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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF IDEA ACCORDING TO MALEBRANCHE

S u m m a r y

According to Malebranche only God can cause the interaction between mind and body, two substances having totally different characteristics. Descartes claims that in the cognition we need ideas' mediation. While we can get to know spiritual ego in a clear manner, we know the material world only in an imperfect way because it is located outside our mind. The originality of Malebranche's philosophy consists in the fact that he appreciates the cognition of the material world. We mustn't forget, however, to follow our reason as well as clear and distinct ideas, not blurred sensations. The French philosopher deprives senses and imagination of their cognitive value in favour of intellectual cognition. Information received through our senses serves the body to sustain life. Imagination is in many cases the source of mistakes. It is only pure understanding that gives us the possibility for objective cognition based on eternal and unchangeable archetypes.

We cannot get to know God's immensity nor God's attributes because of our mental limitations. Still, in the most perfect way we can apprehend ideal extension which constitutes this part of God's substance that contains clear and distinct ideas of bodies. Archetypes of objects contain all properties of objects. Looking at the created world, we see them in different ways depending if we get to know them only intellectually or receive the movements of nerves' fibres as well. But we can't see God by an intermediary of an idea because nothing finite can represent infinity.

Summarised by Elżbieta Walerich

Słowa kluczowe: idea, reprezentacja, rozciągłość inteligibilna, czyste rozumienie, widzenie w Bogu.

Key words: idea, representation, intelligible extension, pure understanding, seeing in God.

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