

Why the Parts of Absolute Space are Immobile

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Abstract

Newton's arguments for the immobility of the parts of absolute space have been used to licence several proposals concerning his metaphysics. This paper clarifies Newton. Notably, it demonstrates, contrary to Nerlich (2005), that Newton does not appeal to the identity of indiscernibles, but rather to a view about de re representation. Additionally, I show, contrary to DiSalle (1994), that the argument does not reveal Newton to be an anti-substantialist. Its premises entail that 'Leibniz shifts' in space are impossible, but they also entail that all motion is the relative motion of bodies; hence they cannot be core doctrines.

Keywords: Newton, substantialism, absolute space, space, identity of indiscernibles

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