We have had to wait more than 300 years for the complete publication of Leibniz’ *Unvorgreifliches Bedencken* (“Unprejudiced Thoughts”) on charitable religious reconciliation between Lutherans and Calvinists (1698-1704); but now the central ornament of Akademie-Edition IV, 7, amounting to almost half the book, is a superb critical edition of *Unvorgreifliches Bedencken*—both the (more important) “First Version” (*Erste Fassung*) and the final (but more cautious) definitive version (published on facing pages), plus a number of closely related Leibniz-manuscripts which flesh out and illuminate this magisterial irenical writing (especially the *Tentamen Expositionis Irenicae*). Nonetheless *Unvorgreifliches Bedencken* has a pre-publication “history,” and justice itself requires acknowledgement of earlier Leibniz-scholars who made us expect and hope for the eventual appearance of this work; our chief debts are to Paul Schrecker, Gaston Grua, and Hartmut Rudolph, for they set the stage (over a period of 80 years) for the advent of the splendid Academy-Edition volume whose arrival we now celebrate. (Schrecker recalled *Unvorgreifliches Bedencken* from near-oblivion in 1934, revealing it as “a true treasure of philosophy and of theology”; Grua, “guided” by Schrecker, published a philosophically crucial fragment of the *Erste Fassung* in 1948; Rudolph published the Calvinizing work (Jablonksi’s *Kurtze Vorstellung*) to which Leibniz was responding, though this ”response” transformed narrow theological quibbles into Schrecker’s *vrai trésor de philosophie*.)

Given that it was Paul Schrecker who pulled *Unvorgreifliches Bedencken* out of centuries of neglect, and given that Schrecker was a great Leibniz-scholar whose Leibniz-work is no longer as well known as it deserves to be, it seems reasonable to start with the resurrection of *Unvorgreifliches Bedencken* in the 1930s-40s (at the hands of Schrecker and Grua), then to move toward the present—culminating in the publication of A IV, 7 through the excellent editorial work of Professor Wenchao Li (*Leiter* of Reihe IV) and of Dr. Stephan Waldhoff (who has recently had particular charge of *Unvorgreifliches Bedencken*).
To mark this important Leibniz-publication we now include, as an appendix to this review of A IV, 7, seven photo-reproduced pages of the ms. (specifically, excerpts from LH I, 9, BL. 117v – 119v) of the “Erste Fassung” of the “Unprejudiced Thoughts” (LH I, 9, BL. 106r – 167r) – all in Leibniz’ own hand. Almost all the quotations from Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken in this review come from these philosophically crucial pages, and they are marked with an asterisk.

II. Paul Schrecker’s “Recovery” of Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken

Paul Schrecker (Vienna 1889 – Pennsylvania 1963) made important contributions to Leibniz-scholarship for more than three decades, from his (virtual) co-editorship of volumes 3 and 4 of Reihe I in the Berlin Academy Edition of the Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe (officially unacknowledged until 1950) to his American edition of Leibniz-writings (including the best English translation of De Rerum Originatione Radicali) which appeared just after his death. But Schrecker’s greatest contribution to our understanding of Leibniz came neither in Berlin nor in America but in Paris, and in French, in 1934, soon after his expulsion from Germany; one means Schrecker’s splendid book, G.W. Leibniz, Lettres et fragments inédits sur les problèmes philosophiques, théologiques [et] politiques de la réconciliation des doctrines protestantes, together with a post-war amplification of the 1934 volume—a London lecture for the Royal Institute of Philosophy called “Descartes and Leibniz in 1946”. These closely-linked writings are not just a study, but an ardent defense of one of Leibniz’ greatest works, the “Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken” (1698-1704), which Schrecker called “[un] vrai trésor de philosophie et de théologie”—a “true treasure” because it sustained a (basically Platonice) notion of justice and goodness as “eternal verities” (reason-ordained and universally valid) against the idea that morality (and indeed truth itself) are divinely produced or “willed” by fiat or decree (as in Calvin, Descartes and Hobbes). And radical “voluntarism,” for Schrecker as for Leibniz (and also for Ernst Cassirer, as will be seen) led to “despotism” and “tyranny”: the very tyranny which (as the Wille zur Macht urged by Callicles in Gorgias) had driven Schrecker himself out of a lifetime in Berlin as (likely) successor to Paul Ritter at the Academy-Edition. Only after the War did Schrecker speak, in print, of the dangers of voluntas ungoverned by ratio—the central theme of Leibniz’ “Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken”; for Schrecker in bombed-out London in 1946, “no other means of pacifying the world has ever been proposed from which greater success might be expected than from a recourse
to the universal ideas of reason and justice, as recommended by Leibniz.” Schrecker adds, for Leibniz and for Plato, “like the first principles of knowledge, are not therefore rooted in the unfathomable decree of some tyrannical will or power, but, independently from any power ... in the ideas of justice itself.” And finally Schrecker goes on to say that, “just as the eternal truths of reason did not depend upon a divine decree, so also the principles of justice did not derive their validity from a decision of the divine will, but, on the contrary, like the eternal truths, presided over the creation and government of the world.”

These words of Schrecker’s—the survivor of injustice, exile and war—sound like a paraphrase of the “Unvorgreifliches Bedencken,” and of the Théodicée, “The Justice of God”—because that is what they are. Schrecker was a Leibnizian, who put his faith and hope in charity—not just a Leibniz-scholar and Leibniz-editor.

A few biographical details will throw further light on the Leibniz-achievements of Paul Schrecker—before turning his “reading” of Leibniz’ “Unvorgreifliches Bedencken.” Born in Vienna in 1889—when Sigmund Freud had lately become a Viennese-by-adoption and Gustav Mahler was soon to do so—Schrecker pursued a Leibnizian trivium (philosophy, science and law) at Vienna University, receiving a LLD (which had also been Leibniz’ doctoral degree) in 1913. (A year earlier, in 1912, he had published a study of Henri Bergson’s theory of “personality.”)

Following further university work in Paris (Sorbonne) and in Berlin (Humboldt), he received a Ph.D. in philosophy from the Prussian institution in 1927, then joined the Leibniz-Commission of the Prussian Academy in 1929. For the next four years he “stood next to” Paul Ritter, founder of the Academy-Edition, “creating the foundations” (in Kurt Müller’s words) of the third and fourth volumes of Leibniz’ Allgemeiner Politischer und Historischer Briefwechsel. (This Müller pointed out in his “Introduction” to vol. 4 of the General Correspondence, which finally saw the light of day in Berlin only in 1950.)

Chased out of Berlin by Nazi racial laws, Schrecker fled to long-familiar Paris in 1933; with the advantage of perfect French he was able to bring out Leibniz: Lettres et fragments inédits in 1934 (from MSS uncovered in Warsaw), then to turn to a completion of Ravier’s celebrated Leibniz-bibliography in 1937 (“addenda et corrigenda”). Soon thereafter he served as co-translator of a book on “Descartes, Corneille and Christine of Sweden” by Ernst Cassirer (another great émigré Leibnizian), and by 1939 he had prepared an unpublished 1697 Leibniz-letter to the Abbé Nicaise for publication in Thomas Mann’s Mass und Wert (Zürich 1939-1940). This unpublished letter, like most of Leibniz’ late letters to Nicaise, dealt...
with the “disinterested love” which had set Fénelon and Bossuet at unloving odds and which was crucial to Leibniz’ own definition of justice as “the charity [love] of the wise.” One can reasonably wonder: did Schrecker’s sending a Leibniz-MS on Platonizingly “disinterested” love to Thomas Mann in the late 1930’s perhaps inspire the great Goethe-reverie on Leibnizian monads in Lotte in Weimar, which Mann brought out in 1940? After all, in this reverie Goethe is made to say that sublimated (made-sublime) erotism “makes an entelechy of the monad” through love-driven “beautiful metamorphoses.” One can wonder, merely—but the coincidence is indeed striking.

With the fall of France in 1940 Schrecker fled to New York City, where he published in Francophone émigré journals and found a place at the New School for Social Research (itself chased out of Frankfurt); here two of his colleagues would have been Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt. By War’s end he was teaching at Swarthmore College (the Quaker institution near Philadelphia); Leibniz himself had extolled “philadelphian” (brother-loving) union through caritas and benevolentia—and these were prominent themes in Schrecker’s great post-war London lecture, “Descartes and Leibniz in 1946” (which finally made clear the motives behind his 1934 Paris book).

By the late 1940s Schrecker had become professor of philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania; in 1951 he published a remarkable article, “Leibniz and the Timaeus,” in which he argued that Leibniz’ De Rerum Originatione Radicali is a de-personalized, de-mythologized, rationalized re-working of Plato’s great dialogue. (He also argued that “[of Leibniz’] decisive indebtedness to Plato there can be no doubt.”)

Throughout the 1950s Schrecker built up, at the University of Pennsylvania, the greatest collection of Leibniz microfilms outside Hannover—inspired by his fear, during World War II, that the Leibniz-Archiv might be bombed into oblivion. In 1959 Schrecker returned to the 1930s, pour ainsi dire, by writing a fine Leibniz-appreciation for an old pupil/disciple of Ernst Cassirer, Raymond Klibansky—who published a four-volume set of essays on the history of philosophy in Florence in 1959. Schrecker, earlier, had been Cassirer’s French translator; and what tied Cassirer and Schrecker together was a shared conviction that Leibniz was, at bottom and above all, a Platonist. After all, Cassirer, in his great Philosophy of the Enlightenment (1932), had seen Leibniz as Leibniz saw himself (in the 1703 Méditation on justice): as Plato contra Thrasymachus-Hobbes, as right contra might:
The thinkers of this [Enlightenment] era [and especially Leibniz] are never satisfied with the consideration of conventional historical law; they go back rather to “the laws we were born with.” But in the justification and defense of this type of law they return to our most ancient legal heritage, to Plato’s radical formulation … of the relationship between right and might …. After more than two thousand years the eighteenth century established direct contact with the thinking of antiquity …. The two fundamental theses represented in Plato’s Republic by Socrates and Thrasymachus oppose each other again [in Leibniz’ Méditation].

Leibniz, the jurisconsult, for Cassirer (as for Schrecker), inherited jurisprudential Platonism (as found in Gorgias and Republic) from the “classical humanism” of Hugo Grotius’ De Iure belli ac Pacis (1625), and conveyed that slightly chastened Platonic “light” into the German Enlightenment (Lumières, Aufklärung)—where, in a still more chastened “critical” version, it also did much to shape Kant’s practical thought (Critique of Pure Reason A 314/B 371, on Plato’s Republic). Leibniz, Cassirer urges,

...was merely drawing a clear and definite conclusion from an idea stemming from [Plato and] Grotius when he declared that jurisprudence belongs to those disciplines which do not depend on experience, but on definitions, not on facts, but on strictly logical proof. For experience could never reveal what law and justice are in themselves.

Cassirer (like Schrecker) defended Leibniz and “right” against the “the Levia-than state” and “might”: and it is no accident that Cassirer wrote the Preface to Enlightenment (October 1932) when he thought a new Thrasymachus (or Callicles) was about to march up Unter den Linden to destroy the “enlightened” but doomed left-Kantian Weimar Republic. (And, indeed, Cassirer, Kant and Leibniz would join together in the “Weimar” sentiments of Thomas Mann’s Goethe novel, in which the sister of Schopenhauer is made to say that “enthusiasm is beautiful, but only with the Enlightenment [Aufklärung] which reins in evil passions.” And Schrecker would be in perfect agreement.)

In the early 1960’s Schrecker’s health began to fail, and he died (1963) before completing his fine edition of Leibniz’ writings; his wife completed the edition from his notes and published it in 1965. Excellent as this volume is, it remains true that Schrecker’s greatest Leibniz-accomplishment will always be Leibniz: Lettres et fragments inédits, from his Parisian exile; it is to that work (and to its rescue of Unvorgreifliches Bedencken) that we now return.

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III. Leibniz’ “Unprejudiced Thoughts”

For Leibniz perhaps the highest (or widest) form of justice as *caritas sapientis* or *benevolentia universalis* (as Paul Schrecker saw) is to be found in religious reconciliation, unity, and concord, in three ever-outward-expanding spheres or circles: (1) reconciliation of Protestants (“Lutherans” and “Calvinists”) in Germany (2) reconciliation of Protestants and Roman Catholics in Europe,\(^{29}\) (3) reconciliation of Christians with all other rational beings (for example the Chinese, as recommended in *Novissima Sinica* [1699]).\(^{30}\) In 1699 Leibniz was still at work on the great irenical treatise called “Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken” (“Unprejudiced Thoughts”) on Lutheran-Calvinist *rapprochement* which he had begun early in 1698 with his friend and colleague the Lutheran Abbot of Loccum, Gerhard Wolter Molanus\(^{31}\) — an irenical work which Schrecker rightly called, not just “a true treasure of philosophy and of theology” but also the “definitive formulation of Leibniz’ irenical thoughts” in “an ample and profound writing” (*Lettres et fragments inédits*, Paris 1934). (After Schrecker emigrated to France he advised his young French colleague Gaston Grua to include part of the “Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken” in what finally became — after a decade’s delay — Leibniz’ *Textes inédits* [Paris 1948].\(^{32}\) And more recently the “Unprejudiced Thoughts” have been illuminated especially by Dr. Hartmut Rudolph [now of the Leibniz-Bibliothek Hannover\(^{33}\).]

While collaborating on the “Unprejudiced Thoughts” Leibniz and Molanus exchanged a number of important letters, many of them found by Schrecker in Warsaw and published by him in Paris in 1934; and a crowning glory of their correspondence is Leibniz’ remarkable letter to Molanus of October 1699 urging that hyper-Calvinist notions of groundless, extra-reasonable “election” and “salvation” (regardless or merit and desert) can degenerate unto unjust, uncharitable “tyranny.”\(^{34}\) And it is worth remembering, of course, that it was for Molanus that Leibniz finally wrote the definitive statement of his Christian-Platonic “universal jurisprudence” of charity and benevolence, the “Opinion [*Monità*] on the Principles of Pufendorf,”\(^{35}\) in 1706 (as will be seen in part IV, ahead).

To conciliate the Evangelical and the Reformed churches — Leibniz refused to use the names “Lutheran” and “Calvinist,” which he considered too personal and partisan, too inimical to charitable transcending of “schism”\(^{36}\) (as Schrecker pointed out) it would be sufficient to find *minimal* acceptable common ground between those churches.\(^{37}\) Leibniz, however, pursues not the prudent minimum but the radical maximum in the “Unprejudiced Thoughts”: he bases his argument not
on a narrow common ground acceptable just to (closely related) Protestant sects, but on the notion of that which is necessarily, universally true and/or right for all rational beings in the universe. And that is why he closely paraphrases Plato’s dialogue *Euthyphro* (without naming it) in the key paragraph of the “Unprejudiced Thoughts”—for the point of the *Euthyphro* is that even the gods themselves see and know and chastely love the “eternal verities” (mathematical and moral) which are valid for all “minds” in the cosmos, that the gods don’t cause or make eternal truth by *decrees* or a so-called “absolute” will.38 This Platonizing moral universalism, which Leibniz was to turn against both radical Cartesian voluntarism and Calvinist “absolute decrees” (as will be seen shortly), was the basis of his *jurisprudence universelle* of “wise charity” and “universal benevolence”—a universal jurisprudence well-outlined in his letter of January 1698 to Huldreich von Eyben, which urges that “the whole of practical theology is indeed nothing other than a species of the highest jurisprudence, that is the right of God [*de jure Dei*],” and that while each earthly *Respublica* “has its own jurisprudence, so to speak,” these individual justice-systems are subordinate to “the jurisprudence of the greatest city of all minds under the monarchy of God,” which is the “*optima Respublica*.”39 And in a letter to the Florentine scholar Antonio Magliabechi from June 1698, Leibniz makes it clear that this universal justice in the “best commonwealth” has everything to do with “the nature of true love” or finding one’s own pleasure “in the felicity of others”: universal *caritas* requires the wise love of God and of one’s neighbor.40 It is not surprising that a professional law-expert with a doctorate in jurisprudence should view practical theology as a “species” of “the highest jurisprudence,” and that the same legal expert should write a *theodicy* [theos-dike, “the justice of God”], saying “it is the cause of God I plead.”41 (It is thus no accident that Schrecker made the *Causa Dei* the crown of his late, posthumous edition of Leibniz’ works.) Indeed Leibniz the “universal” jurisconsult finds objectionable in a Calvinist “absolute” God the same things that a practicing lawyer would condemn in a court of law: “the damnation of an innocent, the taking back of divine promises, and the like, which would not be an *actus conformis justitiae*”—for it would be incongruent with “the goodness and the wisdom of God”).42

One doesn’t really “need” Platonism just to bridge the (not too huge) differences between Calvinists and Lutherans; Leibniz uses Platonism, which goes well beyond his immediate, limited irenical needs, precisely because of his “almost worshipful … devotion to Plato” (as Schrecker has aptly called it).43 It is revealing, indeed, that Leibniz should fall back on Plato’s *Euthyphro* when something more modest,
less radical, would be sufficient. “Reason not the need,” as King Lear says—or rather, go beyond what is narrowly, immediately needed to reason itself. For what reason dictates universally to all rational beings—even to the gods themselves in Euthyphro—will be also automatically valid for Lutherans and Calvinists. The theological fine-points of the “Unprejudiced Thoughts” are of greater interest to the history of theology than to the history of philosophy; but it is philosophically interesting that Leibniz should use Platonic rationalism to draw together two modern, north-European Christian sects. Tertullian had famously asked, “If we have Jerusalem, what need have we of Athens?” Leibniz uses “Athens” to bridge quarreling sides of a divided “Jerusalem.” He enlists Plato to mediate between Luther and Calvin—not surprisingly, given his view that “the doctrine of Plato concerning metaphysics and morality is holy and just . . . and everything he says about truth and the eternal ideas is truly admirable.”

(Paul Schrecker makes the same point in a slightly different way when he says that Leibniz’ “passionate will to reconcile opposing views” led him, not to “choose and to borrow what suited him in opposing doctrines, but to make the contrasts disappear in a higher unity, a true Aufhebung in the sense given to this word by Hegel … The method Leibniz uses is that of the purest rationalism.”

As the 1699 letters to Molanus will soon make clear, what Leibniz found most worrying in hyper-Calvinism (and hyper-Cartesianism) was the notion that by an “absolute decree” God willed the election of the saved and the reprobation of the damned—not from foreknowledge of good or bad use of faith and grace on the part of human beings, but simply as an exercise of unquestionable sovereign power. (Euthyphro, in “his” dialogue, had urged that whatever the gods love counts as right, but Socrates refutes him; small wonder that Leibniz should view Calvin as a kind of Euthyphro après la lettre). The idea of “tyrannical” divine potestas, undirected by any rational causa impulsiva or benevolent charity, Leibniz had eloquently denounced as morally intolerable near the beginning of the “Discourse on Metaphysics” (1686):

Why praise [God] for what he has done if he would be equally praiseworthy in doing exactly the opposite? Where will his justice and his wisdom be found if nothing is left but a certain despotic power, if will takes the place of reason, and if, according to the definition of tyrants [Thrasymachus’ definition of justice in Plato’s Republic], that which is pleasing to the most powerful is by that very fact just?

Almost exactly the same kind of tyranny-rejecting language appears in Leibniz’
letter of February 1698 to his collaborator Molanus: “every act of divine will has a determining reason [\textit{causa impulsiva}], otherwise God would not be supremely wise.” Condemning the notion of willful divine “tyranny” yet again, Leibniz makes Christ himself speak against it—and in Greek, the language of Plato. Leibniz then actually compares divine tyranny to the Roman practice of decimation—something bloody, arbitrary, and not personally \textit{deserved}—and urges that “jurisconsults” will view such tyranny with “aversion,” as “one of the impossible things.” In this same Romanizing vein, Leibniz then goes on to reflect on Tacitus’ \textit{Annales}, saying that while a mere \textit{princeps} [prince] will suffer from “human imperfections” \textit{[imperfectioni humanae]}, God by contrast will always act through a “supremely wise perfection” which rules out the arbitrary and the tyrannical.\textsuperscript{48} Schrecker rightly says that this letter is “a document of high philosophical importance” precisely because it insists that, “one must make the goodness of God prevail” over the “predilection of the orthodox” to “raise up the omnipotence and omniscience” of the divinity.\textsuperscript{49} But it is in an October 1699 letter to Molanus that Leibniz expands his Christian-Platonist objections to Calvinist (and Cartesian) “absolutism” as something \textit{unjust}:

   God does not act through absolute power alone, without reason, as would a tyrant, and it is always his supreme wisdom which makes him choose the best—though the reasons for this depth of his counsel may be unknown to us. Thus the love of God and the respect which we owe him is not injured at all; his wisdom, his goodness, and his justice remain in their entirety, as well as his power and his supreme right... This sovereign master does not act without reason, or by some obscure movement of his power alone, which would be the act of a tyrant, but through reasons (however unknown to us) which his perfections furnish to him: in a word, sovereign wisdom has as much of a role as sovereign power.\textsuperscript{50}

Sections 175-178 of the \textit{Theodicée}, a decade later, against the supralapsarians, merely amplify these complaints about “tyranny” and “injustice” in the letters to Molanus.\textsuperscript{51} And that is why Schrecker is so correct when he urges that the October 1699 letter contains “all the elements of [Leibniz’] irenical ideas”—but especially “the accentuation of the sovereign wisdom and goodness of God in contrast with his omnipotence.”\textsuperscript{552} (Leibniz ardently rejected Hobbes’ view that all we \textit{know} of God is his “irresistible power.”)

The Platonic-rationalist anti-voluntarism outlined in these letters to his collaborator had been long-aimed by Leibniz not just against the more radical forms of hyper-Calvinist theology, but against Descartes’ even more thoroughgoing and
extreme voluntarism in the *Reply to the Six Objections*. Descartes had insisted that:

It is self-contradictory that the will of God should not have been from eternity indifferent to all that has come to pass or that will ever occur, because we can form no conception of anything good or true... the idea of which existed in the divine understanding before God’s will determined him to act.\(^{53}\)

One of the most consistent things in Leibniz’s philosophical development was his hostility to such hyper-creationist notions, as an early (1677) letter of his shows: “I know that it is the opinion of Descartes that the truth of things depends on the divine will. This has always seemed absurd to me... Who would say that A is not non-A because God has decreed it?”\(^{54}\)

Here Schrecker, in his 1946 London lecture, pointed out that:

...Leibniz’ activity started with an acute criticism of Descartes’ system... If not only laws of nature, but even truths of reason repose on an unaccountable decree of God’s inscrutable will, all knowledge becomes, indeed, at best a pragmatic implement and loses its dignity as an adequate, though imperfect, representation of the objective universe. The whole voluntaristic basis of Descartes’ epistemology had, therefore, to be surrendered in order to restore to science the exalted role it had played in ancient Greece. Descartes’ God was, indeed, still an absolute monarch whose will stood for reason and who did not owe to his subjects any other account for what he has decreed beyond the *car tel est mon plaisir*. He was *legibus solutus* like the princes of Descartes’ time, and the motives he may have had for enacting his decrees did not have to be justifiable before Reason.

And Schrecker then goes on to say that Descartes’ hyper-voluntarism

...is an assumption which, already shaken by Malebranche, was radically rejected by Leibniz. God, though still conceived of as the sovereign governor of the universe, now became a constitutional monarch, bound by the laws He has Himself enacted. And even though what is infinite in God is only finite in man, and human knowledge can, therefore, never reach perfection, it is nevertheless capable of participating adequately in the idea of the universe as conceived by the Divine Intellect. For Reason is one. The same reason which presided in shaping the archetype of the universe in the Divine Intellect, presides over man’s strife for knowledge. The eternal truths or truths of reason, specifically, are the same for God as for man.\(^{55}\)

In the history of philosophy the idea that the concept of justice, as an “eternal verity,” is not a mere adjunct of power, that it is an idea who necessary truth is at...
least analogous to the truths of mathematics and logic, is commonly associated with Plato. Now while it is not true that Leibniz was a Platonist in any doctrinaire sense—his clinging to Augustinian “good will” (*bona voluntas*) would have made that difficult, given Plato’s rejection of “will” in *Protagoras* (352 b-e)—nevertheless he did agree with Plato on many points of fundamental importance. “I have always been quite content, since my youth,” he wrote to Remond in 1715, “with the moral philosophy of Plato, and even in a way with his metaphysics; for those two sciences accompany each other, like mathematics and physics.”

The Platonic work which Leibniz admired most—at least for use in moral and political philosophy and in theology—was the *Euthyphro*, which he paraphrased almost literally in his most important work on justice, the “Meditation on the Common Notion of Justice.” In the *Euthyphro*, which deals with the question whether “the rules of goodness and of justice are anterior to the decrees of God” (in Leibniz’ words), Plato “makes Socrates uphold the truth on that point”\(^{57}\) (*Théodiceé* II, 182). And that truth is, as Ernst Cassirer puts it, that the good and the just are “not the product but the objective aim and the motive of his will.”\(^{58}\)

The opening lines of Leibniz’s “Meditation” on justice merely convert Platonic dialogue into straightforward prose:

> 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.\(^{59}\)

Leibniz then goes on, in the “Meditation,” to equate Hobbes with the Thrasymachus (*Republic* I, 338c) who had viewed justice not as geometrically “eternal” but as the product of the will of the powerful. Leibniz’ devotion to the doctrine of Plato’s *Euthyphro* is clear not just in the “Meditation on the Common Notion of Justice” (and then later in the *Theodicy*), but in the slightly earlier “Unvorgreifliches Bedencken” (c. 1698-1704), which (as we have seen) 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 “strange Cartesians”
[absonderlich Cartesianer] “who teach that two times two makes four and three times three makes nine, for no other reason [Ursach] than that God wills it.”*60

This last sentence was especially important to Schrecker, for obvious reasons---and he must have made this importance clear to Gaston Grua when the celebrated Textes inédits were being planned in Paris in c. 1936-37. For the crucial phrase, “absonderlich Cartesianer,” appears only in the Erste Fassung of the Unvorgreifliche Bedencken, and was deleted in the final definitive version (for fear of offending certain dogmatic Cartesians at the Calvinist court in Berlin); Schrecker must have helped Grua to see that the Erste Fassung is philosophically more interesting than the definitive version precisely because its opposition to “Cartesian voluntarism” is explicitly, boldly asserted, not veiled and oblique. (In the Erste Fassung, after all, the willful absonderlich Cartesianer make their appearance just three lines after Leibniz’ close paraphrase of Plato’s Euthyphro, in which Socrates rejects Euthyphro’s view that something is “good and right” because “God wills it”*; Leibniz’ letting Plato defeat Descartes is not inadvertent.) And it may be for this reason that in his “Avertissement” to Textes inédits, Grua thanks a list of helpful French scholars (Rivaud, Bréhier, Baruli, Gilson, Laporte) en masse, but mentions “M[onsieur] P. Schrecker” (as a “master” who has “guided” him) in a free-standing separate clause.61 Grua chose to publish the Descartes-bashing Erste Fassung, when the “diplomatic” definitive version was available; almost certainly we owe this choice to Schrecker. To be sure, we cannot know (after 75 years) exactly what Schrecker told Grua in Paris cafés in 1936/37, before Grua went off to the Hannover Leibniz-Archiv (where Schrecker was now persona non grata); but since Schrecker’s degrees were in philosophy (Berlin) and law (Vienna), who could have given Grua better advice concerning the publication of Leibnizian texts about jurisprudence universelle, “la justice divine et humaine”? (In this way Schrecker, though deprived of the Leibniz-Edition, could participate in a Leibniz-edition—and a great one, as it turned out.)

In any case a radically “voluntarist” position, for Leibniz, is as calamitous morally and theologically 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,” that 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

The Leibniz Review, Vol. 21, 2011

130
justice, goodness, and charity.”* (The last clause is a conscious re-working of I Corinthians 13, “Now abideth faith, hope charity, these three;” Leibniz replaces “faith” and “hope” with two additional moral virtues.) 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.”*62 (This phrase from Juvenal’s Satire VI, line 223, continues with another phrase which had great weight with Leibniz: the whole sentence reads Hoc volo, sic jubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas, and was understood by Leibniz to say, “Thus I will do, thus I ordain, my will takes the place of reason.”) Here, in his boldest stroke, Leibniz virtually equates hyper-Calvinists with the willful woman in Juvenal’s Satire who crucifies an innocent slave merely because she wants to. And since Christ (the caritas-lover) was also a crucified innocent, Leibniz links all unjust crucifiers (e.g. Pontius Pilate in Novissima Sinica) to partisanship for extra-rational “absolute” decrees: he deploys pagan Juvenal to make Christian Calvin more charitable (as he had deployed Plato to mediate between Luther and Calvin).

On one occasion in the “Unprejudiced Thoughts” Leibniz quotes, not just his favorite line from Juvenal (“hoc volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas”)—this phrase from Satire VI appears no fewer than six times in Unvorgreifl iches Bedencken—but also a line from a later Satire (XIII) in which a cruelly vengeful person says, “est vindicta bonum vita jucundius ipsa” (“vengeance is good, sweeter than life itself”); to this Juvenal responds that “that’s how the ignorant talk, you’ll see their passions flare up for the flimsiest reason, or maybe for none at all”—adding that Socrates would “never have given his prosecutor [Miletus] one drop of the hemlock he had to drink in his cruel bondage.” And then: “benign philosophy, by degrees, peels away our follies and most of our vices [and] gives us a grounding in right and wrong.”

This Juvenalian appeal to Euthyphro, Crito, Phaedo and Apology (the relevant “Socratic” dialogues), with its foretaste of Theaetetus 172b (“matters of right and wrong”) is perfect for Leibniz’ Platonizing purposes, and fleshes out the pithier hoc volo, sic jubeo: Socratic “reason” and “philosophy” must prevail over uncontrolled voluntas, whether that “will” is God’s or man’s. For Leibniz’ recalling of Juvenal XIII is aimed (in Unvorgreifl iches Bedencken) against hyper-Calvinistic “supralapsarians” who imagine that a vengeful God created men only “to achieve their eternal misery and damnation” through “pleasure and joy in the death and ruination of sinners.” This, Leibniz says, would be a “pleasure in misfortune”
(proto-Freudian Schadenfreude!) which is a sign “not only of imperfection but also of evilness.” (For Leibniz the supralapsarians’ God is—to recall Iago’s words in Othello—a “cruel God” who is a “divinity of hell.” Indeed Shakespeare, Juvenal and Freud would join together with Leibniz in opposing the unjust, impious gods long-since condemned by Plato in the Euthyphro—the gods who, after a riot of unwise love (the rapes of Europa and of Ganymede) would connive at the judicial murders of Socrates and of Christ.)

Leibniz’ insistence on God’s “justice, goodness and charity” as an antidote to “absolutism” and “tyranny” is brought out in a crucial paragraph of the Unvorgreifliches Bedencken (and then echoed in his 1698-99 letters to Molanus). In the “Unprejudiced Thoughts” Leibniz urges that:

the divine attributes must necessarily be compatible, or as it is explained by our theologians, harmoniously united [harmonica]. God, though he is not only charitable [barmherzig] but charity itself, can nonetheless undertake no exercise of it which goes against his justice—and also no exercise of his justice through which his charity would be left behind.*

Any exercise of divine omnipotence [Allmacht], Leibniz goes on to say, must be limited by God’s “goodness” and “wisdom”—leading finally to “justice” [Gerechtigkeit]. This same Gerechtigkeit is insisted on by Leibniz, over and over, in his long and important letter to Molanus of July 18, 1698—especially in the paragraph in which Leibniz treats Christ as “a just judge” for charitably saving “the woman taken in adultery” (John VIII, 15) from the legal penalty of death by stoning, for benevolently saying, “Go, and sin no more.” It is not surprising that Leibniz should give primacy to the Johannine Gospel—which in effect “foresees” Leibniz’ notion of anti-legalistic caritas sapientis and benevolentia.

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.” (“Now consist justice, goodness, beauty, no less than mathematical things, in equality and proportion, and are therefore no less aeternae et necessariae veritatis.”) He adds that “true justice, as it is grasped by all understanding and honor-loving people, consists not in impunity, but means a universal good-willingness, in which wisdom is included.” (Given Leibniz’ standard moral equivalences, as Schrecker also saw, allgemeine Gutwilligkeit = benevolentia universalis = caritas sapientis = justice.) And finally Leibniz plays the “ontological proof” trump card: if all truths were divinely caused ex nihilo, then

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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*].”68 In that passage, Plato triumphs not just over the unholy Trinity of Euthyphro-Calvin-Descartes, but over the unholy Pantheon of Euthyphro-Thrasymachus-Epicurus-Calvin-Descartes-Hobbes—for Leibniz (as much as Plato) wisely loved and ecumenically cherished not pan-theon but theos-dike.

In Leibniz’ later correspondence, by the way, several letters from Leibniz to Molanus himself refer to Unvorgreifliches Bedencken; but Leibniz’ most important elaboration of the work (in the idiom of the “divine jurisprudence” of the optima respublica) appears in a letter to Heinrich Ludolf Benthem (May 1701), which claims that Calvinism can be made “not dangerous” [nicht gefährlich] only if it finds a non-voluntarist way to “save” the “attributa divina, nehmlich bonitas, sapientia et justitia”—for without goodness and wisdom there can be no justice as caritas sapientis. Saying that in our present state (“through a glass darkly”) we cannot comprehend why God elects some but not all (“many are called but few are chosen”), Leibniz nonetheless insists that Calvinists—if they hope for eventual rapprochement not just with Lutherans but even with Catholics—must see that a just God (who creates the “best”) chooses the saved “nicht ex mero quoadam placito velut tyrannico, sed ex principis summae sapientiae et justitiae,” that is, not through a “decretum absolutum” which is “independens ab omni ratione.”69 For “choice without reason” would be the Juvenalian stat pro ratione voluntas which Leibniz always calls “the motto of a tyrant,”70 and which (in the late correspondence with Clarke/Newton) he calls “Epicurean”—the very doctrine which he joins Cicero (De Natura Deorum) in condemning as morally fatal and providence-destroying. “One must not imagine that God is capable of doing that which would be called tyranny in men.”71

IV. Unvorgreifliches Bedencken and Observationes de Principio Iuris: “The Same” Work

Given Leibniz’ view that moral theology is “a certain divine jurisprudence which explains lawfully our society with God” [De Fine Scientiarum A IV 5]72, given that Leibniz’ only large-scale published theological work is Théodicée, theos-dike, “the justice of God,” it is not surprising that, at the very moment he was revising and polishing the Platonizingly anti-voluntarist Unvorgreifliches Bedencken on religious reconciliation, he also was reading—and then reviewing in print, albeit

The Leibniz Review, Vol. 21, 2011

133
anonymously—the *Principio Iuris* of Samuel Cocceji (1699), which basis “right” on the same creative “will” of God that Leibniz had just rejected in *Unvorgreifliches Bedencken*. For Leibniz in his *Observationes de Principio Iuris* the “principle of right” is only a little more “secular” than the nominally theological (i.e. “divinely jurisprudential”) “Unprejudiced Thoughts”; the *Bedencken* and the *Observationes* are, in effect, “the same work” from slightly different angles.

During the period 1700-1706, indeed, Leibniz wrote his three most important mature pieces on justice as “wise charity” and “universal benevolence”—a justice also conceived as a demi-Platonic “eternal moral verity” akin to the necessary truths of mathematics and geometry (as in *Meno*) not as the mere artificial product of power-based sovereign “command” and “will,” as in Calvin and Descartes and in Hobbes’ *De Cive* and *Leviathan*. These three late justice-essays are (in order) the *Observationes de Principio Iuris* (1700), the *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice* (1703), and the *Monità* on Pufendorf (1706). The *Méditation* and the *Monità* are reasonably well-known; but the (almost) equally important *Observationes* are very little-known indeed (and have never been translated into English).

The *Observationes*, as noted, are a commentary on Samuel Cocceji’s *Disputatio de principio Iuris naturalis unico, vero et adaequato*—the same Cocceji who later served as Chancellor of Prussia under Frederick the Great. While Cocceji’s name is no longer familiar in the history of philosophy and jurisprudence, what matters is that Leibniz’ *Observations* on Cocceji offer one of his more striking critiques of voluntarism and of Hobbism, anticipating the 1703 equating of Hobbes with Thrasymachus (just as “will,” “power” and “command”) in the *Méditation* on justice.

Cocceji, Leibniz says in section VI of the *Observationes*, “affirms that the natural law is the command of the creator . . . that the will of the creator obligates the creature.” But, Leibniz thinks, this will not do: “if indeed we suppose that the creature can dispose of enough power, once produced, to be no longer constrained by the creator, it will have to be considered as emancipated”—in the same way that “sons can arrive at a degree of power such that they can no longer be constrained by the parents who brought them into the world.” Soon enough, in any case, on Leibniz’ view, “creation” collapses into purest Hobbism: “But the illustrious author [Cocceji] seems to derive law from coercion alone. And thus, since generation does not give law”—sons can grow up—“neither will creation give it, but only power.” But “if omnipotence is, above all, the power to do harm (in virtue of which it is said that certain people adore the devil),” one will soon have to revert to the doctrine that Plato strove so hard to overturn—one will soon have to “go
back to the tyrannical principle enunciated by Thrasymachus in Plato: that will be just which is pleasing to the most powerful. Neither is Hobbes far from this, who bases justice on power.” But since, Leibniz recalls, a Hobbesian (following Job 40) acknowledges only God’s “irresistible” power, not his moral and intellectual attributes (“hast thou an arm like mine?”)—“supposing that there is a malignant God such as the Manichaeans admitted, his power would suffice to make just even the worst of things, which is repugnant to our conception of natural justice.”

This passage is not as charitable as it is effective: to link Hobbes to adoration of the devil and to Manichaeanism is more striking than just. All the same, in Leibniz’ view, Hobbesians (like Calvinists and Cartesians) are wrong in overstressing God’s power. In a more moderate paragraph of the Observationes which anticipates the Theodicy of ten years later (while echoing the Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken), Leibniz insists that

Justice is founded on higher and better principles—not solely on the will of God but also on his intelligence; not on his mere power but also on his wisdom. Justice is based not on the will, but on the charity of the knower. Wherefore justice has been defined by a jurisconsult as “the charity of the wise” . . . And if we suppose, per impossibile, that an evil genius seized supreme power, he would not cease to be wicked and unjust and tyrannical through the fact that he could not be resisted.

One cannot derive the concept of right from the mere possession of unwise, “willful” power—as Leibniz invariably says, whether he is speaking of God or man. And this is why, Leibniz says, in a 1701 letter to his assistant Friedrich August Hackmann on the Observationes, that he “hopes” that “no damaging opinions” flow out of Cocceji’s ἔτεςολογία—not just out of his “heterodoxy” but out of his “hetero-reason” (!), a Leibnizian neologism.

In this 1701 letter to Hackmann, written almost a year after his anonymous review, Leibniz says (a little coyly) that he has “seen something” of Cocceji’s “new Principio juris naturae,” but that he is “firmly opposed” to the work and will “stick sooner with the old” principles of justice, which hold that “rightfulness [Gerechtigkeit] flows not merely from the fear of punishment and coercion” (cf. Hobbes’ “the passion to be reckoned upon is fear”) but “from a higher source [Ursprung].” After urging that the Holy Scripture is “at one” [einig] with this higher source “when it says that Justo non ex lex posita” (St. Paul, 1 Timothy 1, 9)—the source is “higher” and Scripture then agrees with it—Leibniz then goes on to say that in his own Preface to the Codex Iuris Gentium (1693) “and in later clarifications”
a principle “diametrically opposed” to Coccejianism is followed, one which “draws justice out of wisdom and charity [ex sapientia et caritate],” not out of “will,” so that justice “is therefore in reality charity governed by wisdom [caritas ad normam sapientis]”—a Christian-Platonic and Ciceronian (De Finibus) principle “from which flow afterwards certain degrees of justice [gewisse gradus juris], namely strict law [jus strictum], equity [aequitas], and probity [probitas], and to which correspond the three precepts of the [Roman] jurisconsults—neminem laedere [to harm no-one], suum cuique tribuere [to render to each] and honeste vivere [to live honorably].”

This is an utterly typical and characteristic Leibnizian synthesizing fusion of Platonic sapientia, Pauline-Johannine caritas, and Ciceronian-Roman jurisprudentia (“la raison écrite”), in arriving at a “higher” justice in which “fear,” “power,” and especially “will” are radically subordinated to wise love (hence Leibniz’ dictum in a 1695 letter to Kettwig that “I recognize that men, out of mutual fear and necessity,” must constitute a “custodial” power for society: nonetheless, this comes about finally “from love sooner than fear” [sed praeter metum amor].")

Turning in the Observationes themselves from the “divinely jurisprudential” back to the divine per se, Leibniz goes on to urge that the Hobbesian (and also the Cartesian) conception of God is self-destructive; here logic and St. Anselm replace devil-worship and Manichaeanism. “If, for constraint, the will of the powerful is sufficient,” Leibniz says, “there is no reason to require goodness in the supreme legislator.” And then he suggests (in the language of the Unvorgreifliches Bedencken) that “certain Cartesians say that the truth itself is constructed by the will of God, and that the number four is ‘even’ because God commands it.” But if that were true “the very existence of God would have to be arbitrary”—that is, if even the ontological proof is not an eternal verity, a necessary truth. For Leibniz God cannot “create” the proof of his own existence ex plenitudo potestatis, any more than the “fullness” of power can fabricate justice ex nihilo. In the 1700 Observationes, Hobbes, Calvin, and Descartes are converted into one single three-part radical voluntarist, an unholy trinity—not very fairly, but certainly very strikingly. (And the Observationes show that Leibniz struck the phrase “absonderlich Cartesianer” out of the contemporaneous Unvorgreifliches Bedencken for merely strategic, not philosophical, reasons.)

Leibniz never retracted, but instead magnified his criticisms of Cocceji’s Principio Iuris in later years. To Philippe Naudé of Berlin (who had seen and praised Leibniz’s Observationes on Cocceji in 1701) Leibniz wrote in late 1707 that “you will
perhaps remember a discourse in Latin [the Observationes] which I sent to you in other times concerning the principles of right [droit] by a certain learned professor [Cocceji], in which I remarked upon the same defect [that one now finds] in the extreme supralapsarians, who derive justice from the sole power of an arbitrary will—instead of which justice is at bottom nothing other than the goodness of the wise [la bonté du sage].” And finally, linking up jurisprudence with theology, Leibniz adds that “I also would not wish to say . . . with some Cartesians that the ideas of things come from the will of God . . . sans raison, quod staret pro ratione voluntas” [Grua II, 502-3]86 (Here Juvenal’s Satire VI, quoted once in the Méditation on justice and six times in Unvorgreifliches Bedencken, appears yet again.)

Leibniz’ anti-Coccejianism continued (literally) to the point of death: only his demise on November 14, 1716 kept him from answering (adversely) a letter from H.E. Kestner (19 September 1716) lauding the illustris Coccejus—the very Cocceji whom Kestner had already praised in 1712 (together with Buddaeus, Pufendorf and Christian Thomasius) for making the “will of God” the basis of justice. (In response Leibniz told Kestner in summer 1716 that the “right reason” of the “Roman jurisconsults” best reveals “eternal equity.”)87

Six years after the Observationes, Leibniz brought all of his anti-voluntarism to its final perfection in his magisterial Opinion [Monità] on the Principles of Pufendorf (1706)—a work in which Leibniz’ demi-Platonism and anti-Cartesianism are brought into play one last time, in a passage that echoes not only the Euthyphro-loving “Meditation on the Common Notion of Justice” (written two or three years earlier), but also the Unvorgreifliches Bedencken.

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; and it is right that our author is reproached by theologians when he maintains the contrary; because, I believe he had not seen the wicked consequences which arise from it. 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 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. So that no one will maintain 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; as if the reason that a triangle has three sides, or that
two contrary propositions are incompatible, or that God himself exists, is that
God has willed it so.88

This passage shows (yet again) that Leibniz continued to think that the “ab-
sonderlich Cartesianer” of the “Unprejudiced Thoughts” remained “strange” (or
worse)—as absonderlich in 1706 as they had been in 1698, 1700, and 1703. And
Leibniz finally urges in the Monitè that the Cartesian God as “willful” princeps
legibus solutus (to recall Schrecker’s language) would lead to the notion
. . . which some people have imprudently held, that God could with justice
condemn an innocent person, since he could make it such that precisely this
would constitute justice. Doubtless those who attain to such aberrations do
not distinguish justice from unaccountability [άνυπεύθυνος]. God, because of
his supreme power over all things, cannot be made to submit his accounts
[άνυπεύθυνος], inasmuch as he can be neither constrained nor punished, nor
is he required to give reasons to anyone whomsoever; but, because of his
justice, he accomplishes all things in a way which satisfies every wise man,
and above all himself.89

It is worth remembering that, just before his assault on the voluntarism of Pufen-
dorf (“not much of a lawyer and even less of a philosopher”), Leibniz had already
insisted that mere sovereign “unaccountability” (whether Calvinist, Cartesian or
Hobbesian) cannot be the basis of justice: “Non voluntas sed sapientia Dei justitiae
regula ultima est. Voluntas sapientis est consectarium intellectus. Despoticum vero
et tyrannicum foret, si pro ratione staret voluntas.” (“Not the will but the wisdom
of God is the highest rule of justice. The will of the wise follows from the intel-
lect. It would be truly despotic and tyrannical, if will took the place of reason.”)90

As Gaston Grua (who first published this 1705 text) rightly says, Leibniz’ Pla-
tonizing privileging of ratio, sapientia and “intellect” over voluntas, tyranny and
“despotism” is the great Hannoverian’s “doctrine constante”91—“as constant as
the Northern star,” in Shakespeare’s words.

V. Conclusion

In Leibniz’ practical philosophy, as is clear by now, there is a direct, unbroken
line—pro “Platonic-idealist,” anti “Cartesian-voluntarist”—from Unvorgreiffliches
Bedencken (1698/9) to Observationes de Principio Iuris (1700) to Méditation on
justice (1703) to Monitè on Pufendorf (1706): it is all the “divine jurisprudence”
of the optima respublica. And it is all crowned by Théodicée, theos-dike, “the
justice of God,” 1710.

Schrecker and Cassirer, and then Grua, saw all of this decades ago. And Kant was exaggerating only enough to make his point when he called Leibnizianism “a strictly Platonic conception of the world” in the Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft, 1786. It is the great merit of the new Academy Edition A IV, 7 to give us a superb critical version of the Unvorgreißliches Bedencken, which makes the “descent” of Leibniz’ Graeco-German Platonism as clear as daylight.

Leibniz was the greatest early-modern Platonist (however “Christianized”): and this means that he conveyed into modernity the Platonic notions that (a) there are “eternal moral verities” which are “absolute” (whatever this may do to “Genesis”); (b) the eternal verities (e.g. justice) are “geometrically” demonstrable; and (c) we can “ascend” to these truths through sublimated (made-sublime) “erotism” (“being in love with the eternal”). All three of these are very strong claims, and in combination they are stronger than the claims of any other practical philosopher. And whatever Hume and Kant may have done to these claims—however differently—Leibniz brings them out of antiquity (like Orpheus carrying Eurydice out of fatal darkness) and rejuvenates them for “our” times.

Patrick Riley
Department of Government
Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass. 02138
Fax: 617 495-0438

Notes

1 G.W. Leibniz, Unvorgreißliches Bedencken, in Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe, Reihe IV, Politische Schriften Band 7, ed. Leibniz-Editionsstelle Potsdam (Wenchao Li et al.). Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011 (cited hereafter as AIV, 7). (The Tentamen [1698] is No. 62 in A IV, 7.)
3 Paul Schrecker, G.W. Leibniz: Lettres et fragments inédits sur les problèmes
philosophiques, théologiques [et] politiques de la réconciliation des doctrines protestantes (1669-1704), Paris 1934, (Félix Alcan), pp. liv, 121.


5 Schrecker, Lettres et fragments inédits, op. cit., p. 50.


8 Plato, Gorgias, III, 486 d - 492 e.


10 Ibid., p. 220.

11 Ibid.


13 Schrecker-archive, Department of Philosophy, University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia).


16 Ibid.


20 Ibid., pp. 262 ff.

21 See, for example, Leibniz’ letter to Theodore Heinson (1699), A I 17, pp. 362-364.


24 Paul Schrecker, “Leibniz,” in Philosophy in the Mid-Century, ed. Raymond Klibansky, vol. 4, Firenze 1959, pp. 142-146. The present reviewer was taught
German philosophy by Judith Nisse Shklar (at Harvard); she in turn was taught by Klibansky (at McGill, Montreal); he in turn was taught by Cassirer (in Germany).


Ibid.


See especially the Leibniz-Bossuet Correspondence in *Oeuvres*, ed. F. de Careil (Paris 1859-75), vol. II, passim.


On this point see the invaluable remarks of Schrecker in *Lettres* (1934), op. cit., pp. 47 ff.


Dr. Rudolph, former Leiter of the Potsdam edition of the *Politische Schriften*, organized a conference in 1996 (“Labora diligenter”) which dealt with the “Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken”; and until 2007 he did the principal editorial preparation of the full text of the “Unprejudiced Thoughts” (including all variants) which just appeared in *Politische Schriften* Bd. VII (Berlin 2011).

Leibniz, letter to Molanus (October 1699), A I, 17, pp. 428 ff.


P. Schrecker, Leibniz, *Lettres et fragments inédits*, op. cit, 96, and now also A, I, 17, 610.

A, I, 14, 690-691.

*Euthyphro* 9e-10e, paraphrased by Leibniz in “Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken,” A IV, 7, op. cit., p. 468.

A, I, 15, 137.

Ibid., 645.

*Théodicée* (Huggard), “Prelim. Diss.”


Schrecker, “Leibniz and the Timaeus,” op. cit., p. 497

Tertullian, *De praescriptiones heraeticorum*, VII.

Leibniz, letter to Huet (1679), Dutens V, 458 ff.


Leibniz, “Discours de métaphysique,” A VI, 4, teil “B.”
Patrick Riley

48 A, I, 15, no. 208.
50 A, I, 17, 609.
51 *Théodicée* (Huggard), II, 175-178.
54 Leibniz, to Eckhard (1677), Loemker ed., p. 181.
56 G, III, 637.
57 *Théodicée* (Huggard), II, 182, 240-241.
59 Leibniz, “Meditation on ... Justice,” in *Political Writings*, ed. Riley, 45.
60 Leibniz, “Unvorgreifliches Bedencken,” A IV, 7, p. 468, and Gr. I, 428 ff. Thus when Leibniz says, in A IV, 7, no. 76, that “the Cartesians changed their minds concerning the will of God as the cause of truth,” and struck “absonderlich Cartesianer” out of the *Erste Fassung*, he was briefly trying to persuade himself of what he did not believe.
65 A, I, 15, 702-703. Paul Schrecker’s last lecture on Leibniz, soon before his death, was at St John’s college in Maryland—by sheer chance which nonetheless seems fitting.
67 Ibid., 431.
68 Ibid., 432.
69 A IV, 7, pp. 466-467, and Gr. I, 432.
72 Leibniz, *De Fine Scientiarum*, in A IV, 5, No. 70, pp. 590.
74 On Hobbes’ notion of justice as “law” and “command,” see P. Riley, *A Treatise on Law*, vol. 10: *The Philosophers’ Philosophy of Law from Grotius to Rawls*
(Dordrecht and Berlin, 2009), ch. 3.

75 The Méditation and the Monità can be found in English in P. Riley (trans. and ed.), Leibniz: Political Writings, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, U.K., 1988).

76 On Samuel Cocceji, see the brief life in Vittorio Mathieu, “Nota Bibliografica” pp. 66-67, in Scritti Politici e di diritto naturale di Leibniz (Torino 1951).


78 Leibniz, Observationes de Principio Iuris (1700), in Dutens IV, iii, op. cit., pp. 370ff.

79 Leibniz, Observationes, sec. vi, in Dutens IV, iii, pp. 370ff.

80 Leibniz, Observationes, sec. vii, in Dutens IV, iii, pp. 370ff.


82 Leibniz, to Hackmann, op. cit. Cf. Cicero, De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum, trans. H. Rackman (Cambridge, Mass., 1914), Book V, xxiii, pp. 467-469: “There is nothing more glorious ... than that actual affection [caritas]...which is justice.”


84 Leibniz, letter to N. Kettwig (November 1695), in Grua Textes inédits, op. cit., II, p. 653. See also Leibniz, notes on Prasch’s De Lege Caritatis Commentatio.

85 Leibniz Observationes, in Dutens IV, iii, 370 ff.

86 Leibniz, to Philippe Naudé (1707), in Grua, Textes inédits, op. cit., II, 502-503.

87 Leibniz, correspondence with Kestner, 1708-1716, in Grua II, 681-699.


89 Ibid, p. 71.

90 Leibniz, on “Necessity of Faith,” in Grua, Textes inédits, op. cit., I, p. 252; see “Unvorgreifliches Bedencken,” A IV, 7, op. cit. p. 526: “From eternity there is indeed nothing except God: but there are still ab aeterno in the divine intellect ideas of things both possible and actual.”

91 Ibid., p. 252 n.

92 Kant, Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft, in Werke, ed. Ernst Cassirer (Berlin 1922), vol. 4, p. 413.

93 Plato, Phaedo, 71a-75d.

94 Plato, Meno, 82 ff.

95 Plato, Symposium, 202 c ff.
Appendix: Excerpts of LH, I, 9, Bl. 117v - 119v

Excerpts of LH, I, 9, Bl. 117v - 119v, from G. W. Leibniz, “Erste Fassung” [First Version] of the Unvorgreifftiches Bedencken [January 1699] (from the Leibniz-Archiv, Hannover): LH, I, 9, Bl. 106r - 167r. Dr. Herbert Breger’s permission to publish these excerpts is gratefully acknowledged. Photo-copying was facilitated by Dr. Hartmut Rudolph and Dr. Monika Meier, who are sincerely thanked for their efforts.
Aus Atributa Divina

recht unverm[e]hlt, compatibilis, aber
mir [n]ur von untern Theologen [e]pprimiert
und Harm[oh]ica. Dazu, Gott, ob [r]i
[zu]ndert nicht nur Darstellung, sondern in
Darstellung nicht alles ist, nur indem man
Zweck der Erscheinung auf die[r]
atürg[liche] Weise auf

Einschung der Günstigkeit auf die[r]
darstellung nicht ausschmückt
Will, Gott, mir Erscheinunggründe alleinsti
Rume gütig, ohne dem, dem der von[s]tum, du
mit [s]ie alle, meine Göttin, wenigstens aller-
ding zumals du.

The Leibniz Review, Vol. 21, 2011
145
At this point Leibniz discusses Calvinist theologians who base God's justice on power, "will" and decree.

LH, I, 9, Bl. 117v (part 2)
[At this point Leibniz discusses Calvinist theologians who base God’s justice on power, “will” and decree.]

LH, I, 9, Bl. 118r

[At this point Leibniz discusses Calvinist theologians who base God’s justice on power, “will” and decree.]
Leibniz now uses Plato’s *Euthyphro* to defeat “strange Cartesians” who think that God makes truth and right.

LH, I, 9, Bl. 119v
[Leibniz now uses Plato’s *Euthyphro* to defeat “strange Cartesians” who think that God *makes* truth and right.]
LH, I, 9, Bl. 119v (part 1)
materialibus humanis, quae ista ista
sunt, das unser Gott nicht zu finden darin,
dies sind, et verbis et verbo rationibus
repente, in omnibus, et proportionibus.

LH, I, 9, Bl. 119v (part 2)