

eternity of the mind, can hardly do better than this book. Nadler's interpretation of this vexed doctrine is both sensible and carefully wrought, and the case he makes for reading it in light of the tradition of Jewish rationalism is compelling. Though *Spinoza's Heresy* will not end debate over Spinoza's expulsion, no one engaged in that debate can afford to ignore it.

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Christia Mercer. *Leibniz's Metaphysics: Its Origins and Development*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. xiii + 528. Cloth, \$80.00.

Christia Mercer's massive study is aimed at unearthing the hidden roots of Leibniz's metaphysics by placing the German philosopher back in the intellectual context within which his thought first took shape. In so doing she stresses the fundamental importance of Leibniz's early years for the development of his philosophy. In particular she convincingly argues for the key role played by Leibniz's early exposure to the thought of eclectic thinkers (including his teachers) who were trying to build a new philosophical synthesis centered around the key tenets of Christian theology and combining elements of Aristotelianism, Platonism, and (in at least some cases) the new mechanical philosophy of nature.

One of Mercer's central theses is that the methodological and metaphysical commitments that Leibniz developed during his youth formed the bedrock of his mature philosophy (23). More precisely, her bold claim is that Leibniz's core metaphysics (including the complete concept account of substance) was constructed in 1668–71, re-examined and slightly developed in 1672–79, and then used for the rest of his long philosophical career (18, 470). The key inspirational forces driving the development of Leibniz's philosophy, in her view, had even earlier origins. In the mid-1660s Leibniz did not yet have a fully formulated metaphysics; but he already possessed very definite philosophical objectives which were to guide the development of his metaphysics and form the unstated assumptions underlying his mature thought (40). Mercer identifies these unstated assumptions as a "Metaphysics of Method," a "Metaphysics of Substance," and a "Metaphysics of Divinity," all of which she finds fully developed in his early thought (468–9).

According to Leibniz's "Metaphysics of Method" (examined in part I), there exists a truth beneath the prominent philosophical schools which can and ought to be discovered. This conciliatory methodology was Leibniz's answer to the political, religious, and philosophical chaos around him. He was deeply convinced that his brilliantly original eclectic metaphysics would provide the foundation of philosophical, theological, and even political peace. Leibniz's "Metaphysics of Substance," Mercer argues in part II, melded an Aristotelian approach to substance with a mechanical physics and originated at the very outset of his intellectual carrier in an attempt to solve specific theological problems (e.g., those of the incarnation and resurrection). Platonism in turn offered the material for Leibniz's "Metaphysics of Divinity" (explored in part III), that is, for his conception of the relationship between God and creatures. The fourth and final part of Mercer's book takes her analysis of Leibniz's writings up to 1679 and describes the laying of the foundations of his mature metaphysics. She concludes not only that Leibniz proposed the doctrine of pre-established harmony prior to his departure for Paris in March 1672, but also, more generally, that the other tenets of Leibniz's mature thought, including his theory of truth, grew naturally out of his early metaphysics (see, in particular, 2, 15–8, 47, 52, 169–70, 250–2, 300–1, 472).

Throughout the book Mercer describes her interpretation as "startling," "unfamiliar," "dramatic," and "surprising," and fears that "readers may balk" at her conclusions since "so much of Leibniz's thought has escaped us for so long" (see, for instance, 1, 9, 471). Some readers may feel, on the contrary, that she has underestimated the extent to which several of her central theses—such as the importance of the earliest stages of Leibniz's philosophical development in general and of eclecticism, theological problems, and Platonism, as well as Aristotelianism within that development in particular—are already reflected in the

best recent traditions of international Leibniz scholarship. But her book undoubtedly breaks new ground and remains an important contribution to an exciting field which cannot and will not be ignored. While international Leibniz scholarship may not absorb some of this book's more extreme theses, it will need to come to grips with many of its more basic innovations.

Perhaps the single most important of these is a very general one: to take seriously the German intellectual world from which Leibniz emerged. Within the general history of early modern philosophy, Leibniz is too often portrayed as a "modern" western European stranded in a central European intellectual backwater. Mercer's account is the most sustained argument to date that Leibniz was not a misplaced modern westerner: rather, the most characteristic features of his thought were deeply rooted in the German intellectual world from which he emerged. Most fundamentally, his deep desire to reconcile ancient and modern thought, philosophy and theology, and Protestantism and Catholicism ultimately derived from the need to repair the terrible disunities which had precipitated a generation of devastating war in central Europe and to substitute in their place intellectual, religious, and political peace. This fundamental set of concrete conditions helps explain, among other things, the philosophical harmony between the Lutheran philosophers in Leipzig to which Mercer usefully directs our attention and the seemingly very different Calvinist and Catholic thinkers whose importance for the young Leibniz has been emphasized by others. No sophisticated student would now hope to grasp the full significance of Hobbes or Locke without reference to the wars and revolutions of seventeenth-century England; and future Leibniz scholarship will likewise come to recognize still more clearly the extent to which his deepest philosophical impulses were conditioned by the thirty years of continuous warfare which immediately preceded his birth. On the road to this new outlook, Mercer's book constitutes an impressive and outspoken piece of research which forcefully promotes and advances in the Anglo-American world a new way of approaching the history of philosophy.

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Rupert Read and Kenneth A. Richman, editors. *The New Hume Debate*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. Pp. vii + 210. Cloth, \$85.00.

No one debates that Hume's views about causation are of central importance to his philosophy and that, historically speaking, what he said on this subject has been enormously influential. Nor is there much doubt that according to the "standard" interpretation Hume holds that causation must be understood in terms of the constant conjunction of objects and does not involve any "metaphysical" powers or forces in the objects themselves. On this reading Hume is a proponent of the "regularity" theory of causation, and it is this view that has done much to shape empiricist and "positivist" philosophy over the past two centuries.

Despite these points of agreement, recent work in Hume scholarship has challenged the accuracy of the standard interpretation. This work includes, most notably, John Wright's *The Sceptical Realism of David Hume* (1983) and Galen Strawson's *The Secret Connexion* (1989). One particular merit of *The New Hume Debate* is that it gives both Wright and Strawson an opportunity to present their case for the "causal realist" interpretation in relatively concise and brief papers that will be more accessible to a wider audience. The most important and influential response to the realist interpretation, as defended by Wright and Strawson, is Kenneth Winkler's paper "The New Hume" (1991), which is reprinted in this volume along with a new "Postscript." The other contributors to this collection, beside the editors, are Barry Stroud, Simon Blackburn, Edward Craig, Martin Bell, Daniel Flage, and Anne Jaap Jacobson. All the contributions are of interest and merit comment. However, for the purpose of this review I will focus my attention on the debate between Strawson and Winkler, which involves most of the central issues.