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Renaissance Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 3 (Fall 2014), pp. 1049-1051

Published by: [The University of Chicago Press](#) on behalf of the [Renaissance Society of America](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/678852>

Accessed: 11/06/2015 15:31

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Studia Leibnitiana: Supplementa 36. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013. 476 pp. €72. ISBN: 978-3-515-10310-7.

This valuable, indeed indispensable collection of studies on the *Wirkungsgeichte* of Leibniz's 1710 *Theodicy* stems from an international symposium that took place in Berlin in 2010. Twenty scholars contribute studies in German, French, and English. The excellent introduction by the editors previews the contents. Heinrich Schepers's

opening contribution focuses on the 1710 text as such, establishing the “rational kernel” of Leibniz’s argumentation in the light of our knowledge of Leibniz’s metaphysics — fuller today than Leibniz had disclosed to the public in his lifetime; the rationality that Schepers discovers is one deeply indebted to Augustine’s Trinitarian harmony of power, wisdom, and love. Other contributions similarly focus on various problems of interpretation of Leibniz’s vexing text, such as physical evil, representation, and the immortality of the soul. Contextual studies regarding Leibniz’s contemporaneous engagements with Bayle and Pufendorf also appear, though surprisingly not with the two who figure so prominently in the *Theodicy*, Hobbes and Spinoza

The fascinating contribution made by this volume, however, lies in the studies of the reception of Leibniz’s *Theodicy* through the ensuing centuries: Stefan Lorenz expounds an early German response, anonymously published, *Dubita circa existentiam Dei*, that articulates quickly perceived difficulties with Leibniz’s optimism; Hanns-Peter Neumann excavates a Lutheran theological appropriation and recasting of the relation of faith and reason in Israel Gottlieb Canz’s hermeneutic of grace coming to the aid of reason distorted by sin; Ursula Goldenbaum queries a Judaic effort in theodicy in the relation of Moses Mendelssohn’s *Sache Gottes* to Leibniz; Martin A. Völker uncovers little-known Joachim Böldicke’s (1704–57) narrative interpretation of the conclusion of the *Theodicy*, where Leibniz took up Valla’s history of Sextus Tarquinius, to yield, so Völker argues, two possible ways of redeeming today the doctrine of the best of all possible worlds; Hubertus Busche’s “metacritique” of Kant’s critique of Leibniz is a very valuable exposé of clichéd dismissals of Leibniz. Other contributions focus on Voltaire, Maupertuis, and Bonnet.

Of more contemporary philosophical interest are studies of the reception and transformation of Leibniz’s *Theodicy* in Hegel, Feuerbach, and William James. Kurt Appel’s interpretation of Hegel’s *Gottesmystik* as providing what Kant had demanded in an “authentic” rather than “dogmatic” theodicy opens up a line of interpretation that sees both Leibniz and Hegel standing in the tradition of *fides quarens intellectum*. Jamie De Salas juxtaposes Leibniz and James in mutually illuminating fashion, especially on the issue of epistemic perspectivalism (with an aside to Nietzsche). Wenchao Li’s study of Feuerbach’s regard of Leibniz as “half-Christian” penetrates to the decisive choice between voluntarist and rationalist accounts of the deity and the implications of these choices in philosophical theology for accounts of the human predicament and the experience of evil.

Of exceptional interest for contemporary theology is the masterful survey of the reception of the *Theodicy* in the Protestant theology of twentieth-century Germany by Walter Sparr. Reflecting today on twentieth-century Europe’s disasters, Sparr isolates certain desiderata in the unfinished work of Ernst Troeltsch in search of a new cultural synthesis — much, I may comment, as Leroy E. Loemker had characterized Leibniz’s seventeenth-century quest for harmony after the devastation of the Thirty Years’ War in his *The Struggle for Synthesis: The Seventeenth Century Background of Leibniz’s Synthesis of Order and Freedom*. A struggle unfolds in Sparr’s telling between the Reformation’s legacy, that it is sinful man who must be justified

before the holy God, and the Enlightenment's counterdemand that it is the creator God who must be justified before the suffering but rational creature. A cultural synthesis of these two, often mutually opposing *Fragestellungen*, is desired but still goes wanting.

The volume is addressed to interdisciplinary and international scholarship that is concerned to uncover alternative paths through modernity to present cultural tensions and perplexities. To the extent that such struggles for a new synthesis found an original voice in Leibniz's faith in human progress as grounded in the power, wisdom, and love of an *intelligentia extra mundum* — in contrast to the “dangerous idea” (Dennett) of consistent naturalism that seems unable to provide either guidance or the resolve to persevere — this volume provides indispensable perspective.

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