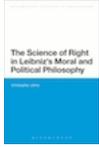


Published Book

The Science of Right in Leibniz's Moral and Political Philosophy. (Bloomsbury Books, Oct. 2013).



In this book I argue that the foundation of Leibniz's practical philosophy is deontic, rather than consequentialist. This foundation is laid in his early, and neglected, *Nova Methodus* (New Method for Learning and Teaching Jurisprudence, 1667), portions of which are translated into English for the first time. In this work Leibniz determines "right and obligation" to be the moral qualities of rational substances and derives the "three degrees of right" that are used throughout his writings on natural law. In the *Elements of Natural Law* (1672), this foundation serves as the prescriptive ground for his account of love and justice. In his middle period (1670's - 90's) I show how this deontic foundation informs several of his unpublished writings, as well as the *Codex Juris Gentium*, and how from it he derives his mature definition of justice as "the love of the wise person." Turning to the early 1700's, and his *Meditation on the Common Concept of Justice*, and *Monita, On the Principles of Pufendorf*, I show how the three degrees of right derive his unique version of the Golden Rule. I then show how Leibniz's mature *metaphysical* notions of freedom and necessity, in *Theodicy* and his correspondence with Clarke, depend on his earliest deontic foundations. I then compare Leibniz's practical philosophy with the theories of his contemporaries, Grotius, Locke, and Hobbes. Overall, I provide a textually grounded argument for the centrality of Leibniz's practical philosophy, in relation to his overall metaphysics. Donald Rutherford's review of my book may be found here: <http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/49352-the-science-of-right-in-leibniz-s-moral-and-political-philosophy/>

Articles:

"Leibniz and the Square: A Deontic Logic for the *Vir Bonus*" (*History and Philosophy of Logic*, May 2014)

17th century philosopher Gottfried Leibniz's contributions to metaphysics, mathematics, and logic are well known. Lesser known is Leibniz's "invention" of deontic logic, and that his invention derives from the alethic logic of the Aristotelian square of opposition. In this paper, I show how Leibniz developed this "logic of duties," which designates actions as "possible, necessary, impossible, and omissible" for a "vir bonus" (good person). I show that for Leibniz, deontic logic can determine whether a given action, e.g., as permitted, is therefore obligatory or prohibited (impossible). Secondly, since the deontic modes are derived from what is possible, necessary, etc., for a good person to do, and that "right and obligation" are the "moral qualities" of a good person, we understand how deontic logic is ultimately derived from these moral qualities. Finally, I show how Leibniz grounds a central deontic concept, namely *obligation*, in the human capacity for freedom.

"Leibniz, Pufendorf, and the Possibility of Moral Self-Governance," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* (July 2012)

In his *On the Duties of Man and Citizen*, 17th century natural law theorist Samuel Pufendorf argues that the source of obligation lies in 'the command of a superior.' This so-called 'voluntarist' position was famously criticized by the 'rationalist' Gottfried Leibniz. However, I wish to highlight several neglected aspects of the debate. Leibniz implicitly proposes a solution to a central moral problem: *how one can be obligated voluntarily*. His answer reflects a sort of motivational internalism, whereby the ideas of justice provide *some* motive cause of action, and virtue provides the rest. In this way the agent acts voluntarily by making the principles of justice the principles of her action. Secondly, I show how this argument for the principles depends implicitly on his 'science of right', established in his earliest writings on jurisprudence. These principles are constituent of the nature of rational substance. It then becomes clear that Leibniz had long developed a foundation for *self-governance*, similar to Kantian autonomy,

consisting in the agent's internal moral power to act (*jus*) and moral necessity to act (obligation). These points are exposed through a close reading of Leibniz's criticisms of Pufendorf on the end, object, and efficient cause of natural law.

"The Grounds of Right and Obligation in Leibniz and Hobbes," *Review of Metaphysics* (March 2009)

This paper maintains that Hobbes grounds right and obligation in self-interest, and opposes a recent argument that for Hobbes obligation is grounded in the agent's practical deliberation. In addition, it maintains that for Leibniz right and obligation are grounded in the moral-rational capacity of persons, but not in self-interest. It proceeds by distinguishing among the various senses of *jus* or "right," and contrasting Hobbes's and Leibniz's understanding of the term—though both see it as a kind of freedom they differ fundamentally as to its kind. The little explored treatment of "right" that appears in Leibniz's *New Method for the Learning and Teaching of Jurisprudence* is discussed in the course of the article. In conclusion, the article finds that for Leibniz, obligations are grounded in one's moral capacity. One ought not to harm others because one is a rational being among others who hold the same rights and obligations. For Hobbes, obligations are grounded in self-preservation and maintained by external coercion. For Leibniz, right is the possibility of doing what is just, maintaining the rights and obligations of others; while for Hobbes, right is a *problem* for doing what is just—a problem for self-interested agents that requires an external solution.

"Deontic Foundations in Leibniz's Practical Philosophy" (*Studia Leibnitiana*, Band 38/39 Heft 2, 2006/9)

It is widely recognized that Leibniz's practical philosophy is firmly grounded in teleological principles (perfection and happiness), affective factors (pleasure and love), as well as intellectual virtues (knowledge, wisdom). Indeed, Leibniz defines *wisdom* as "the science of happiness" and *justice* ultimately as "the charity of the wise person." In this paper, however, I argue that Leibniz's practical philosophy is grounded in the deontic categories of *right* and *obligation*. These categories, introduced in one of Leibniz's earliest works, *Nova Methodus* (1667), denote the *moral qualities* of a rational substance, i.e., the moral power and moral necessity of a person to act justly. I provide historical background into what these qualities are and how they constitute the *self-limiting* freedom of persons. I then show how Leibniz derives *material* rights and obligations, the requirements of public utility, as well as his well-known three precepts of right, from this deontic, *a priori* foundation. In essence, the deontic categories designate the internal capacity of a rational being to make her ends compatible with and beneficial to all other rational beings. I claim that Leibniz's practical philosophy cannot be properly understood, without recognizing this, rather overlooked, deontic foundation.

"The Rule of Reason: The Golden Rule and the Definition of Justice in Leibniz's *Meditation on the Common Concept of Justice*." Leibniz Internationaler-Kongress, 2006.

It is widely recognized that Leibniz defines justice ultimately as *caritas sapientis* (the love of the wise person). Also recognized is Leibniz's realism (or Platonism) about definitions. What remains unclear, however, is the realist definition of justice Leibniz seeks in his 1703 *Meditation on the Common Concept of Justice*. In this paper I argue that, while Leibniz does not state it explicitly, he derives a definition, or what he calls a "formal reason" of justice, from the (so-called) Golden Rule. I also show how this realism opposes Hobbes' nominalism and voluntarism, and thus how Leibniz understood justice to be grounded in pure reason. I further show how Leibniz extends this "formal reason" of justice to include "three degrees" of justice. Finally, I indicate two problems with Leibniz's realism about definition.