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Bodies, Matter, Monads, and Things in Themselves

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1 Introduction

There is a well-known tension in Leibniz's later philosophical writings, from approximately 1704 onwards, concerning the ontological status of bodies and matter. On the one hand, some texts suggest that in this period Leibniz held a phenomenalist view, according to which bodies are merely the "mutual dream" of the monads; on the other hand, some texts seem to contain a more "realist" view of bodies according to which they are "aggregates" [*aggregata*] of monads, or are "composed" [*composés*] of monads. In the past few decades a number of scholars have attempted to reconcile these two strands in Leibniz, or argued that they cannot be reconciled, that they represent an unresolved tension in his metaphysics.¹ It is less commonly appreciated, however, that a structurally very similar tension appears in Kant's Critical philosophy: some passages suggest that Kant was a phenomenalist about empirical objects in space (bodies), while others suggest a more realist view on which bodies just are things in themselves considered under a certain guise or description ("as they appear to us"). This tension has given rise to one of the oldest, and most intractable, debates about the nature of his transcendental idealism: are bodies (appearances) and things in themselves distinct kinds of object, or are they two different ways of considering one and the same domain of objects? Or, more dramatically, is Kant's transcendental idealism merely a more complex form of Berkeley's phenomenalism, or something quite different?

While this tension in Kant's idealism has been the object of philosophical and scholarly scrutiny far longer than the corresponding discussion about Leibniz,

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¹ Jolley (1986), Wilson (1989), Rutherford (1994; 2008), Hoffmann (1996), Arthur (1998), Lodge (2001), and Garber (2009). For a survey of older literature on the subject, see Adams (1994, 217 n. 2).

the discussion of Kant has, to some extent, calcified into a debate between “one object” readings and “two object” readings—or, as I prefer to call them, “identity” readings and “non-identity” readings.² Interpretations of Kant’s idealism often proceed by giving some general considerations in favor of either the identity or non-identity view, selectively citing some passages that support it, acknowledging that there are texts that support the other interpretation, and admitting that there are other ways of reading Kant. By contrast, the discussion of Leibniz’s ontology of bodies has been guided by the attempt to balance both strands in Leibniz.

My aim in this paper is to examine the tension between phenomenalism and realism in Kant through the lens of the structurally similar tension in the later Leibniz. I do this for two reasons. First of all, I think that recent Leibniz scholarship has achieved a greater level of philosophical sophistication on these issues than corresponding literature on Kant.³ This is partly because Leibniz has a richer set of technical notions for characterizing the relation between monads and bodies than Kant has for characterizing the relation between things in themselves and appearances: aggregation, immediate requisition, resulting, and “being in.”

The other reason I approach Kant through a Leibnizian lens is the obvious one of influence. While I do not explicitly address the influence of Leibniz on Kant, it is plausible that Kant is picking up Leibniz’s complex ontology of body and

² “One object or two?” is a bad way of characterizing this dispute because “two object” readers, despite the name, are not committed to thinking that there is in general *one and only one* thing in itself that appears as a given appearance. The dispute really turns on whether appearances and things in themselves are numerically identical or not. “Two object” or “non-identity” readers hold that things in themselves are not in general numerically identical to appearances; appearances and things in themselves, on this view, are distinct *kinds* of objects. “One object” or “identity” readings hold that the distinction between appearances and things in themselves is *not* a distinction between kinds of objects but between two ways of considering one and the same set of objects. Prominent “identity” readers include Allais (2004) and Allison (1983/2004) (although Allison’s view is very different from Allais). Aquila (1979) offers a full-throated defense of the “non-identity” view; Adams (1997b) and Ameriks (1982b) come down on the side of non-identity, although not as strongly as Aquila. The debate is complicated somewhat by the fact that many “non-identity” readers hold an identity view about the self: the “empirical self” and the “noumenal” self are one and the same entity considered under two guises. Aquila (1979b) holds the non-identity view even about the self. On this issue, see Adams (1997b), Aquila (1979) and Ameriks’s (1982b) discussion of Aquila. The interpretation offered by Langton (1998) does not fit easily into either the “identity” or the “non-identity” camp because her official view is that appearances are not “objects” at all but relational properties of things in themselves, substances with intrinsic properties. This could be developed either in an “identity” direction (talk of appearances is just talk of substances qua their relational properties) or in a “non-identity” direction (appearances are properties of substances, and thus are numerically distinct from the substances in which they inhere). The now standard distinction between “one object” readings and “two object” readings is originally found in Ameriks (1982b). Several important works on Kant’s idealism (e.g. Lucy Allais’s *Manifest Reality*) were published in the years between my writing of this chapter and the publication of this volume, so I cannot discuss them here.

³ The situation has improved somewhat in the years since I wrote this paper. Recent work by Lucy Allais, Tobias Rosefeldt, and Colin Marshall have brought a new level of textual and philosophical sophistication to the debate.

adapting it to his own ends, albeit with significant modifications.⁴ To answer adequately the question of historical influence, one would need to reconstruct Kant's knowledge of Leibniz's metaphysics of bodies on the basis of Leibnizian texts available in 1781, as well the way in which philosophers like Wolff and Baumgarten constructed their own monadological theories of matter; that project lies outside the scope of the present chapter.⁵

Before continuing, I want to flesh out slightly my claim that there is a structural similarity between Kant and Leibniz's ontology of bodies. The principal element in this common structure is a distinction between two classes of entities. The entities in the first class exist "in themselves"; that is, they exist independently of whether they are perceived or otherwise represented by any finite mind. According to Leibniz, at least in his later writings, the entities in the first class are non-extended non-composite mind-like substances, monads; Kant's term for these entities is "things in themselves," and he is necessarily more cautious than Leibniz in offering a positive characterization of them. Both Leibniz and Kant call entities in the second class "phenomena" and both of them include bodies and matter among the phenomena. Phenomena exist at least partly in virtue of the contents of the representational mental states of minds or mind-like entities. Both thinkers hold that human minds, at some level of description,⁶ are among the "in itself" entities of the first class, and both think that human minds are among those whose representational states ground (at least partly) the existence of phenomena. Both thinkers also hold that phenomena possess certain of their properties (e.g. spatiotemporal properties) in virtue of the contents of the representational states of such minds, but my focus in this chapter will be the ways in which the existence of phenomena, rather than their properties, is or is not grounded in representations of them.

It is clear that Leibniz and Kant disagree on important points about the nature and relation of the entities in these two classes, although it is less clear what their precise views are. For instance, Leibniz has highly determinate views about the

⁴ Kant's acceptance of intersubstantial causation and a distinction in kind, rather than in degree, between sensibility and understanding means that, no matter the parallels, there will be significant differences in their views about bodies.

⁵ See Radner (1998) and Watkins (2006) for more on the Leibnizian and Wolffian background to Kant's own theory of matter. See Brandon Look (Ch. 1 of this volume) for a discussion of the history of Leibniz reception in Germany philosophy before, and by, Kant. I should also note that, while I am restricting my attention to the "later" Leibniz in this chapter, there is now a lively scholarly debate as to whether the views of the later Leibniz are continuous with the views expressed in the 1680s in such texts as the *Discourse on Metaphysics* and the Arnauld correspondence (neither of which were available to Kant); I am going to ignore that debate. Cf. Adams (1994) and Garber (2009) opposing views on the "continuity" of Leibniz's theory of bodies.

⁶ For the later Leibniz, as a thinking substance, a monad, I am an entity in the first class, but my body belongs in the second class. Considered as an organism, I am a body (phenomenon) united to a dominant monad (my soul, a substance); organisms for Leibniz are less substantial than monads but more substantial than mere bodies. Kant's views on the ontology of the "self" are harder to discern, but it is relatively clear that considered as I am in myself, I belong in the first class of entities.

nature of “in itself” entities: they are non-extended, each of them perceives the entire world, they do not causally influence one another, God creates them with harmonized perceptions, etc. Kant’s official position is that we can have no theoretical knowledge whatsoever about entities in the first class, things in themselves, but he does venture some limited claims about them, and in some places even claims to know that they exist and are non-spatiotemporal.⁷ Determining Kant’s exact views on the extent and nature of our knowledge of things in themselves is a complicated task, but one I will not pursue in this chapter. Leibniz thinks that entities in the first class are substances in a non-derivative sense, while entities in the second class are substances only in a derivative sense.⁸ Kant thinks that some entities in the second class are substances; specifically, bodies in space (composed of matter). His official view is that categories like “substance” and “causation” lack what he calls “objective validity” when applied to entities in the first class, but he nonetheless frequently uses these very categories when discussing them.⁹ These are real points of disagreement between Kant and Leibniz, and I do not want to downplay them. But in this chapter I am going to focus on the broad structure of agreement between the two thinkers, not their differences.

Leibniz and Kant not only make a similar distinction between entities that exist independently of being represented (monads, things in themselves) and those that depend upon being represented (bodies, phenomena); they also express these views in ways that raise very similar hurdles for commentators trying to interpret their texts. In the case of both philosophers, some texts support a narrowly phenomenalist reading on which bodies are nothing over and above

⁷ Regarding the existence of things in themselves, Kant writes in *Prolegomena* §32: “the understanding, just by the fact that it accepts appearances, also admits to the existence of things in themselves [gesteht auch das Daseyn von Dingen an sich selbst zu]” (Ak. 4:315; cf. 4:354). This is significant because Kant here attributes the category of “existence” [*Dasein*] to things in themselves, and not merely problematically. The prima facie meaning of the passage is that in claiming that empirical objects are appearances, one is thereby committed to claiming that there exist non-empirical things in themselves that appear as those objects; if the former is a possible item of knowledge—and, given that it is one of the central tents of the *KrV*, it is hard to see how it might not be—then the latter is as well. Regarding their non-spatiotemporal character, Kant claims at A 48 that it is “*ungezweifelt gewiß und nicht bloß möglich oder auch wahrscheinlich*” that space and time are merely subjective, hence, that things in themselves are non-spatiotemporal.

⁸ GP VI 590/AG 265; GP II 275–276/AG 181–182; GP III 606/L 655.

⁹ He repeatedly uses causal concepts to describe things in themselves, writing that they “affect” us (A 190/B 235; Ak. 4:289, 314, 318, 451), that they possess forces (Ak. 8:153–154), that they are causes (A 387, A 494/B 522, Ak. 8:215), etc. In some texts he also applies the modal category of possibility to things in themselves (R5184, 5723, 5177). Kant asserts the substantiality of God in his lectures on rational theology (Ak. 28:1037; cf. 28:600, 800, 805, 1163, 1261); I take him to mean that it is subjectively necessary for us to hypothesize a substantial God, but we cannot assert the existence of such a being with apodictic certainty (a priori cognition). The Paralogisms section of the first *Critique* is usually interpreted to mean that I cannot know that my soul is a substance. However, in his metaphysics lectures Kant repeatedly claims that I can know through apperception that I am a substance, rather than a modification of some other substance (as Spinoza held); Ameriks (1982a) draws on these and other texts to challenge the standard interpretation of the Paralogisms.

the intentional contents of some class of representations (infinite monadic perceptions, experience). For instance:

Matter and motion are not so much substances or things as the phenomena of perceivers, whose reality is located in the harmony of perceivers with themselves (at different times) and with other perceivers. [GP II, 270/L 537]¹⁰

For the appearances, as mere representations, are in themselves real only in perception. To call an appearance a real thing prior to perception means either that in the continuation of experience we must encounter such a perception, or it has no meaning at all. [A 493/B 521–522]¹¹

But other texts suggest a realist view, on which an individual body is either identical to an individual thing in itself (Kant) or to an aggregate of monads (Leibniz), or is in some other way grounded in “in itself” entities (things in themselves, monads). For instance:

Everything is full in nature. There are simple substances everywhere, actually separated from one another by their own actions, which continually change their relations; and each distinct simple substance or monad, which makes up the center of a composite substance (an animal, for example) and is the principle of its unity, is surrounded by a mass composed [*composée*] of an infinity of other monads, which constitute [*constituent*] the body belonging to this central monad, through whose properties the monad represents the things outside it, similarly to the way a center does.

[“Principles of Nature and Grace,” GP VI, 599/AG 207]¹²

¹⁰ See also AG 307; L 363–365; GP VI 590/AG 265. In the De Volder correspondence see Leibniz’s letter of 1705 (GP II 275/AG 182) and Leibniz’s letter to De Volder of January 19, 1707 (GP II 283/AG 186). In his letter of June 30, 1704, De Volder himself seems to be interpreting Leibniz as a phenomenalist (GP II 272).

¹¹ See esp. the entire section “Transcendental idealism as the key to solving the cosmological dialectic” (A 491–497/B 519–525) as well as the Fourth Paralogism in the A edition (A 367–380, esp. A 376f. and the note on A 374–375). Cf. A 59/B 42; A 383; A 506/B 534; Ak. 4:354, 4:506. Allais (2004) objects to any phenomenalist reading of Kant by pointing out, correctly, that on Kant’s view there are empirical objects we can never perceive (A 226/B 273, Ak. 8:205). However, if we understood phenomenalism as the view that empirical objects exist partly in virtue of facts about the contents of subjects’ perceptual states, this is compatible with holding that there exist empirical objects we never directly perceive. Van Cleve (1999) makes a similar point. I realize that these phenomenalist-sounding texts can be read otherwise. While, ultimately, I think that Kant ultimately holds a form of phenomenalism, I’m not assuming that here. My point is simply that there is a strand in Kant’s texts that supports the attribution of phenomenalism, just as there is in Leibniz.

¹² See also GP II 281/AG 185; GP IV 498/AG 146–147; GM III, 537/AG 167; and GP VI 607/L 643. However, in his letter to De Volder of June 30, 1704, Leibniz explicitly denies that matter is composed of monads: “properly, speaking, matter isn’t composed [*componitur*] of constitutive unities, but results from them, since matter, that is, extended mass is only a phenomenon grounded in things, like a rainbow or a parhelion, and all reality belongs only to unities” (GP II 268/AG 179).

[T]he same objects can be considered from two different sides, *on the one side* as objects of the senses and the understanding for experience, and *on the other side* as objects that are merely thought at most for isolated reason striving beyond the bounds of experience. [Note to B xix, Kant's emphasis]¹³

Interpreters of Kant and Leibniz, therefore, face similar problems when confronted with these texts: how do we square the apparent commitment to phenomenalism with the apparent commitment to a more realist view about bodies? How can bodies simultaneously be (aggregates of) substances/things in themselves, and be the mere phenomena of perception/experience?

I begin by examining Leibniz's views on matter and bodies from the perspective of an influential essay by Donald Rutherford that squarely confronts the question: how do we do justice to Leibniz's idealism without reducing it to mere phenomenalism? Rutherford argues that Leibniz is an idealist, in that he accepts that everything that exists in the finite concrete world¹⁴ is either a monad or exists in virtue of the contents of monadic perceptions, but he is not a phenomenalist, because, although bodies exist in virtue of the contents of monadic perceptions, they have a reality "over and above" these perceptual contents. Precisely characterizing the sense in which bodies can be something "over and above" the contents of monadic perceptions, yet exist in virtue of them, will be one of the main tasks of §§2 and 3 of this chapter.¹⁵

In §4 of the chapter I turn to Kant and compare his views on the ontological status of empirical objects in space (bodies) with what my early discussion has revealed about Leibniz's theory. Having distinguished several different idealist views about bodies in the context of Leibniz's philosophy, I consider which of these idealist theses Kant is committed to. I conclude that, their substantial differences aside, Kant and Leibniz have similar views about the ontological status of bodies. In particular, both philosophers agree that bodies exist in virtue of

¹³ See also A 3/B 5, B xx, B xxvi–xxvii, and B 69.

¹⁴ The qualification "in the finite concrete world" is meant to exclude God, who is infinite, and "abstract" items like concepts, propositions, numbers, etc. that, according to Leibniz, exist in virtue of God's awareness of them. For more on Leibniz's ontology of abstract objects, see Mates (1989).

¹⁵ A note on how I am using the terms "ground" and "in virtue of." By "ground" I refer to an asymmetric relation of metaphysical determination between facts, which can (though need not) hold between mutually necessarily entailing facts. "In virtue of" refers to the converse of the grounding relation; that fact that *p* is said to obtain in virtue of the fact that *q* just in case the fact that *q* grounds the fact that *p*. There has been much recent work on the relation of grounding in contemporary metaphysics; see esp. the essays collected in Correia and Schnieder (2012). In an eighteenth-century context, though, it is important to distinguish (metaphysical) grounding from efficient causation; the precise details of how to do so depend upon our background theory of grounding and of causation, but for now this rough gloss will suffice: a grounded fact is nothing "over and above" what grounds it, while a cause is either a distinct substance (Kant) or an earlier state of one and the same substance (Leibniz). There is more metaphysical "distance" between a cause and its effect than there is between a ground and its consequences. The distinction between metaphysical ground and efficient causes corresponds to the distinction between *ratio essendi* and *ratio fiendi* in German rationalism, a distinction Kant inherits. See Smit (2009) and ch. 7 of Stang (2016) for more on this distinction.

things in themselves (monads) appearing to cognitive subjects (monads), and that to be a body just is to be the appearance of things in themselves (monads) to cognitive subjects (monads). I conclude by suggesting that the notion of force is the key to combining the realist and phenomenalist strands in each thinker. Both thinkers hold that bodies are more than mere illusions, in part because the (primitive) forces in things in themselves (monads) appear as the (derivative) forces in bodies.

2 Preliminaries: Idealism, Essence, and Existence

Rutherford begins his essay by very helpfully distinguishing two kinds of idealism that Leibniz might accept: substance idealism, “the idea that the only things that meet the strictest conditions on being a substance are unextended, mind-like entities”;¹⁶ and matter idealism, “the idea that material things exist only as appearances, ideas, or the contents of mental representations.”¹⁷ Rutherford argues that, while Leibniz is a substance idealist in his later period, he is not a matter idealist. Because much will hinge on exactly what is, and is not, compatible with these forms of idealism, it is worth being very precise about what they mean. The *locus classicus* for the later Leibniz’s substance idealism is his remark in a letter to De Volder that:

Indeed, considering the matter carefully, we must say that there is nothing in things but simple substances, and in them, perception and appetite. Moreover, matter and motion are not substances or things as much as they are phenomena of perceivers, the reality of which is situated in the harmony of the perceivers with themselves (at different times) and with other perceivers. [GP II 270/AG 181]

In this passage, and many others, Leibniz claims that everything there is, is either a monad, a perception or an appetite of a monad, or is a “phenomenon” of these. (Henceforth, I am going to just refer to monadic “perceptions,” by which I mean both perceptions and appetitions). Assuming that a phenomenon of monads exists in virtue of facts about monads, this means that Leibniz is committed at the very least to the following principle:

SUBSTANCE IDEALISM: Everything that exists in the concrete realm is either a monad, a perception of a monad, or exists in virtue of facts about monads and their perceptions.¹⁸

¹⁶ Rutherford 2008a, 142. ¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ I am restricting attention to finite monads; in some texts, Leibniz refers to God’s mind as the supreme monad. Consequently, I am ignoring, for the purposes of this discussion, the strand in

I think Rutherford would accept this as a characterization of substance idealism because it retains the core idea of substance idealism from his paper: monads are substances in the most genuine sense because everything else that exists, exists in virtue of monads and their perceptions.

Note, though, that, as formulated, Substance Idealism is compatible with the claim that bodies exist in virtue of facts about monads and their perceptions, but do not exist in virtue of being themselves perceived *by* monads. Strictly speaking, Substance Idealism is compatible with bodies *never* being perceived by monads, as long as the existence of those bodies is grounded in some other way by facts about monads' perceptions. For instance, if bodies were complex wholes composed of monads, which wholes exist in virtue of harmonious relations among monadic perceptions, Substance Idealism would be satisfied even if monads never perceive the bodies they compose.¹⁹ Whatever view about the relation between bodies and monads Leibniz is asserting in the De Volder passage, it is at least as strong as Substance Idealism.

Rutherford distinguishes Substance Idealism from what he calls "Matter Idealism," "the idea that material things exist only as appearances, ideas, or the contents of mental representations."²⁰ He argues that Leibniz is not a Matter Idealist, in this sense, because bodies have a "reality" over and above being represented by monadic perceptions; they do not exist only "as" the objects of monadic perceptions. He packs a lot into the idea of an object existing only *as* the content of a mental representation, so before continuing I want to separate a few different claims that might constitute "matter idealism," first:

WEAK MATTER IDEALISM: For all bodies *B*, if *B* exists, *B* exists partly in virtue of facts about monadic perceptions of *B*.²¹

Weak Matter Idealism adds an important element missing from Substance Idealism: that the existence of bodies is not merely grounded in facts about monads, but are grounded (at least partly) in facts about those monads'

Leibniz's thought, noted by both Adams (1994) and Rutherford (2008a) that takes bodies to be the phenomena of God's perceptions.

¹⁹ However, Leibniz does not think that monads are parts of bodies. See the letter to De Volder of June 30, 1704 (quoted in n. 11 above).

²⁰ Rutherford (2008a, 142). Cf. Adams (1994, 146), Lodge (2001, 472).

²¹ Some readers will object that it is incoherent to suppose that something can exist in virtue of its standing in a relation to something else, for its existence is a partial ground of the fact that it stands in that relation. For instance, the relational fact that a monad perceives a body is partially grounded in the fact that this body exists; it cannot therefore be a ground of the existence of that body (given the irreflexivity of grounding). While I agree with this line of reasoning as a piece of metaphysics, I do not think it is correct to import this assumption into Leibniz (or Kant for that matter). I think both philosophers accept that for some values of *x*, *x* exists in virtue of a fact about *x*. For instance, Leibniz holds that God exists in virtue of a fact about God: his essence contains existence. Kant, I think, holds that a phenomenon exists in virtue of a fact about it: it is experienced.

perceptions of bodies. That Leibniz is a Weak Idealist about Matter is relatively uncontroversial; he repeatedly describes bodies as aggregates, and writes that aggregates are “semimental” [*semimentalis*] because their unity, hence their existence, depends upon a perceiving mind.²² Since the conjunction of Substance Idealism and Weak Matter Idealism is not going to be further in question in this chapter, henceforth I will use the term “Substance Idealism” to refer to that conjunction. Intuitively, the idea behind the renaming is that that we have added to Substance Idealism the requirement that the existence of bodies must be grounded, at least partly, in facts about monadic perceptions of them. It excludes the purely compositional relation between bodies and monads I mentioned earlier and hence gets better at Leibniz’s intentions in the De Volder passage.

But Rutherford means something stronger by “matter idealism,” since he does not deny that Leibniz held Weak Matter Idealism. Remember, he defines “matter idealism” as the view that bodies exist only “as” the objects of monadic perceptions. There are at least two different ways of understanding this. First:

IDEALISM ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF BODIES: For all bodies *B*, if *B* exists, *B* exists wholly in virtue of facts about coherent monadic perceptions of *B*.

The idea behind this principle (“Existence Idealism,” for short) is that all there is to a given body *B* existing is there being monads that have coherent perceptions of *B*. One might well ask what “coherent perceptions” are; intuitively, this is supposed to capture the requirement that *B*’s existence is grounded in a plurality of monads having internally consistent perceptions of *B* that agree in representational content with their perceptions of other bodies.²³ But the details of the coherence relation among the perceptions that ground the existence of bodies is not relevant here; it suffices to notice the structure of the view: there is some relation of coherence among monadic perceptions, and monadic perceptions that stand in that relation ground the existence of bodies.

But Rutherford might have something else in mind by “matter idealism.” If bodies exist only “as” the objects of monadic perceptions then, intuitively, they are nothing “over and above” the objects of monadic perceptions. All there is to being a body is being the object of monadic perceptions. These sound like claims about the *essence* of bodies, not about what grounds their existence (what it is in virtue of which they exist). So, we might understand “matter idealism” as follows:

IDEALISM ABOUT THE ESSENCE OF BODIES: (I) The essence of being a body (= what it is to be a body) is to be the object of coherent monadic perceptions,

²² RB 146; Des Bosses correspondence (GP II 304).

²³ Cf. “On the Method of Distinguishing Real from Imaginary Phenomena” (GP VII, 319–222/L 363–365).

and (II) For any body B , the essence of B (= what it is to be B) is to be the object of a certain set of coherent monadic perceptions.²⁴

I will refer to this view as “Essence Idealism.” This gives a quite strong sense in which bodies might be “nothing over and above” monadic perceptions: their essences are exhausted by being the objects of those perceptions. Clause (II) states that for any body B there is a coherent set of monadic perceptions such that the essence of B is to be the object of those coherent perceptions, but it does not say which set of perceptions that is. The natural answer is to combine Essence Idealism with Existence Idealism, and further specify those monadic perceptions as the monadic perceptions that enter into the facts that ground the existence of B .²⁵ So, on this package of views, for any body B , B exists in virtue of facts about monadic perceptions of B , and those very monadic perceptions determine the essence of B : to be B is to be the object of those very monadic perceptions. This makes bodies, in a very strong sense, dependent upon monadic perceptions. On this view, all there is to being a given body is being the object of some particular coherent monadic perceptions. Perhaps, in denying that Leibniz is a matter idealist, Rutherford merely means to deny that Leibniz held that conjunction of views.²⁶

Before continuing, though, I want to address a point that will shortly become important. One might think that Essence Idealism entails Existence Idealism, so, by the contrapositive, the negation of Existence Idealism entails the negation of Essence Idealism. If this is correct, if Leibniz denies idealism about the existence of bodies, he would thereby be committed to denying idealism about their essences. But it is incorrect; Essence Idealism does not entail Existence Idealism. To see why, note that that Essence Idealism is a claim of the form:

(1) The essence of X is to bear relation R to the Y s.

where X is a given body, the Y s are some monads, and R is the relation of being coherently perceived by the Y s. Existence idealism is a claim of the form:

²⁴ The first clause (idealism about the essence of being a body) does not entail the second clause (idealism about the essence of individual bodies). For instance, assume that the essence of being a father is having at least one child and assume that every father is essentially a father. It does not follow that for any father x , there is a child such that x is essentially the father of *that* child. This example is due to Beau Mount. Paul Hoffmann anticipates my distinction between idealism about the essence and idealism about the existence of bodies by distinguishing between whether, for Leibniz, the being (essence) or the unity (existence) of bodies depends upon perception (Hoffmann 1996, 118).

²⁵ This means that the view I go on to describe in the rest of this paragraph is stronger than the conjunction of Essence Idealism and Existence Idealism: the quantifier over monadic perceptions has been moved out to have scope over the grounding relations, so for each body there are some monadic perceptions that body that grounds its existence *and* constitute its essence. Thanks to Beau Mount for pressing me on this point.

²⁶ Lodge (2001, 473) cites a passage from the Arnauld correspondence in which Leibniz denies what I have called “idealism about the essence of bodies” (GP II 96/LA 121). However, this passage is from the mid-1680s, and thus falls outside of the purview of this chapter.

(2) The fact that X exists is grounded in the fact that X bears relation R to Y .

But claims of the form of (1) do not in general entail claims of the form (2). For instance, consider the following claim about the essentiality of origin:

(1*) The essence of GWL is to be the son of Friedrich Leibniz and Catharina Schmuck.

does not entail the following claim about ontological dependence:

(2*) The fact that GWL exists is grounded in the fact that GWL is the child born to Friedrich Leibniz and Catharina Schmuck.

Regardless of whether one thinks (1*) or the essentiality of origin is true, and of whether one thinks (2*) is true, (1*) does not *entail* (2*). There is nothing incoherent about claiming that to be Leibniz is to be the child of his parents, but he does not exist *in virtue* of being their child. Surely, one could accept (1*) and hold that, when Leibniz exists, he exists in virtue of, say, his organic parts being appropriately unified and functioning. This shows that an entity need not, in general, exist in virtue of facts about the objects that are mentioned in its essence (i.e. the objects such that the entity's essence is to be related to those objects in certain ways). So, there is room for Leibniz to be an idealist about the existence of bodies, but not about their essences.

In much of the essay, Rutherford takes Robert Adams's "qualified realist" interpretation of Leibniz as his stalking-horse and argues that Adams mistakenly assimilates Leibniz's view to "matter idealism." However, the distinctions I have made among various things "matter idealism" might be (idealism about the existence or the essence of bodies) allow us to see that Rutherford may not be as successful as he thinks in finding an interpretive alternative to Adams.²⁷ Adams agrees with Rutherford that Leibniz rejects what I have called "Existence Idealism" about bodies. According to Adams, the existence of a body is grounded in monadic perceptions of that body as well as there being monads "in" that body; Adams expresses this point by writing: "since all bodies have substances [monads] 'in' them, they can be regarded as appearances *of* substances as well as appearances *to* substances [monads]."²⁸ So, in this sense, Adams's Leibniz is not an Existence Idealist, as Rutherford himself acknowledges (Rutherford 2008a, 160). This means that Rutherford succeeds in distinguishing his interpretation from

²⁷ The same ambiguity affects Adams's claim that "Leibniz does not believe that phenomena have any being except *in* the existence or occurrence of qualities or modifications of perceiving substances" (Adams 1994, 223). If by "being" Adams means existence, then this is false on his own view. If by "being" he means essence, it is unclear why he assumes this is true of Leibniz.

²⁸ Adams (1994, 240f.). Cf. Jolley (1986, 48) and Hoffmann (1996, 115).

Leibniz only if he can show that his reconstruction of Leibniz's theory rejects Essence Idealism; if Rutherford cannot do this, then there is no clear sense in which his Leibniz is any more "Matter Realist" than that of Adams. This is why it is important that, as I argued in the previous paragraph, Essence Idealism does not entail Existence Idealism, and, equivalently, the negation of Existence Idealism does not entail the negation of Essence Idealism. By rejecting Existence Idealism, Rutherford's Leibniz is not thereby committed to rejecting Essence Idealism. In §3, I will argue that, for all Rutherford shows, Leibniz might nonetheless be an Essence Idealist about bodies. However, I conclude by sketching my own argument that Leibniz in fact rejects Idealism about the essence of bodies.

3 Rutherford and Adams on Leibniz

The guiding idea of Rutherford's interpretation is that while Leibniz is a Substance Idealist (and hence holds that bodies exist at least partly in virtue of being perceived by monads), bodies have a "reality" above and beyond that which they have as the intentional objects of monadic perceptions, a reality they inherit from the monads from which they result (to use Leibniz's technical terminology). The crucial issue about Rutherford's interpretation, and how it differs from Adams, is how to understand the idea that bodies get their "reality" from the monads "in" them.

Rutherford offers the following model for reconciling Substance Idealism and Leibniz's alleged Matter Realism: bodies exist partly in virtue of monadic perceptions, because monadic perceptions give them the unity without which they would not exist, but the unity conferred by monadic perception does not exhaust the reality of the monads that make up the body, the monads that are unified by perception. In this section I will try to unpack this model and determine whether it succeeds in reconciling Substance Idealism with Matter Realism, and whether it constitutes a real interpretive alternative to Adams.

Rutherford's model would show that Leibniz is a Matter Realist *if* Leibniz were to hold that monads are parts of bodies: a group of monads only compose a body if other monads agree in perceiving those monads as parts of the body. On such a view, the existence of a body is partly grounded in monadic perceptions of the body, but the essence of the body is not merely to be the object of those monadic perceptions; to be a given body is to be a complex whole composed of a given set of monads, whose principle of unity is perception by other monads. On such a view, Leibniz would not be an Essence Idealist in my sense; in Rutherford's terms, he would be a Substance Idealist and a Matter Realist. The reality of bodies would be something "above and beyond" that of monadic perceptions because bodies would literally be composed of monads, substances that exist (and thus are real) independently of being perceived. But, as Rutherford himself points out, Leibniz

denies that monads are literally parts of bodies. Leibniz writes in a letter to De Volder:

properly, speaking, matter isn't composed [*componitur*] of constitutive unities, but results from them, since matter, that is, extended mass is only a phenomenon grounded in things, like a rainbow or a parhelion, and all reality belongs only to unities...substantial unities aren't really parts, but the foundations of phenomena. [June 30, 1704; GP II 268/AG 179]²⁹

So, the compositional model of how bodies have a reality “over and above” being the objects of monadic perception, whatever its merits, is not Leibniz’s.

But Rutherford suggests another way for understanding how Leibniz can be a Substance Idealist (bodies exist at least partly in virtue of monadic perceptions of them) without being a Matter Idealist (without thinking that “all there is” to a body is its being the object of monadic perceptions). According to Rutherford, Leibniz conceives of matter as an “inherently plural mass.” But it is not entirely clear what Rutherford means by this intriguing suggestion. One thing he might mean is that “matter” (*materia, matière*), as Leibniz uses it, is a “mass noun”: it refers to a kind of stuff, not to individual objects. Syntactically, the marker of a mass noun “*x*” is that “counting expressions” like “how many *x*’s?” are not well-formed. For instance, “how many matters?” is ill-formed (at least, in the relevant sense of “matter”), just like “how many waters?” or “how many nitrogens?” (likewise). Where *x* is a mass noun, the expression “some *x*” can be used to refer to a quantity or portion of *x*. By contrast, “body” (*corpus, un corps*) is a count noun. (It can also be used generically to refer to the kind *body*, but I’m going to ignore the generic usage.) Syntactically, the mark of a count noun is that the question “how many *x*’s?” is well-formed. For instance, the questions “how many pencils?,” “how many kittens?,” and “how many bodies?” are all well-formed, which means that “body” is a count noun, just like “pencil” and “kitten.” This means bodies are individual objects. The relation between matter and bodies, on this interpretation, is that every body is made of some matter (a quantity of stuff).

What is the matter that makes up bodies? Rutherford’s idea that matter is a kind of stuff, rather than a kind of object or thing, only helps us understand the relation between bodies and monads, and thus determine the sense in which Leibniz is or is not a “matter idealist,” if we have a grasp on the relation between monads and the stuff *matter*. And here, I think, Rutherford’s suggestion faces a significant problem. Rutherford might claim, that matter, for Leibniz, is monads, or, more precisely, the matter of a body is some monads. But this is incoherent, if we are assuming that matter is a stuff, because monads are countable individual

²⁹ Cf. GP II 436/AG 199; A VI.4.1670/AG 105; GM III 542/AG 168.

objects, not stuff, so a particular quantity of the stuff *matter* cannot be literally identical to the monads “in” that matter, or from which that matter results. The identity statement “the matter of body B = the monads in B” is ill-formed because the term on the left-hand refers to a quantity of stuff, while the term on the right-hand side refers to some countable individuals.³⁰ Observe, we can ask intelligibly “how many monads?” but we cannot ask “how many matters?” But this means that if matter is a kind of stuff rather than a kind of thing, then the matter in a body is not identical to the monads from which it results. Rutherford’s interesting suggestion that “matter” is a kind of stuff, therefore, gets us no closer to understanding the relation between matter and monads.

What, then, is the relation between the matter of a body, and the monads from which that body results? Rutherford claims that it is identity: bodies are made of monads. This only makes sense, as I argued in the last paragraph, if both halves of the identity claim are count nouns. This requires giving up Rutherford’s suggestion that matter is an “inherently plural mass.” But the monads “in” a body cannot be literally identical to the matter of that body, because, in passage after passage, Leibniz contrasts matter with substances, writing that matter is a “phenomenon” rather than a substance.³¹ These passages become hard to understand under the supposition that matter itself is just some substances.

Even if matter *is* monads, this gets us no closer to understanding how Leibniz is a “Matter Realist,” or how Rutherford’s Leibniz is any more realist than Adams’s, without understanding what bodies are, and whether this commits Leibniz to Idealism about the Essence of Bodies.

What, then, on Rutherford’s view, is the essence of a Leibnizian body? One might think that his answer should be:

(3) For any body *B*, the essence of *B* is to be some monads coherently perceived by a (perhaps over-lapping) set of monads as composing *B*.

But this cannot be right, for reasons given earlier: to be a body is not to *be* the monads that compose the body, because the body is not identical to those monads, *even* if the body is perceived as the aggregate of those monads (i.e. even if all the conditions for the existence of the body are satisfied). The monads are the matter of the body, a plural collection of substances, while the body is an individual. Compare a Leibnizian body to a set, such as {a,b}. The essence of {a,b} is not to *be* *a* and *b*; although the existence of {a,b} is grounded by the fact that *a* exists and *b* exists, that is not all there is to the essence of {a,b}. To be the set {a,b}

³⁰ See, however, Sider (2007) for a partial defense of the view that masses (e.g. some matter) can be identical to individual objects (e.g. monads).

³¹ E.g. GP II 270/L 537; GP II 276/AG 182; GP III 636/L 659; and GP IV 356/L 384.

is to be the set whose members are a and b (and nothing else). So, we might instead think that Leibniz's view is that:

- (4) For any body B , the essence of B is to be a whole composed of some monads, such that those monads are perceived by monads in certain determinate ways.

If this were Leibniz's view, he could hold onto Weak Existence Idealism while rejecting both Existence Idealism and Essence Idealism. However, this is not Leibniz's position because, as we have seen, Leibniz denies that monads are *parts* of bodies. This means that bodies are not literally composed of monads. There may be some other sense of "composition" in which bodies are composed of monads, but Rutherford—and Leibniz as well—owes us an account of what that is; the literal, ordinary sense of composition is that a thing is composed of its parts. Rutherford has given an account of what grounds the existence of Leibnizian bodies; but, on this score, he has not distinguished his interpretation from Adams's interpretation. Rutherford needs to explain what the relation is between monads and bodies in such a way that avoids the attribution of Essence Idealism; otherwise, his view is no less "matter idealist" than Adams's.

In the later sections of his essay, Rutherford distinguishes several different technical Leibnizian notions that might characterize the relation between monads and bodies: aggregation, resulting-from, being-in, and resulting. However, I will argue, none of these is sufficient to support Rutherford's interpretation. Each of them, when interpreted correctly, is merely a consequence of his Substance Idealism. Consequently, none of them succeeds in explaining why the essence of a body is not merely to be the intentional object of monadic perceptions. None of them succeeds in making Rutherford's Leibniz any more "realist" about bodies than Adams's.

1. *Aggregation*. In numerous texts, Leibniz claims that bodies are aggregates of monads. As noted earlier, though, we cannot understand this in the natural way, because monads are not parts of bodies. However, the alternative to the straightforward reading is to understand Leibniz's claims that bodies are aggregates of monads as meaning that bodies bear some other metaphysical grounding relation to aggregates of monads: they result from aggregates of monads, they are "in" aggregates of monads, or aggregates of monads are immediate requisites of them.
2. *Resulting*. Rutherford cites a text in which Leibniz defines the *resulting* relation as follows: "I understand that to result [*resultare*], which is immediately understood to be posited, when those things from which it results have been posited" (A VI 4, 310). The most natural way of reading this definition is: the X-facts result from the Y-facts just in case the X-facts are immediately grounded in the Y-facts (i.e. the Y-facts ground the X-facts) and if the Z-facts ground the X-facts, either they are identical to the Y-facts

or they ground the Y-facts. Clearly, for Leibniz, facts about bodies result from facts about monads, but this is just a consequence of his Substance Idealism. So, by pointing out that bodies result from monads, Rutherford fails to distinguish his interpretation from Adams's, and thus fails to show that his Leibniz is any more "realist" about matter than Adams's. Nor does the fact that bodies "result" from monads entail that Essence Idealism is false; for all this shows, Leibniz might still be an Idealist about the essence of bodies.

3. *Being-in/immediate requisition.* Rutherford sees Leibniz as identifying "being in" with immediate requisition. Leibniz frequently talks about monads being everywhere "in" matter, and of monads being "immediate requisites" of bodies. Rutherford quotes the following Leibnizian definition of immediate requisition: "if A is an immediate requisite of B, A is said to be *in* B, that is, A must not be posterior in nature to B, and with A supposed to exist, it must follow that B also does not exist, and this consequence must be immediate, independent of any change, action or passion" (A VI 4, 650).³² Clearly, for Leibniz, this relation holds between monads and bodies: it would not be possible for there to be bodies unless there were monads. However, this is just a consequence of Substance Idealism. That monads are immediate requisites of bodies does not entail that Leibniz is a Matter Realist, in either of the two senses distinguished earlier. Specifically, it does not entail that Leibniz rejects Essence Idealism, and constitutes no difference between Rutherford's and Adams's interpretations.

Since, when properly interpreted, all of these relations hold between bodies and monads whether or not Leibniz is an Idealist about the essence of bodies, I conclude that Rutherford has not given us grounds to deny that Leibniz is an Idealist about the essence of bodies. Since Rutherford does not succeed in distinguishing Leibniz's view from Essence Idealism, nor from Adams's qualified realist view, I conclude that he does not undermine Adams's interpretation. Rutherford seems to think that Adams's view attributes a kind of "matter idealism" to Leibniz; if he is correct about this, then Rutherford's Leibniz is just as much a "matter idealist" Leibniz as Adams's. I will make only the weaker claim that neither Adams nor Rutherford's interpretation is incompatible with Essence Idealism; neither of them show that Leibniz would deny that the essence of a body is to be the object of coherent monadic perceptions. I conclude that, for all they show, bodies may indeed exist only "as" objects of monadic perceptions (to use Rutherford's phrase).

Finally, Rutherford considers another way in which Leibnizian bodies are something "over and above" the objects of monadic perceptions: they possess active forces, which are the manifestation or modification of the primitive active forces in monads. One of the most consistent features of Leibniz's metaphysics, from at least the 1680s on, is his anti-Cartesian insistence that it is part of the

³² Rutherford (2008a, 167).

essence of bodies that they have forces, that they are not inert. Whether this Leibnizian doctrine is inconsistent with Essence Idealism hinges on whether bodies can have forces in virtue of being perceived to have forces. If so, then it would be consistent for Leibniz to hold that what it is to be a body is to be the object of coherent monadic perceptions which represent the body as having certain dynamic properties. But I am not going to delve into that issue here. I will consider the relation between monadic and corporeal forces in §4 of this chapter, when comparing Leibniz's views on force to Kant's.

In the remainder of this section I want to sketch a "Matter Realist" reading of Leibniz in Rutherford's sense; that is, an interpretation on which there is more to the essence of a given body than being the object of a coherent set of monadic perception and which thus vindicates Rutherford's claim that Leibniz is a "Matter Realist" in both of the two senses distinguished in §1 of this chapter: he denies both Existence and Essence Idealism about bodies. However, as far as I can tell, my reading is just as much available to Adams as it is to Rutherford; if successful, therefore, my reading would not vindicate Rutherford's claim to have found a more "realist" Leibniz than Adams. What follows is a rational reconstruction of Leibniz's views. It is not explicitly stated (or denied) in any texts of which I am aware. Consequently, I offer no direct textual support in its favor; it constitutes merely one view that Leibniz could have held, consistent with the texts cited above by me, and those discussed by Adams and Rutherford.

Earlier, I distinguished Idealism about the essence of the kind *body* and Idealism about the essence of individual bodies. I give a Leibnizian argument against the first idealist thesis—idealism about what it is to be a body—and then I use that to motivate a Leibnizian argument against the second idealist thesis—idealism about what it is to be *B*, where *B* is a body. Earlier, I argued that Leibniz is committed to:

- (1) For any body *B*, if *B* exists, *B* exists partly in virtue of facts about monadic perceptions of *B* and partly in virtue of facts about the monads appearing as *B*.

This is the consequence of Leibniz's acceptance of Weak Matter Idealism—the claim that a body exists *partly* in virtue of facts about monadic perceptions of it—and rejection of Existence Idealism—the claim that a body exists *wholly* in virtue of facts about monadic perceptions of it. The beginning of my argument is the following plausible principle to which Leibniz can appeal:

- (2) If the X-facts obtain in virtue of the Y-facts this is explained by the essences of the things involved in the X-facts and the Y-facts.³³

³³ Cf. Rosen (2010).

For instance, to use a Leibnizian example, if the facts about what is possible obtain in virtue of facts about God's intellect (as Leibniz claims in Mon 43), then this is explained by the essences of the possible things and the essence of God and his intellect. But note that claim (1) is a claim about all bodies *as such*. It is plausible, then, that (1) is explained not merely by the individual essences of each body but by the essence of the kind *body*. Specifically, it is plausible that (1) is explained by the fact that it is part of the essence of *body* (what it is to be a body) to be the object of coherent monadic perceptions and it is part of that essence to be the appearance of other monads (perceived as the organic parts). There may be more to the essence of *body* than that, so we can say schematically:

(3) Being a body = being the object of coherent monadic perceptions and being the appearance of monads perceived as organic parts and F_1

where this is understood as specifying the essence of being a body, what it is to be a body, and F_1 is just a placeholder for whatever other information is included in the essence of *body*. However, we do not need to complete the schema—we do not need to know what F_1 is—to observe that this entails that Idealism about the Essence of *Body* is false: to be a body is not merely to be the object of monadic perceptions. It is also to be the appearance of monads to other monads. But this allows us to mount a further argument, against Idealism about the Essence of Bodies, since it is plausible that, for any body *B*, it is part of the essence of *B* (what it is to be *B*) to be a body (i.e. every body is essentially a body). But this means that the essence of any body can be given schematically as:

(4) For any *X*, for *X* to be $B = X$ is a body and *X* is the unique body such that F_2

where this is understood as specifying what it is to be *B* and F_2 is a placeholder for whatever additional information is included in the essence of *B*. But we do not need to know how to fill in F_2 because, substituting in (1), we can see that (2) is equivalent to:

(2*) Being *B* = [being the object of coherent monadic perceptions and being the appearance of monads perceived as organic parts and F_1] and *X* is the unique body such that F_2

without knowing how to fill in F_2 we can see that this means that there is more to being *B* than being the object of monadic perceptions, because being *B* involves *at least* being the appearance of some monads to other monads. So even without being able to fully specify what the essence of an individual body *is* (or what the essence of *body* is) we can see Idealism about the essence of individual bodies is false, on Leibnizian grounds. To be an individual body *B* is to be the object of

certain coherent monadic perceptions, but also to be the appearance of various monads whose organic bodies are perceived as the infinitely enfolded organic parts of *B* and perhaps more. So, there are very general reasons why Leibniz would deny that to be *B* is merely to be the object of a set of coherent monadic perceptions. This is merely a sketch of an argument, but, if correct, it supplies what, I have argued, is missing from Rutherford's interpretation: an account of why there is more to the essence of an individual Leibnizian body than merely being the object of monadic perceptions. But this strategy is also available to Adams. So, if Rutherford is successful in showing that Leibniz is a "Matter Realist" (in both senses distinguished in §1), then so is Adams.

4 Kant

So far, we have distinguished several different kinds of idealist positions that Leibniz might hold, examined the logical relations among them, and considered which is the most defensible reading. In this section I distinguish corresponding positions within Kant's philosophy. This comparison with Kant requires a change in formulation. Rather than monads, it is "things in themselves" that are said to be ground phenomena and consequently the representations that ground phenomena are not monadic perceptions, but subjects' experiences. Human cognitive subjects, considered as they are "in themselves" rather than as they appear to themselves, are things in themselves, entities that do not exist in virtue of being experienced by other things in themselves—in Leibnizian terms, they are genuine substances. Translating the Leibnizian notion of body and matter into Kantian terms is slightly more complicated, though. "Matter" is an empirical concept, which Kant variously analyzes as "movable in space" (*Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*) or as "impenetrable, lifeless and extended" (*Critique of Pure Reason*). In *Metaphysical Foundations* Kant gives this definition of "body": "a body, in the physical sense, is a matter between determinate boundaries" (Ak. 4:524). I take this to mean that "body" is a count noun; it refers to a determinate quantity of matter within specified boundaries. Consequently, it is an empirical concept, just like "matter" itself. That "matter" is an empirical concept means that, although all outer objects in space are material ("matter" is the highest empirical concept of nature), this is not determined by the forms of experience. So, the correct Kantian analogue to the Leibnizian concept "body" is "outer appearance" or "empirical object in space," the objects that empirically happen to be material. But in order to avoid these clunky expressions, I am going to simply use the term "body." In doing so, I am using the expression differently than Kant uses it.³⁴

³⁴ I do not mean to give the impression at this point that these Leibnizian notions can be translated "without remainder" in to Kantian ones. In Kantian terms, all monads are things in themselves but we

We can now consider the Kantian analogues of the various idealist theses we considered in the context of Leibniz's philosophy, for instance:

SUBSTANCE IDEALISM: Every finite thing that exists is either a thing in itself, or exists in virtue of facts about the representational states of things in themselves.³⁵

This claim partitions every finite thing into two classes: things in themselves, and things that exist in virtue of facts about things in themselves and the contents of experiences.

Determining whether Kant is committed to Substance Idealism, so formulated, is difficult. On the other hand, some of Kant's statements in his lectures on rational theology suggest that he might in fact have been a Substance Idealist; assuming that God is a thing in itself in the relevant sense, there are passages in his lectures on rational theology that suggest that Kant thinks that everything that exists, exists in virtue of God's intellectual intuition of it.³⁶ However, it is unclear whether these statements express Kant's own considered theoretical commitments, because it is unclear what their epistemic status is. Within the Critical system what could warrant Kant in claiming that God is the ground of absolutely everything there is? While Kant does deploy such Critical doctrines as the ideality of space and time, the casual community of all phenomenal substances and the unknowability of things in themselves in the lectures on rational theology, he never squarely addresses the question of how, or whether, they are compatible with his Critical restrictions on theoretical cognition. He does claim that, while we cannot prove with apodictic certainty (i.e. a priori) that there is a God, we are subjectively required by our rational faculty to assume that there is a God and to conceive of him in certain determinate ways (the content of which he outlines).³⁷ He claims further that while we cannot have positive knowledge of God's inner nature, we can have negative knowledge that some conceptions of God are incorrect (e.g. Spinozism, polytheism, deism), and that apparent positive doctrines

cannot know whether all (indeed, any) things in themselves are monads or not. My point about "translation" should be read in the context of my remarks in the Introduction about the parallel structure of Leibniz's and Kant's ontology of matter. All I am claiming is that things in themselves and monads are playing a structurally similar role.

³⁵ This does not presuppose that all things in themselves have representational states or are minds (something we could never know on theoretical grounds, according to Kant). It states that the existence of bodies depends upon those things in themselves that do have representational states (according to Leibniz, all of them).

³⁶ E.g. *Religionslehre Pölitz*, Ak. 28:1054 (esp. within the larger context of 1033–1056). I think Kant's considered view is that if there is a God and God is the *ens originarium*—the being whose existence grounds the possibility of all other beings—God grounds actually existing beings through his *will* not through his *understanding* (God does not have senses, so it is misleading to talk about his perceptions), which is the traditional position (see Mon 48).

³⁷ Ak. 28:1036, 1046.

about God (e.g. that he is a substance) are to be understood analogically.³⁸ Fully unpacking this, and determining whether it constitutes a violation of Critical doctrines (either because Kant had misgivings about those doctrines, or because he was inclined to present a more positive “spin” to his critique of rational theology when publicly exercising his duties as a servant of the Prussian state) or not, is a significant undertaking and I will not attempt it here. I bring it up merely to point out that determining whether Kant is really committed to Substance Idealism requires dealing with some of the most vexed questions in the Critical system (e.g. exactly what it means that we cannot have theoretical cognition of things in themselves).

The next Idealist thesis we considered in Leibniz was:

WEAK MATTER IDEALISM: For all outer phenomena *B*, if *B* exists, *B* exists partly in virtue of facts about subjects’ experience of *B*.

It seems fairly clear that Kant is committed to this. There is abundant textual evidence that bodies exist *at least* partly in virtue of subjects’ experiences of them.³⁹ In fact, some of those texts appear to support attributing to him something stronger, namely:

IDEALISM ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF BODIES: For all phenomena *B*, if *B* exists, *B* exists wholly in virtue of facts about subjects’ experiences of *B*.

However, there are reasons to think that Kant would reject this particular Idealist thesis. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he writes: “representation in itself does not produce its objects in so far as existence is concerned” (A 92/B 125). By “produce” [*hervorbringen*] I think Kant means “ground,” for surely the efficient causal production of objects by representation is not what is in question here (in a parenthesis he makes clear that he is here bracketing the relation of objects to the will, which can causally produce its object). In the larger context of the passage Kant is contrasting two ways in which representation and object can “meet and relate to one another”: either the object makes the representation possible, or the representation makes the object possible. He goes on to argue that our a priori concepts make their objects possible, but not in respect of their existence, merely their form. I take this to mean that the existence of the objects of our representations is not grounded in facts about the contents of our representations.

One might assume that by claiming that representations do not “produce” the existence of their objects, Kant is making the anodyne point that I can have a

³⁸ Ibid., 1048–1049.

³⁹ See n. 10 above.

non-veridical perceptual episode (e.g. a hallucination) that represents an object outside of me without there being such an object. But can there be an ideally coherent and connected series of representations (let us assume, even across different subjects) of bodies, without those bodies existing? In other words, is it just that individual representations do not ground the existence of their object, but they do ground their existence at the limit of coherence and intersubjective agreement? Or, to put it in Leibnizian terms, does Kant hold that for bodies “existence consists in this, in sensation keeping certain laws... moreover sleep need not differ from waking by any intrinsic reality, but only by the form or order of sensations; wherefore there is no reason to ask whether there are any bodies outside us [because their existence is guaranteed by the coherence of our perceptions]” (A VI 3, 511)?⁴⁰

One might think that, for Kant, the ideal coherence of a set of representations does guarantee the existence of its objects. Kant repeatedly makes claims about empirical objects that are most naturally read as meaning that for an empirical object to exist is just for us to experience it. For instance:

Accordingly, the objects of experience are never given in themselves, but only in experience, and they do not exist at all outside it. That there could be inhabitants of the moon [*daß es Einwohner im Monde geben könne*], even though no human being has perceived them, must of course be admitted; but this means only that in the possible progress of experience we could encounter them [*treffen könnten*]; for everything is actual that stands in one context with a perception in accordance with the laws of the empirical progression. Thus they are real when they stand in empirical connection with my real consciousness, although they are not therefore real in themselves, i.e. outside this progress of experience... For the appearances, as mere representations, are in themselves real only in perception. To call an appearance a real thing prior to perception means either that in the continuation of experience we must encounter such a perception, or it has no meaning at all. [A 493/B 521]

One must note well this paradoxical but correct proposition, that nothing is in space except what is represented in it. For space itself is nothing other than representation; consequently, what is in it must be contained in representation, and nothing at all is in space except as it is really represented in it. A proposition which must of course sound peculiar is that a thing exists only in the representation of it; but it loses its offensive character here, because the things with which we have to do are not things in themselves but only appearances, i.e., representations. [A 374 n.]

⁴⁰ Quoted in Adams (1994, 238).

First, a note on how I am interpreting these texts. One might be tempted to read the second sentence of the first passage as meaning: if it is possible for there to be men on the moon, this just means it is possible for us to experience them. But this reading—on which Kant is merely asserting a connection between possibilities—is contradicted by the final sentence: “to call an appearance a real thing prior to perception means either that in the continuation of experience we must encounter [*treffen müssen*] such a perception, or it has no meaning at all.” If Kant were merely equating the possibility of there being moon-men with the possibility of experiencing moon-men, why would he write that to say that an appearance exists before we have perceived it is to claim that we *must* eventually experience it? Now, it might be objected that Kant here is making only a claim about a sufficient condition on actual existence: anything connected with our perceptions by empirical causal laws is actual, although there may be actual objects that we neither experience either by directly perceiving or indirectly perceiving their traces. But then his claim about moon-men would be undermined: if it is possible for there to be actual objects that are never in any sense experienced, then the possibility of there being moon-men does not reduce to the possibility of our experiencing moon-men. In the second passage Kant makes as clear as one could hope that, for an object in space, to exist is to be represented. Now, the second passage leaves open what kind of representation is sufficient to ground the existence of an object in space; surely Kant does not mean to deny that I can have a hallucination as of a pink elephant, even if no pink elephants exist in space. The natural answer to this question, in light of the first passage, is that it is experience of objects in space (bodies) that is sufficient to ground their existence.

The idea that experience of bodies is sufficient to ground their existence may strike some readers as absurd. Surely, I can have a hallucinatory experience of an object when in fact no such object exists? The key point here is that Kant’s technical notion “experience” [*Erfahrung*] does not refer to just any perceptual episode with objective purport but consists in *at least* a unified and coherent set of perceptions that exhibit exception-less empirical laws and whose content obeys the transcendental principles of experience (it represents an absolutely permanent set of substances that underlie all apparent generation and corruption). As Kant says at the outset of the A Deduction:

there is only *one* experience, in which all perceptions are represented as in thoroughgoing and lawlike connection, just as there is only one space and time, in which all forms of appearances and all relation of being or non-being takes place. If one speaks of different experiences, they are only so many perceptions insofar as they belong to one and the same universal experience. [A 110]

So, in this sense, hallucinations and non-veridical perceptions would not count as *experiences* because they do not cohere with the “universal experience,” which, I have been arguing, grounds the existence of phenomena.

Determining exactly what it takes for a connected series of perceptions to constitute experience lies far outside the scope of this essay; indeed, it would take little less than a commentary on the entire *Transcendental Analytic*. But even without answering that monumental question we are in a position to see an apparent tension in Kant's view. On the one hand, he denies that "representation in itself" grounds the existence of its objects. On the other hand, he holds that experience grounds the existence of its objects. The answer to this question lies in what Kant means by the phrase "representation in itself." The phrase suggests that Kant means to be talking of representations considered solely in themselves, or from the side of the subject or subjects having them. In this sense, "representation in itself" does not require an external object, although it may represent there being one. "Representation in itself" is related to what philosophers now call "narrow content." Any state subjectively indistinguishable from my present state is the same state of "representation in itself"; it has the same narrow content, assuming the common view that narrow content supervenes on phenomenal states.⁴¹ However, two subjectively indistinguishable states that are the same considered as "representations in themselves" may differ in important respects: one may veridically record the existence of an external object, while the other does not. In order to avoid running afoul of Kant's doctrine that only a connected series of representations is an experience, let us focus not on episodic representations but on the entire representational sequence of a single mind over its lifetime. If I am correct about what Kant means by "representation in itself" at A 92/B 125, then his claim that representation in itself does not produce the existence of its object is compatible with his view that the existence of empirical objects is grounded in the contents of experience only if experience is not merely "representation in itself"; that is, if whether a representational sequence is an experience does not depend only on "the subjective side," its narrow content. How could it be that experience is not merely representation in itself (i.e. that whether I am experiencing or merely seeming to experience does not supervene on the qualitative character of my representational sequence)?

One of the central tenets of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is that experience requires sensibility, which he defines as "the capacity to acquire representations through the way in which we are affected by objects" (A 19/B 33); the Introduction to the B edition begins: "how else could the cognitive faculty be awakened into experience if not through objects that stimulate our senses and in part themselves produce representations...?" (B 1). This naturally gives rise to the question: which are the objects that stimulate our senses, produce representations and thus "awaken" the cognitive faculty into experience? Given that Kant ends the first

⁴¹ "Narrow content" in contemporary philosophy typically refers to mental (or semantic) content (if there is any) that supervenes on the intrinsic states of a subject. "Wide content" is content that does not so supervene. Obviously, I am using these terms in a slightly broader sense in Kant and Leibniz. The classic defenses of wide content (and inspirations for the distinction) are Putnam (1975) and Burge (1979).

paragraph of the B edition by saying “as far as time is concerned, then, no cognition in us precedes experience,” one might think that he has in mind exclusively a process of causal affection that occurs in time and, thus, the affecting objects can only be spatiotemporal empirical objects. However, there are compelling reasons, both textual and philosophical, for thinking that Kant also admits a noumenal affection of our sensibility by non-empirical objects, things in themselves. First of all, he straightforwardly says as much in *On a Discovery*, and numerous other texts:

Having raised the question “Who (what) gives sensible sensibility its matter, namely sensations?” [Eberhard] believes himself to have pronounced against the *Critique* when he says “We may choose what we will—we will never arrive at *things in themselves*.” Now that, of course, is the constant contention of the *Critique*; save that it posits this ground of the matter of sensory representation not once again in things, as objects of the senses, but in something supersensible, which *grounds* the latter, and of which we can have no cognition. It says that the objects as things-in-themselves *give* the matter to empirical intuition (they contain the ground by which to determine the faculty of representation in accordance with its sensibility), but they *are* not the matter thereof.

[“On a Discovery,” Ak. 8:215]⁴²

Aside from the historical question of *whether* Kant accepted non-empirical affection (to which the answer must be a resounding “Yes!”) there is the philosophical question of whether he *should*. Consider, however, the following argument:

- (1) Empirical objects exist partly in virtue of the sensory content of experience.
- (2) If the fact that *p* is among the grounds of the fact that *q* then the fact that *q* does not cause it to be the case that *p*.
- (3) If empirical objects affect the subject to produce the sensory contents of experience, then the fact that they exist causes it to be the case that experience has the sensory content it does.
 - (C1) ∴ Empirical objects do not affect the subject to produce the sensory contents of experience.
 - (C2) ∴ If the sensory content of experience has a causal ground, it is not in empirical objects.
- (4) Receptivity is the faculty of being affected by objects distinct from the subject and thereby acquiring sensory representations. So, the sensory content of experience has a causal ground in objects distinct from the subject.
 - (C3) ∴ The sensory content of experience has a causal ground in non-empirical objects distinct from the subject.

⁴² Cf. A 190/B 235; A 387; A 494/B 522; Ak. 4:289, 4:314, 4:318, 4:451.

This is an argument that the objects that affect our sensibility and produce the sensory representations which the faculty of understanding goes about synthesizing, combining, etc. are not empirical objects. Intuitively, the idea of the argument is that, since empirical objects are appearances, they exist in virtue of the contents of experience, and thus by (2) cannot be among the causes of that sensory content; appearances cannot “reach” back to cause the very experiences in virtue of which they exist.

F. H. Jacobi famously quipped that “without the presupposition [of the thing in itself] I was unable to enter into [Kant’s] system, but with it I was unable to stay within it.”⁴³ I take it that the first half of this remark expresses the argument up to (C2)—that the thing in itself and noumenal affection are indispensable to Kant’s theory of experience—and the second half of the remark continues the objection to (C3) and then raises the objection: Kant’s restriction of the categories to empirical objects does not allow us to draw (C3). Kant’s theory of experience both requires, and does not allow him to posit, noumenal affection by things in themselves. Note that (C1) and (C2) are not subject to the objection that categories like “cause-effect” can only be applied to empirical objects. Even if (4) inadmissibly applies “cause” effect to non-empirical objects, (C2) stands. However, I think this objection misunderstands Kant’s “restriction” thesis. Kant holds that the categories are cognitions only with respect to empirical objects; we can only know that empirical objects fall under the categories, and we can only know principles involving the categories (e.g. the persistence of substance) if those principles are restricted to empirical objects. Not only can we think about any object as falling under the categories; we must, because we cannot think about any object whatsoever without applying the categories to it!⁴⁴ The respect in which the Jacobi-inspired objection is correct is that Kant’s Critical epistemology seems to entail that we cannot know through theoretical reason premise (4) or (C3). Thus, while it is clear that Kant is committed to the noumenal affection of sensibility by non-empirical objects the Jacobi objection points out a serious problem about how he could be rationally warranted in adopting that commitment, but I will not further pursue the point here.

If I am indeed correct that Kant thinks that because the receptivity of sensibility requires affection by a non-empirical object, this offers a natural explanation of why experience is not “representation in itself” and thus why Kant’s claim at A 92/B 125 that “representation in itself” does not “produce” the existence of its object is compatible with claiming that the existence of empirical objects is grounded in experience of them: to be experiencing is not merely to enjoy a representational sequence with certain highly unified contents, but for that representational sequence to be the product of causal affection by things in

⁴³ From Jacobi (1787), vol. II, 109.

⁴⁴ See B xxvi; A 88/B 120; B 167 n.; A254/B 309; Ak. 5:43 and 5:55.

themselves. In other words, experience necessarily requires affection by something “transcendentally external” to the subject (or subjects) of experience. This proposal—that experience for Kant is by definition the product of causal affection by things in themselves—is confirmed by Kant’s repeated insistence throughout the *Critical philosophy* that the idea of an appearance that is not the appearance of something that is not itself an appearance (i.e. the appearance of a thing in itself) is absurd. Kant repeatedly maintains that since empirical objects are appearances, there must be objects that are non-empirical, and hence which are not appearances, which appear as those empirical objects.⁴⁵ This is not a causal inference to the existence of things in themselves, but a conceptual requirement on what it is to be an appearance: if x is an appearance, then there is a y such that y is not an appearance and y appears as x . Kant also seems to conclude that if this y is not an appearance it must be a thing in itself. This fits well with the current proposal—that experience is essentially the product of noumenal affection—because appearances are essentially the appearances of thing in themselves, and experience is essentially causally related to things in themselves, then it stands to reason that experience is essentially the experience of appearances; that is, objects that exist in virtue of things in themselves appearing to us by causally affecting us.

What does this have to do with whether Kant is committed to Idealism about the Existence of Bodies? First of all, it shows that it matters how we translate the Leibnizian notion of “perception” into Kantian terms. For consider the following views Kant might hold:

R-IDEALISM ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF BODIES: For any body B , if B exists, B exists wholly in virtue of facts about the contents of subjects’ *representations* of B .

E-IDEALISM ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF BODIES: For all bodies B , if B exists, B exists wholly in virtue of facts about the contents of subjects’ *experiences* of B .

In Kant’s technical terminology, R-Idealism is the claim that representations in themselves (i.e. merely in virtue of their narrow content) ground the existence of bodies; as we have seen, he rejects this view. Whether he holds E-Idealism depends upon whether I am right that experience essentially involves noumenal affection by things in themselves; that is, whether it is possible to experience bodies without that experience constituting the appearance of things in

⁴⁵ The *locus classicus* for this view is Kant’s following remark in the B preface: “the reservation must also be well noted that even if we cognize these same objects as things in themselves, we at least must be able to think of them as things in themselves. For otherwise there would follow the absurd proposition that there is an appearance without anything that appears” (B xxvi). Cf. Ak. 4:315, 354.

themselves as those bodies. If I am right that, for Kant, experience necessarily involves affection by things in themselves then Kant is committed to E-Idealism. If a body exists, then its existence is grounded in the fact that noumenal affection produces in subjects representations (with the appropriate content) which ground an experience of that body such that those things in themselves appear as that body. But notice further that Kant's commitment to E-Idealism does not constitute a difference from Leibniz, who, I argued in §1, rejects Idealism about the Existence of Bodies. The reason this does not constitute a difference with Leibniz is that Leibnizian "perception" is a notion of "representation in itself"; whether a mental state is a Leibnizian perception supervenes on its narrow content. That a state is a perception depends only upon the "subjective side"; it does not require that there be an external object answering to that state (causally or otherwise). So, Leibniz and Kant agree that the mere fact that subjects enjoy representational mental states *as of bodies* does not entail that there are such bodies; for each thinker more must be added to ground the existence of bodies. For Leibniz, there must be monads "in" each part of the represented bodies. Ultimately, this means there must be an infinitely enfolded series of organic bodies, each dominated by a monad perceiving the entire world from the point of view of that organic body. For Kant, it means that the subjects' experience of bodies must constitute the appearance of things in themselves to those subjects as those bodies, which requires at least that there be things in themselves causally affecting those subjects, giving rise to the sensory contents that are synthesized into experience of those bodies.

The remaining idealist doctrine we need to consider is:

IDEALISM ABOUT THE ESSENCE OF BODIES: (I) The essence of being a body is being the object of subjects' representations (with appropriate content), and (II) For any body B, the essence of B is being the object of a certain set of subjects' representations (with appropriate content).⁴⁶

⁴⁶ The following objection may occur to some readers. There is also a strand in Kant's thinking that is extremely pessimistic about our ability to know essences; if this pessimism about essence represents Kant's considered view, then he must be agnostic vis-à-vis both conjuncts of Idealism about the Essences of Bodies. In various texts Kant distinguishes between the logical essence of a concept and the real essence of the object or objects of the concept. The logical essence of the concept is the analytic marks we think in the concept—for instance the logical essence of <body> is <impenetrable>, <lifeless> and <extended>—while Kant defines real essence as "the first inner ground of all that belongs to the possibility of a thing" (*Mrognovius*, Ak. 29:820). I take this to mean that for Kant the real essence of a thing is a complex of properties that constrain what is possible for those objects: anything that is a consequence of the essence is a necessary property of the object, while anything that is compatible with the essence but is not entailed by it is a contingent property of the object. The properties that make up the essence are the essential properties of the object (*essentialia*). Kant repeatedly claims that we cannot know real essences, notably in his letter to Reinhold of May 12, 1789 (see Ak. 11:37). That text might seem especially damning for my project, since it is the real essence of matter/body itself that Kant there claims we cannot know. However, when put in the context of other texts, this text is in fact fully compatible with my interpretation. Kant, following Baumgarten, distinguishes between the essence of

Just as with Leibniz, whether Kant accepts the first conjunct of Idealism about the Essence of Bodies—which I will call Idealism about Being a Body—depends upon whether the representations involved are mere representations or experience. For, as we have seen, there is more to being a body than being the intentional content of representation; to be a body is to be the intentional object of representations with a certain content in which things in themselves are appearing as that body. So, if what Kant calls “representation in itself” is the relevant notion, Kant rejects Idealism about Being a Body. Does he accept it as formulated with experience, where experience is understood as involving appearance of things in themselves to subjects?

E-IDEALISM ABOUT BEING A BODY: To be a body is to be the intentional object of a certain set of subjects’ experiences (with appropriate content).

On this view, to be a body is to be represented by experiences with a certain content—for instance, to be represented as an impenetrable, lifeless extended object (to adopt the analysis of *<body>* in the *Critique of Pure Reason* rather than in the *Metaphysical Foundations*)—where that experience is the product of noumenal affection by things in themselves that appear in the content of those experiences as those bodies. Determining Kant’s views on these matters is always somewhat difficult because he never states his views on the ontology of phenomena very clearly, and he thinks our knowledge of the noumenal basis of phenomena is very limited, but this seems to express Kant’s view about what it is to be a body.

Now let us turn to the second half of Idealism about the Essence of Bodies: for any body B, the essence of B is to be the object of certain experiences. Call this “Idealism about the Essences of Individual Bodies.” In §3 I sketched a short Leibnizian argument against Idealism about the Essences of Individual Bodies. I think that a similar argument is available to Kant. The crucial premise here is that every body is essentially a body. I know of only one text, from the Duisberg Nachlaß, in which Kant explicitly addresses this issue. In this unpublished note Kant is discussing the comparison of concepts in judgments, and distinguishes three cases, of which the third is:

an object, the properties that make up the essence (*essentialia*), the properties that follow necessarily from those properties (*attributa*), and the contingent properties of the object that are compatible with, but sufficiently grounded in, its essence (*affectiones*). Even if we cannot know the essence of *<matter>* we may be able to know some part of its essence, specifically, we might know that it is part of the essence of matter to be an appearance of things in themselves, and we may be able to know some of the properties that follow from the essential properties of matter. In other logic lectures, a context in which he frequently claims that we cannot know the real essence of objects, Kant explicitly claims that we can know some of the essential properties of matter; see *Metaphysik Pölitz*, Ak. 28:553. I conclude that this strand of skepticism about our knowledge of essences does not preclude Kant from adopting an Idealism about the essence of body, or its negation. Kant might hold that we know part of the essence of body, and that it includes being the appearance of things in themselves, or that we know that, whatever the essence of matter is, it does not include things in themselves, without claiming that we can know the complete essence of matter.

But if *a* cannot be separated from *b* in *x*, i.e. no *x* which is a body is indivisible, then one must see that the *x* which is thought through *a* can never be thought through non-*a*, that no being which has the nature of a body can become incorporeal, and that the *a* in itself is not a predicate in respect of *x*, but a reciprocal concept [*sondern mit ihm Wechselbegriff sei*] and thus holds of a substance. [R4767; Ak. 18:654]⁴⁷

Kant here asserts two different necessary connections: an object *x* which cannot fail to fall under the concept *a* and the concept *b* is contained in *a*. Consequently, *x* cannot fail to fall under *b*. The second necessary connection is the familiar Kantian one of analytic containment. The first necessary connection is more problematic. Kant's characterization of this necessary connection in the last sentence suggests that he has in mind the idea that a substance and its essence are only "rationally distinct"; the essence of *x* is not a predicate of *x* but a merely a way of expressing *x*'s nature. The object *x* and its essence *a* are "reciprocal concepts" because it is impossible for *x* to exist without *a* being its essence; *a* can be substituted for *x* in all contexts, even modal ones, *salva veritate*.

Kant's example of the relation between an object, an essence and an essential property contained in that essence is: a body *x*, being a body, and being impenetrable. If every body is essentially a body, and being a body necessarily involves being the appearance of things in themselves to subjects, as I argued earlier, then the essence of any individual body entails being the appearance of things in themselves (this is an attribute of any individual body). So, being an individual body is more than being the intentional object of certain representations "in themselves." But once again, whether Kant is an Idealist about the Essences of Individual Bodies depends upon whether the representations involved are "mere representations" or experience, which necessarily involves the appearance of things in themselves to subjects:

R-IDEALISM ABOUT THE ESSENCES OF INDIVIDUAL BODIES: For any phenomenon B, the essence of B (= what it is to be B) is to be the object of a certain set of representations "in themselves."

E-IDEALISM ABOUT THE ESSENCES OF INDIVIDUAL BODIES: For any phenomenon B, the essence of B (= what it is to be B) is to be the object of a certain set of experiences.

⁴⁷ It has long been appreciated that the Duisberg Nachlaß can shed light on the *Critique*; Longuenesse (1998) in particular offers an extensive argument that Kant's Critical conception of the role of the logical function of categorical judgment and its relation to the category of substance should be understood in light of this passage. Although it is a pre-Critical text, I think that nothing in Kant's mature doctrine in the *Critique* is incompatible with.

But the argument I just sketched is only a reason for Kant to reject R-Idealism about the Essences of Individual Bodies: it does not entail that the essence of an individual body is not to be the object of a certain experience because being an object of experience necessarily involves being the appearance of things in themselves to subjects, and all I have argued is that individual bodies are essentially the appearances of things in themselves.

Let us now focus on E-Idealism about the Essences of Individual Bodies, the idea that all there is to being a given body is being the object of a certain set of experiences. Let us assume for the moment that experiences are individuated by their representational content and perhaps by the subjects whose experiences they are; they are not individuated by the things in themselves that appear in those experiences, although experience is essentially the appearance of some things in themselves. (In other words, experiences are essentially appearances of things in themselves to subjects, but not essentially the appearance of any particular things in themselves). Perhaps it is easiest to get a handle on the content of E-Idealism by understanding what it *denies*. Take a particular body *B*, say, the boat sailing downstream from the Second Analogy of Experience. If Idealism about the Essences of Individual Bodies is *true*, then while this boat is essentially an appearance of things in themselves, it is not essentially the appearance of any particular things in themselves. No particular things in themselves enter into the essence of *B*; to be *B* is to be an object represented as having certain properties in an experience that is the appearance of things in themselves to subjects, but not any particular things in themselves.

To get a more intuitive grasp on this issue, notice that on so-called “One Object” readings of Kant’s idealism an individual appearance is essentially the appearance of an individual thing in itself; namely, the thing in itself to which it is numerically identical. Let “*B*” refer to the appearance, in this case, the boat. Let “*T*” refer to the thing in itself that appears as *B*, if there is only one. On “One Object” readings, $B = T$. Since *B* is numerically identical to *T*, in fact, it is simply *T* qua appearing to us, this very appearance *B* could not exist without being the appearance of *T* (i.e. without being *T* qua appearing to us). So insofar as one is tempted by a One Object reading of Kant’s idealism, there is strong reason to think that Kant would reject Idealism about the Essence of Individual Bodies, and hold that it is part of the essence of a given body to be the appearance of a particular thing in itself in itself, namely, the thing in itself it, considered independently of how it appear to us, is.

Independently of whether one is a “One” or “Two” Object reader of Kant’s idealism, though, there are very general reasons to expect that Kant would not accept Idealism about Essences of Individual Bodies. If we are truly ignorant of the noumenal “side” or “aspect” of appearances—that is, we are ignorant of the intrinsic nature of the things in themselves that affect us and appear to us as these objects—it would stand to reason that, for all we know, individual bodies are

essentially appearances of a particular thing in itself or group of things in themselves. Within Kant's epistemology, what would rationally warrant us in excluding the possibility that for a body *B* there is some group *G* of things in themselves such that *B* is essentially the appearance of the members of *G* to us? According to this line of reasoning, Kant should neither accept nor reject Idealism about the Essences of Individual Bodies; we cannot know whether it is part of the essence of individual bodies to be appearances of particular things in themselves. I am not sure this exhausts the reasons for accepting or rejecting this Idealist thesis in the context of Kant's system; there may be reasons originating from this theory of the will, practical agency, or the immortality of the soul for making more determinate claims about the involvement of particular things in themselves in the essences of individual appearances. But for reasons of space, I will have to leave the discussion there.

Our examination of Leibniz's and Kant's views on the ontological status of bodies and matter has revealed that in addition to the structural similar tension in both philosophers—there are texts that support a phenomenalist reading and texts that suggest a more realist reading of bodies—they agree to a surprising extent, once we abstract from differences in their background theory (e.g. Leibniz's monadology, Kant's doctrine of noumenal ignorance). Specifically, we have seen that each of them denies a version of the following thesis:

IDEALISM ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF BODIES: For any body *B*, the existence of *B* is grounded solely in facts about the representational contents of monads/subjects' perceptions/representations of *B*.

Substituting the appropriate Leibnizian or Kantian terms, this is a view each philosopher would reject. Similarly, both would accept the weaker claim that:

WEAK IDEALISM ABOUT BODIES: For any body *B*, the fact that *B* exists is grounded partly in facts about the representational contents of monads/subjects' perceptions/representations of *B*.

And their reasons for accepting Weak Idealism but rejecting Strong Idealism are the same: the facts that ground the existence of bodies are not merely facts about the "narrow" representational content of monads'/subjects' representations but require, in addition, facts about the grounds of those representations in monads/things in themselves. In Leibniz this is the requirement that there be monads in each organic part of the body that perceive the whole universe of bodies "as if" from that spatial location. In Kant it is the requirement that there be things in themselves appearing as the body in virtue of noumenal affecting subjects and thereby producing the experience of that body. What this brings out is the main difference between Leibniz and Kant over the "extra factor" that must be required

to ground the existence of bodies (beyond the narrow representational contents of subjects'/monads' perceptions) follows from differences in their background theory: Leibniz's denial of intersubstantial causation and Kant's doctrine of noumenal ignorance. Because Leibniz denies the possibility of intersubstantial causation, the "appearance" relation by which monads appear to one another as a world of infinitely enveloped organic bodies is necessarily non-causal. Leibniz cashes out this appearance relation in terms of an isomorphism between the world of monads and the phenomenal world of bodies. Likewise, Kant is much more agnostic about the involvement of things in themselves in bodies than Leibniz is because he puts much more radical limits on our knowledge of the extra-phenomenal reality of things in themselves. Where Leibniz is willing to posit an infinity of monads, one dominating each organic part of each body, Kant thinks we are irredeemably ignorant of the intrinsic natures of things in themselves and the specific details of their involvement in bodies. This puts a limit on how similar their theories can ultimately be.

I would like to conclude by discussing one final similarity in their theories of the ontological status of bodies and matter. Leibniz and Kant share an anti-Cartesian conception of matter, according to which bodies possess dynamic properties and real moving forces. And both philosophers claim that the forces possessed by bodies are the appearance or manifestation of the forces of monads (Leibniz) or things in themselves (Kant). Leibniz is clearer on this point, for he holds that primitive forces are perceptual capacities in monads, while derivative forces, the moving forces possessed by bodies studied by the science of dynamics, are manifestations or appearances of those primitive forces. Consider these two texts from the De Volder correspondence:

Derivative forces I relegate to the phenomena, but I think it is clear that primitive forces cannot be anything but internal tendencies of simple substances, because of which, by a certain law of their nature, they pass from perception to perception. [GP II 275/AG 181]

The forces that arise from mass and velocity are derivative and belong to aggregates or phenomena [bodies]. When I speak of the primitive force remaining, I do not mean the conservation of the total power to move, which was discussed between us earlier, but the entelechy which always expresses that total force as well as other things. And certainly derivative forces are nothing but modifications and results of the primitive [forces]. [GP II 251/L 530]

What does it mean for a force that is essentially a force of motion in space and time to be the appearance of a non-spatial force of perception and appetite in a nonextended simple substance? Ordinarily, if we say that x appears as y we are assuming at least that (i) x is among the causes of our perception of y , and (ii) x 's

perceptible features are responsible for y 's perceptible features in some relatively systematic way. This model is significantly complicated when x is something that cannot be directly perceived; that is, when x is something that we can only perceive indirectly by perceiving an object y where x appears to us as y . If we drop the requirement that the features that manifest themselves in the appearance y are perceptible features of x , then we get some traction on Leibniz's view. There is a systematic correlation between the features of monads and the features of bodies as they appear to us: monads perceive the entire corporeal universe with varying degrees of clarity and these differences in clarity correspond to their spatial positions and their relations of domination. If monad m perceives monad n more distinctly than monad n perceives monad m then the organic body of m contains the organic body of n . So, there is a systematic correlation between the force of perception in monads and its degrees of clarity and distinctness and relations of containment in organic bodies. It is somewhat harder to see how there can be systematic correlation between the derivative forces in bodies and the perceptive and appetitive forces in monads. This is in part because of Leibniz's unclarity surrounding the derivative forces of bodies. But if we assume that bodies have derivative force in virtue of being perceived by monads as having derivative force, then we can say the following: the derivative forces of bodies supervene globally on the degrees of clarity and distinctness present in the perceptual forces of monads. So, there is a function from the total perceptual state of all the monads to the complete set of derivative forces and motions possessed by bodies. Some sense can be made of the idea that primitive forces appear as derivative forces.

Kant also describes the forces of things in themselves as appearing in empirical objects, although (appropriately, given his epistemology) he is more reticent about this than Leibniz is. Kant claims that our empirical character is an appearance of our intelligible character (A 538–558/B 566–586); in the *Groundwork* he claims that “the world of understanding contains the ground of the world of sense and of its laws” (Ak. 4:453); and in the *Prolegomena* he writes that “reason is the cause of these natural laws and is therefore free” (Ak. 4:346).⁴⁸ However, he is in a worse position than Leibniz to account for this. There is a problem, we saw earlier, in understanding how the features (forces or otherwise) of a non-spatial

⁴⁸ This view is more clearly articulated in the Inaugural Dissertation of 1770, in which Kant is more optimistic about our knowledge of noumena: “the human mind is only affected by external things, and the world is only exposed to its view, lying open before it to infinity, in so far as the mind, itself, together with all other things, is sustained by the same infinite force of one being. Hence, the mind only senses external things in virtue of the presence of the same common sustaining cause. Accordingly, space, which is the sensitively cognized universal and necessary condition of the co-presence of all things, can be called phenomenal omnipresence” (Ak. 2:409–410); see also Ak. 2:357, 2:391, and 2: 407. If space is the appearance of divine omnipresence (the way in which divine omnipresence manifests to us, given our form of intuition) then the forces encountered in space, it stands to reason, are the appearances of the forces sustained by the infinite force of one being, God. Whether this remains Kant's Critical view would require further substantiation.

object can appear as the features (forces or otherwise) of spatiotemporal object. Bracketing problems about the unschematized use of the categories, Kant can claim that forces in things in themselves appear as the forces in empirical objects in the following sense: things in themselves affect us, which produces in us experience of empirical objects and this experience represents those empirical objects as having forces that correspond in some way to the forces by things in themselves affect us. Whether this is a genuine sense in which the forces in things in themselves appear as the forces in empirical objects depends upon what “corresponds in some way” means. The mere fact of causal dependence is not enough to make it the case that empirical forces are appearances of noumenal forces; causal dependence is compatible with a weaker relation, on which noumenal forces are merely the external cause of empirical forces. What more is required for noumenal forces to appear as empirical forces? What more do we need to pack into “corresponds in some way”? Leibniz had a natural answer at his disposal: due to the pre-established harmony, there is an isomorphism between the (degrees of clarity and distinctness possessed by) perceptual forces in monads and the motive forces in bodies. It is not clear there is anything satisfactory for Kant to say here; it is not clear that Kant can vindicate the idea that noumenal forces appear as empirical forces without violating the strictures of his own epistemology.

I began this chapter by discussing the tension between phenomenalism and a more realist view of matter in Leibniz and Kant. Leibniz maintains that it is only because the primitive forces of monads manifest as the motive forces of bodies that bodies have more reality than the objects of coherent dreams, or phantasms.⁴⁹ The main systematic purpose to which Kant puts the claim that noumenal objects appear as, rather than merely cause, empirical objects, is in the context of his theory of the will: because our noumenal character appears as our empirical character, we have some rational warrant to hope that a continuously improving empirical character (the best Kant thinks is possible for radically evil creatures like us) is a sign of a noumenal character that has not completely subordinated the moral law to self-interest. This suggests that for both philosophers the main sense in which empirical objects are not *mere* phenomena is that the causal powers of non-empirical objects, substances in their own right, appear in those empirical objects. Perhaps the best place to look to reconcile the phenomenalist and realist strands in Leibniz’s and Kant’s philosophy is their theory of non-empirical forces and causes and how these manifest in the empirical world. But that will have to wait for another occasion.

⁴⁹ “On the Method of Distinguishing Real from Imaginary Phenomena” (A VI 4, 1500ff./L 363–365)