

# Leibniz' "Monadologie" 1714-2014

Patrick Riley, Harvard University

## *Abstract*

It is well-known that Leibniz ends and crowns the 1714 "Monadologie" with a version of his notion of *jurisprudence universelle* or "justice as the charity [love] of the wise:" for sections 83-90 of the Vienna manuscript claim that "the totality of all spirits must compose the City of God . . . this perfect government . . . the most perfect state that is possible . . . this truly universal monarchy [which is] a moral world in the natural world"—a moral world of *iustitia* in which "no good action would be unrewarded" for those "citizens" who "find pleasure . . . in the contemplation of [God's] perfections, as is the way of genuine 'pure love.'" But the opening four-fifths of the work offer Leibniz' theory of "substance" (or monad) viewed as the *necessary pre-condition* of justice: for "on the knowledge of substance, and in the consequence of the soul, depends the knowledge of virtue and of justice" (to Pierre Coste, 1712). Thus without a complete and correct notion of substance/monad, no complete and correct *notion commune de la justice* would be conceivable. Hence the entire "Monadologie" can be understood as a theory of justice underpinned by a *Grundlegung* of moral "monads" or justice-loving rational "substances." In this connection it is revelatory that Leibniz cites the relevant sections of the 1710 *Théodicée* in most of the 90 articles of the "Monadologie" (beginning indeed with article #1): for *Théodicée* (*theos-dike*) is (Leibniz says) "the justice of God," and Leibniz makes that justice "appear" in the *opening lines* of the "Monadologie" (in effect) by referring the reader immediately to *Théodicée* #10 ("Preliminary Dissertation") — which relates "immortal spirits" to a just God who is cherished through "genuine pure love." This means that "the justice of God" as "higher love" colors the "Monadologie" instantly. Thus one need not "wait" for sections 83-90 to arrive in order for the "Monadologie" to be(come) a "theory of justice:" it is such *ab initio*.

## **Prefatory Note: Leibniz' Vienna Trinity of 1714**

**B**y early summer 1714, Leibniz had been in Vienna for a year and a half (starting in mid-December 1712)—to the growing displeasure of the court in Hannover (despite Leibniz' pleas of ill-health, and of services to the Empire [of

which Hannover itself was the ninth “electorate”]).<sup>1</sup> With the death of his last great patroness and defender, Electress Sophie of Hannover (June 8, 1714)<sup>2</sup>—Queen Sophie-Charlotte of Prussia had been dead for nearly a decade—Leibniz could no longer delay the return to Germany; sensing that his happiest days must now be ending, Leibniz finally acceded to the long-standing wish of his Viennese admirer Prince Eugene of Savoy for a *summa* of his philosophy (this became *Principes de la nature et de la grâce*),<sup>3</sup> and to the comparable wish of his Parisian Platonizing admirer Nicolas Rémond for a *summa* of the notion of substance or “monad” (which eventually became the “Monadologie”).<sup>4</sup> (Leibniz rightly suspected that his work back in Hannover would not be philosophical but historical, the completion of the history of the House of Braunschweig-Lüneburg.) The requests of Prince Eugene and of Nicolas Rémond thus gave Leibniz a three month occasion—without Hannoverian distractions—to *sum up* his philosophy in his 68<sup>th</sup> year, before leaving Vienna forever on September third. And so Leibniz produced (or rather finally wrote out), between June and August 1714, not just the celebrated “Monadologie” (in early versions) but the closely-allied *Principes de la nature et de la grâce* and the (equally closely-allied) lecture “On the Greeks as Founders of a Sacred Philosophy.”<sup>5</sup> Leibniz’ “Vienna Trinity of 1714”—with “Monadologie” as Father, *Nature et grâce* as demi-perfect Son, and “On the Greeks” as Holy Spirit (*logos*)—is indeed the *summa* of his philosophizing and (apart from the letters to Clarke/Newton) the definitive statement of his final “system.”<sup>6</sup>

A last prefatory point: if anything is novel or unorthodox in the present essay, it lies (1) in treating the “Monadologie” as a “theory of justice” (amplified by Leibniz with quotations from *Théodicée*, “the justice of God”); and (2) in treating the Vienna lecture “On the Greeks” as a crucial part of a 1714 Trinity held together by the notion of *monas*, unified by “unity.” (Since the lecture is the least-known and most-neglected “member”—having been published in a critical edition meeting Academy-Edition standards only in 2008—“On the Greeks” will get the *most* attention here.)<sup>7</sup>

## I. Leibniz’ “Monadologie” as a Theory of Justice

It is well-known that Leibniz ends and crowns the 1714 “Monadologie” with a version of his notion of *jurisprudence universelle* or “justice as the charity [love] of the wise:”<sup>8</sup> for sections 83-90 of the Vienna manuscript claim that “the totality of all spirits must compose the City of God ... this perfect government... the

most perfect state that is possible ... this truly universal monarchy [which is] a moral world in the natural world"—a moral world of *iustitia* in which “no good action would be unrewarded” for those “citizens” who “find pleasure ... in the contemplation of [God’s] perfections, as is the way of genuine ‘pure love.’”<sup>9</sup> But if it is well-known that the “Monadologie” ends with *iustitia caritas sapientis* and *benevolentia universalis*, what is perhaps less familiar is the fact that the opening four-fifths of the work offer Leibniz’ theory of “substance” (or monad) viewed as *the necessary pre-condition* of justice: for “on the knowledge of substance, and in the consequence of the soul, depends the knowledge of virtue and of justice” (to Pierre Coste, 1712).<sup>10</sup> (“True ethics is to metaphysics what practice is to theory, because upon the doctrine of substances in general depends the knowledge of spirits and particularly of God and the soul, which gives a proper meaning to justice and virtue.”)<sup>11</sup>

In a word: without a complete and correct notion of substance/monad, no complete and correct *notion commune de la justice* would be conceivable. Hence the *entire* “Monadologie” can be understood as a theory of justice underpinned by a *Grundlegung* of moral “monads” or justice-loving rational “substances.”

In this connection it is revelatory that Leibniz cites the relevant sections of the 1710 *Théodicée* in most of the 90 articles of the “Monadologie” (beginning indeed with article #1)<sup>12</sup>: for *Théodicée* (*theos-dike*) is (Leibniz says) “the justice of God,”<sup>13</sup> and Leibniz makes that justice “appear” in the *opening lines* of the “Monadologie” (in effect) by referring the reader immediately to *Théodicée* #10 (“Preliminary Dissertation”)—which relates “immortal spirits” to a just God who is cherished through “genuine pure love.” This means that “the justice of God” as “higher love” colors the “Monadologie” instantly. Thus one need not “wait” for sections 83-90 to arrive in order for the “Monadologie” to be(come) a “theory of justice:” it is such *ab initio*.

To be more precise, section 10 of the *Théodicée* (cited in “Monadologie” article 1) treats *bad* versions of “pure” or “disinterested love” by condemning the “quietism” of Fénelon (in which the self disappears into a love of God so radically “disinterested” that there is a kind of person-absorbing *nirvana*); in opposition to that *Théodicée* 10 vigorously rejects “the annihilation of all that belongs to us in our own right”—so that rational “substances” will not be simply (as Leibniz says) “swallowed” without remainder by God (and become mere “modes” of a “single universal substance” or spirit).<sup>14</sup> Rather (for Leibniz) such created substances are autonomous participants in a just “fellowship” with God—to recall the language

of both the “Monadologie” (section 84) and of the *Principes de la nature et de la grâce*. (Leibniz would have approved of Thomas Mann’s notion of a human “alliance with God” in *Joseph and his Brothers*.)<sup>15</sup>

Leibniz’ identification of Fénelonian “quietism” with the “annihilation” of the “rights” of substances/monads/selves—in “*Theod.* 10”, interpolated only 22 words into the “Monadologie”—reminds us that Leibniz had been deeply worried by Fénelonian substance-dissolution since the 1690s:<sup>16</sup> for in 1697 Fénelon had published his *Maxims of the Saints*, in which he argued that one loves God “purely” or disinterestedly only if one hopes for nothing for oneself, and fears nothing—that the person who disinterestedly loves God does so even if he should know (*per impossibile*) that he is to be eternally damned. And that is why Fénelon says that one must “*sortir de soi*” (go out of oneself), that one must ever “*se haïr*” (hate oneself); the person who truly loves God “will have contempt for himself and hate himself, he will leave himself, he will fear himself, he will abandon himself to God, he will lose himself in him. Happy loss!”<sup>17</sup> Charity is obviously problematical, on the Fénelonian view: if one loves one’s neighbor “as oneself,” but one’s *self* self-hatingly evaporates, then *caritas* gives way to a kind of *nihilism* that anticipates Freud’s grim notion that “justice means that we deny ourselves many things in order that we may be able to deny them to others as well.”<sup>18</sup>

If one (mis)understands “love” as *dissolving* oneself (one’s “substance”) into an all-absorbing God (as in Fénelon) one loses *both* substance and “genuine” love (the twin bases of the “Monadologie”): but then justice can no longer mean what it means in Leibniz, namely *caritas sapientis*, “wise” love (since “love” has been *unwisely* mis-conceived).

Even if Leibniz shared with Fénelon an ardent devotion to Platonic “eternal” truth which is not caused by mere “genesis” in time (*Republic* 526b), even if Leibniz and Fénelon were both (in some sense) Christian Platonists, nonetheless one cannot imagine Leibniz using the eternal and the divine *against* the world and the “self.” One cannot imagine Leibniz indulging in the kind of radical self-abnegation which Fénelon eloquently defended in works such as “Happiness of the Soul:”

It is only those who do violence to themselves who will gain the kingdom of heaven. One must be reborn, renounce oneself, hate oneself, become a child, weep in order to be consoled, and not be of the world at all (which is cursed because of its scandals) ... Misery to those lax and timid souls which are divided between God and the world!<sup>19</sup>

Leibniz found that degree of “violent” quietistic self-abnegation not just wrong

but impossible: for him “genuine ‘pure love’” (“Monadologie” 90), the basis of justice, must delight in the perfection or felicity of another, but that delight is one’s own; it is a “disinterested” delight or happiness when one’s joy is brought about by the perfections which are objectively *there*, in the person or thing loved—whether God, or one’s neighbor, or a painting by Raphael.<sup>20</sup> (Leibniz can mention God, other persons, and Raphael in the same breath; one cannot imagine Fénelon doing so.)

Leibniz’ view was that not even Fénelon himself could coherently and consistently adhere to radical self-annihilation; and as evidence he would have adduced the following (very eloquent) Fénelonian text:

Be a true nothing in everything and everywhere; but one must add nothing to this pure nothing. It is against nothingness that there can be no siege. It can lose nothing. True nothingness never resists, and there is no “I” with which it concerns itself. Be nothing, then, and nothing beyond that, and you will be everything without dreaming of being so.<sup>21</sup>

For Leibniz that kind of self-losing is literally inconceivable, psychologically impossible as well as morally mistaken; and he would add that Fénelon’s last clause—“you will be everything without dreaming of being so”—reveals that impossibility. For in that clause “nothing” yields not just to “something,” but to “everything.”

In the part of the *Théodicée*’s “Preliminary Dissertation” added to “Monadologie” 1, by the way, Leibniz sarcastically says that partisans of a “single universal substance” or “world-soul”—whether they are Spinozists, mystical neo-Platonists, Fénelonians, Ficino-lovers, Averroists, Molinists, or Chinese disciples of Fohi[us]—might well be called “monopsychites”<sup>22</sup> (suffering, perhaps, from monopsychosis). When Leibniz wrote the “Monadologie” in 1714 Fénelon was the main *living* “monopsychite”—but not for long, since he died (January 1715) four months after Leibniz’ final departure from Vienna<sup>23</sup> (with the nearly-finished “Monadologie” in hand).

To be sure, Leibniz in “*Théodicée* 10” carefully, accurately *characterizes* (and paraphrases) Fénelon’s “quietism” without *naming* him: for Leibniz, who was obsessed with the French “quietist controversy” at least from 1693, knew that Fénelon had been cruelly persecuted by his one-time mentor Bossuet, condemned by the Vatican (1699), and permanently exiled to his provincial diocese in Cambrai;<sup>24</sup> out of wise *caritas*, then, Leibniz faithfully *described* Fénelonianism without (this time) naming the author of it. (But Leibniz wrote dozens of pages—nearly identical to *Théodicée* 10—in which Fénelon is named.) In any case, Leibniz was

not (generally) hostile to Fénelon: “the incomparable Fénelon made a more just reputation for himself in the world by the publication of his *Telemachus*”—the didactic novel about the moral and civic educative transformation of the son of Ulysses—“than in the manifestation of his sentiments about the love of God.”<sup>25</sup> For these “sentiments” converted “genuine pure love” into *se hair* and *se fuir*. (Leibniz also lauds Fénelon’s *Telemachus* in *Théodicée* III, 261—as if to *balance* the critique of “quietism” with praise for the celebrated novel which was re-published in France more times than any work (save the Bible) between 1699 and 1789, and which was the favorite modern writing of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.)<sup>26</sup>

## II. “Monadologie” and *Théodicée* = Leibniz

How can we *know* that “*Théod.* 10” (added to “Monadologie” 1) refers to part 10 of the “Preliminary Dissertation” and not to I, 10 in the main text? Simply because “*Théod[icée]* 10” (in the Preliminary Dissertation) ends with a proto-“Monadologie 1”: for in *theos-dike* “Dissertation 10” Leibniz says that his own “system of pre-established harmony” shows that there are “substances which are simple and without extension” [cf. “without parts”] and which “must subsist *independently* of every other [substance] except God.”<sup>27</sup> (“Monadologie 1” is clearly a nearly-verbatim copy of the 1710 text.) But Leibniz prefaces this proto-“Monadologie” (in the *Théodicée*) with his long polemic against “quietism,” in which substance-selves are (as we have seen) “swallowed” up by God as “single universal spirit:” a misconception of love as utterly self-denying, even self-“hating”, on the part of Fénelon and others, destroys (“annihilates”) substances or monads. (But Leibniz’ motto was *nihil sine ratione*, not just *nihil*.)<sup>28</sup> In any case *Théodicée* I, 10 (in the main text) is a set of (rather complacent) remarks about the possible advantageousness of *felix culpa* in a “best” (but imperfect) world; this is *not* what Leibniz would have used to enlarge and illuminate the notion of substance/monad in “Monadologie” 1.<sup>29</sup>

To be sure, there was no (absolute) “necessity” to explicate the (lean and compressed) “Monadologie” *through* the (ample and expansive) *Théodicée*, to make the later work into a miniature version of *theos-dike* and *jurisprudence universelle*: in *Principes de la nature et de la grâce*, after all, written in Vienna more-or-less concurrently with the “Monadologie,” (and making more-or-less the same argument) Leibniz amplifies *Nature and Grace* not through *iustitia* but by *binding* it—literally, in red leather—with the “New System of Substances” (1695),<sup>30</sup> which is “jurisprudential/practical” in only a few fleeting lines of section 5; in the

"New System" *iustitia* appears only *en passant*, in the middle, not as the ringing dominant conclusion (which the whole piece *moves toward*). The "Monadologie-*Théodicée*" [to coin a title] is *as it is* because Leibniz wanted it that way: "everything is what it is, and not another thing" [Butler].<sup>31</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

With respect to Leibniz' "adding" of the *Théodicée* to the "Monadologie": both works are (Platonizingly) given Greek names—*theos-dike*, "the justice of God," and *monas-logos*, "the reason for" (or "discourse about") unitary substance. (There is no good reason to doubt that "Monadologie" was Leibniz' own preferred title: after all, Leibniz gave Koehler an "intermediate" copy of the "Monadologie" in Vienna in summer 1714, and Koehler then published the first version of the work, *auf Deutsch*, in 1720.)<sup>32</sup> But there is more than a merely nominal and Graecophile connection; for without God (*theos*) as "necessary" substance (*monas*), the father-monarch of (non-necessary) created substances ("why is there something rather than nothing?"<sup>33</sup>) there would be no *iustitia universalis*—since "eternal moral verities" (e.g. justice) must be "imbedded" [*inditis*, "On the Greeks"] in an *eternal necessary mind*:<sup>34</sup> not least to avoid the Cartesian *mauvais raisonnement* that God's will creates right and truth *ex nihilo* ("Monadologie" sec. 46). (Leibniz had complained at length in *Urfassung* of the *Unvorgreifliches Bedenken* [1698] about "strange Cartesians [*absonderlich Cartesianer*] who teach that two time two makes four ... for no other reason than that God wills it"—as Gaston Grua and Paul Schrecker have made clear.)<sup>35</sup>

To sum up provisionally, then: the opening of the "Monadologie" says, "The monad, of which we shall speak here, is nothing else than a simple substance, which enters into compounds. Simple, that is to say, without parts."<sup>36</sup> But this definition of "monad" is itself so "simple" and "without parts"—so insubstantial, as it were—that Leibniz had a sufficient reason to add "*Théod[icée]* 10" at the end of this (terse and cryptic) "Monadologie 1": for it is precisely in that part of *theos-dike*, as we have seen, that Leibniz rejects any "vanishing" or disappearing substance—in a "quietism" which would immediately rule out a being who could (autonomously) love the *Ens Perfectissimum* (though a *sentiment de perfection* which is the basis of universal "justice" as "wise love" [*caritas sapientis*]).<sup>37</sup> Created substances must Platonizingly "ascend" to the *Ens Perfectissimum* without *dissolving* into a "single universal spirit" (Leibniz 1702); love must (again) be *one's own* pleasure or delight

or joy in the “perfection” of *autrui*—and even God is (somehow) “other.” (After all, Leibniz says that we are “images,” not “parts,” of God.<sup>38</sup>)

Leibniz could have “added” many things (or also nothing) to the “Monadologie 1”; but he *chose*—by adding *Theodicy* 10—to *preserve* autonomous, non-vanishing, rational substances who don’t disappear in a love-hate mystical “union.”

Leibniz arguably thinks something like this: why “bother” (so to speak) with “Genesis” and with the creation of finite “substances” if their only “rôle” is to “disappear” without remainder into the single “universal substance”? “Creation” *makes no sense* if created beings can be worthy only through (self) annihilation, through being “swallowed.” Only a “cruel” God (to recall Iago’s phrase from *Othello*)<sup>39</sup> would create a non-necessary being whose sole purpose is to have no purpose save *nothingness*, whose only *raison d’être* is *not* to exist; and so to Hamlet’s question, “to be or not to be,”<sup>40</sup> Leibniz would answer, “to be.” (Whether Leibniz’ own “perfectionism” is not problematical for creation of a “best” possible world which is not straightforwardly *good* is too vast a worry to take up here in passing.)

### III. More problematical than Fénelon: Hobbes and Locke

If Leibniz worried enough about Fénelonian quietistic substance-subversion to place “*Theod[icée]* 10” only 22 words into the “Monadologie,” so that “monopsychosis” is *immediately* unmasked as self-“hatred,” he was surely even more worried by the tendency of English philosophy (Hobbes and frequently Locke) to reduce “substance” to pure corporeality or “body,” with (Leibniz feared) fatal moral-theological-political results. (In Hobbes especially, for Leibniz, “complete corporeal substance” becomes completely corporeal substance [cf. “Monadologie” 63 ff].)

Leibniz always takes care to bring out the practical significance of his concept of “substance”: he is, to be sure, concerned as a metaphysician with substance as such, but always wants to show that without (naturally immortal) substances or persons there can be no moral concepts, no “subjects” of universal justice, no “citizens” of the divine monarchy or City of God (“Monadologie” 83-90). That is one reason (among many) that Leibniz is hostile to Hobbes (read as an Epicurean anti-Platonist): if, as in *De Cive* and *Leviathan*, “all substance is body,” and if mere body cannot conceive moral ideas—because “body” cannot conceive anything at all—then “universal jurisprudence” is ruled out by bad metaphysics, by an inadequate conception of substance.<sup>41</sup>



Here, of course, Leibniz is thinking of a passage such as the one in *Leviathan*, chapter 34, in which Hobbes says that “substance and body signify the same thing,” and that therefore the phrase “incorporeal substance” strives vainly to link up “words which, when they are joined together, destroy one another, as if a man should say, an Incorporeal Body.”<sup>42</sup> Or, alternatively, Leibniz is thinking of the passage in the savagely funny chapter 46 of *Leviathan* (“Of Darkness from Vain Philosophy and Fabulous Traditions”), which follows an assault on scholastic “Aristoteleity” with the insistence that the Graeco-Christian term “substantial form” is nothing but the decayed jargon of “School Divinity”:

The world (I mean not the earth only ... but the Universe, that is, the whole mass of things that are) is corporeal, that is to say, Body: and hath the dimensions of magnitude, namely length, breadth and depth .... Nor does it follow from thence that Spirits are nothing: for they have dimensions, and are therefore really bodies.<sup>43</sup>

The opening chapter of *Leviathan*, which represents all “conceptions” as “movements’ in the brain caused by “pressure” of outward “objects” (“the mind is nothing other than a motion in certain parts of the organic body”)<sup>44</sup> is for Leibniz completely inadequate; mind or *esprit* vanishes, or is at least unaccountable. Hobbes speaks, Leibniz complains, “as if it were possible to derive memory, intellect, will and consciousness from [bodily] magnitude, shape and motion alone” (*Apologia Catholicae Veritatis*, c. 1685).<sup>45</sup> Of course Hobbes uses moral ideas such as “ought” and “obligation”—saying in *Leviathan*, chapter 14, that once a man has “transferred” his right to a sovereign beneficiary he is “said to be obliged” not to “make void that voluntary act of his own,” that he “ought,” and that it is his “duty,” to keep covenants; but in Leibniz’ view Hobbes is not entitled to those terms, since the Hobbesian notion of *substance* makes them inconceivable within his system. Strictly speaking, for Leibniz, Hobbes views mind itself as an epiphenomenon—literally as a set of impressions made by the “pressure” of objects. But how (Leibniz would ask) can a pressing object “cause” the conceivability of “oughtness” or “obligation,” or provide the idea of “moral necessity”? Even if so-called sense-perception (of a tree or a rock) might be accounted for in this Hobbesian way—though for Leibniz there is no “empirical” perception (“Monadologie” 17)—how would “pressure” of objects generate moral notions? For Leibniz, as for Plato and Kant, only reason can “give” ideas such as moral necessity; no empirical experience can do so, as Plato’s *Phaedo* urges; it is in that moral sense that Plato, Leibniz, and Kant are all “idealists.”<sup>46</sup>

If, in Leibniz’ view, Hobbes wrecked “substance” through his radical materialism,

even treating God as corporeal (“but such a God is impossible”<sup>47</sup>)—and if he also wrecked *caritas* by calling it a love which is “merely sensual, but with an honourable pretense for the old to haunt the company of the young and beautiful [Socrates and Alcibiades],”<sup>48</sup> so that Platonizing justice as “higher” love is a self-deceiving fraud—by contrast Locke (for Leibniz) was a (somewhat wavering) semi-materialist who suggested that God *might* (by a miracle) endow “matter” with a capacity for thought, so that a Leibnizian monad (as a purely *psychic* being) would be dispensable. (“Monsieur Locke ... without having the intention” of supporting Hobbesian materialists never the less “does so ...without thinking by maintaining in his excellent work [the *Essay*] that God could give thought to matter”: but “I show... that if God does this, he gives it at the same time a substance which thinks.”<sup>49</sup>) And Leibniz then gives these thoughts a moral-jurisprudential turn by urging (in a letter to Thomas Burnett from May 1706) that “justice and injustice do not depend solely on human nature” (e.g. Hobbesian “appetite” and “aversion”) “but on the nature of intelligent substance in general.”

...I have remarked that M. Locke has not gotten to the bottom of necessary truths, which do not depend on the senses, or experiences, or facts, but on the consideration of the nature of our soul—which is a being, a substance, possessing unity, identity, action, passion, duration, etc. One should not be astonished if these ideas, and the truths which depend on them are to be found within us ... on all these matters M. Locke reasoned *un peu à la légère*.<sup>50</sup>

And all of this leads Leibniz to say, in the *Nouveaux Essais*, that “upon the doctrine of substances in general depends the knowledge of spirits and particularly of God and the soul, which gives a proper meaning to justice and virtue.”<sup>51</sup>

If Fénelon and Hobbes are philosophically/theologically as far separated as is conceivable, they nonetheless share one thing: namely the ruination or “annihilation” of “substance” and thus of a “Monadologie” crowned by justice as “genuine ‘pure love.’” And if Locke is less worrying, it is only because he is more *vague*.

#### IV. Leibniz’ 1714 Vienna Lecture “On the Greeks”

If *Théodicée* 10 (which Leibniz added to “Monadologie” 1) had shown (*inter alia*) that “mystics” have corrupted true Platonism (and turned it from “simple and solid ... exact definitions of notions” into “hyperbolic thoughts” of amorphous “world-souls” and “mystic numbers”),<sup>52</sup> then the purpose of “On the Greeks” is not just (negatively) to rescue the “real” Plato but (positively) to show that Plato was the

principal discoverer of "substance" itself, i.e. the "monad," i.e. the very heart of Leibniz' mature philosophy. "Many of the Platonic doctrines . . . are most beautiful," Leibniz wrote to Hansch, "[notably the notion of] the really real [τὰ ὄντως ὄντα] or simple substances, which I call monads . . . since we discover being, the one, substance, action and the like within ourselves."

Hence you may reject the quietists, false mystics, who deny individuality and action to the mind of the blessed as if our highest perfection consisted in a kind of passive state, when on the contrary, love and knowledge are operations of the mind and will. Blessedness of the soul does indeed consist in union with God, but we must not think that the soul is absorbed in God, having lost its individuality, its distinct substance, for this would be an evil enthusiasm, an undesirable deification.<sup>53</sup>

Fortunately, Leibniz adds, "I observe nothing in Plato that would lead me to conclude that minds do not conserve their own substance."<sup>54</sup> (Leibniz knew that in Plato finite substances strive to "participate" in eternal ideas (*Timaeus* 49b)—but this precisely requires *participants*, i.e. active, not "passive," beings.)<sup>55</sup>

Plato had to be saved *from* the "mysticism" of Fénelon, Ficino, Molinos et al. and saved *for* Leibniz. (On this point see the superb article by Hartmut Rudolph, "Res publica Christiana and Corpus Mysticum.")<sup>56</sup> The Vienna lecture "On the Greeks" is thus a crucial amplification of "Monadologie": above all of section 18, which uses and explicates the Greek terms for "a certain perfection" and for "a certain self-sufficiency" in finite individuals—as against being "swallowed" by God as only monad or "world-soul." (Leibniz' notion of *autarkeia* or rational monads' being "the source of their own internal actions" in "Monadologie 18" is best treated by Christopher Johns in his excellent *The Science of Right in Leibniz' Moral and Political Philosophy* (2013).<sup>57</sup>)

Leibniz' lecture on the Greeks as the founders of rational theology, which was delivered by Leibniz himself at an 'Academy' in Vienna on July 1, 1714—breaking off from the writing of the "Monadologie" and of the *Principes de la nature et de la grâce* (while also echoing those two works)<sup>58</sup> is of course interesting as evidence of the breadth of his knowledge of the history of religious ideas. But from a philosophical point of view its main interest lies (1) in elaborating Leibniz' debt to Platonism—a debt which Leibniz made clear in his published letters to the French Platonist Rémond but which receives reinforcement from this 1714 lecture; (2) in showing, more particularly, that Leibniz relied on Plato (and Aristotle) in developing a concept of "substance" (or monad) which would remedy the defects of

“materialism” and “mechanism” and explain the immortality of the soul “naturally,” without recourse to “miracles” or to “faith”—a soul which could then be a subject of eternal divine justice in Leibniz’ “universal jurisprudence.”<sup>59</sup>

It is, appropriately enough, from Leibniz’ first extant letter to Rémond (Vienna January 10, 1714) that we know something of the connection between (1) and (2) in the development of Leibniz’ thought: in a famous passage Leibniz says that in his youth, having learned Aristotle and having found “contentment” in Plato and Plotinus, he began to deliberate at the age of 15 (!) whether he “would keep the substantial forms”; that after modern “mechanism” led him to the study of mathematics, he discovered that he could not find the “final causes” (*dernières raisons*) of mechanism or the laws of motion in mathematics, that “it was necessary to return to metaphysics.” It was this dissatisfaction with mechanism and materialism, Leibniz says, “which brought me to Entelechies, from the material to the formal, and which finally made me understand ... that the monads, or simple substances, are the only true substances, and that material things are only phenomena, but well-founded and well-connected ones.” Plato, Leibniz adds, though he had “found something” important in his notion of an immaterial soul, and in “looking for the source of things in final and formal causes,” neglected “efficient and material” causes too much; but a much more serious mistake was made by modern “materialists” (such as Hobbes and sometimes even Locke) who “attach themselves solely to mechanical philosophy.” In his own “monadology” or theory of substance, Leibniz remarks, he has “brought to demonstration” truths which Plato “only advanced.”<sup>60</sup> And this matters for Leibniz’ *practical* philosophy, for he said that “I have always been quite content, since my youth, with the moral philosophy of Plato, and even in a way with his metaphysics.”<sup>61</sup> (Leibniz’ *iustitia caritas sapientis* has its most venerable ancestor in Plato’s notion of being rightly “in love with the eternal” [*Symposium* 202 b].)

Leibniz’ 1714 Vienna lecture focuses especially on a central point in “natural theology,” and one which begins to lead naturally into the full statement of the doctrine of “substance” (which Leibniz provides only at the end of the lecture): namely the Platonic notion of the *natural* immortality of the soul. The idea that there is one supreme God (as contrasted with many gods) who has established “other inferior ones” endowed with “immortality” was taught by “the wisest people among the Greeks and Romans”—though Plato, Leibniz adds, taught the “doctrine of the unity of God” (in the *Timaeus*) “as if in secret,” lest he suffer the same fate as Socrates. (“Unity” [“without parts”] is the chief property of a *monad*, whether

divine or finite—as Leibniz says in *Nature et grâce* prop. 1: “*monas* is a Greek word which means unity, or that which is one”). Leibniz observes as evidence of what the “wisest” Greeks and Romans knew, that in Book I of *De Natura Deorum*<sup>62</sup> Cicero has Antisthenes say that there is “one natural god, and many according to popular opinion” (*unum esse Deum naturalem, multos autem populares*)—a saying which recalls Plato’s *Letter XIII* (to Dionysius): “There are many who ask me to write whom it is not easy to put off openly, so that at the beginning of the letters that are seriously intended, I put God; in other cases, the gods.”<sup>63</sup> Leibniz clearly knew these letters, since he cites *Letter II* to Dionysius in the Vienna-lecture. (Leibniz greatly admired Cicero’s *De Natura Deorum* not just for its monotheism but for its defense of natural immortality and of *caritas naturalis* (against the Epicureans)—as one can see in Leibniz’ notes on Cicero (Rome 1689) in his treatment of Cudworth’s *True Intellectual System of the Universe*.)<sup>64</sup>

Leibniz’ consideration of the notion of the natural immortality of the soul finally leads him, toward the end of the Vienna lecture, to a full statement of what he thinks Greek philosophy provided in the “amplification and illustration of natural theology”—namely the first adequate concept of *substance* (one of whose properties is of course the natural immortality which makes “eternal justice” possible). Even if, Leibniz says, some of the foundations of natural theology 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, for Leibniz, “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 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.” Aristotle “also sought the principle, sometimes of motion, sometimes even of thought, in incorporeal substances,” and he not only attributed intelligence to heavenly bodies but also recognized “that the intellect acting in man is something external to the body, and separable.”<sup>65</sup>

Now much of this simply re-enforces what is known in Leibniz’ published work. In an important letter to Arnauld on “substance” as an “indivisible and naturally indestructible being” (1686) Leibniz praises the ancients, “and particularly Plato, who showed quite clearly that matter alone does not suffice to form a substance.”

And in the second of the so-called *Lettres sur Descartes et le Cartésianisme* he goes so far as to say that “Plato explains divinely well incorporeal substances distinct from matter and ideas independent of the senses.”<sup>66</sup>

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’ special theory of substance occupies in his philosophy. When God “translates” a portion of essence into existence—in fashioning the (fully justifiable) best of all possible worlds—he creates “substances” (or, as Leibniz also called them after c. 1696, monads), which are characterized by “perception” when passive and by “force” (or activity) when active; the Leibnizian monad is understood—to recall a phrase in Hegel’s *Phenomenology*—in terms of “inner activity and self-movement of its own active life.”<sup>67</sup> For Leibniz there is a continuum of substances stretching from the barely organic to God himself: bare monads have perceptions only; animals have feeling and purely empirical “memory;” but spirits or minds, which are characterized by self-consciousness, memory or moral personality (on which responsibility guilt and punishment depend), and innate knowledge of logical, mathematical and moral “eternal verities,” are citizens of the City of God.<sup>68</sup> All of this is clear in the finest single paragraph of Leibniz’ *Memoir for Enlightened Persons of Good Intention* (written soon after the completion (1690) of Leibniz’ correspondence with Arnauld concerning “substance”):

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 of God and of the felicity of minds, and that as a result the entire universe is made for minds.<sup>69</sup>

Since, as is evident, no less a doctrine than Leibniz “monadology” itself is a special theory of “substance,” there is little cause for wonder that he should have taken a special interest in the first appearance of that notion in the history of Greek philosophy. And much of his own theory of substance, as Leibniz said in a letter to Jaquelot (1703), is—excluding the purely Christian elements—“generally speaking the substantial form of the ancients.”<sup>70</sup> Hence his concern in the 1714 Vienna lecture to show that an important doctrine which had been “obscure” before Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle was “recognized in an accomplished way” in their

theories of "substance."

The notion that persons as "rational substances" or "minds" ("higher" monads) are subjects of a "kingdom of grace" (of which God is the "monarch") leads back to an earlier point in Leibniz' Vienna lecture—a point with which one can provisionally conclude. As was pointed out, the concept of a natural immortality which is demonstrable in "natural theology" is a key point in Leibniz' universal jurisprudence—if rational substances are to receive "what their actions are worth" and if justice is not to be simply a *legal* concept confined to the "human forum" alone. Leibniz puts this as well as he did anywhere in a letter to Bierling (from 1713, when the Vienna lecture was perhaps being contemplated):

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 oblige men than the gods of Epicurus, which are without providence.<sup>71</sup>

Leibniz conceived his debt to Plato, Aristotle and Pythagoras, then, largely in terms of their having "more distinctly expressed" the idea of the natural immortality of substances (or "unities" or "monads") which had existed "obscurely" in "Eastern" religious thought—"obscurely" even in Judaism, as Leibniz had complained earlier in the *Theodicy*. And so at the end of the 1714 Vienna lecture, Leibniz says that

Though I may doubt whether the Greeks discovered anything demonstrably new (in theology), nevertheless I think some things, which had been described rather obscurely by Eastern peoples, were more distinctly expressed by the Greeks. The most important of these is the doctrine concerning incorporeal substances. Moses spoke about God, in such a way as to make it quite clear that the most important thing which he said about himself, I am who I am, removed the source of the essence from any corporeal contamination; but although he expressed himself eloquently in the matter of dogma, he was not so eloquent at expressing the truth. On the subject of souls the Eastern people also did not speak in a way consistent with the existence of immaterial substances ...

And Leibniz then continues his encomium of Greek philosophy by insisting that: The Greeks 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 from the tradition of Pythagoreans, [and] from what is reported about the teachings of Anaxagoras, but especially from Plato and Aristotle, whose writings survive, and who restored reason to immateriality. For Plato 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*]...<sup>72</sup>

And finally Leibniz makes the Greeks more (philosophically-theologically) “chosen” than the Jews:

A sacred philosophy, in which the nature of divine and spiritual matters [especially “substances”] is not only expressed more clearly but demonstrated with outstanding arguments, is owed to the Greeks. Until then God, using the Hebrew race initially as if it were a tool standing for highest providence had instructed simpler men (who were less educated in the precepts of philosophy) through the revelations of the prophets; but later he 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.<sup>73</sup>

An astonishing conclusion! For Leibniz in 1714 a “sacred philosophy,” demonstrated with “outstanding arguments,” was developed not by the Jews, or even by Christ, but by “the Greeks” — with God merely “using the Hebrew race as a tool” before “infusing Greek minds with a love of wisdom [philosophia], so that divine truths [above all concerning substances] might be communicated” through Platonic, more-than-merely-revealed revelation, and with Greek “greater subtlety of thinking” displacing and replacing the “simplicity” of the “less educated.” (Not only Jews, but equally Christians, might be jolted by this paragraph: everything true in “natural” theology, already “imbedded” (*inditis*) in the mind of God “like other sciences,” is Platonic, and even St John (“a new law I give unto you”) is a Greek-speaker who stresses *logos* and *philia*.)

Leibniz’ “universal jurisprudence,” which involves a “moral realm” within the “natural realm” (“Monadologie” prop. 86) in which all “rational substances” act justly—that is, in terms of “the charity of the wise”—requires a theory of natural substantial immortality which (according to the Vienna lecture) received its first *adequate* expression at the hands of Greek philosophy. (Thus the 1714 lecture is a crucial amplification of the “Monadologie” and of “Nature and grace.”)



### V. Leibniz' Later Thoughts on "Monadologie"

Even if Leibniz' return to Hannover from Vienna (September 14, 1714) meant that he would now have to labor mainly on his "official" task, the history of the House of Braunschweig-Lüneburg (he was, indeed, soon forbidden to travel),<sup>74</sup> he continued when possible to think about and revise the "Monadologie"—the *definitive* version of which was left among his papers, a *Nachlass* apparently unseen by any of his correspondents (not even by Rémond, who had to settle for a copy of *Principes de la nature et de la grâce*). (The final "Monadologie" was not published, as everyone knows, until 1840.)

At least Leibniz, in sending *Nature et grâce* to Rémond (Vienna July 1714) was also able to include an important letter which revealed much about the progress (if not the completion) of the "Monadologie."

I was hoping [Leibniz wrote] to attach to this letter some clarification concerning the monads, which you seemed to ask for; but it ["The Monadologie"] has grown under my hands and many distractions [including, above all, the July 1 lecture "On the Greeks"] have kept me from finishing it so soon.<sup>75</sup>

And in a letter from the same Vienna-period (July 1714), Leibniz was able to offer a proto-monadology, or monadology-in-progress, to Rémond:

I believe that the whole universe of creatures consists only of simple substances or monads and in their aggregations ... There is no action in substances except for perception and appetitions; all other actions are [mere] *phenomena*.<sup>76</sup>

Since Leibniz knew that Rémond was an ardent Platonist (as we saw in section IV), he went out of his way to say that "Plato seems to have seen something of this [truth about monads]: he considers material things as not-very-real [*peu réelles*]."<sup>77</sup> Leibniz then goes on to consider "the pre-established harmony between substances," saying that "each simple substance is a mirror of the universe ... [thus] one same universe is multiplied in an infinity of ways by so many living mirrors, each representing [the universe] in its fashion." He goes on to tell Rémond that:

... one can say that each simple substance is an image of the universe, but that each spirit [mind] is, beyond that, an image of God, having knowledge not only of facts ... like souls without reason, which are only empirics, but having also knowledge of the necessity of the eternal verities ... and also capable in this way of entering into a society with Him and of furnishing a member of the City of God—the best-regulated state that is possible, just as the world is also the most perfect of all structures, both the best physical and the best

moral composition.<sup>78</sup>

This letter to Rémond is a brilliant *précis* not just of the “Monadologie” but of the whole “Vienna Trinity” of 1714, and includes echoes of the *Théodicée*, “the justice of God”—just as “Monadologie” itself had included not just echoes of the *theos-dike* but large quoted chunks of it.

One other post-Vienna letter (December 1714) matters especially for “monadology” as a *practical* doctrine (crowned by *iustitia*): namely a letter to Louis Bourguet which urges that not just Fénelon but also Spinoza do harm to the autonomous rational substances who must not be reduced to “nothing.”

Given the way that I define perception and appetite, it is necessary that all the monads be endowed with them. For perception is for me the representation of the multitude in the simple, and appetite is the leading from one perception to another: now these two things are in all of the monads, for otherwise a monad would have no relation to all other things.<sup>79</sup>

And Leibniz then goes on to say that

I do not know, Sir, how you can draw any Spinozism from this [monadology] ...

On the contrary it is exactly through these monads that Spinozism is destroyed, for there are as many true substances, and, so to speak, living mirrors of the universe actually subsisting ..as there are monads.

“Instead of this,” Leibniz finally tells Bourguet, “according to Spinoza, there is only a single substance. He would be right if there were no monads: then everything outside of God would be evanescent and would evaporate into simple accidents or modifications, since there would be at bottom no [real] substance in things.”<sup>80</sup>

And “evanescent Spinozistic evaporation” is as bad as the “quietistic Fénelonian annihilation” which Leibniz had condemned in *Théodicée* 10, and which he had immediately added to “Monadologie” as the *first* thing necessary for the preservation of *theos-dike*.

## VI. German “Readings” of the “Monadologie”: Kant, Hegel, Cassirer

There is a distinguished German tradition of reading Leibniz’ “Monadologie” as a *practical* philosophy of strong individuality: this tradition begins with Kant, continues with Hegel, and has a late flowering in Ernst Cassirer. (If Leibniz could give an account of the genesis of *monas/logos* in “On the Greeks,” his German successors could give an account of Leibniz’ “individualization” of the monad.)

Kant, in his great 1790 Leibniz-essay *Über eine Entdeckung*, says that the main significance of Leibniz' "monadology" is *moral*, not principally metaphysical: for Kant urges that Leibniz' "pre-established harmony"—not so much within as *between* monads—is a theory of "the [harmonious] relation ... between the Kingdom of Nature and the Kingdom of Grace (i.e. the Kingdom of Ends in relation to the supreme end, that is, men under moral laws)."<sup>81</sup> And this is a Kantian teleologizing paraphrase—more fully worked up in *Critique of Judgment*, "Introduction" IX—of "Monadologie" sections 78 and 79, in which Leibniz says that "the soul follows its own laws, and the body likewise follows its own laws ... souls act according to the laws of final causes [purposes], through appetitions, ends, and means. Bodies act according to the laws of efficient causes or motions. And the two realms, that of efficient causes and that of final causes, are [in pre-established] harmony with one another."<sup>82</sup>

Kant (in *Über eine Entdeckung*) seizes on "ends" to shore up his own notion of *reine praktische Teleologie*, "pure practical teleology," i.e. his notion of "reason-ordained ... objective ends that we ought to have" (*Religion I*). Kant transforms Leibniz' "Kingdom of Grace" wholly into the "Kingdom of Ends" because (for Kant) divine salvific grace can't be *known*<sup>83</sup>: for Kant one must "save" oneself by "good will" and "respect" for persons as "objective ends;" from the perspective of late-Augustinian "grace" he is thus a (skeptical) "semi-Pelagian." (For Kant the only thing truly *known* with "apodeictic" certainty is the moral law as *Faktum der Vernunft*<sup>84</sup>: not God, not grace, not even freedom—except as something that must be *thought* to make "ought" possible.)

For Kant the "moral realm of grace" ("Monadologie" 87) is really just the "moral realm," *Punkt, sine gratia*. In Kant there is a *double* reduction: mind-body harmony *within* monads (unknowable) becomes moral harmony *between* monads (knowable, since it *ought* to be); and "grace" becomes the Kingdom of Ends ("what Leibniz really meant"<sup>85</sup>). In short, Leibniz becomes Kant and "the critical philosophy" is thus "the true apology for Leibniz."<sup>86</sup>

Even if it is extravagant to think that Leibniz "really meant" to be(come) Kant, it is nevertheless the case that Leibniz sometimes tries to firm up his own notion of loving others "disinterestedly" or purely (but without Fénelonian self-"annihilation") by appealing to a notion of persons who are cherished as "*ends*", not used as mere "*means*": here the crucial Leibnizian work is the great letter to the Abbé Nicaise (1697), written at the height of the "quietist" controversy (which led to Fénelon's reduction to "nothing" at the hands of Bossuet and the Vatican):

When one sincerely loves a person, one is not seeking his own profit, nor a pleasure detached from that of the beloved person, but one seeks one's pleasure in the contentment or in the felicity of that person; and if that felicity does not please in itself, but only because of an advantage which results for us this would no longer be a pure and sincere love. ... It is clear by the notion of love which we have just given, how we seek at once our own good for ourselves and the good of the object loved for itself, when the good of this object is immediately, finally (*ultimato*) and for-itself an end, our pleasure and our good—as happens with regard to all the things one hopes for, because they please us by themselves and are in consequence good in themselves, when one has no regard for the consequences; they are ends and not means.<sup>87</sup>

Here there is a fusion of proto-Kantian “pure practical teleology” (“objective ends”) and of Platonizing “higher” love: it is neither typically Kant nor typically Leibniz, but a point on the line between them. (The “problem” is the space between *caritas/philia* and *Achtung* “respect”: is this a *continuum* or a chasm?)

(It is worth noticing *en passant* that while Friedrich Schiller had been a devoted Kant-student, he was nonetheless a kind of left-Leibnizian in his practical thought: “love is the bond that unites all men [and] establishes a correlation between individual happiness and the perfection of society.” And the Schiller-loving Beethoven converted this “bond that unites all men” into the “brotherhood,” even into the “*Elysium*,” of the Ninth Symphony.)

\*\*\*\*\*

Even if Hegel was a harsh critic of Kant's practical philosophy—viewed as an “arid formalism” which vainly tries to “extort” ethical content from bare logical “universality”<sup>88</sup>—he nonetheless agreed with Kant that the real force of Leibniz' “monadology” is *practical*, a strong defense of “individuality” against quietistic “annihilation.”

Hegel gets things exactly right, indeed, in the final chapter of the *Phenomenology*, when he says that for Leibniz “spirit [*Geist*] at once recoils in horror from this abstract ‘unity’ [of a single universal substance], from this selfless substantiality, and maintains as against it the principle of Individuality.”<sup>89</sup> If Leibniz (and others) were “shocked and revolted” by the notion that God is the *only* real “substance,” Hegel goes on to say, “the reason lay partly in the instinctive feeling that in such a conception self-consciousness was simply submerged, and not preserved.”<sup>90</sup>

Ernst Cassirer—the greatest German reader of Leibniz (and of Kant) in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century—in effect follows Hegel's 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit* when he says that "Leibniz' doctrine ... in its principle of the monad, had given the clearest expression to the problem of individuality, and had indeed assigned to individuality a firm central position in a comprehensive philosophical system.... Leibniz does not wish to subordinate the many to the one."<sup>91</sup>

And Cassirer then goes on to say that: "...in Leibniz' philosophy an inalienable prerogative is first gained for the individual entity. The individual no longer functions merely as a special case, as an example; it now expresses something essential in itself and valuable through itself. For in Leibniz' system every individual substance is not only a fragment of the universe, it is the universe itself seen from a particular viewpoint."<sup>92</sup>

In this Cassirer-reading Kantian *reine praktische Teleologie* and Hegelian *Geist* are "already" to be found in Leibniz.

It is heartening, by the way, to see that the Kant/Hegel/Cassirer tradition of reading the "Monadologie" as (mainly) *practically* significant (with "individuals" viewed as valuable, autonomous "ends") is now continued in Stefan Luckscheiter's excellent new *Seele und Fürst bei Leibniz* (Hannover 2013), which rightly urges that "since souls and spirits are substances [or monads] for Leibniz, this means that the concept of substance is the 'immovable foundation' of [Leibnizian] political philosophy"—adding, again rightly, that "Leibniz grounds his theory of natural right/justice in the concepts of perfection and of love."<sup>93</sup>

An invaluable feature of the Luckscheiter volume, incidentally, is an "Appendix" which publishes for the first time a Leibniz-MS (L Br XL Bl. 22-23, from c. 1702) that is a miniature predecessor of the "Monadologie"—beginning (like the 1714 work) with "unities" and "rational substances" and ending with "entelechies or souls" who are "susceptible to eternal verities" and who are "subjects of a government such as is the City of God."<sup>94</sup> (There is, after all, a sense in which Leibniz had been working *toward* the "Monadologie" since the 1686 "Discourse on Metaphysics" and the letters to Arnauld [1686-1690]—with the "new" 1702 manuscript standing mid-way in the *continuum*.)

## VII. Conclusion

If a trinity is "multiplicity in unity" or "unity in multiplicity," (three-in-one), then Leibniz' "Vienna Trinity" of 1714 is "multiple" (or triple) in the slightly different

colorations of the three writings in this tripartite utterance—with “Monadologie” more jurisprudential (*iustitia caritas sapientis*), with *Nature et grâce* more conventionally theological, and with the lecture “On The Greeks” more historical/philological; but that Vienna Trinity is indeed a “unity” (since “monas” means unity) in its shared insistence on the autonomy and the “rights” of rational “substances” which (or rather *who*) should not be “annihilated” by “quietism” or “materialism” or “false mysticism” or “single universal spirit(ism),” such that *theos-dike* disappears or “evaporates.”

To be sure, a “real” Trinity is thought to be “eternal”; by contrast Leibniz’ complete Vienna-Trinity *emerged* over three centuries’ time—*Nature et grâce* in 1718, the definitive “Monadologie” in 1840, the lecture “On the Greeks” in 2008. (Perhaps *Kairos*, the Greek god of “the opportune moment”—and youngest son of Zeus—bided his time in letting eternity slowly appear or unfold in the Vienna Trinity.)

Just as “the greatest of these is charity,” so too “the greatest of these” members of the 1714 Vienna-Trinity is the “Monadologie,” the Father—but it *matters* that Leibniz’ last great Vienna-effort was three-pronged, a trilogy in the Greek sense (“three discourses”), and that the three “persons” sustain and uphold each other through *caritas sapientis* and *benevolentia universalis*, the “genuine pure love” which is at the heart of *theos-dike*.\*

*Received 17 November 2014*

Patrick Riley  
Department of Government  
Harvard University  
Cambridge, Mass. 02138  
Leibnutz@aol.com

*Notes*

<sup>1</sup>For a splendid account of Leibniz’ final Vienna-summer, see Maria Rosa Antognazza, *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge, UK: 2009) (“At the Court of the Emperor, December 1712–September 1714”), pp. 488 ff.

<sup>2</sup>K. Müller and G. Krönert (eds.), *Leben und Werk von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: Eine Chronik* (Frankfurt 1969), p. 244.

<sup>4</sup>Antognazza, *Leibniz*, op. cit., pp. 498-503.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid; see also Patrick Riley, "Leibniz, Platonism and Judaism: The 1714 Vienna Lecture on 'The Greeks as Founders of a Sacred Philosophy,'" in *Leibniz und das Judentum*, ed. D. Cook, H. Rudolph and C. Schulte, *Studia Leibnitiana, Sonderheft* 34. (Stuttgart 2008), pp. 95 ff. (including the first critical edition of Leibniz' Latin lecture-text).

<sup>6</sup>Antognazza, *Leibniz*, op. cit., p. 501: "[The 1714 Vienna-papers] established Leibniz as the author of a strikingly innovative and beautifully economical metaphysics insofar as it was centered on the notion of simple substances (or monads)."

<sup>7</sup>Riley, "Leibniz, Platonism and Judaism," op. cit., pp. 95 ff.

<sup>8</sup>For Leibniz' definition of justice as *caritas sapientis seu benevolentia universalis*, see *Codex Iuris Gentium* (1693), in *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, Reihe IV, Bd. 5, ed. H. Rudolph et. al. (Berlin 2004), pp. 60-61.

<sup>9</sup>Leibniz, *Monadology and other Philosophical Writings*, trans. and ed. Robert Latta (Oxford 1898), pp. 266 (still the best English translation).

<sup>10</sup>Leibniz to Pierre Coste (1712), in Ger. III p. 428 (a comment on "*le Platonisme nouveau*" of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*).

<sup>11</sup>Leibniz, *Nouveaux Essais*, in *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe* op. cit., Reihe VI, Bd. 6, ed. A. Robinet and H. Schepers (Berlin 1962), IV, 10-11.

<sup>12</sup>Leibniz, *Monadology* (ed. Latta), op. cit., p. 217. See also Nicholas Rescher's fine edition of the *Monadology* (Pittsburgh 1991), which incorporate the "added" parts of the *Théodicée* into the text.

<sup>13</sup>Leibniz, *Theodicy*, ed. A. Farrer (New Haven 1952), "Preliminary Dissertation." See also Leibniz, "Théodicée ou apologie de la justice de Dieu," in *Textes inédits*, ed. Gaston Grua (Paris 1948), II, p. 495.

<sup>14</sup>Leibniz, *Theodicy*, ed. Farrer, op. cit., "Preliminary Dissertation" sec. 10.

<sup>15</sup>Thomas Mann, *Joseph and his Brothers* (New York 1936), cited in E.M. Forster, *BBC Broadcasts* (London 2012). (Mann, of course had given a "Leibniz-monad" speech to Goethe in *Lotte in Weimar* (1940). In a similar vein, see Francesco Piro, "Die ethische Gemeinschaft der Geister mit Gott," in *Monadologie*, ed. H. Busche (Akademie Verlag Berlin, 2009), ch. 13.

<sup>16</sup>On this point see E. Naert, *Leibniz et la querelle du pur amour* (Paris 1964), p. 164.

<sup>17</sup>Fénelon, *Explication des maxims des saints*, ed. Albert Cherel (Paris 1911), pp. 118-130; Fénelon, "Bonheur de l'âme," in *Oeuvres de Fénelon* (Paris 1835), vol. I, p. 330.

- <sup>18</sup>Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, trans. J. Strachey (London 1936), ch. 5.
- <sup>19</sup>Fénelon, “Bonheur de l’ame,” op. cit., p. 330.
- <sup>20</sup>Leibniz, letter to Electress Sophie (1697) in *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, op. cit., Reihe I, Bd. 14, pp. 53-60.
- <sup>21</sup>Fénelon, cited in J.-L. Goré, *L’Iteneraire de Fénelon* (Paris 1957), vol. II, p. 178.
- <sup>22</sup>Leibniz, *Theodicy*, ed. Farrer, op. cit., “Preliminary Dissertation” 9-10.
- <sup>23</sup>See Patrick Riley, “Introduction” to Fénelon’s *Telemachus, son of Ulysses* (Cambridge, UK 1994), *passim*.
- <sup>24</sup>Leibniz, cited in Naert, *Leibniz*, op. cit., p. 98.
- <sup>25</sup>Leibniz, *Theodicy*, ed. Farrer, op. cit., III, 26.
- <sup>26</sup>Riley, “Introduction” to Fénelon’s *Telemachus*, op. cit., pp. xi-xiii.
- <sup>27</sup>Leibniz, *Theodicy*, ed. Farrer, op. cit., “Preliminary Dissertation,” sec. 10.
- <sup>28</sup>The motto of the 2001 Berlin Leibniz-Kongress.
- <sup>29</sup>Leibniz, *Theodicy*, ed. Farrer, op. cit., Book I, ch. 10.
- <sup>30</sup>Müller and Krönert (eds.). *Leibniz: Eine Chronik*, op. cit., p. 245.
- <sup>31</sup>Butler’s famous saying is cited in *The Oxford Literary Guide*, ed. D. Eagle (Oxford 1977), p. 358.
- <sup>32</sup>Antognazza, *Leibniz*, op. cit., pp. 518-519.
- <sup>33</sup>Leibniz, *Principles of Nature and Grace*, in *Monadology*, ed. R. Latta, op. cit., p. 415.
- <sup>34</sup>Leibniz “On the Greeks,” op. cit. [cf. Note 5], pp. 95 ff.
- <sup>35</sup>See Patrick Riley, review of A IV, 7 (Berlin 2011), in *The Leibniz Review*, vol. 21, pp. 119 ff.. See also Patrick Riley, “Leibniz’ *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken*, (1698-1704): ‘Unprejudiced Thoughts on Justice and Charitable Religious Reconciliation,’” in *Pluralität der Perspektiven und Einheit der Wahrheit im Werk von G.W. Leibniz*, ed. F. Beiderbeck and St. Waldhoff, (Akademie-Verlag Berlin, 2011), pp. 93 ff.
- <sup>36</sup>Leibniz, *Monadology*, ed. Latta, op. cit., prop. 1, p. 217.
- <sup>37</sup>Leibniz, *Codex Iuris Gentium*, op. cit. pp. 60-63.
- <sup>38</sup>Leibniz, letter to Hansch (1707), in L. Loemker (ed.), *Leibniz: Philosophical Papers and Letters*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Dordrecht 1969), pp. 592-595.
- <sup>39</sup>Shakespeare, *Othello*, Act II, Sc. 2.
- <sup>40</sup>Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act III, Sc. 1, lines 55-56.
- <sup>41</sup>Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. M. Oakeshott (Oxford 1946), ch. 34.
- <sup>42</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>43</sup>Ibid., ch. 46.



<sup>44</sup>Hobbes, *Third Objections to Descartes*, in *Oeuvres*, ed. Adam-Tannery (Paris 1842) vol. ix.

<sup>45</sup>Leibniz, *Apologia Catholicae Veritatis* (c. 1685), in *Politische Schriften*, ed. Rudolph et al., *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe* (Berlin 2007) Reihe IV, Bd. 7, pp. 714 ff.

<sup>46</sup>Leibniz, *Apologia Catholicae Veritatis* op. cit., pp. 714 ff. ("this gangrene [Hobbesism] spreads itself more and more").

<sup>47</sup>Leibniz, to Thomas Burnett (August 1704), Ger. III, p. 298.

<sup>48</sup>Hobbes, *The Elements of Law* (1640), ed. F. Tönnies (Cambridge, UK, 1928), p. 34.

<sup>49</sup>Same as note 47.

<sup>50</sup>Leibniz, to Thomas Burnett (May 1706), Ger. III, pp. 307-308.

<sup>51</sup>Leibniz, *Nouveaux Essais*, ed. Robinet-Schepers op. cit., IV, 10-11.

<sup>52</sup>See especially Leibniz, *Theodicy*, ed. Farrer, op. cit., "Preliminary Dissertation" 9-10. See also Leibniz letter to Abbé Foucher (1686), Ger. I, p. 380.

<sup>53</sup>Leibniz, letter to Hansch (1707), op. cit., pp. 592-595.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup>Plato, *Timaeus*, 49 b. See also Paul Schrecker's superb article, "Leibniz and the Timaeus" in *Review of Metaphysics* Vol. IV, No. 4, June 1951, pp. 495-505.

<sup>56</sup>Hartmut Rudolph, "Res publica Christiana and Corpus Mysticum," in *Studia Leibnitiana* Bd 43, Heft 1 (Stuttgart 2011), pp. 24 ff.

<sup>57</sup>Leibniz, *Monadology* 18, ed. Latta, op. cit., p. 229. (Leibniz then refers the reader to *Theodicy* I, 87, which offers a treatment of "substance" and "entelechy" in Aristotle.) (Christopher Johns, in his *Science of Right in Leibniz* [London: 2013], also offers fine readings of the neglected *Nova Methodus* and *Elementa Iuris Naturalis*, as well as excellent translations of both texts.)

<sup>58</sup>Müller and Krönert, *Leibniz: Eine Chronik*, op. cit., p. 245. The lecture "On the Greeks" was first published (from the Vienna manuscript) by Patrick Riley in 1976, then re-published in a critical edition (using Academy-Edition methods) in 2008 (see note 5).

<sup>59</sup>See Patrick Riley, *Leibniz' Universal Jurisprudence: Justice as the Charity of the Wise* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), passim; see also Patrick Riley, "Leibniz' Mediterranean Ethics: the Graeco-Roman Foundations of *Iustitia caritas sapientis*," in *Studia Leibnitiana* Band 43, Heft 1 (Stuttgart 2011), pp. 5 ff.

<sup>60</sup>Leibniz, to Rémond, Ger. III, p. 605.

<sup>61</sup>Leibniz, to Rémond, Ger. III, p. 637.

<sup>62</sup>But cf. Leibniz' satirical use of *De Natura Deorum* in the 1683 *Mars*

*Christianissimus*, A IV, 2, p. 487.

<sup>63</sup>Plato, letter XIII; whether this disputed letter is by Plato or by a “Platonist” is not crucial here.

<sup>64</sup>For Leibniz’ praise of *De Natura Deorum* see his notes (Rome 1689) on Ralph Cudworth’s *True Intellectual System of the Universe*, A VI, Bd. 4, No 351.

<sup>65</sup>Leibniz, 1714 Vienna-lecture “On the Greeks,” *Studia Leibnitiana* Sonderheft 34, op. cit. p. 113.

<sup>66</sup>A. Foucher de Careil, *Nouvelles lettres et opuscules inédits de Leibniz* (Paris 1857), p. 240.

<sup>67</sup>Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind [Spirit]* trans. J. Baillie (London 1910), p. 108.

<sup>68</sup>Leibniz, *Monadology*, ed. Latta, op. cit., props. 56, 83-90.

<sup>69</sup>Leibniz “Memoire pour les personnes éclairées et de bonne intention,” A IV, Bd. 4, pp. 612 ff.; English in Riley (ed. and trans.), *Leibniz’s Political Writings*, (1972, 1988).

<sup>70</sup>Leibniz, to Jaquelot Ger. III, p. 458.

<sup>71</sup>Leibniz, to Bierling (1713), in *Opera Omnia*, ed. L. Dutens (Geneva 1768), vol. V, p. 390.

<sup>72</sup>Leibniz, “On the Greeks,” op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Müller and Krönert, eds. *Leibniz: Eine Chronik* op. cit., p. 249.

<sup>75</sup>Leibniz, to Rémond (Vienna July 1714), Ger. III, p. 618.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid, pp. 622-623.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Leibniz, to Bourguet (Hannover 1714), Ger. III, pp. 574-575.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Kant, *Über eine Entdeckung*, in *Werke*, ed. Cassirer et al., (Berlin 1923), Bd. 6, pp. 68-71.

<sup>82</sup>Leibniz, *Monadology*, ed. Latta, op. cit., props. 78-79.

<sup>83</sup>Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. T.M. Greene (Boston 1962), passim. (Prof. Greene was the present writer’s first Kant-teacher, 1959-1960.)

<sup>84</sup>Kant, *Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft*, in *Werke*, ed. Cassirer, op. cit., Bd. 5, p. 104.

<sup>85</sup>Kant, *Über eine Entdeckung*, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Leibniz, to Abbé Nicaise (August 1697), cited in Naert, *Leibniz*, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

<sup>88</sup>Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, ed. T.M. Knox (Oxford 1942), pp. 89-91.

<sup>89</sup>Hegel, *Phenomenology*, op. cit., pp. 802, 80.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. J. Pettigrow (Boston 1955), pp. 288, 32.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Stefan Luckscheiter, *Seele und Fürst bei Leibniz: Die Ethischen und politischen Implikationen von Leibniz' Metaphysik der Substanz und des Körpers* (Hannover 2013), pp. 27-29. (Luckscheiter's only questionable judgement is the claim that Leibniz' theory of "justice as wise love" is "*Keineswegs eine Christliche Nächstenliebe*" (p. 153); but Leibniz' *iustitia caritas sapientis* descends (more or less equally) from Plato, Cicero, St. Paul ("the greatest of these is charity"), St. John ("a new law") and Augustine, so that "*Keineswegs*" is much too strong. ("Not merely Christian" would be more accurate.)

<sup>94</sup>Luckscheiter, op. cit., *Anhang*, pp. xiv ff. (The Luckscheiter volume is part of a splendid series edited by Professor Wenchao Li [Hannover/Potsdam]—"Hefte der Leibniz-Stiftungsprofessor." For a fine English-language account of the rôle "substance/monad" in Leibniz' practical philosophy, see John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. B. Herman (Cambridge, Mass., 2000), pp. 105 ff.

\*N.B.: For valuable advice about this essay I am grateful to my Harvard colleague Ignat Kalinov.