

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Metaphysics

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IDENTITY

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Cambridge University Press & Assessment

978-1-009-00134-2 — Identity

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Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

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Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009001342

DOI: 10.1017/9781009004671

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First published 2022

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-009-00134-2 Paperback

ISSN 2633-9862 (online)

ISSN 2633-9854 (print)

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DOI: 10.1017/9781009004671
First published online: September 2022

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Abstract: Identity criteria are powerful tools for the metaphysician. They tell us when items are identical or distinct. Some varieties of identity criteria also try to explain in virtue of what items are identical or distinct. This Element has two objectives: to discuss formulations of identity criteria and to take a closer look at one notorious criterion of object identity, Leibniz's Law. The first section concerns the form of identity criteria. The second section concerns the better-regarded half of Leibniz's Law, the indiscernibility of identicals. The third section turns to the more controversial half of Leibniz's Law, the identity of indiscernibles. The author considers alternatives to Leibniz's Law as well as the possibility that there are no adequate identity criteria to be found.

Keywords: identity, identity criteria, metaphysics, Leibniz's Law, objects

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ISBNs: 9781009001342 (PB), 9781009004671 (OC)
ISSNs: 2633-9862 (online), 2633-9854 (print)

Contents

1 Identity Criteria	1
2 The Indiscernibility of Identicals	17
3 The Identity of Indiscernibles	31
4 Counterexamples to the Identity of Indiscernibles and Alternatives to Leibniz's Law	40
5 Concluding Remarks	51
References	52