

***Leibniz on Apperception, Consciousness, and Reflection*, by Mark Kulstad. München: Philosophia, 1991. 183 pp. Reviewed by Pauline Phemister, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.**

I have awaited Professor Kulstad's new book since Philosophia first announced its forthcoming publication in 1989. The wait perhaps increased my expectations, but now, with book in hand, I am in no way disappointed. The book concerns Leibniz's views on apperception, consciousness and reflection. These concepts play important roles in Leibniz's metaphysics. Scholars on the continent at the turn of the century recognized this, but anglo-american Leibnizians generally did not, although recently the issues have attracted the attention of McRae, Jolley and Rescher.

Kulstad traces the development of these key terms from Leibniz's early philosophical writings, the *Catholic Demonstrations* and the *Confession of Nature against Atheists*, through the Correspondence with Arnauld to their use in the *New Essays* (which necessitates an introductory, scene-setting, independently valuable chapter on Locke on consciousness and reflection), ending with analysis and discussion of passages (especially §4) from the 1714 *Principles of Nature and of Grace*. But the book is not only a developmental study of Leibniz's usage of the terms, 'apperception', 'consciousness' and 'reflection'. It is primarily a study of the differences between the mental lives of animals and those of humans. Kulstad exposes a tension in Leibniz's writings between texts which support the 'standard' view that animals do not apperceive

(supported by *Principles*, §4) and those which allow animal apperception (e.g., *New Essays* 2.21.5). The tension is neither resolved nor dissolved here. Leibniz himself, argues Kulstad, struggled unsuccessfully to find a solution. On the one hand, Leibniz admits that 'it will ever be difficult to persuade men that beasts feel nothing' (*Theodicy*, §10). (Why Leibniz should be similarly hard to persuade is not absolutely clear to me, although the 'nature makes no leaps' doctrine is obviously involved.) Denying animal apperception, on the other hand, is presented as a theologically attractive option which would permit the drawing of a sharp distinction between beasts and humans, which in turn would allow Leibniz to press the City of God doctrine and to justify divine reward and punishment of moral beings.

Along the way, the key terms are explored and different senses introduced. It is important to distinguish apperception of what is outside of us (basically, the sensation of external things) from apperception of what is in us. This distinction is paralleled by two types of reflection: simple reflection or consciousness and focused reflection. Both involve the perceiving of an act of perception. In the perceptual act, we may distinguish three elements: the actor (the soul), the action (the operation) and that which is acted upon (the thing perceived). In simple reflection, attention is directed primarily to the thing perceived, to an image of sense, perhaps. In focused reflection, attention is directed primarily towards the soul and its operations, to what is properly 'in us'. (Questions are raised in this context concerning how much the soul can attend

to at any one time). But apperception of what is in us and focused reflection are not identical. Apperception of what is in us is the wider term, sometimes involving considerations of abstraction and order (p. 144). We can order truths (more correctly, propositions) according to whether they are primitive or derived by deduction or demonstration and with varying degrees of complexity. All these truths count as being 'in us' and so are susceptible to being apperceived. Only human and higher beings are granted such rational capabilities. Beasts, not being able to direct their attention to their own mental operations, are restricted to lower apperception and empirical, not deductive, reasoning.

This approach towards a solution of the tension finds its best expression in the *New Essays*. But by the time of the *Principles*, Leibniz has almost reverted to the denial of animal apperception, although examination of the context of §4 and its drafts reveals that the reversal was not perhaps complete and definitive. Leibniz is still vacillating. And why? Possibly because the distinction between humans and animals, if the *New Essays* solution was adopted, would come to rest on the distinction between those beings which can direct their attention to the operations of their own minds (focused reflection) and those which can practise reflection, even to the extent of perceiving the workings of their own souls, but which cannot focus their attention on those actions. A fine and delicate distinction. Too fine to carry the weight of the City of God, especially since there seems to be no reason why animals, if they can direct their attention to some things, would not also be able to direct

their attention to the operations of their souls. Maybe the tension could never be resolved for the great chain of being will dictate that the borderline is always fuzzy.

Kulstad is exceptionally fair throughout, subjecting each alternative reading, including those he most prefers, to penetrating criticism. His writing displays the clarity of his thought, with carefully chosen words and a system of textual signposts guiding the reader through the argument. On account of both its contribution to the study of Leibniz and the method of historical philosophy employed, this book is a delight to scholars and advanced students alike.

Leibniz et l'école moderne du droit naturel, by René Sève. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989. Reviewed by Graeme Hunter, University of Ottawa.

This erudite book is aimed more directly at specialists in theories of right and law, than at Leibniz scholars. Acknowledging a debt of inspiration to the remarkable historical work of André de Muralt,¹ the author introduces in variable detail the legal philosophy of Suarez, Grotius, Pufendorf, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, and Kant, with substantial forays into Augustine, Aquinas, Scotus and Ockham. Leibniz fits into this study less as its *raison d'être* than as a piece in the puzzle, one local system of thought amid the galaxy of the modern school of natural right.

The great project of the modern school is to determine the degree to which moral principles may be established apart particular they are concerned with two