

24.400
Proseminar in philosophy I

Fall 2003

“External and Internal Relations”

‘ \Box ’ is the familiar box of modal logic, which we will interpret to mean: it is metaphysically [analytically?] necessary that...). Using this, we can write schematic versions of Moore’s (1) and (2) as:

$$(1) \quad \Box \forall x (\mathbf{aR}x \supset \forall y (\sim \mathbf{aR}y \supset \sim y=x))$$

$$(2) \quad \forall x (\mathbf{aR}x \supset \Box \forall y (\sim \mathbf{aR}y \supset \sim y=x))$$

where ‘ \mathbf{a} ’ may be replaced by any name (or the variable ‘ x ’) and ‘ \mathbf{R} ’ by any two-place predicate. (Remember that Moore’s F is supposed to be a “relational property”.)

(2) is the weak internal relations thesis. The strong internal relations thesis (p. 86) is:

$$(3) \quad \forall x (\mathbf{aR}x \supset \Box \forall y (\sim \mathbf{aR}y \supset \sim y \approx x))$$

where ‘ \approx ’ expresses the relation of “qualitative identity”. Moore notes (p. 102) that an instance of (3), replacing ‘ \mathbf{R} ’ by ‘ $=$ ’, and ‘ \mathbf{a} ’ by ‘ x ’, is the Identity of Indiscernibles:

$$(4) \quad \forall x (x=x \supset \Box \forall y (\sim x=y \supset \sim y \approx x))$$

or, more simply:

$$(5) \quad \forall x \Box \forall y (\sim x=y \supset \sim y \approx x)$$

That is, everything is such that necessarily everything not identical to it is not qualitatively identical to it. Finally, as Moore also notes (p. 103) the strong internal relations thesis is equivalent to the weak thesis plus the Identity of Indiscernibles: (the conjunction of (5) and an instance of (2) is equivalent to the corresponding instance of (3)).