

Leibniz (1646-1716)

“[B]y virtue of imperceptible variations, two individual things [...] must always differ” [“en vertu des variations insensibles, deux choses individuelles [...] doivent tousjours differer”]

[GW] Leibniz, *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement*, in *Die philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, vol. 5 (CJ Gerhardt ed., Olms 1965 [1704/1764⁺]), p. 49.

“[I]t is not true that two substances resemble each other entirely” [“il n'est pas vrai que deux substances se ressemblent entierement”]

[GW] Leibniz, *Discours de métaphysique*, in *Die philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, vol. 4 (CJ Gerhardt ed., Olms 1965 [1686]), §IX, p. 433.

If a popular instantiation be found helpful, consider snowflakes. Wilson A. Bentley (1865-1931), a Vermont-based early photographer of snowflakes, photographed more than five thousand snow crystals in his lifetime and argued that no two were alike, that each one was unique, singular. For a collection of the photographs, see W.A. Bentley & W.J. Humphreys, *Snow Crystals* (Dover, 1962); W.A. Bentley, *Snowflakes in Photographs* (Dover, 2000). For a biography, see Duncan C. Blanchard, *The Snowflake Man* (McDonald & Woodward, 1998).

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Gadamer (1900-2002)

“Each [being] that shows itself necessarily distinguishes itself from an other being that shows itself. It separates itself from the other [being] [...]. This is certainly correct” [“Ein jedes, was sich zeigt, unterscheidet sich notwendig von anderem Seienden, das sich zeigt. Es gliedert sich vom anderen aus (...). Das ist gewiß richtig’.]

Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Hermeneutik auf der Spur”, in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 10 (Mohr Siebeck, 1995), p. 160.

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Tarde (1843-1904)

“To exist is to differ” [“Exister c'est différer”].

Gabriel Tarde, *Monadologie et sociologie*, in *Œuvres*, vol. 1 (Eric Alliez ed., Institut Synthélabo 1999 [1893]), p. 72.