1666-1671; (3) Blank’s judgment that I failed to see that some things in Leibniz’ *Méditation* cannot be accounted for “in traditional Platonic terms”—overlooking my own clear insistence that Leibniz needs extra-Platonic “perfectionism” to *ground* the “eternal verities” in the mind of a necessary *ens perfectissimum*, and to account for love as a *sentiment de perfection* (since Plato has “wise love” in *Phaedrus* and *Symposium* but not a general “perfectionist” metaphysics), and overlooking my own clear insistence that in equating *caritas sapientis* with *benevolentia universalis* Leibniz introduces an early-Augustinian stress on *bona voluntas* which is incongruent with Plato’s rejection of “the will” and of *akrasia* in *Protagoras*;¹¹ (4) Blank’s failure to appreciate the accelerating Platonism of Leibniz’ late period, from roughly 1697 (*Novissima Sinica* and the introduction of the Greek term *monad* for “simple substances”), to the *Euthyphro*-colored *Unvorgreifliches Bedencken* (1698), to the *Méditation* itself (1703), to the *Nouveaux essais* (1704), to the *Theodicée* [theos-dike, “the justice of God”] (1710), to the Platonizing Vienna-lecture “On the Greeks” (1714); (5) Blank’s failure to see Leibniz’ growing anti-voluntarism (the opening of the *Méditation*!), which absolutely rules out (as relevant “background”) the very *Nova Methodus* in which the 20-year-old Leibniz had defined highest justice as the “will of God”—the precise doctrine which Leibniz spent his last 20 years combating, saying that Juvenal’s *stat pro ratione voluntas* is “the motto of a tyrant”¹²; (6) Blank’s reluctance to admit that the “eternal verities” and “necessary” truths are first of all (ontologically and chronologically) in the mind of God (co-eternally “imbedded”)—and therefore “belong to the nature of rational beings” more generally only if they are eternally “there” and thus *available* to finite rational beings; (7)

Blank's failure to see Leibniz' (almost!) "full-blown Platonism" in the *Nouveaux essais*, especially in the notion that "demonstrative" natural justice is an eternal truth found, *Meno*-like, in the great chapter on "geometrical" demonstration (*Nouveaux essais* IV, 7, 19).

A final preliminary word: let's just stipulate that Blank is right in saying that Part II of the *Méditation*, with its notion of ascending, by infinitely graded degrees, from negatively refraining from harm (*neminem laedere*) to charitably doing positive good (*honeste vivere*) is of course, *inter alia*, a "sorites" argument; and let's just stipulate that on this point the supreme interpreter is indeed (as Blank urges) that superb scholar Emily Grosholz (whom I strongly praised in *Leibniz' Universal Jurisprudence*).¹³

I. "Background"

The notion of "background" in the history of philosophy can be most quickly treated; and here the obvious point is that the right background must stand "behind" (in space or time) the right foreground: if in the case of Raphaël (say) one puts "behind" the 1512 Vatican "School of Athens" (with "Plato and Aristotle" at its center) a simpering, semi-vertebrate Peruginesque background of 1502 (from Raphaël's 'prentice days), the result will be *incoherent*—since "background" and "foreground" exist only in *relation* to each other. (There is no "absolute background," as such, in itself.) In the decade 1502-1512 Raphaël moved on; why would not Leibniz do so in the nearly four-decade period from 1666 (*De Arte Combinatoria*) to 1703 (the *Méditation*)?

Leibniz' definition of juridical "definition" in his earliest works of 1666/67 could count as the relevant "background" to the 1703 *Méditation* on justice only if he arrived—in the 1660s, at the bare beginning of his philosophical career—at a fixed, permanent "definition of jurisprudential definition" from which he never departed or deviated, but invariably used with absolute constancy, through the early 18th century (including the *Méditation*). But is this the case?

It is not; and here the clearest evidence is to be found in the 1693 *Praefatio* to the *Codex Iuris Gentium*, the very work which first published Leibniz' celebrated definition of justice as "wise charity" or "universal benevolence." In that *Preface* Leibniz says that the notorious skeptic Carneades was wrong to declare that justice is "supreme folly" [*stultitiam*] because it "commands us to consider the interests of others while we neglect our own"; and the *reason* that Carneades was

wrong is traceable to his “ignorance of the definition of justice.”¹⁴ But this definition, *justitia est caritas sapientis*, was formulated by Leibniz (in a letter) only in 1677, and wasn’t published until 1693; moreover only in 1694 (at the earliest) did Leibniz say that *caritas* = love = *sentiment de perfection* (as part of a more general perfectionism which *necessitates* God and then *defines* love itself)—even if there are intimations of “wise love” in the *Grundriss* of 1671 and in a letter (of the same year) to Antoine Arnauld.¹⁵ Moreover, Leibniz “completed” *justitia caritas sapientis* only in the late 1690s, at the time of the fratricidal “pure love” controversy between Fénelon and Bossuet.¹⁶ And therefore Leibnizian *juvenalia* from the 1660s can’t serve as the relevant “background” to a not-yet-existing “foreground.”

In fact the work of the “young Leibniz” which really does count as a *relevant* background to the post-1677 definition of justice as eternally necessary *caritas sapientis* is Leibniz’ 1676 Latin version of Plato’s *Theaetetus*: for it is in that dialogue that Plato says that “in matters of right and wrong” there is “something natural” with “a reality of its own,”¹⁷ not just “arbitrary public decision”—an intimation of the opening paragraph of the 1703 *Méditation*, in which Leibniz, Plato-like, says that justice is *not* “arbitrary” because it “belongs to the necessary and eternal truths about the nature of things, as do numbers and proportions.”¹⁸ That definition fuses *Theaetetus*’s rejection of the “arbitrary” (and embracing of “nature”) with *Phaedo*’s notion that all “absolute ideas”, mathematical and moral, are necessary and eternal—and Leibniz also translated *Phaedo* in 1676. (And then *Euthyphro*, with which Leibniz begins the *Méditation*, adds that the gods chastely, wisely love, and neither cause nor change, the eternal verities.) Here, then, is *relevant* “background,” which leads in linear fashion from the 1676 Plato-translations to the 1677-1693 definition of *justitia caritas sapientis* to the opening paragraph of the *Méditation*—a real background, but certainly not a “broadly Aristotelian” one.

II. “Broad Aristotelianism”

The heart of Blank’s case is his argument that Leibniz’ theory of justice was “broadly Aristotelian” from his earliest days (beginning with *De Arte Combinatoria* in 1666 and the *Nova Methodus* in 1667) and that this Aristotelian “background” was still the relevant one when—nearly four decades later—Leibniz wrote his

Méditation on justice in 1703. But (as it turns out) the very passages of “early Leibniz” chosen and cited by *Blank himself* do not support his case.

Beginning with very extensive quotations from these earliest Leibnizian jurisprudential writings, Blank urges that in *De Arte Combinatoria* Leibniz “tries out a broadly Aristotelian concept of justice . . . against Hugo Grotius’ conception of natural law,” and that Leibniz’ “strategy” is “to apply the Aristotelian solution of elucidating the nature of a given virtue as a mean in affects to the case of justice.”¹⁹ Given that the older Leibniz (of the period of the 1703 *Méditation*) always called Grotius “the incomparable,” and thought that Grotian natural law (as *parallel* to mathematical truth) was the decisive modern defense of a demi-Platonic ethical perspective,²⁰ one is immediately suspicious of Blank’s “case,” Aristotle v. Grotius; and these suspicions are sharpened when Blank comes to his central statement of supposed “broad Aristotelianism” in the (very) young Leibniz:

The theory of justice in the *Elements of Natural Law* (1670-1671[?]) can be seen as an expression of similar strategy. In the third MS of the *Elements of Natural Law*, Leibniz objects to Aristotle’s suggestion to look for the mean only in relations between things: “...if one has obtained a more precise insight into this problem, one realizes that justice governs love and dislike of a human being towards another human being.... Now there are two rules to moderate this emotion: 1. to hurt nobody, 2. to help everyone, as far as no-one else is hurt by this.” The idea of the mean consequently is described as a process of deliberation between various affects: “*What is just* is not precisely enough defined as what is useful for the community, since it is permissible to prefer the death of many to my own death. . . . The just is the well-proportioned relation between self-love and the love for another person.” Thus, in this context, the search for rational proportions underlying the Platonic component of Leibniz’s theory of justice is not introduced as an alternative to an Aristotelian conception of justice but rather as an attempt at realizing what Aristotle himself was unable to attain: applying to the concept of justice the basic Aristotelian insight into the nature of virtue.²¹

What this (rather obscure) paragraph seems to forget is that (a) Aristotle himself doesn’t usually define justice as a virtuous “mean” between affective extremes, but more commonly says that justice is recognizing and rewarding people’s contribution to the common good of the *polis* (*Politics* III, 1283 a ff.), and (b) more importantly, Aristotle doesn’t typically define justice *at all* as—in Leibniz’ words—a “well-proportioned relation between self love and the love for another

person.” The whole notion of “well-proportioned love” as the definition of justice is early-Augustinian (*De Doctrina Christiana* I, 27, xxviii), not Aristotelian in the slightest; more exactly, it is Plato’s notion of “proportion” and “measure” as the “highest” things (in *Philebus*) refracted through early-Augustinian “love” as the motive of all human action. (“He lives in justice,” Augustine says, “who has an ordinate love...nor loves less or more what should be loved equally.”)²² And therefore when Blank concedes that “rational proportions” indeed *underly* “the Platonic component of Leibniz’ theory of justice” but then claims that this Platonic mathematizing “rationalism of proportions” is “*not* introduced as an alternative to an Aristotelian conception of justice”—that (on the contrary) the “Platonic component” is brought in merely “*as an attempt at realizing what Aristotle himself was unable to attain*”—he fails to see that Plato and Aristotle cannot plausibly be viewed as *supplements* to each other, or as mere “enablers” of each other. To use Plato (Aristotle’s teacher and master) as a second-order enabling corrective to a “broadly Aristotelian” definition of justice doesn’t *work*: after all, Plato was a radical “erotist” who made ardent love ethically central, while Aristotle merely ranked *philia* (*Ethics* VIII and IX) above legal *dike* (*Ethics* V); and it must not be forgotten that Aristotle (in Book Alpha of the *Metaphysics*) bitterly chastises the Platonists for trying to *mathematize* ethics—for example, by making justice a “proportion” (thereby improperly turning “practice” into “theory”).²³ And therefore “well-proportioned love” is not an idea that one can call “Aristotelian”—not even “*broadly* Aristotelian”; for neither *love* nor *proportion* lies at the heart of Aristotelian ethics (since the “well-proportioned” isn’t necessarily a “mean”). Beyond all this, Leibniz’ claim in the *Elementa juris naturalis* that the “rules” of justice are “1. to hurt nobody, 2. to help everyone” are basically Roman-jurisprudential (*neminem laedere* and *honeste vivere*) and Augustinian (*De Civitate Dei* XIX, 13-15, “never to harm anyone and ...to aid whomever we can”²⁴), *not* “Aristotelian.” (Blank seems to have forgotten that in the very MS of *Elementa juris naturalis* which he insists on, Leibniz says that when he was young he “applauded with enthusiasm” the notion that justice might be “a virtue regarding the mean [*mediocritatem*] between the two affects of man in relation to man,” but that he “easily *abandoned* this opinion, which is more seductive than solid.”²⁵) Blank turns Leibniz’ doubts about Aristotle into a Platonic salvage-effort, “an attempt at realizing what Aristotle himself was *unable* to attain.” But how does that “*unable*”—Blank’s own word—add up to a coherent “broad Aristotelianism”

which is merely facilitated by Platonic mathematizing “proportion”? This is not a view that makes sense.

Inconveniently for Blank’s argument that Leibnizian justice was “broadly Aristotelian” by 1666—that is, concerned with fitting justice into a broader Aristotelian theory of “virtue,” with secondary Platonic help—and that it *remained* so (right up through the *Méditation* of 1703), it is in the very work containing Leibniz’ first published version of his official, permanent, definitive definition of justice as *caritas sapientis*, the *Praefatio* to the *Codex Iuris Gentium* of 1693, that three references to Aristotelian “moderating” of the “affections” (with a view to “virtue”) were *struck out* of Leibniz’ original *Praefatio*-draft before the work was given to the publisher. Not one of the manuscript Aristotle-references survives in the printed text—as one can now see by consulting the splendid critical edition of the *Codex* published in 2004 in *Politische Schriften* vol. 5 (edited by Hartmut Rudolph).²⁶ And since Leibniz quotes many political-moral-jurisprudential theorists in the *Codex*—including Machiavelli (hardly a partisan of *caritas* and *benevolentia*) and even Hobbes (for once treated fairly favorably)—it is all the more striking that thrice-mentioned Aristotle disappears on the way from Leibniz’ writing-desk to the printing-house.

In other words, when Leibniz might have tried to make the definition, *justitia est caritas sapientis*, “relate” as much to the Aristotle of the *Ethics* and the *Magna Moralia* as to Plato, Cicero, and “the incomparable” Grotius, he in fact finally kept the definitive version of the *Codex’ Praefatio* mainly Ciceronian and Roman-jurisprudential (stressing what a Roman *vir bonus* would approve). Aristotle was *excised*.

If Leibniz had wanted to make *justitia caritas sapientis* in the *Codex* “broadly Aristotelian,” or even Aristotelian *at all*, he could have left the *Praefatio*-draft in its original form, with three references to Aristotelian virtue, rather than make the published *Preface* into “Cicero *contra* Carneades”—though Cicero turned out to be ideal, since he had insisted on *caritas naturalis* (“between the good”) against the Epicureans (in *De Natura Deorum* I, 43), and had praised “wise love” in both Plato (“our Plato”) and the Stoics in the *Quaestiones Tusculanae*.²⁷

Leibniz chose to remove Aristotle-references from the definition of justice in the definitive *Codex*, as he chose to begin the 1703 *Méditation* with Plato’s *Euthyphro* rather than the *Nicomachean Ethics* or the *Magna Moralia*; and none of this was a slip of the pen (or of the mind).

III. “Traditional Platonic Terms”

Probably it is Blank’s conviction that Leibniz’ early jurisprudential writings are “broadly Aristotelian” (with Plato playing only a supporting role), and that these writings are the relevant “background” to the 1703 *Méditation*, which leads him to think that “there is more to the epistemology of the concept of justice in the *Méditation* than can be described in traditional Platonic terms.” But on this point he appears to forget that I myself stressed the limits of (what I called) Leibniz’ “quasi-Platonic” thought: indeed I insisted on extra-Platonic “perfectionism” as crucial to the completion of Leibnizian practical philosophy.

What I *said* was this — beginning with a 1690 Leibniz-letter to Landgraf Ernst: “as for me I believe that just as the arithmetic and the geometry of God is the same as that of men, except that God’s is infinitely more extensive, in just the same way natural jurisprudence, in so far as it is demonstrative, and every other truth is the same in heaven and on earth. Failing this, God would act as a tyrant, would do what would be called tyranny in a man, by using an absolute power. One must not imagine that God is capable of doing that which would be called tyranny in men.”²⁸

“Natural jurisprudence, *in so far as it is demonstrative*”: that is the key phrase in this letter. But how far can one “demonstrate” full Leibnizian justice from Platonic mathematical-geometrical “eternity” alone? One can’t, in a word—unless one first “mathematizes” justice *very* radically, as Leibniz himself sometimes does (“now consist justice, goodness, beauty, no less than mathematical things, in equality and proportion, and are therefore no less *aeternae et necessariae veritatis*”).²⁹ And that is why Leibniz’ “perfectionism” must be folded in at this point (to account for *caritas* as a *sentiment de perfection*). For, as John Rawls has rightly urged, Leibniz “maintains that the principles of perfection . . . are [also] eternal truths: they rest on and lie in the divine reason. These truths are superior to and prior to the divine will.”³⁰ Indeed “also” would scarcely be the right word—for the necessary existence of “the perfect being,” God is (*pour ainsi dire*) the privileged Anselmian “eternity verity” which is *primus inter pares*: without the eternal “mind” of God to know (but never cause) the eternal truths, there would be no “other” changeless verities at all, such as $A=A$. For Leibniz always insists that while God does not (*pace* Descartes) cause eternal, necessary truths by mere genesis, he nonetheless “finds” those verities “imbedded” [*inditis*] in his understanding.³¹ First God must exist, *owing to* “perfection”; “then” (as it were) he

finds eternal verity in his *sapientia*, not his *voluntas* (as the *Méditation* urges). In this sense “Platonic” eternal verity needs a necessary *ens perfectissimum* as its “ground”—and therefore the Plato-Anselm connection is stronger than it might have seemed. “Perfection” yields a necessary God; he finds all other truth in himself; and the perfection which necessitates him is the basis of love, the “feeling of perfection” in others which underlies justice as wise *caritas* (“to love is to find pleasure in the perfection of another”).³² And that is why Leibniz can say that “the apex of metaphysics and that of ethics are united in one by the perfection of God.”

One cannot love God without knowing his perfections or his beauty. And since we cannot know him except in his emanations, there are two ways of seeing his beauty, namely in the knowledge of eternal truths (which consist in reasons, numbers, figures, orders, changes). . . and in the knowledge of the harmony of the universe.³³

There, indeed, Plato and Anselm blend into each other; Athens and Canterbury timelessly occupy the same space. And perfectionism and anti-voluntarist wise charity also fuse in Leibniz’s great essay, *Radical Origination of Things* (1697): . . . The very law of justice declares that each should participate in the perfection of the universe and in a happiness of his own in proportion to his own virtue and to the degree in which his will has regard to the common good: and by this is fulfilled that which we call charity and the love of God, in which alone, in the opinion of wise theologians, consists the force and power even of the Christian religion.³⁴

For Leibniz, twin-founded “demonstrative” natural jurisprudence (*justice universelle*), grounded doubly in Platonizing mathematical “eternity” and in (moral) “perfection,” is in a position to refute a bad voluntarist trinity: hyper-Calvinism, hyper-Cartesianism, and hyper-Hobbism. (Hyper-Calvinism is a danger to true theology; hyper-Cartesianism is a danger to true philosophy; hyper-Hobbism is a danger to true justice—as the *Méditation* on justice insists in its opening paragraphs.)

Why, then, given so much “Platonism,” should Leibniz’ wise love or *caritas sapientis* (as the core of universal jurisprudence) not be purely and simply Platonic? Why should Leibniz not be, more than any other early-modern philosopher, simply a “footnote to Plato?”³⁵ Partly because Leibniz almost always speaks of *caritas sapientis*, “wise charity,” not *amor sapientis*, “wise love”; partly because there is not much full blooded *eros* in Leibniz which stands in need of

“sublimation”; but above all because Leibniz makes *caritas sapientis* and “universal benevolence” (universal good-willing) exactly equivalent, and there is simply no place for early-Augustinian “good will” (*benevolentia*) in Plato’s radical rationalism. For Plato makes it clear at 352b in the *Protagoras* that an independent, extra-cognitive faculty of so-called “will” is not philosophically acceptable: “there are many who [say that they] recognize the best but are unwilling to act on it,” but they are wrong and “what they say is false” (353a).³⁶

Leibniz, as a Christian descended partly from Augustine, needs to place *bona voluntas* somewhere in his universal jurisprudence; not only does he “place” it, however, he makes it equal to wise charity itself. And a pure Platonist would never equate sublimated *eros* (which wisely ascends to *philosophia*) with “will,” whether “good” or not. There are simply parts of Leibnizian ethics that Platonism cannot accommodate at all; for *caritas sapientis* contains Plato and St. Paul, Athens and Jerusalem. If one makes the notions of wise charity and of general or universal “benevolence” absolutely equivalent—as Leibniz constantly does, in his correspondence with Arnauld and Malebranche and then in the *Codex Iuris Gentium* (“charity is universal benevolence”)—then *benevolentia*, good willing, is interchangeable with “the charity of the wise.” This interchangeability is perfectly clear, for example, in Leibniz’ “De Abstractis” (c. 1686), in which he writes, “*justitia est benevolentia*,” then strikes out benevolence in favor of “*justitia est caritas ad normam sapientis*”: plainly these notions were viewed by him as morally synonymous.³⁷ And it is equally clear in “De Bono Unitatis et Malis Schismatis” (c. 1691), in which “the perfection of the will” (*perfectio voluntatis*) is equated with “the perfection of charity.”³⁸

This is why Leibniz can go on to equate *caritas sapientis* with *benevolentia universalis*: a benevolence which is general or universal is precisely not “particular,” not primarily an individual affection for another individual. Generalization transforms emotion into policy. It is not like the case of the upright lover in Plato’s *Phaedrus*, who detaches himself from a reclining lover for the ascent to *philosophia*.³⁹ The carefully chosen terms “philanthropy” and “benevolence” set the Leibnizian tone: this is love from which *eros* barely needs to be expelled. In a sense—indeed in every sense—Plato is much more radical than Leibniz: in the *Phaedrus* a very passionate erotism is wrenched away from sexual love and lifted up to embrace the realm of ideas; Augustine reflects and preserves this sheer erotic ardor in the *Confessions*; but Leibnizian philanthropic benevolence is closer to policy than to passion.

Nevertheless Leibniz' thought is quite inconceivable without its almost-dominant Platonic component: he does insist, after all, that "the doctrine of Plato concerning metaphysics and morality . . . is holy and just," and that "everything he says about truth and the eternal ideas is truly admirable."⁴⁰ If Pauline charity and Augustinian *bona voluntas* are also crucial (not to mention the whole of modern science and mathematics), that just helps to prove the synthetic quality of Leibniz' thought (which he himself insisted on).

IV. "Accelerating Platonism" in Leibniz

Even though Leibniz' "perfectionism" is extra-Platonic (but congruent with Platonism), and even though his stress on early-Augustinian *benevolentia* is non-Platonic, it remains true that there is (what one can reasonably call) an "accelerating Platonism" in Leibniz' late thought—beginning above all with *Novissima Sinica* (1697) and the introduction of the Greek term *monad* (or "simple substance") at about that same time. (As Leibniz points out in *Principes de la nature et de la grace*, *monad* is the Greek mathematical word for a *unity*; and though the term had been recently used by Giordano Bruno, Leibniz knew that Pythagoras had said that "the *psyche* is a self-moving number"—i.e. the number *one*, a "unity."⁴¹ And is it merely accidental that when Leibniz began to produce his only large philosophical book a decade later he combined two Greek words, *Theos* [God] and *dike* [justice] to yield *theos-dike*, *Théodicée*, *Theodicy*, "The justice of God" (a Platonizing term echoing the *Timaeus*)—since the "best possible world" must be *inter alia*, just?)⁴²

In *Novissima Sinica* (1697), Leibniz remembers that in Plato's *Meno* "virtue" and "geometry" are parallel (in the sense that both are eternal, universal, necessary, rational, and known by "wisdom"); and he remembers too that geometry (so to speak) *reveals* virtue—in the sense that (in the end) "contestability" is no *more* admissible in ethics than in "demonstrable" geometry.

In section 8 of the Preface to the *Novissima Sinica*, Leibniz says that he remembers Father Claudio Filippo Grimaldi's "telling me in Rome [in 1689] how much he admired the virtue and wisdom" of the Chinese ruler, whose "love of justice" and "charity to the populace" were so meritorious; but he moves on quickly to say that "Grimaldi asserted that the [Chinese] monarch's marvelous desire for knowledge almost amounted to a faith," and that this faith-knowledge was revealed by the fact that (after years of Euclidean study) "the emperor prepared a

book on geometry, that he might . . . bequeath the wisdom he had brought into his empire as an inheritance to his realm, having in view the happiness of his people even in posterity.” There immediately follows a “Platonic” passage, traceable to the virtue-geometry linkage in the *Meno*, in which knowledge of geometry (as something “amounting” to a faith) displaces grace and the supernatural and embraces “wisdom” and “happiness”:

Now geometry ought not to be regarded as the sphere of workmen but of philosophers; for since every *virtue* flows from wisdom, and the spirit of wisdom is truth, those who thoroughly investigate the demonstrations of geometers have perceived the nature of eternal truth, and are able to tell the certain from the uncertain. Other mortals waver amid guesses, and, not knowing the truth, almost ask, with [Pontius] Pilate, what it is. But there is no doubt that the monarch of the Chinese saw very plainly what in our part of the world Plato formerly taught, that no one can be educated in the mysteries of the sciences except through geometry. . . . The strength of our geometry, as soon as it was tested by the King, was so much to his liking that he easily came to believe that those who had learned thus to reason might teach correctly *in other things* [e.g. virtue].⁴³

Here nature-contemplating, geometry-measuring scientific knowledge (as *alio gratiae*, “another kind of grace”)⁴⁴ now also “amounts” to a faith: *gratia* and *fides* are swallowed up by *sapientia*, and a geometry-loving ruler who cannot have absorbed orthodox “Augustinian” grace is nonetheless both just and charitable. In this astonishing part of the *Novissima Sinica*, one almost finds *Meno*’s equation of knowledge, geometry, virtue, and justice—and this “amounts” to the (unorthodox) faith that a Chinese ruler might have. And if that ruler knows “eternal truth” and is just and charitable, he is (in effect) a better Christian than bellicose Louis XIV, the self-styled Rex Christianissimus (whom Leibniz called Mars Christianissimus).⁴⁵ In the preface to the *Novissima Sinica* all good things—truth, wisdom, Platonic geometry, charity, justice, virtue, popular happiness—are strongly related to one another, if not fully equated. The Chinese ruler is wise, knows the “eternal truths”; he is just and charitable. But if he is wise and charitable, is that not *caritas sapientis*—through the contemplation of nature, which is “another kind of grace”? By contrast Pontius Pilate lacks wisdom (“what is truth?”) and is neither just nor charitable: he permits the judicial murder of Christ, who did the most to make charity *the* central virtue on earth. It is no accident that the wisely charitable virtues of an enlightened ruler—a Platonic geometer—are contrasted

with the weak viciousness of Pilate: Leibniz could have pitched upon many bad rulers, but he singled out the one who publicly executed *caritas*' embodiment. The point is that one can be a Platonist, and thereby "wisely loving," even if knowledge of Christ is foreign to (what Leibniz called in 1716) "the natural theology of the Chinese."⁴⁶

Stopping just long enough to glimpse the ardently Platonizing *Méditation* of 1703, beginning with its almost-verbatim paraphrase of Plato's *Euthyphro*—the dialogue which, Leibniz says, deals with the question whether "the rules of goodness and of justice are anterior to the decrees of God," and which "makes Socrates uphold the truth on that point" by rejecting arbitrary "will" and *fiat*, the creation of "essence" as well as "existence" (*Theodiccée* II, 182)⁴⁷—one passes onto Leibniz' equally Platonizing letter to Hansch of July 1707, in which he insists that

...many of the Platonic doctrines which you mention are most beautiful—that all things have a single cause; that there is an intelligible world in the divine mind, which I also usually call the region of ideas; and that the object of wisdom is the really real [τὰ ὄντως ὄντα] or simple substances, which I call monads and which, once existing, endure always; the first ground of life [πρώτα ζέκ τιατήζ ζώηζ], that is, God and souls, and of the latter the most excellent ones, namely minds, which are produced by God as images of divinity. The mathematical sciences, moreover, which deal with eternal truths rooted in the divine mind, prepare us for the knowledge of substances.⁴⁸

And rational "substances," *naturally* immortal (as in *Phaedo*), are the subjects of eternal "universal jurisprudence" in the City of God.

Passing for the moment over the all-shaping Platonism of the *Nouveaux essais* (1704)—since this will be the main topic of section 7, ahead—one can turn to Leibniz' extraordinary lecture, "On the Greeks as Founders of a Sacred Philosophy" (Vienna 1714), which is a *summa* of his devotion to (chastened) Platonism. Given Leibniz' insistence that "on the knowledge of substance, and in consequence of the soul, depends the knowledge of virtue and of justice,"⁴⁹ it is not surprising that he cherished Greek philosophy, and especially Platonism, for getting the idea of "substance" (or *monad*) right; this he began to indicate in the 1690s, and then more fully in "On the Greeks."

If Leibniz thought that several of the most celebrated moderns had gotten "substance" wrong, and thereby left no "subjects" of universal jurisprudence—Hobbes had done this by reducing substance to body (and mind to "pressure" of objects), Spinoza by reducing substances to mere "modes" of God, without autonomy—he

thought that the ancients had done much better. “I find that the philosophy of the ancients is solid, and that one should use that of the moderns to enrich it, and not to destroy it,” Leibniz wrote in a 1697 letter to Joachim Bouvet. “One must consider in nature not only matter but also force, and the [substantial] forms of the ancients, or entelechies, are nothing else than forms. And by this means I believe that I have rehabilitated the philosophy of the ancients . . . without taking anything away from modern discoveries.”⁵⁰

In scattered remarks from the 1680s forward, Leibniz praises (especially) Plato for getting substance substantially right: in one of his letters to Arnauld (from 1687) he urges that “only individual substances and their different states are absolutely real. This Parmenides and Plato and many other ancients have indeed seen.”⁵¹ And in section 323 of the *Theodicy* one is told that “the [substantial] form or the soul has this advantage over matter, that it is the source of action, having within itself the principle of motion or change, in a word, τὸ αὐτοκίνητον, as Plato calls it.”⁵²

But that incidental observation in the *Theodicy* was worked up by Leibniz into a full-scale lecture, “On the Greeks,” which he wrote in Vienna at the same time (1714) that he produced the *Monadology* for Prince Eugene of Savoy—a lecture finally published only in 1976.⁵³ And in the Vienna lecture it is made very clear indeed that no moral-political philosophy can be undertaken *at all* unless “substance” is first correctly conceived.

Leibniz’ lecture on the Greeks is of course interesting as evidence of the breadth of this knowledge of the history of religious ideas. But from the standpoint of political and moral philosophy its main interest lies in showing that Leibniz relied on Plato (especially) in developing a “monadology” or concept of “substance” which would remedy the defects of “materialism” and “mechanism” and explain the immortality of the soul “naturally,” without recourse to miracles or to mere “faith”—a soul which could be an eternal subject of divine justice in Leibniz’ universal jurisprudence.

Leibniz, to be sure, was no unreconstructed or perfect Platonist: in fact, Platonism, Leibniz thought, needed to be relieved of certain vestigial Pythagorean “extravagances” if its doctrine of substance was to *underpin* universal jurisprudence. In two separate paragraphs of the Vienna lecture, indeed, Leibniz is willing to accept only what is truly proto-Platonic in the Pythagorean theory of the natural immortality of the soul. Pythagoras, Leibniz says, diffused the doctrine, which he got “from the East,” among the peoples of Greece and Italy. But to what

was correct (indeed morally crucial) in the doctrine, Pythagoras added the “figment” (Leibniz speaks of *incrustamenta figmentorum*) of metempsychosis—mainly, Leibniz believes, simply out of “deference” to the “base habits” of ordinary people, who “burn less eagerly for the bare truth.” But such a doctrine, Leibniz says, is “false and no one doubts that it is mythological”; it is “vain,” and even if it were true it would “reveal nothing of worth to mortals.”⁵⁴ Indeed it would be morally damaging, since souls might “migrate” away from deserved chastisements brought on by malevolence and lack of charity.

Leibniz' consideration of the natural immortality of souls (as citizens of the divine monarchy) finally leads him, toward the end of the Vienna lecture, to a full statement of what he thinks Greek philosophy (suitably demythologized) provided in “the amplification and illustration of natural theology”—namely, the first adequate concept of “substance.” Even if, Leibniz says, some of the foundations of monadology had existed implicitly in “Eastern” ideas (above all “among the Hebrews”), those ideas had been “described rather obscurely” and needed to be “more distinctly expressed.” The Greeks, in his view, “first brought forth a certain metaphysics (insofar as that is part of philosophy) and they recognized in an accomplished way that incorporeal substances are in God and in other minds.” This is “patently clear,” he goes on, “from the tradition of the Pythagoreans” and from what is reported about the philosophy of Anaxagoras, but “especially from Plato and Aristotle.” For Plato, he urges, “recognized that the principle of motion could not be corporeal and that the soul is self-moved, the principle of motion, moving itself to move [*se ipsum excitans*].”⁵⁵

Leibniz' lauding of the Greek philosophers as the founders of a “natural theology” which can be “investigated by the force of human genius” is certainly understandable if one recalls the central place which Leibniz' theory of substance or monadology occupies in his philosophy—in his moral philosophy as much as in his metaphysics. That is clear in the finest single paragraph of his *Memoir for Enlightened Persons of Good Intention*:

As for me, I put forward the great principle of metaphysics as well as of morality, that the world is governed by the most perfect intelligence which is possible, which means that one must consider it as a universal monarchy whose head is all-powerful and sovereignly wise, and whose subjects are all minds, that is, substances capable of relations or society with God; and that all the rest is only the instrument of the glory or God and of the felicity of minds, and that as a result the entire universe is made for minds.⁵⁶

The notion that persons as rational substances or minds are subjects of a “kingdom of grace” (of which God is the monarch) leads back to a morally crucial earlier point in Leibniz’ Vienna lecture. As was pointed out, the concept of natural immortality is a key point in Leibniz’ universal jurisprudence—if rational beings are to receive what their actions are worth and if justice is not simply a legal concept confined to the “human forum” alone. As Leibniz put it in a letter to Bierling,

I find it very bad that celebrated people, such as Samuel Pufendorf and Christian Thomasius, teach that one knows the immortality of the soul, as well as the pains and rewards which await us beyond this life, only through revelation. The Pythagoreans and the Platonists understood this rightly. All doctrines of morals, of justice, of duties which are based only on the goods of this life, can be only very imperfect. Take away the [natural] immortality of the soul, and the doctrine of providence is useless, and has no more power to obligate men than the gods of Epicurus, which are without providence.⁵⁷

Leibniz conceived his debt to Plato, Pythagoras, and even Aristotle, then, in terms of their having “more distinctly expressed” the idea of the natural immortality of substances which had existed only “obscurely” in Eastern religious thought. Leibniz’ universal jurisprudence, which involves a “moral realm” within the “natural realm” in which all rational substances act justly—through the charity of the wise—requires a theory of natural immortality which (according to the Vienna lecture) received its first adequate expression at the hands of the Greek philosophy. (At the end of the lecture Leibniz even says that while God used “the Hebrew race initially as if it were kind of tool standing for highest providence,” he finally “kindled a new light for the human race by infusing Greek minds with a love of wisdom, so that divine truths might be communicated with certain proofs against all doubts of men, progressing through the centuries to a greater subtlety of thinking.”⁵⁸ With respect to philosophical adequacy, then, for Leibniz, the Greeks are even more divinely “chosen” than the Jews. And what Greek “subtlety” established was the foundations of monadology.) And so to St. Paul’s contemptuous question in I Corinthians, “Where is the wise?,” Leibniz’ answer would be summary: in Athens; Leibniz’ “Platonic rationalism” always outweighs mere Scripture.

V. Leibniz against *Stat pro ratione voluntas*

The main thing wrong with Blank's insistence on the *Nova Methodus* (1667) as the permanently relevant, defining "background" to the 1703 *Méditation* on justice is that the youthful work which Leibniz himself later called "adolescent" ("juveniliter et insubide dicta sunt"), insists on the "will of God" as the *highest* form of justice (sec. #75);⁵⁹ but the mature Leibniz opposes—more than *anything* else—the notion that justice is "willed" or made *ex nihilo* by *fiat*: that voluntarism leads, for Leibniz, to "arbitrariness" and "tyranny." This is why he opens the *Méditation* with a paraphrase of the crucial lines (9e-10e) of Plato's *Euthyphro*:

It is agreed that whatever God wills is good and just. But there remains the question whether it is good and just because God wills it or whether God wills it because it is good and just: in other words, whether justice and goodness are *arbitrary*, or whether they belong to the necessary and eternal truths about the nature of things, as do numbers and proportions.⁶⁰

It is revealing that while Leibniz made very extensive "revision notes" for the "adolescent," voluntaristic *Nova Methodus* (as late as the 1690s), he never republished his youthful work—for the sufficient reason that voluntarism (the "will of God") can't be "revised" into the Platonizing rationalism and non-arbitrary "eternal verity" of the *Euthyphro*: if "eternity" is true, then "will" (making in time) must be false ("*essence*" over "*genesis*", as in *Republic* VII, 526 b). (And Leibniz in *Nova Methodus* #75 praises Thrasymachus' identification of justice and power—the very identification which he most abhorred in the 1703 *Méditation*.)

Perverse, then, as it is to use Aristotle as a "background" to the Platonizing 1703 *Méditation*, what is even more perverse is to suggest that the voluntaristic *Nova Methodus* counts as the relevant background to "the common notion of justice" as conceived by the mature Leibniz. Voluntarism isn't the "background" to anti-voluntarism; and for the Leibniz of the 1703 *Méditation* "the justice of God is *destroyed*" by insisting on "will" and *fiat*. This is why Leibniz opens the *Méditation* with Plato's *Euthyphro*, in which the just and the holy are not merely *whatever* the gods happen to "love" *en passant* (e.g. the bodies of Ganymede or of Europa). But why the *Euthyphro*, more exactly—among all Platonic dialogues?

If the "eternal moral verities" of justice and goodness are indeed "eternal," like "the truths of numbers and of proportions," then they are, *inter alia*, "pre-Christian" (since they are "pre-everything" except the eternal divine mind in which

they are co-eternally “imbedded” [*inditis*]); the eternal verities are therefore “pre-*bad-Christian*” as well—“bad” in the sense of Calvin, Descartes and Hobbes. (But a “good,” Platonizing Christianity is safely imbedded in early Augustine, so nothing is *lost*.) Christianity, for Leibniz, is problematical because some self-styled “Christian philosophers” dangerously over-value divine *omnipotence*—as in Descartes’ view that God *causes* the truth of truth(s) in *Reply to the Six Objections*,⁶¹ or in Calvin’s idea of God’s groundless “absolute decree,” or in Hobbes’ notion that the “irresistible power” of God “justifieth all he doth” (*Liberty, Necessity and Chance*, which Leibniz reviewed in an appendix to *theos-dike*, “the justice of God”⁶²). All of these modern thinkers, for Leibniz, make God into a unlovable, arbitrary “tyrant”—as he complains in the opening paragraphs of the *Méditation*. But for Leibniz (above all in the *Préface* to the *Theodicée*), love of God is love of perfection (of the “necessary” *ens perfectissimum*) whose essence entails existence, and love generally is a *sentiment de perfection* which becomes justice when it is “regulated” by “wisdom.” For Leibniz the perfect Being knows and loves all eternal verities, and neither causes them (“genesis”) nor changes them: but the first great defense of just such a view is “Socrates v. Euthyphro” in the *Euthyphro*. If *adequate* philosophy is first of all Greek (“On the Greeks,” 1714), and above all Platonic, how can one fail to begin consideration of “the common notion of justice” with the thinker who got these things most nearly right for the first time, namely Plato? Justice itself requires justice to Plato.

Leibniz’ devotion to the anti-voluntarism of Plato’s *Euthyphro* is clear not just in the “Meditation on the Common Notion of Justice” and in the *Theodicy*, but in the slightly earlier “Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken” (c. 1698-1701), which he wrote partly to counter the extreme Calvinist view that God creates everything *ex nihilo* through his “fullness of power” (*plenitudo potestatis*) and creative “will” alone. One must consider, Leibniz now says, “whether the will of God really makes right [*das Recht*], and whether something is good and right simply because God wills it, or whether God wills it because it is good and right in itself [*an sich gut und recht ist*].” The radical voluntarist view of justice as a divine “product” Leibniz ascribes to a number of now-obscure Calvinist theologians, but also to those Cartesians “who teach that two times two makes four and three times three makes nine, for no other reason [*Ursach*] than that God wills it.” But such a radically voluntarist position, for Leibniz, is as calamitous morally as it is mathematically: for on such a view “the *aeternae veritates* would have no certainty in themselves, and even the *bonitas et justitia dei* would be only extrinsic denominations, and in

fact would be groundless, if their truth derived from God's will alone. *Si tantum staret pro ratione voluntas.*" Those who say, Leibniz adds, that "God wills the evil of punishment without regard to the evil of sin," the he wills to "eternally damn" men even before "any of their sins come into play," forget that such a view "in no way abides with God's justice, goodness, and charity." For if God's decree were "quite absolute, and had no *causam impulsivam* whatsoever, then God would be an acceptor of persons, through election, and would deal with men as a tyrant with his underlings. . . for no other reason than *sic volo sic jubeo.*"

Leibniz goes on to say, in the "Unvorgreifliches Bedencken," that "the eternal truths of goodness and justice, of ratio and proportion," as well as all other "necessary truths," have "their ground in the eternal being of God himself: not, however, in his free decree." And finally he plays the "ontological proof" trump card: if all truths were divinely caused *ex nihilo*, then the truth about the necessary existence of God himself (as revealed by St. Anselm) would be "a product of the free will of God, which is absurd in the highest degree [*absurdissimum*]." ⁶³ In that passage, Plato triumphs over Euthyphro-Thrasymachus-Calvin-Descartes-Hobbes one last time.

Though one could multiply almost *ad infinitum* instances of Leibniz' Platonizing insistence that *non voluntas sed sapientia Dei justitiae regula ultima est*,⁶⁴ one last passage *contra Nova Methodus* will have to suffice—a famous passage from Leibniz' *Monitâ* (1706), against Pufendorf and Hobbes, in which Leibniz' demi-Platonism and anti-Cartesianism are brought into play one last time, in a way that echoes the *Euthyphro*-loving "*Méditation*" on justice (written two or three years earlier).

Neither the norm of conduct itself, nor the essence of the just, depends on [God's] free decision, but rather on eternal truths, objects of the divine intellect, which constitute, so to speak, the essence of divinity itself. . . . Justice, indeed, would not be an essential attribute of God, if he himself established justice and law by his free will. And, indeed, justice follows certain rules of equality and proportion [which are] no less founded in the immutable nature of things, and in the divine ideas, than are the principles of arithmetic and of geometry.

And therefore no reasonable person will maintain, Leibniz concludes, "that justice and goodness originate in the divine will, without at the same time maintaining that truth originates in it as well—an unheard-of paradox by which Descartes showed how great can be the errors of great men."⁶⁵ If one adds that

“proportion” refers not just to Platonic geometry but to the notion that “wise” love or charity must be proportional to degrees of perfection in others, then the whole of Leibniz’ universal jurisprudence is present in the *Monitâ*.

VI. Ideas and God

The just-quoted passage from Leibniz’ 1706 *Monitâ*—“justice follows certain rules of equality and of proportion [which are] no less founded in the immutable nature of things, and *in the divine ideas*, than are the principles of arithmetic and of geometry”—can also serve provisionally, pending a full treatment in section (7), as an initial answer to Blank’s argument that “although [for Leibniz] juridical and arithmetical axioms and definitions in some sense are said to be eternal,” this doesn’t amount to a “full-blown Platonism” because “Leibniz offers an *alternative* to the Platonic doctrine according to which in rational insight we ‘see’ God’s ideas”—since for Leibniz “we think by means of our own ideas...even if ideas in the human mind represent ideas in the mind of God.” Though Blank (generally) prefers “bottom up” views (beginning with finite rational substances) to “top down” ones (starting with God⁶⁶), in this case (at least) the “top down” standpoint is *unavoidable*: for Leibniz the “eternal verities” of justice, mathematics, and geometry are not just, *à la* Blank, “In some sense ... *said* to be eternal”—they are eternally “imbedded” in the mind of the only “necessary” substance (the *ens perfectissimum*), and if that necessary mind weren’t “there” then neither would be “our own ideas.” (And “we” wouldn’t be “there” either.) (Blank is constrained to concede this, in effect, when he reluctantly allows that “ideas in the human mind represent ideas in the mind of God.”) Some Leibniz-pieces do indeed begin “bottom up” (the *New System*, the *Monadology*); others begin “top down” (*Discourse on Metaphysics*); some begin, continue and end “top down” (*Theodicy*)—but it is certain that Leibnizian eternal verities “begin” (to use *exactly* the wrong verb) in the mind of God, as Book IV of the *Nouveaux essais* will shortly make clear—in section (7). “Our own ideas” are God’s first, since “we” don’t exist *ex necessitatis*.

VII. The Real “Background”: The *Nouveaux Essais*

By now it is clear that the real “background” to Leibniz’ 1703 *Méditation sur... la justice* is his ever-increasing devotion to Platonism: and it is no accident that

Leibniz wrote the *Méditation* in the middle of composing his greatest Platonizing work, the *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain* (contra John Locke). Here four things are noteworthy: (1) Leibniz composed the *Nouveaux essais* in the form of a Platonic *dialogue*; (2) The interlocutors in this dialogue are given Greek names, “Theophile” (“God-lover”) representing Leibniz, and “Philalèthe” (“truth-lover”) standing in for Locke; (3) Leibniz’ *Preface* to the dialogue claims that Locke’s philosophy “has more relation to Aristotle and mine to Plato”;⁶⁷ (4) in the same *Preface*, Leibniz says that “I hold along with Plato,” the Stoics, and Euclid that there are innate, rational, non-empirical “common notions” (κοινὰ ἔννοιαι, Euclid’s term), which can also be called “flashes of light” that are “divine and eternal” or *zopyra* (ζώπυρα)—the Greek word for “lights used in the kindling of fires” which Plato employs memorably in the *Laws* Book III, 677b (the remarkable Book in which Plato discusses “the first beginning of a *polis*,” saying that “sober jurisprudence” [685a] should avoid the “supreme folly” of “shrill and tuneless dissonance” [691a] by keeping the newly-kindled city “sane and in friendship [philia] with itself” [693b]⁶⁸). And Leibniz finally adds that among the “divine and eternal” innate “common notions”—in addition to mathematics and geometry—one finds metaphysics and *la morale* or “natural jurisprudence.” In a sense, then, Leibniz’ *New Essays* are a Platonic dialogue between “representatives” of Plato and Aristotle—for Leibniz stands in for Plato, as Socrates had done in the “early Socratic dialogues.” It is no wonder, then, that precisely an early “Socratic” dialogue, the *Euthyphro*, is closely paraphrased at the beginning of the *Méditation*: in this period above all Leibniz had Plato very much in mind, not least in defining *la morale* or “natural jurisprudence”

Still, why should Leibniz’ strongest and most characteristic claim about “natural law” or natural justice appear in the *Nouveaux essais* IV, 7, 19, “Des propositions qu’on nomme maximes ou axiomes” (written concurrently with the *Méditation*)—a chapter which opens with the claim that “the geometers” have often undertaken to “demonstrate” *evident* propositions? Why does “natural justice” soon *follow* geometrical demonstration? Why should Leibniz not have taken up natural law/justice (at least sustainedly) in its “natural” place—in *Nouveaux essais* II, 28 (“Of other relations”), in which he discusses, albeit cursorily and disappointingly, Locke’s tripartite theory of law and justice: “Natural/divine,” “civil,” and “of reputation”? In the very next chapter of *Nouveaux essais* (II, 29), after all—which “anticipates” IV, 7, 19—Leibniz says something more consequential and Platonizingly characteristic than anything in II, 28: “If someone

wanted to write as a mathematician in metaphysics or in morality, nothing would keep him from doing so rigorously; some people have claimed to do this, and have promised us mathematical demonstrations outside of mathematics”—even if “it is quite rare that anyone has succeeded in this.”⁶⁹ (He repeats this claim, with a Roman-jurisprudential variation, early in Book IV: “There are considerable enough examples of demonstrations outside of mathematics... one can say that the jurisconsults have several good demonstrations, above all the ancient Roman jurisconsults.”⁷⁰ And then in the conclusive part of Book IV—i.e. 7, 19, which finally gives the definition of *droit naturel* as a dictate of *la raison pure*, not of *le pouvoir arbitraire* (echoing *Theaetetus*’ elevation of the “natural” over the “arbitrary”)—Leibniz adds that “In order that you not think ... that the good use of these maxims is restricted to the limits of the mathematical sciences alone, you will find that it is no less so in jurisprudence,”⁷¹ where *jurisprudencia* is the science of *justitia universalis*.

It is no accident that Leibniz on “natural” law or justice appears most consequentially in IV, 7, 19. But why should Leibniz, in IV, 7, 19, discuss (*pour ainsi dire*) first “geometrical demonstration” and then “moral demonstration,” *hors des mathématiques*? It has something, surely, to do with Leibniz’ (mainly) admiring, approving view of Plato’s *Meno* in *Nouveaux essais* I, 1: “all of arithmetic and all of geometry are innate, and in us in a virtual way ... as Plato has shown in a dialogue [*Meno*] in which he introduces Socrates leading a child to abstruse truths through interrogation alone, without teaching him anything.” But in *Meno* itself (as Leibniz well knew) the “*vérités abstruses*” include both geometry and virtue: When in *Meno* an impasse is reached over the moral question, “What is virtue?,” Socrates pulls Meno’s slave (“anyone you like”) out of the crowd of Meno’s retainers, elicits astonishing geometrical knowledge from this unlettered (and unnumbered) boy, and then says, in effect, that just as geometry is “wisdom,” so after all is virtue⁷² (which is knowing and following the “eternal verities,” such as the “absolute moral ideas” of the *Phaedo* (75d.) Plato’s hope, in *Meno* 82a ff., is plainly that the contestability of morality (e.g. virtue) may be redeemed by the necessity of geometry (so that moral necessity and geometrical necessity will be logically alike: reason-given, eternal, universal, not subject to Heraclitean *flux*). And Leibniz in Book IV, ch. 7 of *Nouveaux essais* (the “geometry” chapter) shares that Platonizing hope when he asks “How could one do better than to reduce controversy, that is to say contested truths, to evident and incontestable truths; would that not be to establish them in a demonstrative way?”⁷³

Like *Meno* (also praised by Leibniz in *Discours de métaphysique*, 26, with strong reservations about “reminiscence”), Leibniz’ *Nouveaux essais* say that geometers are indeed privileged, but add that Roman “jurisconsults”—the experts, ever, on “natural” law and justice—“have several good demonstrations,” and that the Roman lawyers (such as Cicero of *De Legibus* and *De Finibus*) “all speak in a way that is so just and so nice that they reason, in effect, in a way that strongly approaches demonstration, and often is demonstrative *tout à fait*” (IV, 2, 9).⁷⁴ And the *Préface* to the *Nouveaux essais*—written last, after the mathematizing *droit naturel* of IV, 7, 19 was fully in place—includes *la morale* (or “natural jurisprudence”) among the “demonstrative sciences,” together with logic, mathematics/geometry, theology, and metaphysics. That is why Leibniz says, in *Nouveaux essais* IV, 4, that “the idea” of justice is “not of our invention, any more than those of the circle and of the square”;⁷⁵ once again the morality/geometry “parallel” of the *Meno* is paramount, since justice is not “any more” our “invention” than are the definitions of circularity and of squareness, i.e. not at all. And that is also why he says, in the *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice*, written concurrently with the *Nouveaux essais*, that “invention” has no more place in God than in “us”: “but there remains the question . . . whether justice and goodness are *arbitrary* or whether they belong to the necessary and eternal truths about the nature of things, as do numbers and proportions.”⁷⁶ The voluntarist view of Epicurus, Calvin, Descartes, and Hobbes, that everything is invented/created, Leibniz laments, would “destroy the justice of God.”

It is almost as if Leibniz *postponed* his treatment of “natural” law/justice from its natural place in II, 28 (*contra* Lockean law) to the very late chapter (IV, 7) in which axioms, maxims, geometry, and “demonstration” are dominant—partly in admiring reminiscence of the *Meno* (soon to be praised yet again in Leibniz’ Platonizing letter to Hansch of July 1707),⁷⁷ but also so that “natural law/justice” can be *together with* God and the natural immortality of the soul (IV, 10-11) which are needed if natural justice is finally to have place beyond the “human forum”—so that natural theology and natural immortality are the guarantors of *droit naturel*. After all, for Leibniz that *droit naturel*, as an “eternal verity”—no more our “invention” than the circle—needs an eternal and necessary mind in which all verities are grounded: that is, for *jurisprudentia universalis* one needs not merely “natural” justice but a divinity (demonstrable through natural theology) who both (a) “grounds” natural justice and (b) upholds natural justice eternally; and that in turn requires human “natural” immortality, *à la Phaedo*, as against Locke’s mere

probability of immortality in the *Essay* (“Locke too much weakened the generous philosophy of the Platonists” which had demonstrated immortality [to Jaquelot, 1704]).⁷⁸

For Leibnizian “natural” law/justice to “work,” then, one needs (equally natural) “natural” theology (monotheism) and “natural” immortality—and the three come together, as a *natural* trinity, in Book IV of the *Nouveaux essais*, where one first gets moral “demonstration” *hors des mathématiques* (IV, 7, 19), *droit naturel* as *la raison pure*, and then gets not just God as defender of natural justice (in an immortal eternity) but God as the ground (though never the cause) of the “eternal verity” of both mathematics and *la morale* (IV, 10-11). Fusing the Anselmian proof of God (the *ens perfectissimum*, since logically possible, exists *ex necessitatis*) with the Augustinian proof through the “eternal verities,” Leibniz finally says in IV, 11 that one can always ask “where are these ideas, if no mind whatever existed, and what would then become the real foundation of this certainty of the eternal truths,” and that one can rightly answer that “this leads us finally to the ultimate foundation of truths, namely, to that supreme and universal mind who cannot fail to exist, whose understanding, to speak truly, is the region of the eternal verities, as St. Augustine has recognized,” and that “these necessary truths must be grounded in the existence of a necessary substance.”⁷⁹

As against the Lockean version of “natural/divine justice”—as something *willed* by God to protect his own “Workmanship,” to which he has a natural right through creative labor (a view repudiated by Leibniz in *Observationes de principio iuris*, 1700)⁸⁰—Leibniz begins with “eternal” geometry and with practical demonstration *hors des mathématiques*, then finds all eternal truth (theoretical and practical) in an eternal “mind” which also *realizes* (in a double sense) natural justice in eternity (the “region” of naturally immortal substances). And that is why Leibniz says, in an early version of the *Préface* to *Nouveaux essais*, that “the philosophy of the author [Locke] destroys what seems to me the most important, which is that the soul is imperishable”—adding that Locke’s notion of the mere probability of immortality, perhaps through a miracle, “is directly opposed to Platonic philosophy”⁸¹ in *Phaedo*. For Leibniz, Locke ill-defends the “natural” immortality which “natural” justice requires, and then wrecks “natural” justice itself by hinging it on divine “creation-through-labor”—since for Leibniz natural law/justice is geometrizingly *eternal*, while Creation is both temporal and a “mystery.”

And this is why *Nouveaux essais* IV, 7 is as it is: first geometry/mathematics (as in *Meno*), then God as “ground” (never cause) of all *vérité* (as in *Euthyphro*),

then natural immortality (of God's truth-loving "fellows") for the realization of (practical) *vérité* (as in *Phaedo*, and even in *Apology* insofar as Socrates will get natural justice only *insofar* as he is immortal), then "natural" non-arbitrary justice itself (as in *Theaetetus*). If in *Nouveaux essais* II, 28, Leibniz just shows that Locke (with his "will" of a "Workman") is incomplete and inadequate as a natural lawyer, in Book IV he finally, Platonizingly gives his own positive views, echoing what he said earlier in I, 2, 12: "there is no precept whatever to which one would be indispensably obligated, if there were not a God who leaves no crime without chastisement and no good action without recompense"⁸²—as in the "true myths" of final judgment which crown Plato's *Gorgias* and *Republic*.

In short: Leibniz really did postpone his full treatment of (contra-Lockean) "natural" justice until he first demonstrated geometry, God, and immortality—literally "first things first." Here Leibniz is most nearly like the *Timaeus* (41 b-d), where Plato draws together God, justice, immortality and eternity, saying that "children of gods" will be worthy of immortality if they are "willing to follow justice"—whose "divine part" will be "sown by God himself."⁸³ (For Plato immortality is the *reward* of justice; for Leibniz it is the *condition* of justice.)

Thus Leibniz' chapter IV, 7, 19 in the *Nouveaux essais* is no mere "commentary" on the corresponding part of Locke's *Essay* ("Of Maxims"): it is rather a Platonizing geometrizing *rejection*. For in *Essay* IV, 7, Locke, far from "privileging" geometry, in effect deflates it: "general ideas [in geometry] are fictions and contrivances of the mind, that carry difficulty with them. . . such ideas are marks of our imperfection."⁸⁴

Not only, for Locke, do geometrical "maxims" lack any privileged *priority*; they cannot throw necessitating light on so-called "other" eternal verities, and above all not on practical ones: "When these principles . . . are made use of in the probation of propositions, wherein are words standing for complex ideas; v.g. man, horse, gold, virtue: then they are of infinite danger, and most commonly make men receive and retain falsehood for manifest truth and uncertainty for demonstration" (*Essay*, IV, 7, 15).⁸⁵ For Locke geometry is not (as in *Meno*) a kind of key or clue to "virtue"; there is no bridge between them, *via* "eternity." (Thus for Locke virtue must be revealed by Scripture, which is "so perfect a body of ethics, that reason may be excused from that enquiry."⁸⁶) The so-called *aeternae veritates*, Locke adds, are *not* "eternal propositions"—e.g. "virtue is wisdom"—which are "actually formed, and antecedent to the [human] understanding that at any time *makes* them" (*Essay* IV, 11, 14).⁸⁷ But if they are "made" they are not

“there”: *Meno* and *Phaedo* and *Euthyphro* are wrong, and so too must be Leibniz’ admiration for those works. What Locke is actually saying is that moral ideas such as “virtue” do not come (as it were) “after geometry”; and insofar as Leibniz places *droit naturel* in the “geometry/demonstration” chapter, he is Platonizingly arguing for the very thing that Locke (the “Aristotelian”) thought “infinitely” dangerous and false.

VIII. Conclusion

One day soon, no doubt, we can look forward to an excellent book from Andreas Blank on “Leibniz’ Early Jurisprudence.” (We have good grounds for hoping for such a book, since Blank has just published a volume called *Leibniz: Metaphilosophy and Metaphysics 1666-1686*, which, *inter alia*, deals with Leibniz’ early “descriptive” metaphysics and theory of “substance”—and it is Leibniz himself who insists that “on the knowledge of substance . . . depends the knowledge of virtue and of justice” [to Coste, 1712, GP III, 428].⁸⁸) In the meantime, since the relevant “background” to Leibniz’ late *Méditation* on justice is demonstrably “broadly Platonic,” and since (according to Blank himself) “[Riley’s] interpretation nicely captures the Platonic terminology of the *Méditation*,” both the “background” and the “foreground” of *justitia caritas sapientis* are dominated by a single giant figure: Plato.⁸⁹ But that, of course, is what I said in the first place.

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Notes

¹ Andreas Blank, “Definitions, Sorites Arguments, and Leibniz’ *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice*,” *The Leibniz Review*, vol. 14, December 2004, pp. 153 ff.

² *Ibid.*, p. 153.

³ Leibniz, *Nouveaux essais*, draft of the *Préface*, A VI, 6, pp. 48n.

- ⁴ Goethe, *Theory of Colors*, cited in Ernst Cassirer, *Kants Leben und Lehre* (Berlin 1921), p. 445.
- ⁵ Patrick Riley, *Leibniz' Universal Jurisprudence: Justice as the Charity of the Wise* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), pp. 185 ff.
- ⁶ Blank, "Definitions," op. cit., pp. 153 ff.
- ⁷ Leibniz, "La Félicité" (c. 1694-98), in Grua, *Textes inédits II*, pp. 579 ff.
- ⁸ St. Paul, I *Corinthians* xiii.
- ⁹ Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* I, 43. For a full treatment of Leibniz' debt to Cicero, see the author's review of A IV, 5, in *The Leibniz Review*, vol 14, December 2004, pp. 65 ff.
- ¹⁰ Leibniz, *Nouveaux essais*, op. cit., A VI, 6, p. 50.
- ¹¹ Plato, *Protagoras*, 349a-353a.
- ¹² Leibniz, *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice*, in G. Mollat (ed.), *Rechtsphilosophisches aus Leibnizens Ungedruckten Schriften* (Leipzig 1885), p. 66.
- ¹³ Riley, *Leibniz' Universal Jurisprudence*, op. cit., p. 192 ("the most wide-ranging effort to appreciate Leibniz' notion of justice by degrees. . . is to be found in Emily Grosholz' 'Leibniz and the Two Labyrinths'").
- ¹⁴ Leibniz, *Codex Iuris Gentium (Praefatio)*, in *Politische Schriften*, ed. H. Rudolph, vol. 5 (A IV, 5), Berlin 2004, p. 61.
- ¹⁵ Riley, *Leibniz' Universal Jurisprudence*, op. cit., pp. 215 ff., 268-270.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 144ff.
- ¹⁷ Plato, *Theaetetus*, 172 a ff.
- ¹⁸ Leibniz, *Méditation* (Mollat ed.), op. cit., p. 65.
- ¹⁹ Blank, "Definitions," op. cit., pp. 155-156.
- ²⁰ Leibniz, *Monitè* (on Pufendorf), in *Leibnitii . . . Opera Omnia*, ed. L. Dutens (Genera 1768), IV, iii, pp. 275 ff.
- ²¹ Blank, "Definitions," op. cit., p. 156.
- ²² Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* I, 27, xxviii.
- ²³ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A, 992 a, 30 ff. ("mathematics has come to be identical with philosophy [for the Platonists], though they say it should be studied for the sake of other things"); cf. *Republic* VII, 531 d ff. And at *Metaphysics* 993 b Aristotle adds that "the *telos* of practical knowledge is action . . . [and] practical men do not study the eternal [e.g. mathematics], but what is relative and in the present."
- ²⁴ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XIX, 13-15.

- ²⁵ Leibniz, *Elementa juris naturalis*, A VI, 1 (Darmstadt 1930), p. 462.
- ²⁶ Leibniz, *Codex (Praefatio)*, op. cit., A IV, 5, p. 61 n. (“Et si justitiam cum Aristotle in moderandus affectibus collocare velis (etc.).”).
- ²⁷ Cicero, *Quaestiones Tusculanae* IV, xxxiv.
- ²⁸ Leibniz, to Landgraf Ernst of Hessen-Rheinfels, Grua, *Textes inédits* I, pp. 238-239.
- ²⁹ Leibniz, *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken*, in Grua, *Textes inédits* I, p. 434.
- ³⁰ John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. B. Hermann (Cambridge, Mass, 2000), p. 110.
- ³¹ Leibniz, “On the Greeks as Founders of a Sacred Philosophy” (1714), ed. P. Riley, new ed. forthcoming in *Leibniz’ Stellung zum Judentum*, ed. H. Rudolph et. al (Berlin 2006).
- ³² Leibniz, “La Félicité,” op. cit., p. 579.
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ Leibniz, *Radical Origination of Things*, in *Monadology*, ed. R. Latta (Oxford 1898), p. 349.
- ³⁵ A.N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York 1978), p. 39.
- ³⁶ Plato, *Protagoras*, op. cit., 349a-353a.
- ³⁷ Leibniz, “De Abstractis,” in Grua, *Textes inédits* II, p. 576.
- ³⁸ Leibniz, “De Bono Unitatis,” in *Politische Schriften* vol. 4, A IV, 4, pp. 544 ff.
- ³⁹ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 256 b.
- ⁴⁰ Leibniz, to Huet (1679), in Dutens (op. cit.), vol. V, pp. 458 ff.
- ⁴¹ See also Plato, *Philebus* 15b, *Phaedo* 101e-105c. See Leibniz’ important letter of June 12, 1700, in which he begins with “this simple substance, this unity of substance, or this monad,” then says that those “unities” which are “rational souls” (*i.e.*, *moi en nous*) reason by means of “universal, necessary and eternal truths” which come from “the internal and divine light of ideas,” leading to “a society between them and God” (A I, 18, 114-115, Berlin 2005 [to Sophie and Sophie-Charlotte]).
- ⁴² Plato, *Timaeus* 41 b-d.
- ⁴³ Leibniz, *Novissima Sinica*, in *Leibniz: Writings on China*, e. D. Cook and H. Rosemont (Chicago 1994), pp. 49-50.
- ⁴⁴ Leibniz, letter to Grimaldi (1697), in Dutens, op. cit., vol. V, pp. 75 ff. (also in A I, 13, pp. 515 ff.).
- ⁴⁵ Leibniz, *Mars Christianissimus*, A IV, 2, pp. 446 ff.
- ⁴⁶ In *Leibniz: Writings on China*, op. cit., pp. 75 ff.

- ⁴⁷ Leibniz, *T*, II, 182.
- ⁴⁸ Leibniz, letter to M.G. Hansch (July 1707) in Dutens, vol. II, ppl. 222-225.
- ⁴⁹ Leibniz, letter to Pierre Coste (1712), GP III, p. 428.
- ⁵⁰ Leibniz, letter to Joachim Bouvet (1697), A I, 14, p. 833.
- ⁵¹ Leibniz, letter to Arnauld (1687), in Loemker, p. 342.
- ⁵² Leibniz, *T*, III, 323.
- ⁵³ Leibniz, "On the Greeks," op. cit., orig. pub. by Patrick Riley in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 13, no. 4 (1976); new ed. forthcoming in *Leibniz' Stellung zum Judentum*, op. cit. (Berlin 2006).
- ⁵⁴ Leibniz, "On the Greeks," op. cit., p. 216 (1976 ed.)
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶ Leibniz, *Memoir*, in *Politische Schriften* vol. 4, A IV, 4, pp. 612 ff.
- ⁵⁷ Leibniz, letter to Bierling (1713), Dutens V, p. 390.
- ⁵⁸ Leibniz, "On the Greeks," op. cit., p. 216.
- ⁵⁹ Leibniz, *Nova Methodus* #75, in *Philosophische Schriften* vol. I, A VI, 1 (Darmstadt 1930), pp. 344-345. For Leibniz' later doubts about the merits of *Nova Methodus*, see his self-critical letter ("juveniliter et insubide dicta sunt") of October 1709 to Kestner, in Grua, *Textes inédits* II, pp. 687-688.
- ⁶⁰ Leibniz *Méditation* (Mollat ed.), op. cit., p. 65.
- ⁶¹ Cf. Descartes, letter to Mersenne, in *Oeuvres*, ed. V. Cousin (Paris 1840), vol. VI, p. 109.
- ⁶² Hobbes, *Liberty, Necessity and Chance*, in *English Works*, ed. R Molesworth (London 1836-40), vol. V, p. 440 ff.
- ⁶³ Leibniz, *Unvorgreifliches Bedencken*, op. cit. in Grua, *Textes inédits* I, pp. 428 ff.
- ⁶⁴ Leibniz, on Burnet's *Necessity of Faith* in Grua, *Textes inédits* I, p. 252.
- ⁶⁵ Leibniz, *Monitè*, op. cit., Dutens IV, iii, pp. 275 ff.
- ⁶⁶ See, e.g., Andreas Blank, "Twin-Consciousness and the Identity of Indiscernibles in Leibniz' *Nouveaux essais*," Montréal 2006 (forthcoming).
- ⁶⁷ Leibniz, *Nouveaux essais*, op. cit., A VI, 6, pp. 50-51.
- ⁶⁸ Plato, *Laws*, III, 677b-693b.
- ⁶⁹ Leibniz, *Nouveaux essais*, op. cit., A VI, 6, p. 260.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 370.
- ⁷¹ Ibid., p. 425.
- ⁷² Plato, *Meno*, 82a ff.

- ⁷³ Leibniz, *Nouveaux essais*, op. cit., A VI, 6, p. 419.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 370.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 393.
- ⁷⁶ Leibniz, *Méditation* (Mollat ed.), op. cit., p. 65.
- ⁷⁷ Leibniz, to M.G. Hansch (1707), op. cit., Dutens II, pp. 222-225.
- ⁷⁸ Leibniz, letter to Jaquelot (1704), GP III, p. 474.
- ⁷⁹ Leibniz, *Nouveaux essais*, op. cit., A VI, 6, pp. 445-447.
- ⁸⁰ Leibniz, *Observationes de principio juris* (1700), in Dutens (op. cit.), IV, iii, pp. 270 ff.
- ⁸¹ Leibniz, *Nouveaux essais*, op. cit., A VI, 6, draft of the *Préface*, pp. 48-49 n.
- ⁸² Ibid., p. 96.
- ⁸³ Plato, *Timaeus*, 41 b-d.
- ⁸⁴ Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, IV, 7, in *Works* (London 1824), vol. II, pp. 162-163.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 173-174.
- ⁸⁶ Locke, letter to W. Molyneux (1698), *Works*, op. cit., VIII, 63.
- ⁸⁷ Locke, *Essay*, op. cit., IV, 11, 14, p. 208.
- ⁸⁸ The book just appeared a few weeks ago – from Philosophia Verlag, Munich.
- ⁸⁷ See Philip Beeley’s excellent “Leibniz et la tradition platonicienne,” Montréal 2004 (forthcoming).