

POOL

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THE DOLMENOLOGY

First Office

Our title will remind you of one of Gottfried Leibniz's canonical texts, *The Monadology*. Written in 1714, it has exerted its influence on us. But it wouldn't be a direct source for our work if we left it as it was. We have copied its literary form only, not its metaphysical pursuit. Rather than making big claims about the universe or God, we are interested in learning about what we can and cannot know about the way in which we work and the way in which those activities produce knowledge. So unlike Leibniz, we don't build models about how the world is, but models about how we build the world. Drawing Dolmens, for example, makes the techniques and conventions in architecture's production visible and open to critique. Dolmens, for us, provide an open model because they are the most minimal form of architecture we know: they are man-made and, therefore, already artificial.¹ There are many disciplines that have tried to

seek knowledge about themselves from the way they address these prehistoric objects. In doing so, they made explicit their own disciplinary limits and concerns. As such, to steal a beautiful metaphor from Leibnitz, reading a Dolmen allows all the accidents and errors of each discipline's particularity to enter through its windows. Unlike Monads, Dolmens are not elemental: they are composed of parts; they have a beginning and an end. So, it is possible to define a Dolmen in opposition to a Monad; the two are seeming antonyms. *In other words, the Monad is helpful in exactly describing what a Dolmen is not.* Consider Leibniz's first sentence: "The Monad, of which we shall here speak, is nothing but a simple substance, which enters into compounds; by 'simple' is meant 'without parts.'² To define a Dolmen as architecture, then, it is simply necessary to put Leibniz in the negative:

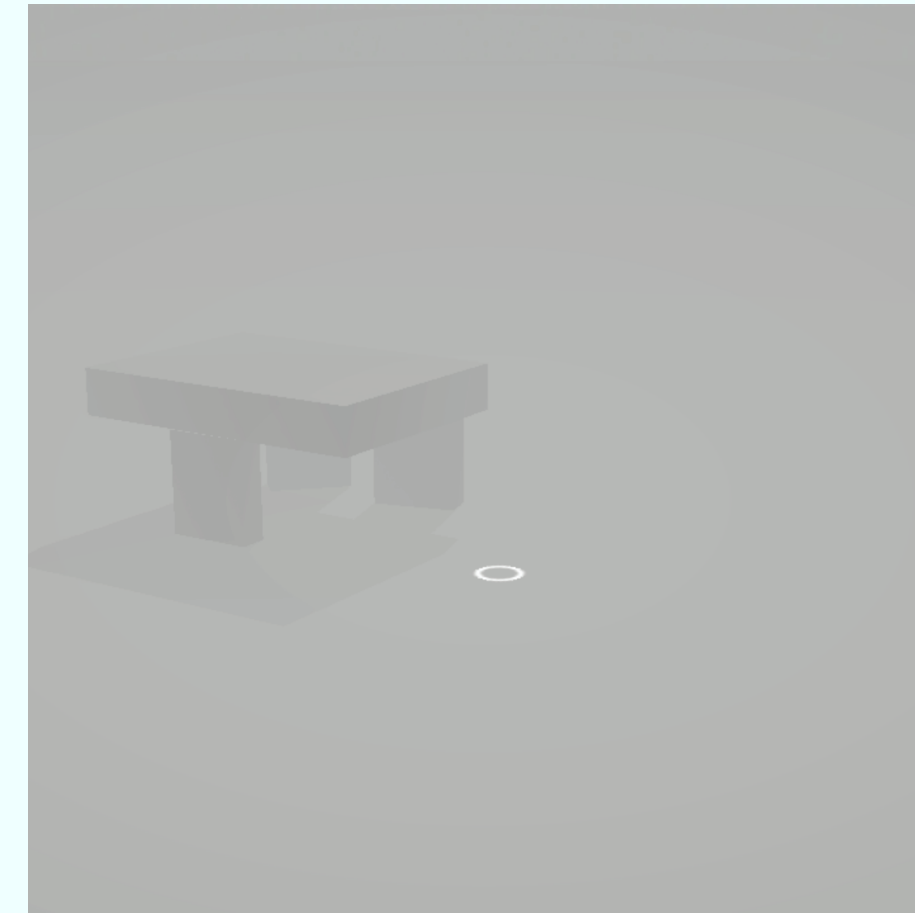


Fig 01 and 02 #Dolmen was developed by First Office and Theo Triantafyllidis. App screenshots taken from effoff.net by POOL Editors.

1. The *Dolmen*, of which we shall here speak, is nothing but a *compound* substance, which is *composed of simple elements*; by '*compound*' is meant '*with parts*.'
2. And there must be *compound* substances, since there are *elements*; for a compound is nothing but a collection or aggregatum of simple things.
3. Now where there are [] parts, there can be [] extension, [] form [figure] and divisibility. These *Dolmens* are the real *constructs* of *man* and, in a word, *compositions* of things.
4. [] Dissolution of these elements *is* to be feared, and there *are many* conceivable ways in which a *compound* substance can be destroyed by natural means.
5. For the same reason there *are many* conceivable ways in which a *compound* substance can come into being by *artificial* means, since it is formed by the combination of parts [composition].
6. Thus it may be said that a *Dolmen* can only come into being or come to an end *over time*; that is to say, it can come into being only by *construction* and come to an end only by *ruination* (or in the French case by *preservation*), for that which is compound comes into being or comes to an end by parts.
7. Further, there *are many* ways of explaining how a *Dolmen* can be altered in *quantity* or internally changed by any other created thing; since it is [] possible to change the place of anything in it or to conceive in it any internal motion which could be produced, directed, increased or diminished therein, *as* all this is possible in the case of compounds, in which there are changes among the parts. The *Dolmens* have [] windows, through which anything could come in or go out. Accidents can [] separate themselves from substances [] or go about outside of them []. Thus *both* substance and accident can come into a *Dolmen* from outside.
8. Yet the *Dolmens* mustn't have [] qualities, otherwise they would not even be *analogous* things. And if *compound* substances [] differed in quality, there would be absolutely no means of perceiving any *similarity* in things. For what is in the compound can come only from the simple elements it contains, and the *Dolmens*, if they had [] qualities, would be too [] distinguishable from one another, since they *already* differ in quantity. Consequently, space being a plenum, each part of space would always receive, in any motion, *something different from* what it already had, and no one state of things would be *comparable* to another.
9. Indeed, each *Dolmen* must be *similar* to every other.

¹ For more on Dolmens and other rude stone monuments, including Menhirs and Stone Circles, see James Fergusson's, *Rude Stone Monuments in All Countries: Their Age and Uses* (London: John Murray, 1872.)

² Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings*, tr. Robert Latta (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1898), 217.