

0 Last time

Properties and *relations* are both taken to be *universal* ("shareable").

Why believe in universals? Here are the reasons we discussed:

- Their existence seems to follow from observations such as "I see a black book" and "These books are both black."
- Positing their existence is explanatorily powerful. That is, they account for:
 - resemblances and differences between distinct particulars
 - causal powers of particulars
 - predicates, verbs, prepositions etc. of our language (like "is black")

Arguments against: loose ends

- Perceptual
 - When we see universals, are they colored or not?
- Non-self-instantiation
 - Motivation for the existence of the property of non-self-instantiation:
 - We have evidence that predicates denote properties.
 - Some properties are self-instantiating (the property of being a property).
 - So some are also not self-instantiating (the property of being an apple).
 - This must then be a property.
 - Russell's paradox: the property of being a non-self-membered set
 - Can the property of non-self-instantiation exist?

1 Sparse Universals

The Principle of Instantiation: Every universal is instantiated. (That is, there do not exist any uninstantiated universals.)

- If we accept this principle, we have the option of rejecting "Plato's heaven."
- We also get around some of the arguments in Conee.

Armstrong believes in *sparse* universals; that is, he restricts the number of universals there are from the number there appear to be. However, he claims that his sparse universals will do all the work of the apparent *abundant* universals.

- Armstrong rejects *disjunctive* universals (in the form "A or B").
 - The property of being A or B wouldn't explain similarity.
 - It would be redundant for explaining causal powers also.
- He also rejects *negative* universals (in the form "not A").
 - What might he say about the absence of a property causing an event?
- But Armstrong accepts *conjunctive* universals (in the form "A and B").
 - What about conjunctive universals and the Principle of Instantiation?

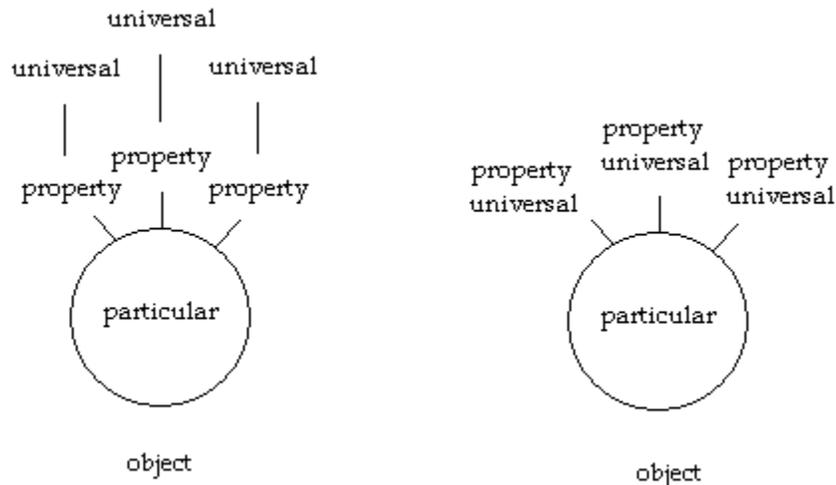
- What's left? "True monadic universals"
 - These are discovered by fundamental science, or physics: mass, charge, extension, duration, space-time interval, etc.
 - Our ordinary predicates don't denote true universals, but rather *families of resemblances* based on conjunctions of true universals.

2 Nominalism

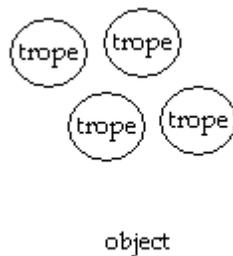
Remember that nominalists reject universals (qua shareable properties) and say instead that only particular things exist. Nominalists usually try to *reduce* properties to things involving only particulars. That is, they say that properties exist, but are not universal.

Class nominalism is the view that properties are sets or classes of their instances. For example, the property black is the set or class of all black things. On the other hand, there's *trope theory*. Tropes are so-called "abstract particulars" – note, particular and not universal. Their postulation provides an alternative picture of the world, in which concrete objects are made up of these bits.

Standard "Thing-Property" View:



Trope-y View:



Here's a problem for trope theory. Universals were supposed to do all this nice explanatory work, including explaining resemblance or similarity between distinct particulars. How are tropes supposed to do this same work?

- Two black books are supposed to be constituted by two different black tropes. But how do these distinct particulars explain resemblance?
- In particular, resemblance is on the standard view a relation between things, and hence a universal.
- Since the trope theorist rejects universals, they must explain resemblance in terms of "resemblance tropes."
- But then different resemblance tropes must resemble each other as well. So the trope theorist must posit further tropes. And so on...