

Leibniz

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- ▶ Wij lezen: *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain* (1704)
 - ▶ Reactie aan Locke's eerdere 'Essay ...'
 - ▶ Dialoog tussen Philalethes en Theophilus.

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 - ▶ Philalethes: vriend van de waarheid (aletheia)
Lethe = (river of) oblivion;
Aletheia = un-forgetfulness (Plato), disclosure (Heidegger)
 - ▶ Theophilus: vriend van God (theo)
 - ▶ Philalethes (=citaten uit Locke's tekst) moet uit liefde voor de waarheid toegeven dat Theophilus (Leibniz), gedreven door liefde voor God vertelt hoe het eigenlijk zit.

New Essays on Human Understanding: boek 3, ch. 3

- ▶ Algemene termen en eigennamen
- ▶ Abstractie
- ▶ Definities
- ▶ Essenties

Over ontologisch status universalia

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- ▶ Locke:
 - ▶ p. 14 'All things that exists being particulars, ...'
 - ▶ p. 23 'The essences of the sorts of things, and, consequently, the sorting of things, is the workmanship of the understanding.'
 - ▶ p. 26 '... the essence of each genus, or sort, comes to be nothing but that abstract idea which the general, or sortal name stands for.'
 - ▶ p. 23 'Nature, in the production of things, makes several of them alike.'

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 - ▶ p. 23 'Nature, in the production of things, makes several of them alike.'
- ▶ Leibniz:
 - ▶ p. 292 'Generality consists in the resemblance of singular things to one another, and this resemblance is a reality.'
 - ▶ p. 293 ' In any case, essences, genera and species depend only on possibilities, and these are independent of our thinking; they aren't affected by whether or not we combine such and such ideas – or indeed by whether they are actually combined in nature.'

Algemene termen, eigennamen, abstractie

- ▶ Waarom veronderstellen eigennamen soortnamen volgens Leibniz?
 - ▶ Citaat: p. 289: 'I would venture to say that almost all words were originally general terms, since it will very rarely happen that a name will be invented just for one given individual without any reason for it. . . . individual names were used to be names of species which were given to some individual either as a prime example [cf. Aristocratic resemblance nominalism] of the species or for some other reason'

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 - ▶ Eigennamen verwijzen naar individuen. Locke vs Leibniz over kennis van individuen en abstractie:

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 - ▶ Locke: vanuit ideeën van individuen naar algemene ideeën via abstractie [bottom up]
 - ▶ Leibniz: 'I do not deny that abstractions are used in that way, but it involves an ascent from species to genera rather than from individuals to species.' (p. 289)
Kunnen wij volgens Leibniz individuen kennen?

Individuen

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- ▶ Een individu is een heel complex verschijnsel

'it is impossible for us to know individuals . . . the most important point in this is that individuality involves infinity, and only someone who is capable of grasping the infinite could know the principle of individuation of a given thing. This arises from the influence -properly understood- that all the things in the universe have on one another' (p. 289-290)

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 - ▶ monade = fundamentele (simpele) bouwsteen van de werkelijkheid, puntvormige krachtpunten van verschillende bewustzijnsgraad (God, menselijke ziel, . . .), 'zonder ramen'
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 - ▶ Hoe is dan communicatie tussen monaden mogelijk?

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Harmonia praestabilita [cf. Prinses Elisabeth probleem]: 'It is this mutual relation, regulated in advance in each substance of the universe, which produces what we call their communication, and which alone brings about the union of soul and body.' (A New System of Nature, G IV 48485/AG 144)

Foetus and Monsters

- ▶ Locke: Ch. iii, §14 It has sometimes been questioned whether some fetus that had been born of a woman was a human, even to the extent of arguing over whether it should be nourished and baptized. This couldn't happen if the abstract idea or essence to which the name 'human' belonged was made by nature, rather than being the uncertain and various collection of simple ideas that the understanding makes general by means of abstraction, and gives a name to.

Ch. vi, §14-16 For us to distinguish substantial beings into species according to the usual supposition, namely that there are certain precise essences or forms of things through which all existing individuals are naturally distinguished into species, we would need to be assured: first that nature always produces things with the intention that they will have certain regulated established essences, . . . and secondly that nature always attains that goal. But monsters give us reason to doubt both of these

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- ▶ Onze onwetendheid verandert niets aan de natuur van de dingen.
- ▶ Essenties zijn mogelijkheden: onafhankelijk van onze ideeën, maar ook van hoe dingen daadwerkelijk zijn

Essenties en definities

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► Leibniz:

- **Essence:** *possibility* of the thing under consideration
- **Real definition:** definition which displays the possibility of the definiendum
 - A priori: justified by reason ('showing its possibility')
 - A posteriori: justified by experience ('showing its actuality and therefore its possibility')
- **Nominal definition:** definition which does not display the possibility of the definiendum
- Essentie: interne structuur die de oorzaak is van de kwaliteiten die wij waarnemen. De essentie geeft de kwaliteiten die in de nominale definitie terugkomen.

Voorbeelden

- ▶ Goud: reële definitie mogelijk a posteriori
the essence of gold is what constitutes it and gives it the sensible qualities that let us recognize it and that make its nominal definition; whereas if we could explain this structure or inner constitution we would possess the real, causal definition. However, in our present case the nominal definition is also real, not in itself (since it doesn't show us a priori the possibility of gold and its mode of origin) but through experience, in that we find that there is a body in which these qualities occur together.
- ▶ Parallel straight lines:
the definition of two parallel straight lines as 'lines in the same plane that don't meet even if extended to infinity' is only nominal, for one could at first question whether that is possible.
- ▶ Voorbeeld van iets die alleen een nominale definitie kan hebben:

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- ▶ Voorbeeld van iets die een reële a priori definitie kan hebben: God, rechthoekige driehoek

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- ▶ Locke: If essences were anything else but abstract ideas they would not be 'ingenerable and incorruptible'. There are perhaps no unicorns, sirens or perfect circles in the world
 - ▶ Wij worden gezegd dat essenties eeuwig en onveranderlijk zijn;
 - ▶ Ideeën veranderen niet;
 - ▶ 'Real essences', afhankelijk van particularia, veranderen wel 'are destroyed and perish with them [particular things]', (p. 30) (cf. Aristoteles)
 - ▶ Dus, essenties zijn ideeën

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 - ▶ essenties gaan over mogelijkheden, kunnen bestaan onafhankelijk van 'actual' individuen