

# Leibniz's Phenomenalism and Two Notions of Phenomenon

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**ABSTRACT:** Leibniz distinguishes two kinds of phenomenon — internal and external phenomena. In this paper I introduce a non-univocal reading of body in Leibniz. Bodies as internal phenomena are merely representational contents in a perceiver. But when he claims that bodies are aggregates of substances and therefore phenomena, they are considered as external objects for the perceiving mind. These two claims are coherent, since internal and external phenomena are not the same entity. I also cast doubt on a claim that was put forth by Louis Loeb, namely that all phenomena must be internal.

## Introduction

In his letter to De Volder of June 30 1704, Leibniz notes that a body or matter is not a substance, but a phenomenon of a percipient being or perceiver:

Indeed, considering the matter carefully, it may be said that there is nothing in the world except simple substances and, in them, perception and appetite. Matter and motion, however, are not so much substances or things as they are the phenomena of percipient beings, whose reality is located in the harmony of the percipient with himself (at different times) and with other percipient beings. (G2, 270/L, 537)

On the basis of the passage, Louis Loeb reminds us that for Leibniz “the basic insight into the required phenomenalist construction did not crystallize until June, 1704” (Loeb 1981, p.309). According to Loeb, June 1704 marks a decisive shift in Leibniz's theory of body. After this date Leibniz no longer commits himself to the thesis that bodies are aggregates of monads, since “bodies are to be reduced to sets of *harmonized* perceptions of *different* substances *over time*” (Loeb 1981, p.305).

However, in this paper I will propose another kind of interpretation. First, I will interpret phenomena in that thesis as representational contents which are internal for perceivers. At that point my position is closer to Loeb. Secondly, on the other hand, I admit that Leibniz often emphasizes that bodies actually are aggregates of simple substances even after June 1704, and these aggregates cannot be reduced to perceptions of perceivers. Loeb seems to take the terms ‘phenomenon’ and ‘body’ too narrowly, since he understands that phenomena must be internal

perceptions.

In the first section, I will introduce a non-univocal interpretation of (phenomenon) and (body). In the second section, I will claim, contrary to Loeb, that Leibniz actually does not commit himself to the phenomenological reduction of body. The third section focuses upon Leibniz's distinction between internal and external phenomena. Internal phenomena are merely representational contents, and they can be explained as perceptions in the way that Loeb suggests. On the other hand, external phenomena are aggregates of simple substances which do not allow the phenomenological reduction at all. This distinction helps us to resolve a number of interrelated questions that have been the basis of much discussion recently, which will be confirmed in the last section. For instance, Robert Adams admits that the term 'phenomenon' is not univocal in Leibniz, but at a certain point he seems to confuse internal and external phenomena. Furthermore, even though Glenn Hartz argues that the claim that bodies are aggregates is not compatible with the claim that bodies are phenomena, we can understand them coherently so long as we take phenomena as external.<sup>i</sup>

## 1. Non-univocal Reading of Phenomenon and Body

Almost all who study Leibniz's metaphysics know that he regards bodies as phenomena. Leibniz claims to have demonstrated the "phenomenality" of body, which is divisible and cannot be one *per se*, in accordance with the principle that one and being are convertible and a substance must have its own unity. Thus Leibniz declared that "it is only indivisible substances and their different states which are absolutely real" (G2, 119/L, 343). However, his theory of body has been interpreted in different ways, since what Leibniz means by that term is not clear. My proposed solution to the problem of ambiguity of the term 'phenomenon' relies centrally upon the non-univocal reading of the notions of phenomenon and body. According to some commentators the term 'phenomenon' has various meanings in the works of Leibniz (Adams 1994, pp.219-20 etc.). These scholars suggest that readers have to consider which notion of phenomenon should be applied in the context. We can understand the term 'phenomenon' as either a representational content in our mind, or an external object which is phenomenal in that it does not have a substantial unity at all. Although for Leibniz the terms 'body' and 'matter' usually refer to an aggregate of substances, they sometimes refer to a mere representational content of a perceiver.<sup>ii</sup>

Not all commentators believe that the terms 'phenomenon' and 'body' are used equivocally by Leibniz. According to Loeb and Hartz, although Leibniz's argument and terminology are complicated and may have changed at a certain period, the term "phenomenon" should always refer to an appearance or private perception of one perceiver.<sup>iii</sup> What is important for them is that the original meaning of phenomenon is an appearance *to somebody*, and it must belong to a unique

perceiver in any case. This reading of phenomenon and body is especially appealing to phenomenologists in the light of their conviction that we cannot know anything other than the phenomena which appear to us.

Whether it is intelligible to say that we can know something truly external to ourselves may be disputed. I shall not enter that debate here. It will suffice, at this juncture, to say that it is possible, or rather persuasive, that we have our representational contents and perceive external objects at the same time. Suppose I am experiencing the brown color of a desk, which is my representational content. I can even assume that a desk is merely an aggregate of sensible qualities like the brown color and so on. But on the other hand I can suppose that something exists outside of my mind and that my representational contents somehow correspond to it, though the demonstration of its existence may not be successfully achieved. And even supposing, as Leibniz actually does, that external substances cannot directly act upon our mind at all, the external entities which are perceived by our minds can still be intentional objects of our mental states.<sup>iv</sup> In other words, it is possible to suppose that our mental states refer to the substances which exist outside of our minds. Of course, one may wonder why we can say that our minds can represent other substances when we cannot successfully demonstrate the existence of external substances. That is a difficult question, but within the framework of Leibniz's metaphysics, the preestablished harmony among all the simple substances is realized by God. Given this harmony, our sensation always corresponds to external substances.

## **2. The Phenomenalistic Interpretation**

Although the scheme which I have proposed so far is not eccentric, it is not shared among commentators as an interpretation of Leibniz's metaphysics. So I shall next argue that the phenomenalistic thesis in the letter to De Volder can be explained following my non-univocal interpretation, and we need not accept the phenomenalistic interpretation as a complete account of Leibniz's theory of body. In fact, considering the claim that bodies are aggregates of substances, this interpretation is not plausible.

I admit that in addition to suggesting the divisibility of body, Leibniz may seem to go further: in the passage that we have already seen above, from the letter to De Volder, Leibniz observes that matter and motion are "the phenomena of percipient beings" (G2, 270/L, 537). Commentators have offered a variety of interpretations of Leibniz's characterization of phenomena in this kind of passage. In light of the claim that only indivisible substances and their states are real, some have suggested that phenomena must be states of substances if not substances themselves.<sup>v</sup> Louis Loeb, for example, has argued that we should understand Leibniz to be proposing a phenomenalistic reduction of body (Loeb 1981, pp.303-5). He points out that the text from the letter to De Volder

quoted above states that bodies are not absolutely real and are to be accounted for in terms of substances and their states (Loeb 1981, p.305). He also quotes a passage from the letter to Arnauld which affirms that a body in itself is “only a pure phenomenon or a well-founded appearance [*n'est qu'un pur phenomene ou apparence bien fondée*]” (G2, 118), and it is “not bodily substance, but an entirely pure phenomenon like the rainbow [*n'est pas la substance corporelle, mais un phenomene tout pur comme l'arc en ciel*]” (G2, 119). To be sure, Loeb admits that some passages in a letter to Arnauld suggest a realist position. For example, in a letter of March 1690, Leibniz states that “the body is an aggregate of substances” (G2, 135/LA, 170). However, according to Loeb, Leibniz no longer committed himself to the claim that bodies actually are aggregates of substances. Loeb also quotes a letter from June 1712 in which Leibniz tells Des Bosses that “I consider the explanation of all phenomena solely through the perceptions of monads functioning in harmony with each other [*Explicationem phaenomenorum omnium per solas Monadum perceptiones inter se conspirantes*]” (G2, 450/L, 604). Loeb concludes that “with the basic structure of a phenomenalist account of bodies in hand, the mature metaphysics is stabilized as Leibniz’s view” (Loeb 1981, p. 305). Leibniz, on Loeb’s interpretation, no longer commits himself to the thesis that a body is irreducible to perceptions of perceivers after June 30 1704. And beyond what Leibniz says about the phenomenality of body, Loeb adds that Leibniz also held that “all material objects (including living bodies or organisms) are susceptible to a phenomenalist reduction to sets of perceptions” (Loeb 1981, p.306).

However, several problems can be identified in Loeb’s treatment of Leibniz.<sup>vi</sup> First, contrary to what Loeb suggests, Leibniz often states that bodies are aggregates of substances even after June 30 1704. For instance, in his discussions of the ontological status of body or mass, he makes it clear that a mass is an infinite multitude of true substances in 1705 (G7, 564). For just this reason in a letter to Des Bosses in 1715 he states that Berkeley, who attacks the reality of body, “does not seem to bring forward suitable reasons, nor does he explain himself sufficiently” (G2, 492/AG, 306).<sup>vii</sup> This by itself suggests that Leibniz did not embrace a strong phenomenism at those periods. Loeb tries to show that the so-called aggregate thesis may somehow be explained in terms of phenomenalist position and suggests that Leibniz argues that bodies are phenomena which “result from substances” (Loeb 1981, p. 304). However, though Leibniz used the phrase “result from” many times,<sup>viii</sup> it is ambiguous and is not decisive evidence for phenomenalist reduction. In addition, it is worth noting that Loeb supplies no hard evidence that the aggregate thesis is reasonably explained in terms of a strong version of the phenomenalist position. In the absence of such evidence we should treat the aggregate thesis and the phenomenalist thesis on a par. If Leibniz continues to assert the aggregate thesis until the very end of his life, there is no reason to favor the phenomenalist reduction over the aggregate thesis.

A second objection to Loeb’s interpretation is that considering his comments on the related

issues of force, it is hard to suppose that Leibniz himself employed “a scheme for the translation of statements about bodies into statements about the perception of monads” (Rutherford 1990, p.14). That is to say, though the metaphysics of a simple substance or monad may give an inspiration for such a phenomenalist doctrine, we still have reasons not to accept it as Leibniz's own view of body. For we seem to be left with the difficulty of understanding how phenomenal bodies have derivative forces. For instance, Leibniz states that “the forces which arise from mass and velocity are derivative and belong to aggregates or phenomena” (G2, 251/L, 530). It is difficult to see how we could justify the claim that derivative forces belong to a mere perception. Indeed, Malebranche argues that extended things are merely appearances of ideal extension in God's Mind and bodies actually do not have forces. If Leibniz understood bodies to lack forces as Malebranche does, then he may not have to take bodies as aggregates of substances. However, Leibniz actually holds that bodies must have intrinsic forces. When Leibniz claims that forces are really ‘in’ bodies, he wants to oppose the opinion of Malebranche (G4, 515/AG, 165-6).<sup>ix</sup> Therefore, when Leibniz considers vital forces in body, we have little reason to take it as an appearance to the mind of a perceiver.

### **3. Two Notions of Phenomena**

Let us begin by reminding ourselves of the ambiguity that exists in Leibniz's notion of phenomenon, for this will prove helpful in understanding how to read the phenomenalist thesis in the letter to De Volder. Leibniz's usage of the term ‘phenomenon’ is not constant, since he characterizes phenomenon as an experience (G1, 370)(1676), or appearance (G2, 112)(1687), or object of limited minds (G7, 563 (1705), cf. Adams 1994, p.219), or modification of a soul (G6, 591)(1711). Concerning the usage of the term, we must be careful not to confuse the various meanings of it. In the following, we will see the distinction of different concepts of phenomenon on the basis of important passages.

#### **3.1. Internal Phenomenon**

In the following passages, Leibniz uses ‘internal phenomenon’ to refer to the representational contents of minds or other simple substances. The representational contents are internally produced by these simple substances or monads:

The soul was created from the beginning in such a way that everything that the body can offer, and is presented in it by virtue of the representative nature which was given to it with its being, for being produced at a designated point. After that by a series of thoughts and, so to speak, like by dreams (or rather internal phenomena) which are regulated and so veritable that they

are foreseen with success[...] (G4, 477)

But even granting that everything takes place in us ordinarily just as it would in the case of bodily annihilation, that is, admitting that we ourselves always produce within us (as I in fact believe) or that God produces in us (as Theodore believes) internal phenomena without the body having any influence over us, must this necessarily involve external ideas? Is it not sufficient to hold that phenomena are simple new transitory modifications of our souls? (G6, 591/L, 626)

I want to begin my consideration of the evidence with the latter passage, since it seems to be relatively easier to read. On the Cartesian theory, a mode [*modus*] or modification [*modificatio*] is something that can never exist without a substance.<sup>x</sup> For example, shape, form, size and motion cannot be apart from something extended. A shape without extension can hardly be understood. In the same way, sensation, idea and will cannot exist without a mind or soul, since all of these are modes of the mind. And Leibniz compares his own theory to Malebranche's, since Theodore is an advocate of Malebranche, and confirms that we produce all the experiences or internal phenomena within us. Even if there are no external things in the world, these internal phenomena should be preserved.

The former passage is a little more complicated. According to Leibniz, souls are created with their own representative nature, that is, a power to have representational contents successively and incessantly. Once they are created, then they can spontaneously develop their own perceptions, and these are so well-connected that we can predict many phenomena in the future referring to laws of physics, astronomy and so on.

At present we have seen the passages in which Leibniz uses the expression "internal phenomenon." But it should be noted that Leibniz often had the notion of internal phenomenon in his mind even when he did not use this expression: "Matter and motion, however, are not so much substances or things as they are the phenomena of percipient beings, whose reality is located in the harmony of the percipient with himself (at different times) and with other percipient beings" (G2, 270/L, 537). And in a passage cited above from *Reply to the Comments of M. Bayle's Dictionary*, Leibniz suggests that there is "an indivisible substance in ourselves, which must itself be the source of its phenomena" (G4, 560/W, 247). Here we should understand phenomena as internal, since they are produced by substance itself. Also, Leibniz usually discusses internal phenomena when he uses the metaphor of a dream. He wrote that material things are nothing but phenomena and they are just like dreams in a margin of a letter to Bourget (G3, 567n). Moreover, he wrote as the following in a letter to Remond of July 1714:

The movements and the collisions are just appearances, but well-founded appearances which never deceive, and like exact and constant dreams. The movement is the phenomenon of change in accordance with position and time, and the body is the phenomenon which changes. (G3, 623)

In these passages, body is taken as an internal phenomenon. If God destroys all the other monads and leaves one soul alone, internal phenomena will be produced by the soul since any simple substance, including the soul, can spontaneously produce all the perceptual states. In a letter to De Volder, Leibniz argues that perceptions or modifications of the mind are like the terms of a series, whereas the mind itself or primitive force is like the law of the series (G2, 262/L, 533).<sup>xi</sup> Since perceptual states are produced by this primitive force, Leibniz states that he can experience all the events “as if there were things outside of [him], without actually being any” (G6, 589/L, 625).

### **3.2. External Phenomenon**

However, in some passages Leibniz does not take phenomena as internal (G2, 251; G2, 252 etc.). For instance, in a letter to Bayle, Leibniz considers phenomena as aggregates of substances that exist outside of the perceiving mind:

Further, there must be simple beings; otherwise there would not be composite beings or beings through aggregation, which are phenomena rather than substances, and exist by convention rather than by nature (that is, morally or rationally rather than physically) as Democrite put it. (G3, 69)

Phenomena in this context require the existence of many simple beings or simple substances. They are clearly different from internal phenomena, given that they are not produced by the perceiving mind alone.<sup>xii</sup> Instead, they are objects of perception that exist outside of the perceiver, that is, external objects (G4, 453) or external things (G5, 46/NE Preface etc.). In another passage in which Leibniz mentions to Democritus, Leibniz again takes phenomena as aggregates of substances: “since only simple things are true things, what remain are only entities by aggregation; to that extent they are phenomena, and as Democritus put it, exist by convention and not by nature” (G2, 252/AG, 177).<sup>xiii</sup> Furthermore, Leibniz speaks of phenomena as aggregates that contain forces in them (G2, 251/AG, 176). It is hard to understand this unless we take the term ‘phenomenon’ as referring to an aggregate of simple substances, since an internal phenomenon or representational content cannot have forces. And Leibniz seems to use the term ‘external phenomena’ to refer to aggregates of simple substances:

The reason why infants do not form the thoughts of adults is that their thoughts are parallel to external phenomena in relation to their bodies. (G3, 465)

According to Leibniz, external phenomena are parallel to what is internal to the soul of an infant, namely their thoughts.<sup>xiv</sup> It seems that things correspond to each other and do not interact since they always observe this parallel relationship. And indeed, Leibniz emphasizes that external things or objects do not directly act upon a perceiver (G5, 46/NE Preface cf. G4, 453). He also uses the expression “phenomena which are outside of perceiving beings [*phaenomena extra percipientia*]” (G2, 485). Here he argues that a composed or corporeal substance is the basis of the reality of that phenomena or body. In addition, Leibniz uses the expressions ‘internal appearance’ and ‘external appearance’ in the *New Essays* (G5, 220 NE 2.27.9; G5, 227 NE 2.27.23). Leibniz takes internal appearances to be perceptions which are available only for one perceiver, while external appearances are accessible for other people. From these texts we can understand that Leibniz regards aggregates which are external to perceivers as phenomena. There are two reasons why Leibniz regards an aggregate of simple substances as “phenomenon.” First, a phenomenon is contrasted with a substance because an aggregate of simple substances cannot itself be a substance and therefore it is categorized as a non-substantial entity (G2, 126; G2, 252; G2, 256). The other reason is that the existence of an aggregate of simple substances in some sense depends upon a mind even though it is constituted by many external simple substances (G2, 256; G5, 133 NE 2.12.7 etc.).<sup>xv</sup> That is, each simple substance exists independently from a mind, but it is a mind that regards it as a member of an aggregate. Considering this dependence, Leibniz assigned the term ‘phenomenon’ to an aggregate of simple substances.

But there may be a question. While Leibniz’s theory of how primitive force of a perceiver generates its own internal phenomena is perhaps plausible given the framework of the monadology, it is difficult to see how external things can be phenomena at the same time. Here I want to suggest the reason why external phenomena can be things that appear to a perceiver. While a perceiver or soul cannot be physically stimulated by other beings, it can perceive and express external objects (G4, 453). But it should be noted that the relation between a perceiver and external things is explained quite differently from Aristotelian or Cartesian theory. Unlike Aristotle and Descartes, Leibniz does not argue that external things can have a direct influence on the soul through stimulating its body, which requires a particular explanation of the perceiving relation. Leibniz offers many clues about how external things are expressed by a perceiver. For example, consistent with his definitions of internal phenomena, Leibniz defines perception as “the passing state which involves and represents a multitude in the unity” (M, 14/AG, 214),<sup>xvi</sup> and expression is defined as “a constant and regular relation between what can be said about one and about the other” (G2, 112/L, 339). The constant and regular relation Leibniz speaks of here consists of one-to-one

correspondence (cf. Adams 1994, p.286).<sup>xvii</sup> Thus, we should reasonably expect perceptions of external things to be explained along these lines: a perceiving simple substance has a representational state which corresponds to the states of other simple substances which exist outside of it. That is to say, when my soul has a sensation of the red color of my shirt, there are many other simple substances which belong to my shirt as an aggregate of simple substances.

In general, our internal phenomena pick out a certain collection or aggregate of simple substances. My representational content or internal phenomenon is distinguished from another by either qualitative or special difference. For instance, I can find my shirt because I remember it is red and located next to my suits. A body has a color which is different from the surroundings. And even if I cannot clearly tell the difference of color, I can make a distinction by their location. Thus looking at the red shirt, I distinguish it from the surrounding air and other bodies. By doing so I determine an aggregate of simple substances which includes some simple substances but not the others. This determination is possible because any internal phenomena in my perception have to correspond to a certain aggregate of simple substances and vice versa by virtue of preestablished harmony which is realized by God. It is true that simple substances are not literally “in” bodies as internal phenomena, but the relation of correspondence is enough for intentionality (Ross 1984, pp.31-3). And though we perceive other substances through our own representational mental state, these objects themselves are still external to us.

#### **4. How to Overcome the Ambiguity of Phenomenon**

At this point my positive account of the two notions of phenomenon is complete. However, before closing, it is necessary to consider how the distinction of these two notions can contribute to resolve the problem which recent commentators have raised. In particular, I will consider the interpretations of Robert Adams and Glenn Hartz, since their arguments include many important issues and the distinction of internal and external phenomena may resolve the difficulties which are intrinsic to their interpretations.

Adams recognizes that the term “phenomenon” has various meanings in relation to the context (Adams 1994, pp.220-1; pp.260-1 etc.). But according to Adams, even though Leibniz once states that phenomena are modifications of soul (G6, 591), the term ‘phenomenon’ usually refers to a body as an aggregate of simple substances.<sup>xviii</sup> Further, Adams suggests that “Leibniz identified bodies, as phenomena, with aggregate of substances” (Adams 1994, p.221).

However, since Adams does not use a special terminology to make subcategories of phenomenon, the way he discusses phenomena is sometimes confusing. On the one hand, Adams suggests that different perceivers express “the same phenomena” (DM, 14; Adams 1994, p.220). Here Adams wants to distinguish mental or psychological states from phenomena as intentional objects. Two

simple substances cannot share the same mental state, but they can perceive or express the same intentional object. It should be noted that Adams implicitly considers phenomena or aggregates of substances as being external to our minds since they are not supposed to exist in any particular mind. On the other hand, Adams goes as far as claiming that aggregates of simple substances “exist in the mind and are dependent on being thought of” (Adams 1994, pp.246-7 cf. Lodge 2001, pp.472-3). Adams’ aggregates are the product of mental operation. Indeed, Leibniz is committed to the convertibility of unity and being, as he indicates in a passage from the letter to Arnauld of April 30 1687: “I hold as axiomatic this basic proposition, which varies only in emphasis: that what is not truly *one* being is not truly one *being* either. It has always been thought that one and being are reciprocal things” (G2, 97/LA, 121). Considering this passage, Adams argues that since the unity of an aggregate is in the mind, the being of an aggregate is also in that mind. Such an aggregate is “logically or metaphysically constructed from the individual substances” by a mental operation (Adams 1994, p.246). Here, Adams wishes to understand the notion of aggregate in such a way that it is just like a set. For example, a set of pencils may have a different ontological status from the pencils themselves (Adams 1994, p.245).

An initial worry for Adams’ reading is that these two arguments may not be coherent. How can we understand that people are actually perceiving the same body or aggregate if it exists in the mind of one person? Unfortunately Adams does not clearly discuss this problem, but in the light of this remarkable difficulty, I think the burden of proof lies with him and we need strong evidence to show the coherence of these two arguments.

Secondly, we should wonder if Leibniz himself did really take an aggregate of substances as something different from substances as such, in the same way as a set of pencils is different from pencils themselves. Indeed, Hartz once suggested the existence of mereological aggregates, which do not require a mental operation at all (Hartz 1992, p.526 etc.). If the term ‘substances’ means this mereological aggregate which is different from a mind-dependent one, it may make sense to distinguish them. But even when we suppose that it makes sense to speak of an aggregate as an entity which is different from substances, there are reasons for thinking that this cannot be a notion of aggregate that Leibniz proposes. To begin with, it is notable that there are no definitions or explicit accounts of the notion of mereological aggregates which differs from a mind-dependent aggregate of substances. And, as I shall argue below, even when Leibniz uses the term “substances” to discuss bodies (G2, 183 etc.),<sup>xix</sup> he seems to take it as referring to a mind-dependent aggregate of substances. That is to say, there seems to be no substantial distinction between an aggregate of substances and substances in Leibniz’s argument. Both of them are collections of simple substances or monads which do not have intrinsic unity. So without a perceiving mind, both of them cannot have their unity at all and therefore they are mind-dependent beings.

On the other hand, it should be noted that an aggregate of substances is not purely mental, and

actually does not exist in the perceiving mind. It is correct that Leibniz demonstrates the convertibility of unity and being (G2, 97/LA, 121 etc.). But as Lodge suggests, Leibniz is also conscious of the characteristics of aggregates and states: "Being and unity are convertible, and when a being is brought about through aggregation it is also one in this way, even if being and unity are semi-mental [*etsi haec Entitas Unitasque sit semimentalis*]" (G2, 304; Lodge 2001, pp.480-1). So even if an aggregate of simple substances somehow depends upon the mind, its being and unity is semi-mental rather than purely mental, which may support the claim that an aggregate of substances exists outside of a perceiver.

Thirdly, as we have already seen above, when Leibniz talks about external objects or things, he refers to not only single substances but to bodies or aggregates. For example, in his comments on Bayle's dictionary, Leibniz states that "thought involves an actual external material object, the human body" (G4, 545/W, 236). We could understand that Leibniz regards a body as one external object for a soul. And in a letter to Sophie Charlotte, Leibniz states that the intelligible truth is independent of the existence of sensible and material things which are external to us (G4 494). Furthermore, in *Conversation of Philarète and Ariste* (1711), Leibniz states that even if external things are destroyed we will have the same experiences, since bodies have actually no influences on souls (G6, 591/L, 625-6). Considering these passages, it is hard to see how an aggregate can exist in the mind if it is said to be an external thing. Indeed, it is plausible to think that it is precisely the provision of such a view that leads Leibniz to introduce the distinction of internal and external phenomenon.

We have seen that some problems of Adams' interpretation come from the ambiguity of his notion of phenomenon. For these problems, we could offer the distinction of internal and external phenomena, and confirm that external phenomena cannot exist in a perceiving mind since external phenomena or aggregates of substances include individual substances as members. That is to say, individual substances are literally in external phenomena. Then, if external phenomena exist in the perceiving mind, individual substances also exist in the perceiving mind. But that would be absurd because all substances are supposed to be unitary beings that do not exist within other substances. Therefore, we should not think external substances are in the perceiving mind even though they are mind-dependent. In summary, Adams' problems seem to arise from his implicit presupposition that aggregates of substances and representational contents must both be internal for perceiver. On the other hand, if we understand that an aggregate of substances cannot be internal for perceiver and yet all phenomena should be internal, then we will understand the notion of phenomenon too narrowly, as Glenn Hartz actually does.<sup>xx</sup>

Here I want to begin my consideration of Hartz's reading, which takes some of Leibniz's statements as incoherent. Indeed, Hartz does not think internal phenomena are in competition with aggregates of substances (Hartz 2007, p.127). He recognizes the undeniable fact that we have our

own phenomena or appearances even if the realist theory is true. For him, the term ‘phenomenon’ is univocal, provided it should exclusively mean something in the mind. But as for an aggregate of substances, it can never be a phenomenon for him. Hartz simply observes: “bodies that are ‘multitudes of an infinity of true substances’ are almost always said to be real because they contain discrete unities, while a ‘well-founded phenomenon’ is continuous and mind-dependent” (Hartz 2007, p.151). Therefore, according to Hartz, Leibniz is guilty of equivocation in a passage from a letter to Sophie Charlotte:

We can therefore conclude that a mass of matter is not truly a substance, that its unity is only ideal and that (leaving the understanding aside) it is only an aggregate, a collection, a multitude of an infinity of true substances, a well-founded phenomenon. (G7, 564)

On the reading that I offered before, on the other hand, bodies can be aggregates of simple substances and phenomena at the same time, if only we take phenomena as external. Considering the two different notions of phenomenon, I think, there is no alternative than to claim that Leibniz was careless in this letter. And I am convinced that it is better to take Leibniz’s statement to be consistent if that is possible. Hartz does not discuss the distinction between internal and external phenomenon, but he probably regards it as contradictory in the following way. Leibniz suggests that the essence of a phenomenon can be understood solely in terms of mind-dependence. This might lead one to conclude that the phenomenon itself must have its being in the perceiver, and that Leibniz is suggesting, for example, that a that a phenomenon or appearance of a desk is in my mind, whereas the desk itself is external to me.

That kind of univocal reading of ‘phenomenon’ might be tempting to many scholars. But Leibniz himself proposed two different notions of phenomenon; it should be considered seriously by commentators. There is surely a necessity to think that there are no subcategories of phenomenon in Leibniz’s ontology. As I have already explained at length above, Leibniz speaks of a purely mental (internal) phenomenon as well as a semi-mental (external) one. Being a phenomenon need not be the same thing as being in the mind. And in the light of this, we can see how an aggregate might be a phenomenon because it is mind-dependent, while it is really composed of mind-independent simple substances. Many passages suggest that aggregates can be phenomena at the same time even if they are not internal to a perceiver. Thus, by considerations of contradiction alone, we have reason to reject Hartz’s comment that Leibniz was guilty of equivocation in the letter to Sophie Charlotte. I would not dare to say that my argument has resolved all the difficult problems which Hartz has raised in his book, but at least a few of them have been diffused here.<sup>xxi</sup>

## Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that Leibniz's notion of phenomenon should be understood in two ways: as a modification of a perceiver and as an aggregate of simple substances. In contrast with Louis Loeb, I have claimed that Leibniz did not commit himself to a phenomenological reduction of body even after 1704. The non-univocal interpretation of phenomenon and body that I offer is more plausible. It is not my aim to go any further in the present paper. However, I want to close by returning to the reason for my initial interest in phenomena. As I noted at the beginning, Leibniz claims throughout his mature writings that bodies are aggregates of substances, and therefore phenomena. If the notion of phenomenon is to be understood the way that I have suggested, it will have obvious ramifications for the way in which we understand this claim. The existence of bodies, like that of a single substance, will be found outside of a perceiver even though it somehow depends upon it. This raises important questions about which criteria we should use to determine what phenomena are. Not all phenomena are internal for a perceiver. In particular, there will need to be some explanation of how it is possible for us to count both internal and external entities as phenomena. Though I proposed the distinction between internal and external phenomena, the sufficient condition to be a phenomenon which both internal and external phenomena are supposed to share is not adequately explained in this paper. But at least I would like to remark that the notion of phenomenon is essentially contrasted to that of substance, and the former can never be the latter, which certainly constitutes one of the essences of phenomenon.

## Abbreviations

- A: *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*. Herausgegeben von der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Darmstadt, 1923 ff., Leipzig, 1938 ff., Berlin, 1950 ff. Cited by series, volume, and page.
- AG: *G. W. Leibniz Philosophical Essays*. Trans. and eds. by Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber. Indianapolis: Hackett. 1989.
- AT: *Oeuvres de Descartes*. Ed. Adam and P. Tannery. Paris: L. Cerf, 1897-1913. Cited by volume and page.
- DM: *Discours de métaphysique*. Cited by section number.
- G: *Die philosophischen Schriften von G. W. Leibniz*. Ed. C. I. Gerhardt. Berlin: Weidmann, 1875-1890. Reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1978. Cited by volume and page.
- GM: *Leibnizens Mathematische Schriften*. Ed. C. I. Gerhardt. Berlin: A. Asher, and Halle: H.W.Schmidt, 1849-1863. Cited by volume and page.
- L: *G. W. Leibniz. Philosophical Papers and Letters*, 2nd. edn. Trans. and ed. By L. E. Loemker. Dordrecht: Reidel, 1969.

- LA: *The Leibniz-Arnauld Correspondence*. Trans. and ed. by H. T. Mason, with an introduction by G. H. R. Parkinson. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967.
- M: *Monadology*. Cited by section number.
- NE: *Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement*. Cited by book, chapter, and section.
- RB: *New Essays on Human Understanding*. Trans. by P. Remnant and J. Bennett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- W: *G. W. Leibniz Philosophical Texts*. Trans. and eds. by R. S. Woolhouse and Richard Francks. New York: Oxford University Press. 1998.

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<sup>i</sup> Hartz supposes that the phenomenalistic thesis belongs to the idealistic theory of Leibniz, while the aggregate thesis appertains to the realist theory (Hartz 2007, pp.18-27).

<sup>ii</sup> Cf. G7, 322; G2, 270 (1704); G3, 623 (1714) etc.

<sup>iii</sup> See Loeb 1981, pp.303-5; Hartz 2007, p.151. It should be noted that Hartz does not accept the phenomenalistic interpretation as an adequate explanation of Leibniz's idea, since he understands that Leibniz simultaneously introduces both idealism and realism.

<sup>iv</sup> For a characterization of body and phenomenon as an intentional object, see Furth 1967, Adams 1983 and 1994. Of course, intentionality itself does not entail the existence of external substances (cf. Hoffman 1996,

p.114).

- <sup>v</sup> Montgomery Furth already tried to reduce bodies to perceptions (Furth 1967). But Furth did not state clearly that Leibniz established or achieved his reduction on June 1704 as Loeb does. John Earman's paper is also important in that it shows a well-established system of phenomenal reduction in Leibniz (Earman 1977).
- <sup>vi</sup> For an early version of criticism of phenomenalist interpretations, see Nicholas Jolley's paper (Jolley 1986). In this paper Jolley distinguishes "idealism" from phenomenalism, and argues that Leibniz is not a phenomenalist though he is an idealist. And for an early version of reconciliation of the phenomenalist thesis and aggregate thesis, see Ross 1984.
- <sup>vii</sup> As pointed out by some commentators, this is not the only passage in which Leibniz examines Berkeley's theory of body. Leibniz wrote comments on the last page of his copy of *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (AG, 307 cf. Adams 1994, pp.224-5), and states that matter is 'the resultant of substances.'
- <sup>viii</sup> "Extention is itself, for me, an attribute resulting from many substances existing continuously at the same time. So primitive force can be neither extension nor a mode of it" (G2, 184/L, 520). Cf. L, 529;L, 577-8 etc.
- <sup>ix</sup> Also see G4, 590, in which Leibniz states that occasionalism, which deprives creatures of intrinsic actions, may fall into Spinozism .
- <sup>x</sup> Descartes himself usually uses the term 'mode' in stead of 'modification' (AT3, 504; AT7, 37;AT7 40;AT7, 73;AT7, 306 etc.). In the Third Meditation, he takes 'a mode of my cogitation' as referring to a certain entity which exists in his mind and cannot exist independently (AT7, 40).
- <sup>xi</sup> Historically, the expression (a law of series [*lex seriei*]) often meant a law to make up a sum of terms. But considering the context in which Leibniz uses this term, we should understand this law as one which produces particular terms rather than a sum of all terms.
- <sup>xii</sup> Donald Rutherford also refers to this passage in the letter to Bayle, though he does not translate it (Rutherford 1990, p.19). He mentions it as evidence that Leibniz considers an aggregate of substances which cannot be reduced into perceptions.
- <sup>xiii</sup> When Leibniz refers to Democrite and examines the reality of body, he always takes a body as an aggregate of substances, since Democrite presupposed the existence of atoms and a body is a real aggregate of these ultimate unities. Also see G2, 101 (1687); G4, 472 (1695); G3, 69 (1702); G2, 282 (1706).
- <sup>xiv</sup> In that passage, external phenomena are contrasted with the infant's body. However, in some passages, even an organic body of a perceiver is assumed to be external for that perceiver, since in the comments on Bayle's dictionary, Leibniz states that "thought involves an actual external material object, the human body" (G4, 545/W, 236).
- <sup>xv</sup> Notice that not all perceiving simple substances can construct an aggregate of other simple substances; some cannot have a mental operation to make up an aggregate. Leibniz clearly states that a mind [*mens*] gives a unity to an aggregate (G2, 256), and the unity which an aggregate of substances has is 'a mental one' (G5, 133 NE 2.13.7/RB, 146). The term 'mind' or 'spirit' refers to a rational being like human souls. That is, animal souls and other simple substances cannot have a mental operation to consciously gather many external substances into one collection.
- <sup>xvi</sup> In a letter to Bayle, Leibniz simply defines perception as "the expression of the multitude in the unity [*l'expression de la multitude dans l'unit *]" (G3, 69).

- <sup>xvii</sup> Leibniz argues that an organic body has to be infinitely organic or complex, since it expresses the whole universe (G2, 251). It is natural to suppose that something that expresses an infinitely complex entity must be itself infinitely complex.
- <sup>xviii</sup> In fact, Adams has changed his view. In 1983, he supported the view that a body is a continuous appearance which a perceiver has in it when it perceives many other simple substances (Adams 1983, pp.222-6). But now he understands a body as an aggregate of simple substances, and a corporeal phenomenon must be constructed out of these true unities (Adams 1994, pp.224-5).
- <sup>xix</sup> See also G2, 239 (1702); G3 457 (1703); G2, 262 (1704).
- <sup>xx</sup> It should be noted, however, that Hartz once took phenomena as aggregates of substances (Hartz and Cover 1988). He distinguished a phenomenon from an ideal space in this paper against Nicholas Rescher (Rescher 1979, p.65, pp.84-5). And he proposed a realistic interpretation of Leibniz (Hartz 1992), but since he noticed a lot of passages which seem to support an idealistic view, he began to understand Leibniz as a theory-pluralist who suggests two different metaphysics of body at the same time.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Hartz states that Leibniz was actually a theory-pluralist (Hartz 2007, pp.18-27). The idealistic theory and realistic one are not compatible, but since Leibniz just introduced them as hypotheses, he did not make contradictory statements. To justify this interpretation, Hartz proposes a lot of complicated issues, which I cannot treat enough in this paper.