

G.W. Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe, Reihe 1, "Allgemeiner Politischer und Historischer Briefwechsel," Band 22 (January-December 1703), Ed. Leibniz-Forschungsstelle Hannover. Akademie Verlag, Berlin, 2011, Pp. xciv, 906, Indices.*

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The main importance of the latest volume of Leibniz' *General Political and Historical Correspondence* (hereafter AI, 22)¹ is that it offers a superb critical edition of Leibniz' only known letter concerning his finest work of political-jurisprudential philosophy: namely the letter of August 5, 1703 to Queen Sophie-Charlotte in Berlin discussing the *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice*—the greatest “German Idealist” contribution to the theory of justice before Kant's 1797 *Rechtslehre*.²

I.

The *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice* (1703), left behind by Leibniz as a manuscript in two parts,³ was fragmentarily quoted by A. Trendelenburg (*Historische Beiträge zur Philosophie*, II, Berlin 1855, 261), and then (almost) fully published by Georg Mollat in Leipzig in 1885 (*Rechtsphilosophisches aus Leibnizens Ungedruckten Schriften*⁴). (Some MS. variants were also published by Gaston Grua in the celebrated *Textes inédits* [Paris 1948].⁵) The first complete English translation, by the present reviewer, appeared in 1972 in *The Political Writings of Leibniz* (Cambridge University Press); the Cambridge edition is the only one to include the opening word (“je,” “I”) of an unfinished final page which shows that the *Méditation* was broken off and left incomplete (without the usual *coda* of *iustitia caritas sapientis* in the *optima respublica* or City of God—as in *Monadologie* sec. 90⁶).

Despite this missing *coda*, Leibniz' *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice* is his most important writing on justice as “wise charity” and “universal benevolence” (viewed as quasi-mathematical, demonstrable “eternal verities”). But Leibniz' essay might with equal justice be called, “Meditation on the Common Notion(s) of Platonism”—for the *Méditation* opens with a nearly-verbatim paraphrase of *Euthyphro* 9e-10e (in which the gods know and love but do not cause or change moral and mathematical “eternal truths”), moves on to reduce Hobbes

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to Thrasymachus (justice as power) in *Republic* Book I, and ends (in its second part) with Platonic “ascent,” in the manner of *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, from mere negative forbearance from harm to justice as wise love, *caritas*, Roman-law *honeste vivere*, and benevolent “aid to others”—as in Augustine’s Platonizing *De Civitate Dei* XIX.⁷

It is from Leibniz’ letter of August 5, 1703 (AI, 22, No. 306) to his old philosophy-pupil Queen Sophie-Charlotte of Prussia (who inspired the *Théodicée*), that we know that at least the first half of the *Méditation* on justice (“si la justice est arbitraire”) was written in summer 1703:

Ayant eu...une conversation avec Monseigneur l’Electeur [Georg Ludwig of Hannover] en presence de Madame l’Electrice [Sophie] sur la nature de la bonté et de la justice, si c’est une chose arbitraire, ou si elle est fondée dans les raisons éternelles, comme les nombres et les figures, j’ay fait un petit discours là-dessus, et je ne say si j’oserois mettre un jour ces bagatelles sous les yeux de Votre Majesté [emphasis added].⁸

And later in the same letter Leibniz praises his friend and colleague Malebranche—on this occasion (*pour ainsi dire*) because the great Oratorian agreed perfectly with Leibniz’ opposition to “arbitrariness” and to justice as power (as will be seen ahead in section V).

Why does it matter that Leibniz’ only known, surviving letter concerning the *Méditation* should have been sent to Queen Sophie-Charlotte in Berlin, and that Leibniz should have gone out of his way to mention the “presence” of Electress Sophie (mother of the Queen) as auditor of a conversation with Georg Ludwig? Simply because, though the Elector Georg was no philosopher, both Sophie and Sophie-Charlotte had strong philosophical-theological interests, and both had received important earlier letters from Leibniz dealing precisely with the demonstrable “mathematical” certainty of “justice” and “goodness.” And Electress Sophie (in August 1703) was about to join her daughter in Berlin: perhaps Leibniz’ letter was (in effect) meant for *both* women to read over together.⁹ (Electress Sophie’s Berlin missive to Leibniz of 10 September 1703, praising “good morals” as the antidote to “superstition” [AI, 22, No. 69] seems to be a response to Leibniz’ August 5 letter. And Leibniz then replied to the Electress [AI, 22, No. 79] that one can “with justice” censure “offenses” against *la sagesse divine*.)

In an earlier letter of August 1696 to Electress Sophie, Leibniz had said that, “As for the order of justice, I believe that there are universal rules which must be valid as much with respect to God as with respect to intelligent creatures.” Intelligible truths

“are universal, and what is true here below with respect to us is also such for the angels and for God himself.”¹⁰ (For Leibniz “angels” are higher, better “knowers”, sooner than quasi-“historical” Scriptural figures such as Gabriel or Michael.¹¹) The eternal truths “are the fixed and immutable point on which everything turns,” such as “the truths of numbers in mathematics and those of figures in geometry.” And for that reason it is “correctly said” (in the *Wisdom* of Solomon) that God “does everything through numbers, by measure and by weight.”¹² (Here Scripture is authoritative not least because it is “mathematical.”)

Obviously, then, Electress Sophie of Hannover was a highly suitable auditor of Leibniz’ remarks (to Elector Georg Ludwig) pointing out that “justice” and “goodness” are not *une chose arbitraire*, that their “nature” is *fondée dans les raisons éternelles, comme les nombres et les figures*. And perhaps she even saw the *petit discours* on justice which Leibniz drew up as a *memorandum*, which we now know as the *Méditation* on justice.

But if Electress Sophie was a suitable auditor of Leibniz’ remarks, her daughter Queen Sophie-Charlotte was at least as suitable a *reader*: For Leibniz had been her philosophy-teacher, and in 1702 sent her a famous letter which is now usually called “What is Independent of the Senses and of Matter.” In this celebrated letter Leibniz urges that “that which the ancient Platonists have remarked is quite true...namely that the existence of intelligible things and particularly of this ‘I’ who thinks...is incomparably more certain than the existence of material things.”¹³ Stressing the “necessity” of mathematics, Leibniz goes on to say that the eternal necessity of morality is “seen” through the same extra-sensory *lumière naturelle* that reveals the truth of $2+2=4$. And he then discusses “justice” as an outgrowth of the “intelligible truth” which is “independent of the existence of sensible and material things outside of us.”

Leibniz goes on, in this 1702 letter to Sophie-Charlotte, to stress the centrality of Plato’s *Meno* in understanding “ideas” (as he had already done in *Discourse on Metaphysics* XXVI); both geometrical and moral necessity, equally,

...show that there is a *light born within us*. For since the senses and inductions could never teach us truths which are thoroughly universal, nor that which is absolutely necessary, but only that which is, and that which is found in particular examples; and since we nevertheless know necessary and universal truths of the sciences, a privilege we have above the brutes; it follows that we have derived these truths in part from what is within us. Thus we may lead a child to these by simple interrogations, after the manner of Socrates [in the *Meno*]

without telling him anything, and without making him experiment at all upon the truth of what is asked of him. And this could very easily be practiced in numbers and other similar matters [e.g. ethics].¹⁴

Leibniz then, having stressed the necessity of mathematics, insists that the necessity of morality is “seen” through extra-sensory *lumière naturelle*: “for example, one can say that there are charitable people who are not just, which happens when charity is not sufficiently regulated [as *caritas sapientis*] . . . For in justice is comprised at the same time charity and the rule of reason. It is by *lumière naturelle* also that one recognizes the axioms of mathematics.” (That “also” is revelatory.) “Necessary truths,” Leibniz urges, are known only by *lumière naturelle*: “for the senses can very well make known, in some sort, what is, but they cannot make known what ought to be, or could not be otherwise.”¹⁵ As usual, Leibniz as demi-Platonist uses, back to back, moral and mathematical examples of what rational “substances” know—*à priori*, though not indeed pre-natally—through “natural light,” independently of sense impressions. The Plato of *Meno* and *Phaedo* is largely supported, British “empiricism” broadly criticized.

Queen Sophie-Charlotte, then, after “What is Independent,” would not have been surprised to find Leibniz discussing the “eternal truth” of justice (only a year later) with her philosophical mother. Nor should it surprise anyone else that Leibniz—after the shockingly unexpected death of Sophie-Charlotte in February 1705—should crown the *Théodicée* (“the justice of God”), conceived in Charlottenburg (initially at the behest of the Queen) with the now familiar question, “What idea shall we form of such a justice as has only will for its rule . . . unless it be the idea contained in that tyrannical definition of justice by Thrasymachus in Plato, which designated as *just* that which pleases the stronger?” But, Leibniz answers, “one will soon abandon maxims so strange and so unfit to make men good and charitable through the imitation of God.”¹⁶

In rendering “theodicy” as “the justice of God,” incidentally, one simply follows Leibniz himself, who says that “I use the title theodicy because it is the justice of God which is the principal subject of that work” (*Théodicée ou apologie de la justice de Dieu* [c. 1707]).¹⁷ Leibniz’s neologism “*Théodicée*” is a Frenchification of *theos* (God) and *dike* (justice), from the Greek, and is almost certainly meant as a Platonizing tribute to the *Timaeus* 41 b-d, where Plato draws together God, justice, immortality, and eternity, saying that “children of gods” will be worth of immortality if they are “willing to follow justice,” whose “divine part” will be “sown by God himself.” (Leibniz’ devotion to *Timaeus* has been best revealed by Paul Schrecker

in *Review of Metaphysics*, 1951.¹⁸) In everyday usage, of course, “theodicy” has come to mean “justification of the ways of God to men”; but by grafting together *theos* and *dike* (*theos-dike*, “the justice of God”), Leibniz was paying yet another tribute to the “Greeks as the founders of rational theology” (to recall the topic of his 1714 lecture in Vienna—first published by the present reviewer (from the Vienna MS) in 1976, and republished in *Studia Leibnitiana* in 2008.¹⁹ (The Vienna lecture is the triumph of Plato and *ratio* over Thrasymachus and *voluntas*.)

To be sure, the *Nova Methodus* of 1667—the youthful work which Leibniz himself later called “adolescent” (“juveniliter et insubide dicta sunt”²⁰)—insists on the “will of God” as the highest form of justice (sec. #75); but the mature Leibniz opposes—more than anything else—the Thrasymachan notion that justice is “willed” or made *ex nihilo* by *fiat*: that voluntarism leads, for Leibniz, to “arbitrariness” and “tyranny.” (Even the young Leibniz thought that God’s *perfection* would “control” his will and power.)

It is revealing, indeed, that while Leibniz made very extensive “revision notes” for the “adolescent,” voluntaristic *Nova Methodus* (as late as the 1690s), he never republished his youthful work²¹—for the sufficient reason that voluntarism (“the will of God”) can’t be “revised” into the Platonizing rationalism and non-arbitrary “eternal verity” of the *Euthyphro*: if “eternity” is true, then “will” (making in time) must be false (“*essence*” over “*genesis*,” as in *Republic* VII, 526 b). Voluntarism isn’t the foundation of anti-voluntarism; and for the Leibniz of the 1703 *Méditation* “the justice of God is *destroyed*” by insisting on “will” and *fiat*. And this is precisely why Leibniz opens the *Méditation* with Plato’s *Euthyphro*.

II. *Méditation* on justice

With the *provenance* of Leibniz’ August 1703 letter to Sophie-Charlotte in place, one should now recall some key passages of the *Méditation* itself—beginning with the Plato-echoing opening lines:

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. The former opinion has been followed by some philosophers and by some Roman [Catholic] and Reformed theologians: but present-day Reformed [theologians] usually reject

this doctrine, as do all of our [Lutheran] theologians and most of those of the Roman Church.²²

Leibniz goes on to urge that the voluntarist view of justice as arbitrary *fiat* ...would destroy the justice of God. For why praise him because he acts according to justice, if the notion of justice, in his case, adds nothing to that of action? And to say *stat pro ratione voluntas*, my will takes the place of reason, is properly the motto of a tyrant...²³

The phrase, *stat pro ratione voluntas*, “let will take the place of reason” (from Juvenal’s *Satire* VI), summed up for Leibniz the unreasonableness of the voluntarist view: for Juvenal places that phrase in the mouth of an unjust Roman woman who crucifies an innocent slave merely because she *wants* to²⁴—in violation of all three principles of Roman law (“to harm no-one,” “to render to each his due,” “to live honorably.”) And this of course reminds Leibniz of *the* Crucifixion, in which charity incarnate suffered judicial murder.

This is why certain persons, too devoted to the absolute right of God, who have believed that he could justly condemn innocent people and even that this might actually happen, have done wrong to the attributes which make God lovable, and, having destroyed the love of God, they have left only fear [behind]...
...Thus all our [Lutheran] theologians and most of those of the Roman Church, and also most of the ancient Church Fathers and the wisest and most esteemed philosophers, have been for the second view, which holds that goodness and justice have grounds [*ont leurs raisons*] independent of will and of force.²⁵

The “founder” of the voluntarist view, for Leibniz, was Thrasymachus in Plato’s *Republic* Book I—a Thrasymachus now brilliantly resurrected in Hobbes (who, as a *kind* of Calvinist, fused ancient Greek and modern Protestant *voluntas* in an especially dangerous and effective way):

Plato in his dialogues introduces and refutes a certain Thrasymachus, who, wishing to explain what justice is, gives a definition which would strongly recommend the position we are combating, if it were acceptable: for that is just (says he) which is agreeable or pleasant to the most powerful. If that were true, there would never be a sentence of a sovereign court, nor of a supreme judge, which would be unjust, nor would an evil but powerful man ever be blameworthy...

And Leibniz, moving from antiquity to modernity, then urges that

A celebrated English philosopher named Hobbes, who is noted for his paradoxes, has wished to uphold almost the same thing as Thrasymachus: for

he wants God to have the right to do everything, because he is all-powerful. This is a failure to distinguish between right and fact. For what one can do is one thing, what one should do, another.²⁶

If Thrasymachus—and also Thrasymachus in his Epicurean-Calvinist English incarnation, Thomas Hobbes—is wrong, then one must try to find the “formal reason” of justice, the concept which should teach us what justice is—and this formal reason or *notion commune* must be “common to God and man,” as arithmetic and geometry are not merely human but “agree with that of God or of the angels.”

Leibniz then speaks at length of the necessary truths of mathematics, offering a table of “square numbers” resembling Socrates’ geometric figures drawn in the sand in *Meno*.²⁷ And he then, still Plato-like, makes “the common notion of justice” logically parallel to numbers and geometry:

The same is true of justice. If it is a fixed term which has some determined meaning; if, in a word, it is not a simple sound, without sense, like *blitiri*; this term, or this word, justice, will have some definition or some intelligible [common] notion: and from every definition one can draw certain consequences, by using the incontestable rules of logic; and this is precisely what one does in building the necessary and demonstrative sciences which depend not at all on facts, but solely on reason, such as logic, metaphysics, arithmetic, geometry, the science of motion, and the science of right as well.²⁸

Here Leibniz’ strategy is to appeal *first* to acknowledged “common notions” in mathematics and geometry—even Hobbes, after all, revered Euclid—then to transfer that demonstrable necessity to “natural jurisprudence” (or what the *Méditation* calls “the science of right”). And to move from mathematical to moral “demonstration” is Platonic, in the manner of *Meno* and *Phaedo*. This is why Leibniz can say, in a letter to Bossuet, that “there is harmony, geometry, metaphysics, and, so to speak ethics [*la morale*] everywhere”²⁹—for all of these are related quasi-Platonic *notions communes*.

Even if Leibniz respected Hobbes for respecting Euclid’s “common notions,” that doesn’t of course mean that “Thrasymachan” Hobbism was *generally* acceptable; for in a letter sent jointly to Electress Sophie and to Queen Sophie-Charlotte in June 1700,³⁰ Leibniz made it clear that the “too-material” philosophy of Hobbes (and even of Locke) made autonomous rational “substances” (and therefore “justice” itself) literally *inconceivable*.

It is indeed precisely *la philosophie trop matérielle* of Hobbes which, according to Leibniz’ *Remarques* on Locke’s *Essay*, makes impossible the “recognition” of

man as “a substance [naturally] endowed with a soul which reasons”;³¹ but, for Leibniz, a correct notion of “substance” or monad is morally-jurisprudentially central: “on the knowledge of substance, and in consequence of the soul, depends the knowledge of virtue and of justice.”³² Hobbes, Leibniz complains, destroys rational substances by speaking “as if it were possible to derive memory, intellect, will and consciousness from [bodily] magnitude, shape and motion alone.” (Leibniz would agree with Shakespeare, indeed, that bad philosophy makes us take “false shadows” for “true substances.”³³). But nothing “is more adverse to the good of the human race and to the progress of the sciences” than the “willful” modernity which pays “no attention at all” to the “intimations of Platonic and peripatetic philosophy.”³⁴ And this comes out very clearly in a remarkable Leibniz-letter written within a few months of the *Remarques*—the above-mentioned joint letter to Electress Sophie and to Queen Sophie-Charlotte.

In this letter of June 1700, composed with the *Remarques* freshly in mind, Leibniz begins with “this simple substance, this unity of substance, or this monad,” then says that these “unities”—cf. Pythagoras’ “the *psyche* is a self moving *number*”—which are “rational souls” (“*le moi en nous*”) reason by means of “universal, necessary and eternal truths” which come from “the eternal and divine light of ideas,” leading to “a society between them and God.” Leibniz then offers in the margin of the letter a table of “square numbers” as evidence of “universal, necessary and eternal truths”—as he would soon do again in the margin of *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice* (1703)—and finally says that “the souls which are capable of these reasonings are called minds [*esprits*], and one can say with justice that they are made in the image of God, and that there is a society between God and them—such that God is, with respect to them, not only what an architect is to his building, but still more what a Prince is to his subjects.”³⁵ And this *parallel* between mathematical necessity and the necessity of justice (and wise princely government) is utterly characteristic of Leibniz’ *Meno*-like demi-Platonism—a demi-Platonism which would (exactly two years later) shape the 1702 “What is Independent”, and then (after one more year) dominate the *Méditation* on justice.

III. Leibniz and Plato’s *Euthyphro*

For the Leibniz of the 1703 *Méditation* and of the contemporaneous letter to Queen Sophie-Charlotte, then, “the justice of God is *destroyed*” by insisting on “will” and *fiat*. This is why Leibniz opens the *Méditation* with Plato’s *Euthyphro*, in which

the just and holy are not merely *whatever* the gods happen to “love” *en passant* (e.g. the beautiful bodies of Ganymede or of Europa).³⁶ But why the *Euthyphro*, more exactly—among all 37 Platonic dialogues?³⁷

If the “eternal moral verities” of justice and goodness are indeed “eternal,” like “the truths of numbers and of proportions,” then they are, *inter alia*, “pre-Christian” (since they are “pre-everything” except the eternal divine mind in which they are co-eternally “imbedded” [*inditis*]);³⁸ the eternal verities are therefore “pre-*bad* Christian” as well—“bad” in the sense of Calvin, Descartes and Hobbes. (But a “good”, Platonizing Christianity [based on “higher” love] is safely imbedded in early Augustine, so nothing is *lost*.³⁹) Christianity, for Leibniz, is problematical because some self-styled “Christian philosophers” dangerously over-value divine omnipotence—as in Descartes’ view that God causes or *wills* the truth of all truth(s) in “Reply to the Six Objections,”⁴⁰ or in Calvin’s idea of God’s groundless “absolute decree,”⁴¹ or in Hobbes’ notion that the “irresistible power” of God “justifieth all he doth” (*Liberty, Necessity and Chance*, which Leibniz reviewed in an appendix to *theos-dike*, “the justice of God”⁴²). All of these modern thinkers, for Leibniz, make God into an unlovable, arbitrary “tyrant”—as he complains in the opening paragraphs of the *Méditation*. But for Leibniz (above all in the *Préface* to the *Théodicée*), love of God is love of perfection (of the “necessary” *ens perfectissimum* whose essence entails existence) and love generally is a *sentiment de perfection* which becomes justice when it is “regulated” by “wisdom.”⁴³ For Leibniz the perfect Being knows and loves all eternal verities, and neither causes them (“genesis”) nor changes them; but the first great defense of just such a view is “Socrates v. Euthyphro” in the *Euthyphro*. If *adequate* philosophy is first of all Greek (“On the Greeks, 1714), and above all Platonic (justice as “wise love”), how can one fail to begin consideration of “the common notion of justice” with the thinker who got these things most nearly right for the first time, namely Plato? Justice itself requires justice to Plato.⁴⁴

Leibniz’ devotion to the anti-voluntarism of Plato’s *Euthyphro* is clear not just in the “Meditation on the Common Notion of Justice” (and in the 1703 Sophie-Charlotte letter), and in the *Theodicy*, but in the slightly earlier *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken* (1698), which he wrote partly to counter the extreme Calvinist view that God creates everything *ex nihilo* through his “fullness of power” (*plenitudo potestatis*) and creative “will” alone. (The *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken* were fully published only in 2011 [A IV, 7, nos. 78-79], and were reviewed at length by us in the 2011 *Review*.) 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” “who teach that two times two makes four and three times three makes nine, for no other reason [*Ursach*] than that God wills it.” But such a radically voluntarist position, for Leibniz, is as calamitous morally as it is mathematically: for on such a view “the *aeternae veritates* would have no certainty in themselves, and even the *bonitas et justitia dei* would be only extrinsic denominations, and in fact would be groundless, if their truth derived from God’s will alone. *Si tantum staret pro ratione voluntas*.”⁴⁵ (These words of Juvenal’s unjust Roman matron were cited *six times* in the *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken*: if for Leibniz Roman law is *la raison écrite*, the unjust Roman matron is *la déraison vivante*.⁴⁶) 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 ways abides with God’s justice, goodness and charity.” For if God’s decree were “quite absolute, and had no *causam impulsivam* whatsoever, then God would be an acceptor of persons, through election, and would deal with men as a tyrant with his underlings...for no other reason than *sic volo sic jubeo*” (a close paraphrase of Juvenal’s *Satire* no. VI).

Leibniz goes on to say in the *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken* that “the eternal truth of goodness and justice, of ratio and proportion,” as well as all other “necessary truths,” have “their ground in the eternal being of God himself: not, however, in his free decree.” And finally he plays the “ontological proof” trump card: if *all* truths were divinely caused *ex nihilo*, then the truth about the necessary existence of God himself (as revealed by St. Anselm) would be “a product of the free will of God, which is absurd in the highest degree [*absurdissimum*].”⁴⁷ In that passage, Platonism triumphs over Euthyphro-Thrasymachus-Epicurus-Calvin-Descartes-Hobbes one more time.

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

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

No reasonable person will maintain, Leibniz now urges, “that justice and goodness originate in 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.”⁴⁸ If one adds that “proportion” refers not just to Platonic mathematics but to the notion that “wise” love or charity must be *proportional* to degrees of perfection in others, then the whole of Leibniz’ “universal jurisprudence” is present in the “Monitè.”

IV. *Notions communes* and the *Nouveaux Essais*

Undoubtedly Leibniz spoke of a *notion commune de la justice* (in the 1703 *Méditation*) because the term “common notion” is not only “Platonic” but (even more and above all) *mathematical*—as Leibniz was at pains to point out in the *Préface* to the *Nouveaux Essais* (written at almost the same time as the *Méditation* itself). But it is worth remembering first that Leibniz had linked up *iustitia universalis* and mathematical *notions communes* at least as early as 1690 (in an important letter to Landgraf Ernst of Hessen-Rheinfels criticizing Arnauld and Jansenism):

To say ... that the justice of God is other than that of men, is just like saying that the arithmetic and geometry of men is false in heaven. Justice has its eternal and unshakeable ideas, and its nature is to bring about the general good insofar as is possible: if that is not the objective of God, one cannot say that he is just according to my definitions, which are in conformity to common notions [*les notions communes*]: namely that *justitia est caritas sapientis*, that is to say a charity which is conformed to wisdom, and that charity is *benevolentia generalis*, such that he who is just advances the good of others as far as he can, without injuring wisdom. And since God is just, one must say that he has regard for the good of all reasonable creatures insofar as this is permitted by the perfection of the universe or the universal harmony which is the supreme

law of the creator.⁴⁹

That last sentence, of course, anticipates the great 1697 essay, “Radical Origination of Things”—and also looks forward to the *Théodicée*. And the use of the Euclidean-geometrical term *notion commune* in connection with *iustitia* shows that Leibniz merely wrote down the (long meditated) *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice* in 1703.

But it is in the *Préface* to the *Nouveaux Essais* that Leibniz develops fully the connection between justice and *notions communes*. It is indeed clear that the real background to Leibniz’ 1703 *Méditation sur ...la justice* (and to his letter to Sophie-Charlotte) is his ever-increasing devotion to Platonism; and it is no accident that Leibniz wrote the *Méditation* (and the letter discussing it) in the middle of composing his greatest Platonizing work, the *Nouveaux Essais sur l’entendement humain* (contra John Locke). Here four things are noteworthy: (1) Leibniz composed the *Nouveaux Essais* in the form of a Platonic *dialogue*; (2) the interlocutors in this dialogue are given Greek names, “Théophile” (“God-lover”) representing Leibniz, and “Philaèthe” (“truth-lover”) standing in for Locke; (3) Leibniz’ *Préface* to the dialogue claims that Locke’s philosophy “has more relation to Aristotle and mine to Plato;”⁵⁰ (4) in the same *Préface*, Leibniz says that “I hold along with Plato,” the Stoics, and Euclid that there are innate, rational, non-empirical “common notions” (κοινὰ Ἐννοιαί, Euclid’s term), which can also be called “flashes of light” that are “divine and eternal” or *zopyra* (ξώπυρα)—the Greek word for “lights used in the kindling of fires” which Plato employs memorably in the *Laws* Book III (the remarkable Book in which Plato discusses “the first beginning of a *polis*,” saying that “sober jurisprudence” [685a] should avoid the “supreme folly” of “shrill and tuneless dissonance” [691a] by keeping the newly-kindled city “sane and in love [*philia*] with itself” [693b]). (Cf. *Symposium* 208e, where the wise man is “in love with the eternal.”) And Leibniz finally adds that among the “divine and eternal” innate “common notions”—in addition to mathematics and geometry—one finds metaphysics and *la morale* or “natural jurisprudence.”⁵¹ In a sense, then, Leibniz’ *New Essays* are a Platonic dialogue between “representatives” of Plato and Aristotle—for Leibniz stands in for Plato, as Socrates had done in the “early Socratic dialogues.” It is no wonder, then, that precisely an early “Socratic” dialogue, the *Euthyphro*, is closely paraphrased at the beginning of the *Méditation*: in this period above all Leibniz had Plato very much in mind, not least in defining *la morale* or “natural jurisprudence” through “eternity” and “non-arbitrariness.”

But it is not only in the *Préface* to the *Nouveaux Essais* that Leibniz stresses

Platonizing eternity and “necessity”; in Book IV, ch. 7, pt. 19 the Platonizing (if anything) accelerates: “If someone wanted to write as a mathematician in metaphysics *or in morality*, nothing would keep him from doing so rigorously; some people have claimed to do this, and have promised us mathematical demonstrations outside of mathematics”—even if “it is quite rare that anyone has succeeded in this.” He repeats this claim, with a Roman-jurisprudential variation, early in Book IV: “There are considerable enough examples of demonstrations outside of mathematics... one can say that the jurisconsults have several good demonstrations, above all the ancient Roman jurisconsults.”⁵² (In AI, 22, No. 375, an October 1703 Leibniz-letter to Ezekiel Spanheim offers the same praise of “the Roman jurisconsults,” together with criticisms of Hobbes and of Pufendorf.) And then in the conclusive part of Book IV—i.e. 7, 19, which finally gives the definition of *droit naturel* as a dictate of *la raison pure*, not of *le pouvoir arbitraire* (echoing *Theaetetus*’ elevation of the “natural” over the “arbitrary”)—Leibniz adds that “In order that you not think... that the good use of these maxims is restricted to the limits of the mathematical sciences alone, you will find that it is *no less so in jurisprudence*.”⁵³

It is no accident that Leibniz on “natural justice” appears most consequentially in *Nouveaux Essais* IV, 7, 19. But why should Leibniz, in IV, 7, 19, discuss (*pour ainsi dire*) first “geometrical demonstration” and *then* “moral demonstration,” *hors des mathématiques*? It has something, surely, to do with Leibniz’ (mainly) admiring, approving view of Plato’s *Meno* in *Nouveaux Essais* I, 1: “all of arithmetic and all of geometry are innate, and in us in a virtual way... as Plato has shown in a dialogue [*Meno*] in which he introduces Socrates leading a child to abstruse truths through interrogation alone, without teaching him anything.”⁵⁴ But in *Meno* itself (as Leibniz well knew) the “*vérités abstruses*” include both geometry and virtue: When in *Meno* an impasse is reached over the moral question, “What is virtue?,” Socrates pulls Meno’s slave (“anyone you like”) out of the crowd of Meno’s retainers, elicits astonishing geometrical knowledge from this unlettered (and unnumbered) boy, and then says, in effect, that just as geometry is “wisdom,” so after all is virtue (which is knowing and following the “eternal verities,” such as the “absolute” moral ideas of the *Phaedo* (75d). Plato’s hope, in *Meno* 82a ff., is plainly that the contestability of morality (e.g. virtue) may be redeemed by the necessity of geometry (so that moral necessity and geometrical necessity will be logically alike: reason-given, eternal, universal, not subject to Heraclitean *flux*). And Leibniz in Book IV, ch. 7 of *Nouveaux Essais* (the “geometry” chapter) shares that Platonizing hope when he

asks, “How could one do better than to reduce controversy, that is to say contested truths, to evident and incontestable truths; would that not be to establish them in a demonstrative way”?⁵⁵ (This last sentence, which could almost be a “recovered” line from the *Meno*, also colors Leibniz’ 1702 and 1703 letters to Queen Sophie-Charlotte.)

It is worth remembering, of course, that Leibniz had insisted on the same *Meno*-like “virtue-wisdom” connection a few years earlier, in his praise of the geometry-loving Chinese Emperor in *Novissima Sinica* (1697/99):

Now geometry ought not to be regarded as the sphere of workmen but of philosophers; for, since every virtue flows from wisdom, and the spirit of wisdom is truth, those who thoroughly investigate the demonstrations of geometers have perceived the nature of eternal truth, and are able to tell the certain from the uncertain. Other mortals waver amid guesses, and, not knowing the truth, almost ask, with [Pontius] Pilate, what it is. But there is no doubt that the monarch of the Chinese saw very plainly what in our part of the world Plato formerly taught [in the *Meno*] that no one can be educated in the mysteries of the sciences except through geometry.... The strength of our geometry, as soon as it was tested by the King, was so much to his liking that he easily came to believe that those who had learned thus to reason might teach correctly *in other things* [e.g. virtue].⁵⁶

In this astonishing part of the *Novissima Sinica*, one almost finds *Meno*’s equation of wisdom, geometry, virtue, and justice—and this “amounts” (Leibniz says), to the unorthodox faith that a Chinese ruler might have. And if that ruler knows “eternal truth” and is just and charitable, he is (in effect) a better “Christian” than bellicose Louis XIV, the self-styled Rex Christianissimus (whom Leibniz called Mars Christianissimus). In the preface to *Novissima Sinica* all good things—truth, wisdom, Platonic geometry, charity, justice, virtue, popular happiness—are strongly related to one another, if not fully equated. The Chinese ruler is wise, knows the “eternal truths”; he is just and charitable. But if he is wise and charitable, is that not *caritas sapientis*—through the contemplation of nature, which Leibniz calls “another kind of grace” (*alio gratiae*)? By contrast Pontius Pilate lacks wisdom (“what is truth?”) and is neither just nor charitable: he permits the judicial murder of Christ, who did the most to make charity *the* central virtue on earth. It is no accident that the wisely charitable virtues of an enlightened ruler—a Platonic geometer—are contrasted with the weak viciousness of Pilate: Leibniz could have pitched upon many bad rulers, but he singled out the one who publicly executed

caritas' embodiment. The point is that one can be a Platonist, and thereby "wisely loving," even if explicit knowledge of Christ is foreign to (what Leibniz called in 1716) "the natural theology of the Chinese."⁵⁷

V. Leibniz and Malebranche

It must have been a consolation to Leibniz that his "eternal" Platonic *jurisprudence naturelle* was (largely) concurred in by the living philosopher whom Leibniz found most *nearly* right: namely Malebranche, who had become Leibniz' friend and colleague during the Paris sojourn of the mid-1670s.⁵⁸ Beginning with the *Entrétiens sur la métaphysique* and continuing through the *Prémotion physique*, Malebranche had urged that "my present design" is to prove that "God is essentially wise, just and good ... that his *volontés* are not at all purely arbitrary—that is to say that they are not wise and just simply because he is all-powerful ... but because they are regulated by the eternal law...a law which can consist only in the necessary immutable relations which are among the attributes and perfections which God encloses in his essence." The ideas which we have of wisdom, justice, and goodness, Malebranche goes on to say, "are quite different from those that we have of omnipotence." To say that the *volontés* of God are "purely arbitrary," that "no reason can be given for his *volontés*, except his *volontés* themselves," and that everything that he wills and does is just, wise, and good because he is omnipotent and has a "sovereign domain" over his creatures—to say all this, Malebranche argues, is "to leave the objections of libertines in all their force."⁵⁹ This page could be invisibly woven into Leibniz' *Théodicée*—a book admired and praised by Malebranche ("you prove quite well...that God must choose the best"⁶⁰). And it mattered very much to Leibniz that Malebranche was a "recovering" Cartesian who abandoned Descartes' radical voluntarism through the Platonizing elements of Augustinianism.

The notion that God wills in virtue of Platonic/Leibnizian "eternal law," not simply through the bare possession of "sovereign domain," leads Malebranche to a criticism of Hobbes (and Locke) which corresponds to much that one finds in Leibniz. "If," Malebranche says, "God were only omnipotent, and if he were like princes who glory more in their power than in their nature," then "his sovereign domain, or his independence, would give him a right to everything, or he would not act as [an] all-powerful [being]." If this were true of God, Malebranche continues, then "Hobbes, Locke, and several others would have discovered the true foundations

of morality: authority and power giving, without reason, the right to do whatever one wills, when one has nothing to fear.” This legal-positivist view of either human or divine justice Malebranche characterizes as “mad;” and those who attribute this mode of operation to God “apparently prefer force, the law of brutes (that which has granted to the lion an empire over animals), to reason.”⁶¹

In connection with his doctrine that God never operates through a *volonté* which is *absolue* or *bizarre*, but only through love of the “eternal law” which is indeed “coeternal” with him, Malebranche designs one of the strikingly imaginative stage-settings that even Voltaire (Leibniz’ nemesis) found impressive:

If God were only all-powerful, or if he gloried only in his omnipotence, without the slightest regard for his other attributes—in a word, without consulting his consubstantial law, his lovable and inviolable law—how strange his plans would be! How could we be certain that, through his omnipotence, he would not, on the first day, place all of the demons in heaven, and all the saints in hell, and a moment after annihilate all that he had done! Cannot God, *qua* omnipotent, create each day a million planets, make new worlds, each more perfect than the last, and reduce them each year to a grain of sand?⁶²

Fortunately, according to Malebranche, though God is in fact all-powerful and “does whatever he wills to do,” none the less “he does not will to do anything” except “according to the immutable order of justice.” And this is why Malebranche insists, in four or five separate passages of the *Réflexions sur la prémotion physique*, that St Paul always said “O altitudo divitiarum Sapientiae et Scientiae Dei,” and not at all “O altitudo voluntatis Dei”⁶³: will can be willful, if its only attribute is power, and that attribute is the one that Hobbes wrongly endows with excessive weight. (And Leibniz had roughly the same “reading” of the same St. Paul who had also insisted that “the greatest of these is charity”—if one can say “also” in connection with the *caritas* which is at the heart of the Leibnizian *ethos*.)

VI. Conclusion

In the end it is quite clear what Leibniz opposes and what he favors in the *Meditation sur la notion commune de la justice* and in the August 1703 letter to Sophie-Charlotte: he is against tyranny, arbitrariness, and willfulness, and he is for charity, benevolence, and reasonability. That is why he constantly argues against the “dangerous opinion” that “all justice, all morality comes not from the nature of things but from the despotic will of God [*non rerum natura sed despotico*

quodam Dei arbitrio constet] (to cite his 1707 letter to the Platonist Hansch).⁶⁴ If one historicizes and personalizes these dislikes and likes, he is hostile to Calvin, Descartes and Hobbes (as radical voluntarists who deny or destroy Platonic eternal verities), and he is favorable to Plato, St. Paul, and Augustine (as *caritas*-lovers)⁶⁵—indeed unless one recalls Leibniz’ prominent place in modern mathematics and science (especially dynamics) he will look briefly (in the moral sphere) like an ancient chastising modernity.

As Leibniz, echoing the 1703 *Méditation*, said with final lapidary precision a few months before his death (in the fourth letter to the Newton-factotum Samuel Clarke, 1716): “Will without reason would be the ‘chance’ of the Epicureans. A God who acted by such a will would be a God only in name.”⁶⁶ Leibniz’ mentioning of Epicurus is no accident: for it was Epicurus who famously said that there is “no natural justice”—in explicit opposition to Plato’s argument that in the field of “right and wrong” there is something *natural*, “with a reality of its own”, not just “arbitrary public decision” (*Theaetetus* 172 b). Is it (so to speak) Epicurean chance that Leibniz translated the *Theaetetus* only a few months before first insisting that natural justice is (eternally, necessarily, demonstratively) “the charity of the wise?”

Leibniz, after all, defends Platonic “natural” justice (from the *Theaetetus*) quite often—but most notably in a letter of 10 July 1704 to Damaris Cudworth (Lady Masham), daughter of the “Cambridge Platonist” Ralph Cudworth: “I am for those who believe that the source of necessary truths is innate in our mind...the intellectual system of the late Monsieur Cudworth pleases me extremely...and I hold, as he does, that justice is natural, and not at all arbitrary.” Since Lady Masham was at once the daughter of Cudworth and the principal benefactress of Locke who [who died on her estate in 1704], Leibniz is using her father’s Platonism to gently chide Locke’s empiricism.⁶⁷ (This Locke-chiding is also to be found, in the new A I, 22, in two Leibniz-letters of December 1703—one to Queen Sophie-Charlotte [No. 418], the other [No. 412] to Thomas Burnett [recently released from the Bastille through Leibniz’s intercession].)

Leibniz’ central anti-voluntarist moral idea, in any case, is that “universal” justice, rightly conceived as a non-arbitrary “eternal verity,” is a positive, other-aiding *caritas sapientis seu benevolentia universalis* (“the charity of the wise, that is, universal benevolence”); that justice “contains” or encloses *all* of the moral virtues; and that it relates to “the common good” or “the perfection of the universe” or “the glory of God”—where these three distinct things are morally equivalent in Leibniz’ usual sense (the sense that in working with wise charity for the common good of

humanity, one is following the “presumptive will” of God as just monarch of the best of all possible worlds).⁶⁸

It is worthwhile to try to recover a tradition of thinking about justice which (since the eighteenth century) has largely disappeared from view: the tradition which defines justice as positive love and benevolence and “charity” and generosity, *not* as merely following commanded or “willed” sovereign law (as in Hobbes’ “legal positivism”) or negatively “refraining from harm” (the *neminem laedere* which is the lowest degree of Roman law). There is (or rather was) a tradition which one can (roughly) call “Christian-Platonic,” which is to be found in Augustine, Dante, Shakespeare and Leibniz (*inter alia*)—and, in a proto-Leibnizian way, in Cicero’s insistence on justice as *caritas naturalis* [natural charity] “between good men” (in *De Finibus* and *De Natura Deorum*⁶⁹)—which claims that justice should not content itself with mere law-observance (since law can be unjust), should not content itself with avoiding injury, but that love and charity as the first of the social virtues should be “ascended” to and embraced (thorough the “sublimated Platonic eroticism” of *Euthyphro*, *Phaedrus*, and *Symposium*) in a completely adequate theory of justice.

This Platonic-Christian tradition comes out in its first full form in Augustine’s *De Doctrina Christiana* I, 27/28, with its notion that the “just” person will feel “ordered” or measured love which is proportional to the moral perfection of fellow men⁷⁰—here St. Paul (I *Corinthians* xiii, “the greatest of these is charity”) supplies the element of love, and Plato supplies the mathematizing-geometrizing notions of order, measure and proportion (unwilled “eternal verities”); it continues in Dante’s notion of loving ascent to a *Paradiso* which embraces Justinian and “higher” Roman justice (Canto VI);⁷¹ it expands in Portia’s eloquent speech in *The Merchant of Venice* Act IV (“though [legal] justice be thy plea, consider this, that in the course of justice none of us should see salvation: we do therefore plead for mercy”), and in Isabella’s speeches in *Measure for Measure* privileging charity and mercy and generosity over sovereignty and the letter of the law;⁷² and it culminates in Leibniz’ great synthesizing-recuperative effort, at the dawn of the Enlightenment, to say that justice rightly understood is not “will” or *fiat* or decree but *caritas sapientis seu benevolentia universalis*, “the charity/love of the wise, that is universal benevolence.” That is indeed a moral theory worthy of intelligent *recovery*—a moral theory whose last great historical defender was precisely Leibniz, but whose roots are deeply Platonic (*stat pro voluntate ratio*).

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Notes

¹ G. W. Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, Reihe 1, “Allgemeiner Politischer und Historischer Briefwechsel” Band 22 (January-December 1703), ed. Leibniz-Forschungsstelle Hannover. (Bearbeiter: Nora Gädeke, Sabine Sellschopp, Regina Stuter and Monika Meier; forward by Herbert Breger). Akademie-Verlag Berlin, 2011, pp xcvi, 906, Indices.

² For the reviewer’s fuller treatment of the *Méditation*, see his *Leibniz’ Universal Jurisprudence: Justice as the Charity of the Wise* (Cambridge, Mass. 1996), ch. 4. The “German Idealist” tradition begins not with Kant and Fichte, but with Leibniz; and the *whole* tradition “descends” from ever-more-chastened, increasingly de-Pythagoreanized Platonism.

³ The two parts, marked Jur. III, 1, 72-81 and Jur III, 1 82-87 (i.e. successive numbers in the Leibniz-Archiv) arguably make up a single, unitary Platonizing work: as Prof. Dr. Herbert Breger, distinguished retired head of the Leibniz-Archiv, Hannover, has written to the present reviewer, the likelihood that Leibniz himself conceived the two parts of the *Méditation* as complementary halves of a single work is strong. Noting that the numbers assigned to parts of the *Méditation* (Jur III, 1, 72-81 and Jur III, 1, 82-87) were written in by the great Leibniz-scholar Eduard Bodemann before 1895, Breger says that “in general he [Bodemann] seems to have left everything [in Leibniz’ papers] as it was” — adding that “in some cases we have the definite impression that a certain order which exists today must have been the order Leibniz gave to the papers.” While cautioning that “we do not know for certain,” Breger ends by saying that “it seems to me more probable that Bodemann in this particular case (as in most cases) just took the papers as they were and added the numbering.” (Breger’s two decades of service in Hannover have been exemplary and invaluable.)

⁴ Leibniz, *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice*, in *Rechtsphilosophisches aus Leibnizens Ungedruckten Schriften* (Leipzig 1885), pp 59 ff. (a critical edition of this text will appear in A VI, 5, c. 2015).

- ⁵ Leibniz, MS variants of the *Méditation*, in *Textes inédits*, ed. Gaston Grua (Paris 1948), vol. I, p. 477.
- ⁶ Leibniz, “Monadologie,” sec. 90, in *Monadology and other writings*, ed. R. Latta (Oxford 1898).
- ⁷ Plato, *Euthyphro*, 9e-10e; Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, Bk. XIX (*passim*)
- ⁸ Leibniz, letter to Queen Sophie-Charlotte (5 August 1703), in AI, 22 (op. cit.), No. 306. (Originally in *Die Werke von Leibniz*, ed. O. Klopp [Hannover 1865], vol. X, pp. 212-213.)
- ⁹ K. Müller-G. Krönert, *G.W. Leibniz: Eine Chronik* (Frankfurt 1969), year “1703.”
- ¹⁰ Leibniz, letter (1696) to Electress Sophie, in *Textes inédits*, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 379.
- ¹¹ See Mattia Geretto, *L’Angelologia Leibniziana*, Soveria Mannelli 2010, for an excellent account of the role of “angels” in Leibniz’ thought.
- ¹² Leibniz, letter (1696) to Electress Sophie, in *Textes inédits*, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 379.
- ¹³ Leibniz, letter (June 1702) to Sophie-Charlotte (“What is Independent of the Senses and of Matter”), in AI, 21 (Berlin 2009), pp. 338ff.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Leibniz, *Theodicy*, ed. A. Farrer (New Haven 1952), “Preliminary Dissertation.”
- ¹⁷ Leibniz, “Théodicée ou apologie pour la justice de Dieu,” in *Textes inédits*, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 495.
- ¹⁸ Paul Schrecker, “Leibniz and the *Timaeus*,” in *Review of Metaphysics* vol. IV, No. 4, June 1951, pp. 495-505.
- ¹⁹ Patrick Riley, “Leibniz, Platonism and Judaism,” in *Leibniz und das Judentum*, ed. D. Cook and H. Rudolph, *Studia Leibnitiana* (Sonderhaft), Stuttgart 2008, “Anhang” [text of Leibniz’ Vienna lecture].
- ²⁰ Leibniz, *Nova Methodus* #75, in *Philosophische Schriften* vol. I, A VI, 1 (Darmstadt 1930), pp. 344-345. For Leibniz’ later doubts about the merits of *Nova Methodus*, see his self-critical letter (“juveniliter et insubide dicta sunt”) of October 1709 to Kestner, in Grua, *Textes inédits*, II, pp. 687-688.
- ²¹ On this point see René Sève’s excellent *Le Droit de la raison* (Paris 1994), pp. 183 ff.
- ²² Leibniz, *Méditation*, in *Rechtsphilosophisches* (u.s.w.), ed. Mollat, op. cit., pp. 66 ff.; English in *The Political Writings of Leibniz*, ed. P. Riley (Cambridge 1972, 1988), pp. 39ff.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Juvenal, *Satirae* VI, 182-183. For a fuller interpretation of Leibniz’ “reading” of

- Juvenal, see the present reviewer's account of A IV, 7 in *The Leibniz Review* vol. 21 (December 2011), pp. 119 ff.
- ²⁵ Leibniz, *Méditation*, op. cit., Mollat pp. 66 ff.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Plato, *Meno*, 82 b ff.
- ²⁸ Leibniz, *Méditation*, op. cit., Mollat pp. 66 ff.
- ²⁹ Leibniz, letter (1692) to Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, in A II, 2 (Berlin 2009). No. 145.
- ³⁰ Leibniz, letter to Electress Sophie and Queen Sophie-Charlotte, A I, 18, pp. 114-115.
- ³¹ Leibniz, in A VI, 6, op. cit.
- ³² Leibniz, letter to Pierre Coste (1713), in Ger. III, p. 428.
- ³³ Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, Act IV (speech of Tamara the Goth).
- ³⁴ Leibniz, *Apologia Catholicae Veritatis*, in A IV, 6 (Berlin 2008), "Anhang," No. 124.
- ³⁵ Leibniz, letter to Electress Sophie and Queen Sophie-Charlotte, A I, 18, pp. 114-115.
- ³⁶ Plato, *Phaedrus* 254-256b.; *Symposium* 202 c ff.
- ³⁷ There are (by the best-accepted accounts) 37 dialogues of Plato and 37 plays by Shakespeare—and this is footnote #37 (for the benefit of numerologists).
- ³⁸ The term "imbedded" (*inditis*) comes from Leibniz' 1714 Vienna lecture, "On the Greeks as Founders of a Sacred Philosophy," pub. and ed. Patrick Riley (1976) *Journal of the History of Philosophy*; new ed. in *Leibniz und das Judentum* ed. H. Rudolph, op. cit.
- ³⁹ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* Bk 1 (c. 395 A.D.), *passim*.
- ⁴⁰ Cf. Descartes, Letter to Mersenne, in *Oeuvres*, Vol. VI, p. 109, ed. V. Cousin, Paris 1840.
- ⁴¹ See Leibniz, *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken*, A IV, 7 (Berlin 2011), *passim*.
- ⁴² Hobbes, "Liberty, Necessity and Chance" in *English Works*, Vol. V, pp. 440ff, ed. R. Molesworth, London 1836-1840.
- ⁴³ Leibniz, "La Félicité" in Grua, 579-580. For a full treatment of this remarkable work see Patrick Riley, review of A, IV, 5, *The Leibniz Review*, Vol. 14, 2004, pp. 75-81.
- ⁴⁴ *Nouveaux Essais* IV, 10 (A VI, 6, 445-447); see also "On the Greeks," *Op. cit.*, *passim*.
- ⁴⁵ Leibniz *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken*, op. cit. pp. 432ff.

- ⁴⁶ For Leibniz on Roman law as *la raison écrite*, see his remarks on Domat's *Les lois civiles, Textes inédits*, op. cit., Vol. II pp. 647 ff.
- ⁴⁷ Leibniz, *Unvorgreiffliches Bedencken*, op. cit., pp. 432 ff.
- ⁴⁸ Leibniz, *Monitè* [1706] on Pufendorf, in Dutens (ed.), *Opera* (Geneva 1768), vol. IV, pt. III (English in *Political Writings*, ed. Riley, op. cit., pp. 64 ff.).
- ⁴⁹ Leibniz, letter to Landgraf Ernst, in A II, 2 (Berlin 2009), No. 84.
- ⁵⁰ Leibniz, *Nouveaux Essais*, (Draft of *Préface*), ed. Robinet-Schepers, in A VI, 6 (Berlin 1962), p. 49 n.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, Bk IV, ch. 7, sec. 19.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.* For the reviewer's fuller treatment of this crucial text, see "Leibniz on Natural Law in the *Nouveaux Essais*," in *Leibniz, selon les Nouveaux Essais*, ed. F. Duchesneau and J. Griard (Paris and Montréal 2006), pp. 277 ff.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Bk. IV, ch. 7, op. cit.
- ⁵⁶ Leibniz, *Novissima Sinica (Praefatio)*, in A IV, 6 (Berlin 2008), p. 400.
- ⁵⁷ See the superb new edition by Wenchao Li and Hans Poser (Berlin 2002), *passim*.
- ⁵⁸ See André Robinet's splendid *Malebranche et Leibniz: Relations personnelles* (Paris 1955), *passim*.
- ⁵⁹ Malebranche, *Réflexions sur la prémotion physique*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. A. Robinet, vol. xvi (Paris 1958), pp. 93-104.
- ⁶⁰ Malebranche, letter to Leibniz (1711), in *Malebranche et Leibniz*, ed. A. Robinet, op. cit., p. 417.
- ⁶¹ Malebranche, *Prémotion physique*, op. cit., p. 98.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 100.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 122, 172 (*inter alia*). For the reviewer's fuller reading of Malebranche, see his chapter in *The Cambridge Companion to Malebranche*, ed. S. Nadler (Cambridge, UK 2000), pp. 220 ff.
- ⁶⁴ Leibniz, letter to Hansch (May 1712), in *Opera*, ed. Dutens, op. cit., vol. V, p. 167.
- ⁶⁵ See Robert Mulvaney's excellent "Divine Justice in Leibniz' *Discourse on Metaphysics*," in *Studia Leibnitiana*, Supplementa xiv (Wiesbaden 1975), pp. 61-82 (the best such piece ever written).
- ⁶⁶ In *Monadology*, ed. R. Latta, op. cit., p. 104 no 1.
- ⁶⁷ Leibniz, letter to Damaris Cudworth (Lady Masham), 10 July 1704, in *Die Werke von Leibniz*, ed. Klopp, op. cit., vol. X, pp. 287-289.
- ⁶⁸ Leibniz, *Elementa iuris perpetui*, in *Scritti Politici*, ed V. Mathieu (Torino 1951),

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⁶⁹ Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, Bk. V; Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* I, 41-43.

⁷⁰ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, Bk. I, ch. 27, xxviii.

⁷¹ Dante, *Commedia*, “Paradiso,” Canto VI.

⁷² Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, Act IV; *Measure for Measure*, Act II.