

# ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM OF UNIVERSALS

**Donald Brownstein**

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UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS PUBLICATIONS  
Humanistic Studies, 44

AUG 21 1978

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**Donald Brownstein**

**LAWRENCE: UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS, 1973**

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 73-620116

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# Preface

This book is a study in metaphysics. For quite some time that would have required an apology in Anglo-American philosophical circles. In recent years metaphysics has once more become respectable—it even shows dim signs of being a fashion. During the period when it was furthest from fashion there were some philosophers who insisted upon the centrality of metaphysics in philosophy. Among these were my teachers and my teachers' teachers. Herbert Hochberg, May Brodbeck, and Douglas Lewis—all my teachers—first made me see that there was work that could be done in metaphysics. And I have also learned much from their teacher, Gustav Bergmann. Those familiar with the work of these philosophers will, no doubt, recognize some of their themes in this book. Of all those who have taught me Herbert Hochberg is the one most closely connected with that which you may be about to read. So he deserves the lion's share of my thanks.

I must also thank my colleagues and former colleagues at the University of Kansas who encouraged me in the face of what I now know to be the usual miseries of publishing a book. I hope it was worth their efforts. The University of Kansas also gets my thanks for helping out with money in the form of a research grant at an early stage in the book's writing.

Some of the material in this book has appeared in altered form elsewhere. Portions of the second chapter are drawn from my paper "Wolterstorff on Qualities" which appeared in *Philosophical Studies*, 1972. Parts of the fourth chapter were presented at the meetings of the Southwestern Philosophical Society in November, 1972.

Lawrence, Kansas  
April 1973

# I:

## Introduction

The problem of universals is actually a sizable cluster of related issues. In this work I am concerned with what, for want of a better term, we may call the “logical structure” of one well-entrenched position on some of those issues. I mean to describe this position as ‘nominalistic’—by which term I mean something rather different from what some philosophers have meant. The central question with respect to which the view I call nominalism arises is: Are any of the qualities of particular things universal, or are they all particular?

The philosopher who, however poor he is at providing answers, is invariably a virtuoso when it comes to raising questions will immediately query with respect to my query: which qualities? which particular things? what does ‘universal’ mean?, etc. My answer to those questions may be clearer at the end of this study. For the moment, though, it is important to get a few preliminary questions out of the way. Since the remainder of this work will amount to an explanation of what will soon be recognized as the labyrinth of nominalism, the reader deserves to be provided with an account, however sketchy, of what we can expect to find in that labyrinth. The nominalist’s position is that all the qualities of particular things are themselves particular and *not* universals. Having given that response, the nominalist must justify it—prove its adequacy, to whatever extent he can, as a philosophical analysis of qualities. Now there are several stratagems open to the nominalist. Since his ultimate aim is to deny that the qualities of particular things are non-particulars he can adopt the rather heroic position that the qualities of particular things are not non-particulars because, strictly speaking, they are not anything at all. This is the view which maintains that there is a sense in which qualities are eliminable in favor of entities which are not qualities—usually the particular things which we originally describe as having the qualities. One popular, but by no means the only, version of this claim has it that the qualities of particular things are really only classes or sets of those things. Such a view has been shown, in its most basic forms, to be unacceptable.<sup>1</sup> Part of any such attempt at what we might call eliminative nominalism involves giving some explanation of the role that quality words play in language. Thus we may be told by the nominalist of the need to distinguish between expressions which, one way or another, *denote* particulars or individuals (or singular objects)<sup>2</sup> and

those which are merely "true of" those *same* particulars.<sup>3</sup> The latter, of course, include many of the terms which we can loosely call 'quality words.' By providing an account of quality words, which, while linking them with non-linguistic features of the world, does not include the mention of anything called 'qualities,' we are supposed to be shoring up the claim that, strictly speaking, qualities do not exist.

In my own opinion the claim that qualities do not exist has an air of unreality to it. But that, of course, is no argument. Nor shall I provide any direct arguments for the claim that there are, strictly speaking, such things as qualities. I am concerned, rather, with the next line of defense which the nominalist can fall back to if he is forced to give up the strong claim that there are no qualities. This is the position which admits that there do exist qualities, but which insists that qualities are themselves, in one way or another, particulars. We shall try to see whether this view—or, at least, some of its versions—is true. The opposite of nominalism is realism. Here again the account of realism must wait upon an explication of the problem(s) of universals. Fundamentally, however, by 'realism' I mean the view that the qualities of particular things are themselves—at least in some cases—not particulars but universals. I believe my own position, as will be obvious, is a version of realism. But I will not argue much for that view directly. Indirectly, the failure I mean to demonstrate of nominalistic alternatives is all the more reason for looking to realism for the makings of a tenable position.

While the nominalism/realism dispute is over the nature of qualities, it can be most easily raised in connection with certain circumstances of qualitative similarity and difference. I shall, in fact, resort to the device of describing a situation of qualitative sameness or difference at the very outset. Thus, we may modify our original question to read: Are the qualities of particular things which are qualitatively similar (in a certain way) themselves universals or particulars? This is essentially the issue with which I shall be dealing in the remainder of this work.

Two preliminary points must be disposed of before we can get to that issue. First, what are the particular things whose qualities I shall be concerned with? Second, which of their qualities are in question?

Throughout this work I shall make use of the notion of a "perceptual particular." It is the qualities of such objects which will concern us. Basically a perceptual particular is the kind of particular one encounters in perceiving, e.g., a spot of color, or a single tone. Perceptual particulars are



not themselves material or physical objects, nor are they, necessarily, mind-dependent entities. They are much like the sorts of things Broad calls 'sensa.'<sup>4</sup> They differ insofar as they are never understood to be entities which exist in addition to material objects but rather are understood to be, in a certain sense, the stuff out of which those objects are built.<sup>5</sup> One of the more important properties these perceptual particulars have is that they are uniquely located spatio-temporally. Thus no one is ever present in more than a single locale. I make use of the unfamiliar notion of a perceptual particular in what follows in order, very largely, to avoid unnecessary and irrelevant complications in the statement of the nominalist/realist dispute.

Since I wish to claim that perceptual particulars and the relations amongst them are the building blocks of the material world, it ought to be possible to generate versions of the dispute about the qualities of perceptual particulars with respect to the qualities of material objects. While I believe that this is possible I will not attempt it here. At best, then, the applicability of the discussion which follows to circumstances involving material objects is by way of a promissory note.

Another distinction which it will be useful to make involves the notion of a complex of qualities. I shall speak of *the* complex of qualities associated with a given perceptual particular. Such a complex contains as its constituent parts all the most determinate qualities which, as we say, are possessed or exemplified by the perceptual particular in question. I will avoid dealing with the questions of (a) whether entities other than qualities are constituents of such complexes, and (b) what the nature of the ties joining qualities into complexes amounts to. I also want to avoid the question of whether, strictly speaking, the complex associated with a given perceptual particular is identical with that particular. Thus I will not consider whether perceptual particulars are quality-complexes.<sup>6</sup> I do insist, however, upon the distinction between a complex of qualities and a set or collection of qualities. While any qualities may form a set or collection, only those collections of qualities every element of which are joined *to* (or *into*) a given perceptual particular form complexes. Moreover, such a complex must contain all the qualities of the perceptual particular in question. Thus we can now ask a variant of our amended original question: Are any of the qualities of a given quality-complex also constituents of some other quality-complex?

Finally, what qualities are we concerned with? I have spoken of "the most determinate" qualities. These include, but are not necessarily limited to, sensible qualities as, for instance, specific shades of color, shapes, etc.

Thus each of the typographical signs on this page has some most determinate shape—though we leave it open whether more than one sign has a single shape. Even those signs which, we will suppose, do not have the same *most determinate* shape, may have the same *determinable* shape. Similarly with shade. Thus two dissimilar (with respect to color) patches of color may be of the same determinable shade (e.g., both “sky blue,” but different determinate shades of that shade). Put in another way, the most determinate sensible color of an object is the one you *experience as* the color of the object.

Having said this much we are prepared to come to grips with the main questions of this study.

#### NOTES

1. See Nelson Goodman, *The Structure of Appearance* (New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), Chapter 5.
2. See W. V. O. Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge, M.I.T. Press, 1960) especially Chapter III.
3. *Idem.* Also see Herbert Hochberg, “Nominalism, Platonism and ‘Being True of,’” in *Nous*, I (1967), pp. 413-419.
4. C. D. Broad, *Scientific Thought* (New York, Humanities Press, 1952), especially Chapters VIII-X.
5. See my unpublished doctoral dissertation, *Objects and Their Qualities* (University of Minnesota, 1969) for a fuller account of the notion of a perceptual particular.
6. This question is, of course, related to the claim made by Locke, Berkeley, etc., that ordinary objects are complexes of “powers” or “ideas.”

## II:

### *Qualities, Classes, and Aspects*

Consider a visual field containing two color spots. They are indistinguishable with respect to shape, but the first, *a*, is red while the second, *b*, is green. The qualities in the complex associated with *a* include its shade, those coordinated to *b* a different shade. From this, along with the dictum that no single object can exemplify more than a single most determinate shade, it follows that *a* and *b* are two rather than one. The point looks considerably less trivial if we remember that the same results follow without the use of the names '*a*' and '*b*', and without the initial supposition that there were two spots. We can ask the following question: Is there any way in which two qualities depend for their being different qualities upon the object(s) exemplifying them? Certainly if the class of objects which all exemplify one quality is a different class from the one whose elements all exemplify another quality, the qualities in question cannot be one and the same. But one could point out that far from indicating a dependence of quality upon object, the non-identity of qualities with different extensions is due to the non-identity of objects with different qualities. It is not enough that different qualities have different extensions. For the claim can just as easily be made that different extensions are determined by different qualities. To claim that the identity of a quality depends upon which object(s) exemplify it is to claim something much stronger than that extensional non-identity entails quality non-identity.

To begin with, consider the qualities coordinated with *a*, but not *b*, and vice versa. To contend that they depend for their identity upon being exemplified by *a* and *b* respectively, is to contend that they (*not* the complexes of qualities of which they are constituents and which are coordinated with the two different objects, *a* and *b*) would not be what they are if they, for example, were exemplified by the other particular. But a shade of green's difference from a shade of red is an intrinsic difference—one not dependent upon the entities having those shades. That *a*, rather than *b*, is red seems of no consequence to the difference between red and green.

Clearly, what is needed if one wants to maintain that the identity of qualities depends upon the objects exemplifying them is some way of "eliminating" qualities and the relations obtaining among them in favor of objects alone. Traditionally nominalists have attempted this by interpret-

ing predicates as denoting classes of the objects or particulars ordinarily construed to exemplify those qualities. Qualities, that is, are conceived of as classes of objects which are not themselves qualities.

But this view leads to major difficulties. The set of all red objects for example is determined by the quality denoted by 'red.' An object is an element of that set if and only if it is red. Membership in the class may be defined in terms of exemplification of the quality. But if one wishes to construe qualities as being classes, one cannot define the class of red objects in the way just noted. For, in that case, it is the exemplification of the quality red which is defined in terms of membership in the class of, as it were, red objects. Under that condition, to maintain that the price of membership in the class of red objects is exemplification, by an object, of the quality red, is to maintain nothing more than the truism 'membership in the class of red objects is the price of membership in the class of red objects.' But surely there are conditions met by some objects and not by others which entitle the former to membership in the class of red objects. There have been various attempts at specifying, for any given "quality class," what these conditions are. One central stratagem is to specify the elements of a quality class in terms of some relations of similarity obtaining among them. Thus a quality class will contain all and only those objects standing in a relation of similarity to one another. Bearing this relation to all the other members of the class is the defining condition for membership in the class. The success of this maneuver, in the context of the discussion we are now engaged in (the question at issue being whether or not the qualities of objects may be construed to be sets of those objects), depends upon two things. First, the relata of the similarity relation must not include qualities, and second, there must be a way to construct quality classes so that to each discernible quality there corresponds a unique class, and to each class there corresponds a discernible quality.

That the first requirement be met is only fair, since the claim I am concerned with is that objects are more basic than their qualities insofar as the latter depend, in important ways, upon the former. The second requirement, it should be noted, has two parts. The first part requires that no two qualities be replaced by a single quality class. If they were, it would follow that they would be, in fact, a single quality. But the idea behind construing qualities to be classes of objects was to provide a way of eliminating qualities while maintaining the distinctions present in a world with qualities. It is good evidence against the validity of such an analysis if it

cannot provide a distinction where a distinction clearly is needed. The second part of this requirement is that to each quality class there correspond a quality. Quality classes contain just those objects which stand in some similarity relation to one another. This similarity relation, moreover, is an analog of the relation of similarity obtaining between two objects which have the same quality in a world where there *are* qualities. The importance of a successful analysis of qualities into quality classes is that the world of quality classes is analogous to the world of qualities in various ways without containing a distinct sort of entity called a 'quality.' If the relation of similarity which serves to mark off quality classes also marks off quality classes to which there correspond no qualities in the world, then there is a serious gap in the analogy. Quality classes were to be identified with qualities. But this is not possible if there are no qualities identifiably linked to some quality classes. To put the point another way, if there are more quality classes than there are qualities, then the entities in the quality classes may not be qualitatively similar. But, of course, they should be if the similarity relation which marks off quality classes is an analog of qualitative similarity. Failure of an analysis to satisfy the second part of the second requirement, then, is good evidence of its being unsatisfactory.

Nicholas Wolterstorff, in a recently anthologized article entitled "Qualities,"<sup>1</sup> attempts to provide a way of constructing quality classes. He addresses himself to two key problems,<sup>2</sup> each of which arises from the second requirement I have just noted. The problems are, respectively, the "difficulty of imperfect community" and the "companionship difficulty." Wolterstorff begins by stipulating two conditions which a class must fulfill in order to be a quality class. These are:

- (i) of the members of the class, each is similar to every other;
- (ii) no thing outside the class is similar to every member of the class (Wolterstorff, p. 100).

Wolterstorff next proceeds to introduce the difficulties of imperfect community and companionship to show the deficiencies of his requirements, ordinarily understood. He explains imperfect community:

Suppose the universe included a class of things of the following description: one is green and hard, another is hard and square, and a third is square and green—symbolized as gh, hs, and sg. Now this class fulfills our requirements for a quality class, since each member

is similar to every other, and we are to suppose that there is nothing outside the class which is similar to every member of the class. Yet there is no quality common to the three members, and consequently the class cannot be identified with a quality (Wolterstorff, pp. 100-101).

The difficulty of companionship is explained:

Suppose that everything green is sticky, and everything sticky is green. In this case the class of green entities would be identical with the class of sticky entities. But then the qualities greenness and stickiness cannot be identified with this class; for greenness is not identical with stickiness (Wolterstorff, p. 101).

The way out of these two difficulties which Wolterstorff proposes depends upon his introduction of certain entities which he calls "aspects." As an example of an aspect he mentions "the color of the Taj Mahal (on one interpretation of this phrase)" (Wolterstorff, p. 101). Wolterstorff proposes that we include these aspects among the elements of the quality classes. We could then avoid the twin difficulties by forming our quality classes in new ways. The companionship difficulty arose when we had a class of things schematically like  $\{gs, gs, gs\}$ . But we can now avoid identifying greenness and stickiness by forming the two quality classes represented by  $\{gs, gs, gs, g\}$  and  $\{gs, gs, gs, s\}$ . The last element in each class is one of Wolterstorff's aspects. The difficulty of imperfect community is, it would seem, likewise resolved by forming three new classes. Where formerly we had the class  $\{gh, hs, sg\}$  we now have  $\{gh, sg, g\}$ ,  $\{gh, hs, h\}$ , and  $\{hs, sg, s\}$ . Each of the three members of each of the three classes has a common quality and each class can now be identified with that quality.

But Wolterstorff's solution is illusory. While the difficulty of companionship is resolved by admitting aspects into the quality classes, imperfect community remains unsolved. The class which originally gave rise to the companionship difficulty,  $\{gs, gs, gs\}$ , no longer, with the introduction of aspects into the range of elements of quality classes, remains a quality class. For now it no longer fulfills Wolterstorff's requirement (ii). The entities denoted by 'g' and 's' are both similar to every member of the class  $\{gs, gs, gs\}$ . Since they are not in that class, the class is not a quality class. But the class which introduced the difficulty of imperfect community remains a quality class even with the assumption that the aspects of the elements of that class may also be members of it. That is, the class

$\{gh, hs, sg\}$ , the aspects of whose elements are denoted by 'g', 'h', and 's', remains a quality class even if we allow for the inclusion of aspects in classes. For none of the entities denoted by 'g', 'h', or 's' is similar to every element of  $\{gh, hs, sg\}$ . Hence  $\{gh, hs, sg\}$  still meets the requirements (i) and (ii). Wolterstorff fails to take note of this. As it stands, then, Wolterstorff's set of requirements fails to exclude enough quality classes, since it admits more such classes than there are qualities. Wolterstorff's analysis thus fails to meet his own criteria of adequacy.

There is a simple and straightforward way to patch up the set of requirements offered by Wolterstorff. We can add a third requirement to the effect that all quality classes must contain at least one aspect in addition to their other members. Thus, while (i) and (ii) were jointly necessary conditions for the status of quality class we now have the necessary and sufficient conditions:

- (i) of the members of the class, each is similar to every other.
- (ii) no thing outside the class is similar to every member of the class.
- (iii) the class contains at least one aspect.

With the addition of this third requirement the difficulty of imperfect community disappears since the classes raising that difficulty fail to contain aspects as members.

The question remains, however, whether the solution we have arrived at is philosophically satisfactory. Wolterstorff takes himself to be arguing against the view that there is an irreducible category of entities called 'qualities' (where qualities are suspect since they may be universals). But how far has he come from that view? And are any gains he has made offset by even worse difficulties?

In answering these questions I first want to examine the difference(s) between aspects and universal qualities. In resolving the companionship difficulty Wolterstorff offers the two classes  $\{gs, gs, gs, g\}$  and  $\{gs, gs, gs, s\}$  as quality classes. The last elements of each class are aspects. Of what, we may ask, are they the aspects? Suppose that they are aspects of the first element in each class. If there really is the dis-analogy between aspects and universal qualities that is fundamental to Wolterstorff's whole enterprise then the aspects of each of the first three elements in the two classes should be distinct from one another (for if they are not then we look to have shared or universal aspects). In that case, however, neither of the

two classes is really a quality class. In the first place, under this interpretation, either there are entities outside of each of the classes which are similar to every entity in each class, or not all the entities in each of the classes are similar to one another. The aspects of the first element of each class have been included in the classes. What of the aspects of the second and third elements of each class? These distinct entities, which I shall denote by 'g\*', 'g\*\*', 's\*', and 's\*\*', should by parity of argument also be similar to the first three elements of each class. Are they also similar to the fourth element of each class? If so, then instead of the two classes that Wolterstorff offers us we should have:

1.  $\{gs, gs, gs, g, g^*, g^{**}\}$
2.  $\{gs, gs, gs, s, s^*, s^{**}\}$

If the different aspects are not similar to one another then we must again give up the classes Wolterstorff offers and replace them with:

3.  $\{gs, gs, gs, g\}$
4.  $\{gs, gs, gs, g^*\}$
5.  $\{gs, gs, gs, g^{**}\}$
6.  $\{gs, gs, gs, s\}$
7.  $\{gs, gs, gs, s^*\}$
8.  $\{gs, gs, gs, s^{**}\}$

The first three elements in each of these six classes are the same. The fourth element in each class is an aspect. Classes 3-8 are all quality classes under requirements (i)-(iii). But there are not six different qualities corresponding to classes 3-8. Hence we must assume that the aspects of different objects may be similar to one another as well as similar to the different objects. We must, in other words, substitute classes 1 and 2 for the quality classes Wolterstorff proposes if we maintain that different objects have different aspects—the view required by the claim that aspects differ from universal qualities.

The only alternative is to reject the proposal that the aspect of an object resembles any other object besides the one whose aspect it is. On this view an aspect is not even similar to those objects which are themselves similar to the object of which it is an aspect. But this would imply that neither of the two classes Wolterstorff proposes is a quality class, in that the fourth term in each is similar to only one of the other terms. Instead, we would be forced to replace Wolterstorff's offerings with the classes:



9.  $\{g^s, g\}$
10.  $\{g^s, s\}$
11.  $\{g^s, g^*\}$
12.  $\{g^s, s^*\}$
13.  $\{g^s, g^{**}\}$
14.  $\{g^s, s^{**}\}$

But classes 9-14 are also inadequate reconstructions of qualities. It seems, then, that classes 1 and 2 are the only satisfactory candidates for quality classes if we are to maintain a difference between aspects and universal qualities.

Even so, the parallel between aspects and universal qualities doesn't disappear entirely. Aspects play a unique role in quality classes. Each aspect alone can be taken to define a quality class—for example “the class of all things (aspects or objects) similar to  $g$ ” (of course ‘ $g^*$ ’ or ‘ $g^{**}$ ’ may be substituted for ‘ $g$ ’). But no object can be so employed. This corresponds to the possibility of defining a class in terms of a quality, e.g., “The class of all  $G$ 's”, and the impossibility of producing such a definition by using any particular object which has the quality  $G$ . Moreover, although Wolterstorff insists that all the elements in a quality class bear a certain resemblance to one another (Wolterstorff, p. 102) there is more than one similarity relation obtaining between them. The similarity between aspects is of a different sort from the similarity between aspects and objects or objects and other objects. The similarity among aspects is a transitive relation. For any three aspects, if the first is similar to the second and the second to the third, then the first is similar to the third, and, hence, in the same quality class. But this is not true of the relations of similarity between aspects and objects or objects and other objects. The last entity in class 1, for example, is similar to the first element in class 1, while the first element in class 1 is similar to the last element in class 2 (since the first element of class 1 *is* the first element of class 2), but the last element of class 1 is not similar to the last element of class 2. If it were, it would belong in class 2, since it would also be similar to everything else in class 2. Again, three objects denoted by ‘ $hg$ ’, ‘ $gs$ ’, and ‘ $sr$ ’ (the last object is a red square) are such that the first is similar to the second and the second to the third, but the first is not similar to the third.

These differences in the similarity relations obtaining between the elements of a quality class provide us with a way of hierarchically arranging

those similarity relations. At the top level we have the relation obtaining between all and only the aspects in a given quality class. Next we have the relation obtaining between any object and any aspect in a given quality class. Finally, we have the relation obtaining between the objects in a given quality class. I say we may arrange these relations hierarchically because there is a clear sense in which the existence of either of the lower level sorts of relationship between the entities in a quality class depends upon there being a higher level relationship among a proper sub-set (the aspects) of the elements of that quality class. The objects in a quality class are similar<sub>1</sub> just because each has an aspect which is similar<sub>2</sub> to an aspect of every other object in the quality class. It is this latter sort of similarity which is, thus, basic. In a sense, it is with a class of similar<sub>2</sub> aspects that my revised formulation of Wolterstorff's position replaces a quality. The presence of entities other than aspects in quality classes is, at most, superfluous. But the presence of aspects in quality classes is (remember requirement (iii)) necessary for them to be quality classes.

In a sense, then, the introduction of aspects into quality classes has led to a complete abandonment of Wolterstorff's original enterprise of reducing qualities to classes of the objects having those qualities. Instead, we have found a way of replacing qualities with classes of aspects standing in a certain similarity relation.

But one last point remains to be made. We must, I think, ask about the similarity relation which Wolterstorff contends obtains between all and only the aspects in a quality class. Is this relation really anything more than identity? Is it not the case, in other words, that  $s$ ,  $s^*$ , and  $s^{**}$  are not three entities but one? The only reason for introducing  $s^*$  and  $s^{**}$  was to avoid the reappearance of qualities in the quality classes. We *could* have done as well with  $s$  alone. But that would have been, for all intents and purposes, a realistic position. For we would then have been able to define quality classes in terms of shared aspects. This would, of course, have been a position no different from that which Wolterstorff is critical of and wishes to eliminate. That aspects are really only disguised qualities is even clearer if one stops for a moment to consider his claim that the aspect of an object itself resembles that object. In what sense can it reasonably be claimed that the color of the Taj Mahal (an off-white) resembles or is similar to the Taj Mahal? Certainly a dis-assembled section of wall from the Taj Mahal will resemble the Taj Mahal insofar as they will both be the same color. But this cannot be what Wolterstorff has in mind for the

similarity of the Taj Mahal and its color. Clearly the Taj Mahal and its *color* are not the same color. For the color of the Taj Mahal is not itself of *any* color. Wolterstorff may have confused what we might call “the surface of the Taj Mahal” with the color of the Taj Mahal. But, of course, even if we allow that the color is “spread over” the surface it is certainly not the same thing as that surface. Thus while the surface of the Taj Mahal may be similar to the Taj Mahal—with respect, e.g., to color—the color of the Taj Mahal is not itself similar to either. And this is so because the color of the Taj Mahal, unlike either its surface or the thing itself, is not an object but a quality of objects.

Thus Wolterstorff’s analysis really never even gets started. The things he calls aspects but which are, in fact, only qualities do not belong in his quality classes at all. For they are not themselves similar to any of the other things in those quality classes—besides the other aspects. If we consider some quality class like 1 or 2 we will note that the similarity between the so-called aspects in that class is a different similarity from that supposed to obtain between any single aspect and any single object. But I think we are in a position now to see that if there is any similarity among the elements of a quality class it is not between aspects and objects. Nor, I believe, is there really any similarity between so-called aspects and aspects. Here, as I noted above, only identity obtains.

I will argue further for this claim below when I consider whether the qualities of objects are individuated with those objects. For Wolterstorff’s aspects, it will be seen, are merely quality-particulars.

Before turning to that task it would be well for us to consider another objection to the claim that qualities are dependent upon the objects of which they are qualities.

The difficulties of imperfect community and companionship which Wolterstorff tried, unsuccessfully I think, to resolve arose primarily because of one key difference between the qualities of objects and the objects themselves. While objects are complex entities—they usually have more than a single quality—their qualities are not. The chain-like linkages in the difficulty of imperfect community, and the constant conjunction of companionship arose because objects can resemble one another in more than one way, i.e., they can be qualitatively similar with respect to more than a single quality. The complex/simple dichotomy between objects and their qualities is inimical in still another way to the position that the identity of qualities depends upon what they are qualities of. Consider two

objects,  $x$  and  $y$ , to be alike in every respect but one. To  $x$  is associated the complex of qualities  $S_1$  whose constituent qualities are  $F, G, H, \dots M$ . To  $y$  is associated the complex of qualities  $S_2$  whose constituent qualities are  $F, G, H, \dots N$ . Thus  $x$  and  $y$  differ in that  $x$  has quality  $M$  while  $y$  has quality  $N$ . To say that the identity of qualities  $M$  and  $N$  depend upon the objects they are the qualities of may be interpreted as meaning that if  $M$  were in  $S_2$  and  $N$  in  $S_1$ , they would no longer be  $M$  and  $N$ , but, let us say,  $M^*$  and  $N^*$ . Moreover, if the claim that qualities depend for their identity upon what they are qualities of is to hold water,  $M^*$  and  $N^*$  must differ from  $M$  and  $N$  not only in that they are in different complexes. For the issue is precisely whether being in a different complex makes, by itself, for being a different quality. But what difference could there be between  $M$  and  $M^*$ ,  $N$  and  $N^*$ ? To put them in different complexes is to suppose that  $x$ , instead of being  $M$  is  $N$ , and  $y$  is  $M$  instead of  $N$ . But  $M$  and  $N$  themselves will still be grouped with the same qualities.  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  contain the same qualities except that  $M$  appears in the former where  $N$  appears in the latter. Substituting  $M$  for  $N$  and vice versa will not, therefore, involve grouping them with different qualities. Only by assuming beforehand that no quality in  $S_1$  is also in  $S_2$  could we even suppose that replacing  $M$  with  $N$  and vice versa would involve grouping them with different qualities. But, of course, the only reason to suppose that no quality in  $S_1$  is also a quality in  $S_2$  is that the identity of a quality is dependent, in perhaps some other sense, upon what it is the quality of. This dependence, moreover, must involve some sort of necessary connection since, otherwise, the qualities in  $S_1$  *could* also be in  $S_2$ . That is, not only must it be the case that as a matter of fact no quality in  $S_1$  is in  $S_2$ , or any other complex; it must also be the case that such a situation can never arise. But this necessary truth must have two parts. First, no quality in  $S_1$  can also be in  $S_2$  (or any other complex), second, no quality once in  $S_1$  can be in a complex associated with a temporally earlier or later object. Not only is "sharing" qualities ruled out, but quality transfer is also excluded. It must not be possible that a quality fitting the description "The quality of  $a$ " can also fit the description "The quality of  $b$ ", if  $a \neq b$ . While I will be discussing these matters below I will note, for now, that even if there were such a necessary truth it would not affect the matter at hand. For we need not say that  $M$  and  $N$  actually transfer from complex to complex. Instead we can ask whether being placed in complexes  $S_1'$  or  $S_2'$  would affect the identity of  $M$  or  $N$ . These two new complexes may be understood to be

"incomplete" versions of  $S_1$  and  $S_2$ . That is, they lack a quality where  $S_1$  has  $M$  and  $S_2$  has  $N$ . The question now becomes: would completing  $S_1'$  rather than  $S_2'$  or vice versa involve an alteration in the identities of  $M$  or  $N$ ? The answer to this question seems to be clearly negative. The only difference, already ruled out as unimportant, would be that  $M$  or  $N$  would be in different complexes and, perhaps (depending upon one's answer to the issues surrounding the "necessary" truth taken note of above), combined with different qualities. We can conclude that the qualities of objects are not, in this way, dependent upon the objects which exemplify them. Put slightly differently, a quality occurs arbitrarily in the complex in which it is found. In Wolterstorffian terms, any of a set of similar aspects could replace, without real difference, any others of that set as the aspects of ordinary objects. In a real sense, then, aspects are *intrinsically* indistinguishable from one another if they are similar to one another.

## NOTES

1. Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Qualities," in *Philosophical Review*, LXIX (1960), pp. 183-200. Reprinted in Michael J. Loux, ed. *Universals and Particulars: Readings in Ontology* (New York, Anchor Books, 1970), pp. 90-108. (Page references are to the anthologized version of the paper.)

2. Both of these difficulties are discussed in Nelson Goodman, *The Structure of Appearance* (New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), Chapter 5, in the context of a discussion of Rudolf Carnap's *Der Logische Aufbau der Welt*, where they arise. The names for the difficulties are introduced at p. 161 and p. 164 of Goodman's book.

### III:

## *Similarity, Perfect Particulars, and Universals*

The question, previously noted but left unanswered, of whether the qualities of objects were particulars is one which we can now begin to consider. Indeed, we can no longer avoid it. We have explained a sense in which certain of the qualities of particular objects are understood to be parts of the particulars having them as qualities. Our question is, accordingly, one about the nature of the qualities. Traditionally the problem we face has been considered a part of the network of problems called "the problem of universals," or "the problem of the existence of universals." But it is important to note that the question we shall try to answer is not really about the existence of any class of entities. Rather, it is about the sort of entity a quality is. If it turns out that certain qualities are in some sense universals then we will not have found some new entity, but a feature of an old one. This is not to say that the problem of universals is in no way concerned with the existence of certain entities. Indeed the claim that there are universals has often involved just that. The classic doctrine of Platonic Forms which will be discussed below is an example. The merits of claims of this sort, however, are not in dispute just now. Instead we are concerned simply with determining whether qualities and objects—the paradigms of particularity—are similar in certain crucial respects or whether they are basically different.

Specifying just what these respects are is the first task facing us. It involves some exploration of what is involved in something's being a particular. Suppose a visual field contains two spots. The first is a blue square, the second a spot of the same shade and shape. The two spots, *a* and *b*, are thus indiscriminable with respect to shade and shape. Suppose that the shade and shape are their only non-relational properties. The two spots do differ relationally. One, *a* that is, is to the left of the other. The second, *b*, is to the right of the first. Neither is to the right nor left of itself. I shall say that this constitutes a relational difference between them. Again consider a visual field containing a spot. This one, *c*, is also blue and square. Suppose that *c* disappears. Subsequently another square blue spot appears, non-relationally indiscriminable from *c*. Some particulars, which I call 'perceptual particulars' are, unlike material objects, not continuants.<sup>1</sup> They occupy, that is, unique temporal locations with respect to

all other perceptual particulars. The last mentioned spot is therefore a different spot from  $c$ . Perceptual particulars are also spatially unique. They cannot be in more than one place. No two perceptual particulars can stand in exactly the same set of spatial relations. Thus, in the case of the just mentioned spots  $a$  and  $b$ , it follows from the fact that  $a$  is to the left of  $b$ , while  $b$  is not to the left of  $b$ , that  $a$  and  $b$  are two perceptual particulars. This is one more way in which perceptual particulars and material objects differ. A material object can occupy two spatial locations as well as two temporal locations. Consider, now, a material object  $M$ . Suppose that at time  $t_1$   $M$  bears relation  $R_1$ , being-to-the-right-of, to another material object,  $N$ . This second object, however, is non-relationally indiscriminable from  $M$ . Suppose both  $M$  and  $N$  disappear from view. At time  $t_4$  two more material objects appear. These have all the non-relational properties  $M$  and  $N$  had. In addition they stand in the relation  $R_1$ . These two new objects may, in fact, be  $N$  and  $M$ . That they now occur at time  $t_4$  does not entail that they are different objects from the things occurring at time  $t_1$ . Further, it may now be  $N$  which stands in  $R_1$  to  $M$ . While at  $t_1$   $M$  was to the right of  $N$ , at  $t_4$   $N$  is to the right of  $M$ . Neither a difference in spatial nor temporal location suffices for a difference in material objects. What does, of course, is a difference in spatio-temporal location. No material object can occupy two places at one time, nor can two material objects be in a single place at one time. If we think of space and time as the axes of a coordinate system then the coordinates of a material object can include more than one spatial and more than one temporal element. But for each temporal coordinate there is one and only one spatial coordinate. These pairs, moreover, are unique for every material object. No such pair is the coordinate of more than a single material object.

Ordinarily, for material objects like  $M$  and  $N$  to be different objects it suffices that at  $t_1$  one of them bears  $R_1$  to the other, while not bearing it to itself. And this fact is reflected by the different fact that different spatial locations cannot be occupied by a single perceptual particular. To put it differently, the uniqueness of the spatial and temporal network in which material objects take part is accounted for by the uniqueness of the spatial and temporal networks, individually, in which perceptual particulars take part. For  $M$  and  $N$  need not be different material objects even though one bears  $R_1$  to the other, while the reverse is not the case. For the latter could also bear  $R_1$  to the former at a different time. ' $MR_1N$ ' and ' $NR_1M$ ' could both be true. What cannot be true is that both of these hold at a

single time. And this is accounted for by the spatial (not spatio-temporal) uniqueness of perceptual particulars coordinated to  $M$  and  $N$ .

It is thus intrinsic to the notion of a perceptual particular that its spatial and temporal location be unique. We can ask whether anything similar holds of the qualities of perceptual particulars. We need not be asking, although it will be found to be important to ask, whether the qualities of perceptual particulars are themselves spatially and temporally unique. For it is controversial whether, and in what sense, the qualities of perceptual particulars are in space and time. Instead of plunging into that issue directly we can ask the question in the following way: Are the qualities of a perceptual particular which is spatially or temporally distinct from another perceptual particular, always distinct from the qualities of that second perceptual particular? Setting the problem in terms of uniqueness of spatial and temporal location is a way of specifying what the problem is with respect to perceptual particulars. Perceptual particulars occupying different spatial and temporal locations are always different particulars. If we remember that material objects do stand in a unique *spatio-temporal* network the problem can be set with respect to them. In that case it will become the problem of whether the quality of an object occupying a unique spatio-temporal location is always different from the quality of an object occupying a different spatio-temporal location.

We can avoid the difficulties attendant upon the introduction of material objects into this discussion in the following way. Material objects are construed to be complex entities whose constituent parts are perceptual particulars. Suppose such a material object,  $p$ , has the quality  $G$ , some shade of color, at time  $t_4$ . Later, at  $t_6$ ,  $p$  lacks  $G$  having been re-painted the color  $F$ . The object  $p$ , which continues through time, both has and lacks a property. Thus, if we construe a material object's having a property as a simple relation between two entities, here  $p$  and  $G$ , we face the possibility of a contradiction. If, on the other hand, we follow the most intuitive way out of this difficulty and take note of the relevance of time—that ' $G(p)$ ' held at  $t_4$  while its denial, ' $\text{not-}G(p)$ ' held at  $t_6$ —we can avoid contradiction. But if we let things stand at that, predication becomes, implicitly, temporally bound. If we wish to avoid this we can deny that material objects exemplify qualities in the way that perceptual particulars exemplify qualities. That is, the exemplification—in the broad sense—of a quality by an object like  $p$ , may be interpreted as the exemplification, in the strict sense, of  $G$  by some of the perceptual particulars which we construe as the "parts" of  $p$ . Thus



' $G(p)$ ' will be true just in case some perceptual particular coordinated with  $p$  is associated with a complex one of whose constituents is  $G$ . In the case at hand, the perceptual particular located at  $t_4$  which is coordinated to  $p$ , is also associated with a complex containing  $G$ . Another perceptual particular coordinated with  $p$ , but occupying temporal location  $t_6$ , is associated with a complex containing  $F$ . That complex does not contain  $G$ . Hence  $p$  has both colors—at different times. The contradiction is only avoided, it is important to note, at the cost of disallowing 'material object  $p$  is  $G$ ' to be understood as a simple sentence. Strictly speaking exemplification does not obtain between  $p$  and  $G$ . Instead, there is a triadic relation, the relata of which are a perceptual particular, a complex associated with that perceptual particular, and a quality in that complex, which obtains when a material object is said to have a quality. In addition, of course, there are any number of other relational ties linking the mentioned perceptual particular with others which, like itself, have been coordinated to the material object  $p$ . What has just been said has an important consequence which should be taken note of. I have at times spoken of both a complex associated with a perceptual particular, and a complex of perceptual particulars coordinated with a material object. But the sense in which perceptual particulars form complexes is different from that in which qualities form them. Quality complexes are constructed so that a single perceptual particular *exemplifies* all the qualities in the complex. Clearly, then, not all the *qualities* of a material object can be tied in the same way. For that would mean that a complex could contain, e.g., two different shades of a color as constituents. But this would entail that some one thing had both shades. Under the hypothesis that the material object in question was uniformly colored, this presents us with a violation of the truth that nothing has more than a single color (all over, at the same time, etc.).

The qualities of a material object, then, do not form a complex. Nor, strictly speaking, do the perceptual particulars coordinated with a material object. The ties that bind perceptual particulars into material objects include spatial and temporal ties. These relations, like shades and shapes, may be considered to be kinds of entities. They may occupy a place in simple relational facts. As such they can be joined to other entities by relational ties like exemplification. Perceptual particulars, on the other hand, are not joined into simple facts with other perceptual particulars. The "facts" they form when joined to one another by various relations (e.g., spatial or temporal relations) are the basis of facts about material objects. These

“material object facts” are a variety of derived fact. They are derivative of perceptual particulars which, in turn, may be considered to be complexes of qualities (among, perhaps, other things). These complexes are construable as simple facts. We thus have a hierarchical arrangement. On the bottom level are qualities and the other constituents of complexes (basic facts); next we have the basic facts built from those constituents by ties like exemplification; finally we have derived facts—which consist of basic facts tied in a variety of non-fundamental (e.g., spatial and temporal) ways.

Because of the derived nature of facts involving material objects we can avoid considering whether the qualities of two material objects are always different qualities. Suppose they are. Then two perceptual particulars will always have different qualities. If they are not, then it will be possible for different perceptual particulars to share a single quality.

As soon as one takes note of these last two consequences of construing material objects to be complexes (in the broad sense) of perceptual particulars the plausibility of the claim that different objects always have different qualities begins to fade. For if it were the case, then not only would different perceptual particulars coordinated with different material objects have different qualities, but different perceptual particulars coordinated with one and the same material object would also always have different qualities. Suppose material object  $p$  is green at  $t_4$ , but red at  $t_7$ . Then the perceptual particular coordinated with  $p$  at time  $t_4$  will be a shade of green while the different perceptual particular coordinated with  $p$  at  $t_7$  will be a shade of red. The different perceptual particulars will exemplify qualities which, quite clearly, are different colors. Now suppose another material object,  $m$ , is a shade of green at  $t_4$ , and then at  $t_7$  has not, so far as can be seen, changed its shade. At times between  $t_4$  and  $t_7$  no change in the color of  $m$  was discernible. But the shape of  $m$  did change from what it was at  $t_4$ , square, to what it is at  $t_7$ , rectangular. There are coordinated to  $m$  at  $t_4$  and  $t_7$  different perceptual particulars. If a version of the discernibility of nonidenticals is held, i.e., that different perceptual particulars always have different qualities, then the shade of the particular at  $t_4$  will, in some sense, be different from the shade of the particular at  $t_7$ . But it will not be different in the way in which the shape of the particular at  $t_4$  is a shape different from that of the particular at  $t_7$ . In any event, the result is that if the thesis that different objects always have different qualities is seriously maintained it follows that the color, shape, and other qualities of material

objects change with time—or at least with times occupied by different perceptual particulars.

But while this result may decrease the plausibility of the thesis I am now ready to call “nominalism with respect to qualities” it is hardly enough to refute it. For the nominalist has several moves open to him. Each of these, in essentials, involves an analysis of what it is to have a quality. The nominalist will claim that qualities as they are common-sensically understood are not really the entities which occur together in complexes forming basic facts. Instead, qualities themselves are built from yet simpler or more fundamental things. In order to explore these claims we will first need to do preparatory work. Let it suffice for now to say that the nominalist is denying that when two perceptual particulars are indiscriminable with respect to a quality, shade for example, their qualities are also, in every sense, indiscriminable and identical.

Consider two round red perceptual particulars, each of exactly the same shade and shape. If we specify that shade and shape are the only qualities coordinated to them, and exclude from consideration relational qualities, it will be true that the particulars are exactly similar. If the first,  $p_1$ , was one shade of red while the second,  $p_2$ , was another shade, the two would be, let us say, Nearly Similar. Again, if  $p_1$  was Red<sub>2</sub> and Round<sub>3</sub>, while  $p_2$  was Red<sub>3</sub> and Round<sub>2</sub>, it might also be the case that they were Nearly Similar. It would be the case if, as one might expect, some *other* relation of similarity obtained between Red<sub>2</sub> and Red<sub>3</sub> and/or Round<sub>2</sub> and Round<sub>3</sub>. There are at least two major sorts of similarity which might obtain between Red<sub>2</sub> and Red<sub>3</sub>, Round<sub>2</sub> and Round<sub>3</sub>. The first sort may obtain between two qualities irrespective of which objects they are the qualities of. Red<sub>2</sub> may be, I shall say, Just Similar to Red<sub>3</sub>. But so may Red<sub>2</sub> and Green<sub>4</sub>. Often it is implicit in a judgement of this sort of similarity that the two qualities judged Just Similar are judged to be more similar to one another than to a third (or fourth, fifth, . . .) quality. Thus Green<sub>4</sub> may be judged Just Similar to Red<sub>2</sub> in the sense that it is more closely similar to Red<sub>2</sub> than to Red<sub>3</sub>. Just Similar, then, is to be understood to be a species or genus of similarity relations rather than a specific relation of similarity which actually relates qualities. The point to note is that this species of similarity holds independently of any quality's being the quality of some specific object. It is, therefore, to be contrasted with the second sort of similarity which may obtain between qualities. This sort of similarity may be termed Extensional Similarity.

The difficulty of imperfect community provides us with an example of Extensional Similarity. There, remember, we had three things fitting the following descriptions: one is green and hard, another is hard and square, a third is square and green. A relation of Extensional Similarity obtains between every quality of these three objects. The qualities green and hard, for example, are Extensionally Similar in that of the two hard objects, one is green. Green and square, and hard and square exhibit two more cases of Extensional Similarity in that both green and square and hard and square are jointly exemplified by single objects. But two qualities may be Extensionally Similar though no single object exemplifies them both. This may be the case if chain relationships occur between the objects exemplifying such qualities. If there are four objects,  $w$ ,  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$ , such that ' $F(w)$  &  $G(w)$  &  $G(x)$  &  $H(x)$  &  $H(y)$  &  $I(y)$  &  $I(z)$  &  $J(z)$ ' is true, then  $F$  and  $J$  may be Extensionally Similar qualities. But if the chain had contained five objects and one more quality it might be the case that  $F$  and that last quality or, in fact,  $F$  and  $J$  were not Extensionally Similar. Extensional Similarity is, in short, an open-ended notion. It is not to be supposed that we already have any very clear cut criteria for determining when two or more qualities are, in the sense explained, Extensionally Similar. Just because of its open-endedness Extensional Similarity is not the species of similarity which grounds the exact similarity of  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  in the example drawn above. If it were, then the introduction of other perceptual particulars,  $p_3 \dots p_n$ , into the situation could conceivably affect it to the extent that  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  were no longer exactly similar. But it is precisely the exact similarity of  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  which the Extensional Similarity of their qualities was supposed to ground.

To reiterate, suppose we judge  $p_1$  to be indiscriminable from  $p_2$  with respect to all their non-relational qualities. For this to be the case will be for them to be exactly similar. But, under the thesis of Extensional Similarity, the similarity of the qualities which grounds the exact similarity of  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  will be a matter dependent upon the exemplification of a group of qualities by other particulars. Thus, conceivably, the fact that some particular of the set  $\{p_3 \dots p_n\}$  exemplifies some quality not exemplified by either  $p_1$  or  $p_2$ , and not standing in the relation of being Just Similar to a quality of  $p_1$  or  $p_2$  might render it false that  $p_1$  is exactly similar to  $p_2$ . This is not to say that we could not set limits on the conditions under which qualities would be judged Extensionally Similar such that the exact similarity of the perceptual particulars in our universe would

be preserved. But even then the truth of the judgement that  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  are exactly similar, something which does not seem arbitrary, would depend upon the truth of judgements about whether the qualities other objects exemplified were Extensionally Similar. And this would be, in a sense, arbitrary. Besides, in order to establish which qualities are Extensionally Similar to one another we must judge perceptual particulars to be Nearly Similar.

But exact similarity is just the limiting case of Near Similarity when the relata are perceptual particulars. Nothing is accomplished by attempting to ground the exact similarity of perceptual particulars in the Extensional Similarity of their qualities. For that too must then be grounded—and in the Near Similarity of perceptual particulars. We know that Near Similarity is a defined relation among perceptual particulars. Its definition makes use of the names of (or variables for) qualities. This, then, puts us back into the realm of qualities and vitiates our attempts to explain Near Similarity in terms of Extensional Similarity. We are not able, therefore, to avoid an inquiry into the nature of similarity among qualities if we are to find a way of accounting for the Near Similarity of perceptual particulars like  $p_1$  and  $p_2$ . What, then, is the relation among the qualities of  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  which grounds that extreme case of Near Similarity—exact similarity?

The simple device of a color chart provides a way of understanding just what sort of relation is involved. The chart consists of patches of color arranged next to one another so as to form a spectrum. Any colors of contiguous patches are more closely similar than any colors separated by a patch of some other color. Any single color is, therefore, most closely similar to the colors of the patches bordering upon it. It is also the case that *the patches* which exemplify the various colors are Nearly Similar. Consider three patches arranged in a row such that only the patches most similar with respect to color touch one another. The patches,  $p_1$ ,  $p_2$ ,  $p_3$ , will then be located in accordance with the degree of similarity with respect to color that they have. The spatial location of each will reflect a degree of similarity to the others. But the spatial location of each patch is determined in accordance with the degree of similarity between the color of the patch and the colors of the others. Nor can we say that the degree of similarity of the colors is a consequence of the patches' exemplifying those colors being in a particular spatial arrangement. The spatial arrangement of the patches is, rather, an artifact of the spectral arrangement of their

colors. A numbering arrangement would do as well. In fact any arrangement ordered by relations with the same logical features as the network relating colors will do.

The spectrum arrangement will be such that triples of colors like the colors of  $p_1$ ,  $p_2$ , and  $p_3$  exemplify a triadic relation of similarity. Another triple exemplifying this relation will be the colors of, e.g.,  $p_2$ ,  $p_3$ , and  $p_4$ . Additional similarity relations will also obtain. Thus, for example,  $p_2$  and  $p_4$  will be similar as will their colors. Most importantly there is a binary relation obtaining between the colors of adjacent patches. This irreflexive, symmetrical, non-transitive relation is the relation which grounds the Near Similarity of  $p_1$  and  $p_2$ ,  $p_3$  and  $p_4$ , etc. That is, where 'NS' denotes Near Similarity of the sort obtaining between the elements of pairs like  $\{p_1, p_2\}$  and  $\{p_2, p_3\}$ , 'QS' denotes the just mentioned relation amongst qualities, and 'F' and 'G' are variables ranging over non-relational qualities:

$$(I) \quad NS(p_1, p_2) = \text{def.} \quad (EF) \quad (EG) \quad (F(p_1) \ \& \ G(p_2) \ \& \ QS(F, G))$$

There is another sort of Near Similarity obtaining among perceptual particulars which is underlined by the irreflexivity of QS. Since QS is irreflexive it follows from the fact that it is exemplified that the exemplifying qualities are not identical. In terms of the spectrum arrangement that means that they are discernible. But sometimes perceptual particulars are indiscriminable with respect to color, while they have different shapes. The color chart will not help to explain this similarity between the perceptual particulars. These perceptual particulars belong in the same place on the color chart. Different positions on that chart are determined by differing degrees of similarity amongst discriminable colors. The color(s) of these two new patches are not discriminable from one another in the way the colors of the chart are. Here we have two patches with, as one says, the same color. True, the previous patches with discriminable colors may also have been the same color, e.g., different shades of red. But this case is clearly different. The topology of the color spectrum makes it clear that the colors of these two patches are not just different shades of a single color-type.

It is at this point that the controversy between the nominalist with respect to qualities and his opponent, whom I shall call the realist, surfaces. The nominalist will argue that the two patches with indiscriminable colors are nearly similar in virtue of a relation obtaining between "the color" of each called 'Exact Similarity.' I put quotes around 'the color' in the last

sentence because, in a strict sense, the nominalist takes a view of what the expression 'the color of x' means radically different from that of the realist. The dimensions of this difference will appear as we proceed. The realist, on the other hand, will argue that the Near Similarity of the two patches is grounded in their exemplifying a single quality. As we put it earlier, the issue is whether objects can be indiscriminable with respect to color (as illustrated by the color chart) and yet have, in any sense, different colors. Now, with the discussion of Near Similarity of one sort out of the way, we can approach the issue directly. Clearly it will center about this new relation of Exact Similarity and the entities it is supposed to relate.

Perceptual particulars  $p_1$  and  $p_2$ , let us suppose, are Nearly Similar. They are discriminable by shape though not by color. I intend to argue that the only way to ground the Near Similarity of  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  is by recognizing that these two perceptual particulars exemplify one and only one color; that this entity they exemplify is "simple"; and that there is no such relation as Exact Similarity. I take these positions to be equivalent to the position that there are universals. The opposing view, which denies that there are universals, nominalism, is understood to be the claim that "the colors" of  $p_1$  and  $p_2$ , while indiscriminable, are not identical. Moreover, on this view it is never the case that the "qualities" of different particulars are one and the same entity. In order to avoid placing expressions like 'the colors' of  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  or 'qualities' in quotes when I use them in describing the nominalist's position, I will now introduce the expression 'perfect particular' as the name of the sort of entity which the nominalist takes to be a constituent of a perceptual particular (i.e., of the complex associated with a perceptual particular) when that particular has a quality. A consideration of what relations obtain between such *perfect* particulars and ordinary qualities will be put off until later. The nominalist I am interested in, then, is a perfect particular theorist.

The Near Similarity of  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  may be explained in the following way: Two perceptual particulars, while different, share an entity—called a quality—such that where 'NS<sub>1</sub>' denotes the sort of Near Similarity present in the case under consideration and 'F' is a variable ranging over most determinate qualities, then;

$$(i) \text{ NS}_1(p_1, p_2) = \text{def. } (EF)(F(p_1) \ \& \ F(p_2))$$

All of the entities denoted by expressions which appear on the left hand side of (i) are, in various ways, derived entities. There is an obvious way

in which  $NS_1$  is a derived relation; namely it is defined. Again, we have made use of the notion of a complex in an analysis of perceptual particulars like  $p_1$  and  $p_2$ . On the other hand, the realist will argue that in instantiating from the existentially generalized expression on the right side of (i) we will be substituting undefined names for the predicate variable. These predicates are neither defined nor otherwise analyzed. They are, as I have said, simple.

The perfect particular theorist cannot, in a "perspicuous language," explicate the Near Similarity of  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  in the same way. For him the Near Similarity of the two perceptual particulars in this example is grounded in essentially the same way we previously grounded the Near Similarity of the patches on the color chart. He makes use here, as we did there, of a similarity relation obtaining amongst the perfect particulars in  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  in order to ground the similarity of  $p_1$  and  $p_2$ . For him it is simply not true that, where ' $F$ ' denotes an entity which is actually "in"  $p_1$  and/or  $p_2$ , ' $F(p_1) \ \& \ F(p_2)$ ' is literally the case. Instead he must say something like ' $F_1(p_1) \ \& \ F_2(p_2)$ ' is the case. Here, since we aim to be perspicuous,  $F_1$  and  $F_2$  are different perfect particulars. But if we leave it at this the Near Similarity of  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  remains ungrounded. For we can still ask what it is about  $F_1$  and  $F_2$  that renders similar the particulars in which they are located. A gambit taken by the perfect particular theorist is to provide such a ground by introducing the relation of Exact Similarity amongst perfect particulars. Where ' $ES$ ' denotes this relation, and ' $F_1$ ' and ' $F_2$ ' are variables over perfect particulars, the nominalist now grounds the Near Similarity of  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  with:

$$(II) \ NS_1(p_1, p_2) = \text{def. } (EF_1)(EF_2)(F_1(p_1) \ \& \ F_2(p_2) \ \& \ ES(F_1, F_2))$$

Sentences I and II are much alike. The difference appears only in the last conjunct, where ' $ES$ ' has replaced ' $QS$ '. Clearly ' $ES$ ' denotes a transitive and symmetrical relation. Whether one chooses to regard it as reflexive or irreflexive is a matter of some interest. What might motivate the nominalist to claim that  $ES$  is an irreflexive relation? His motive might be to ground the Near Similarity of the perceptual particulars as well as the non-identity of the perfect particulars denoted by ' $F_1$ ' and ' $F_2$ ' with a single move. He might reason as follows: If two perceptual particulars,  $p_1$  and  $p_2$ , are not discriminable via any of their non-relational qualities we can say that they are exactly similar. This exact similarity is, as was previously noted, the limiting case of one form of Near



Similarity among perceptual particulars. But exact similarity of this sort is not identity. Exactly similar perceptual particulars may still be different perceptual particulars. There are two ways, the realist's and the nominalist's, in which exact similarity among perceptual particulars may be defined. Where 'ESP' denotes exact similarity among perceptual particulars, and 'F' (a predicate variable of the first Type) and 'F<sub>1</sub>', 'F<sub>2</sub>' (variables over perfect particulars) do not range over relational properties of perceptual particulars:

- (III)  $ESP(p_1, p_2) = \text{def. } (F)(F(p_1) \equiv F(p_2))$   
 (IV)  $ESP(p_1, p_2) = \text{def. } (F_1)(F_1(p_1) \rightarrow (EF_2)(F_2(p_2)$   
 $\quad \& ES(F_1, F_2))) \& (F_1)(F_1(p_2) \rightarrow (EF_2)(F_2(p_1)$   
 $\quad \& ES(F_1, F_2)))$

Formula (III) is the realist's, while (IV) is the nominalist's explication of exact similarity among perceptual particulars. The realist can account for both the Near and exact similarity of perceptual particulars in essentially the same way—for him, in fact, exact similarity is a variety of Near Similarity. He grounds these in the sharing of some or all of the particular's qualities. When two perceptual particulars are Nearly Similar they are, for the realist, yet discriminable in that they need not share all their qualities. This sort of Near Similarity, therefore, is symmetrical, non-transitive, and reflexive. The last property of the relation provides no difficulty. We can tell the difference between the situation in which a single perceptual particular is "sharing" a quality with itself and one in which two perceptual particulars are sharing a quality. That is to say, we can still tell without difficulty when there are two perceptual particulars rather than one. Again, the proponent of the thesis that qualities are universals need not maintain that two exactly similar perceptual particulars are indiscriminable. Their different spatial and/or temporal locations provide descriptions unique to each perceptual particular. Their non-identity (being two) and their discriminability go hand in hand. Thus the realist can unproblematically maintain that exactly similar perceptual particulars are discriminable. One does not feel a need for an irreflexive relation to ground the difference between the perceptual particulars, for it will be possible to reflect their difference in other ways. Thus, if one is a realist one can hold, without hesitation, that ESP is reflexive. Finally, whether or not one maintains that qualities are universals, there is a form of quality similarity (denoted by 'QS' above) which grounds, as noted in (I), a different sort of Near

Similarity among perceptual particulars. This relation obtains among qualities which are Just Discriminable. Adjacent shades in a spectrum provided an example. This relation is irreflexive since no quality is discriminable from itself. This very fact provides an explication of the difference, a reflection of their being two, between two qualities standing in *QS*. They are discriminable and, hence, different.

Now, to continue with the line of reasoning which might lie behind the nominalist's urge to make *ES* irreflexive, compare the above with the nominalist's claim about *ES*. In the case of both Near Similarity and *ESP* discriminability accompanies difference in the relata (both nominalist and realist agree about that). Again, they agree that instances of *QS* are also cases of difference being accompanied by discriminability. The nominalist may think to secure his position about the non-identity of perfect particulars by bringing it into line with all the previous cases of similar but different entities. He may, that is, feel the urge to make *ES* irreflexive in order to provide a way of reflecting the difference between, on the face of it, indiscriminable perfect particulars. The exemplification of an irreflexive relation guarantees the non-identity of the relata exemplifying it. This secures his claim—or so he thinks—that perfect particulars are never shared. And the Near Similarity (or *ESP*, a variety of Near Similarity) of the perceptual particulars is grounded—or so he thinks—by the combination of the perfect particulars and the irreflexive relation *ES*.

But this maneuver, as the more subtle nominalist himself will see, has only a patina of reasonableness. The claim that *ES* is irreflexive, rather than grounding or reflecting the difference between the two perfect particulars, really only begs the question. Once we remember that irreflexivity is a derived quality we see the important difference between the sort of "discriminability" the nominalist is proposing and all the previous sorts. In each of those previous cases of discriminability there was an underived quality present in one of the discriminable entities and absent in the other. Only the case of *QS* was different. And there the difference arose because the relata of *QS* were understood to have no parts in which to differ. But qualities standing in *QS* to one another were said to be Just Similar. *QS* relates qualities as does, according to the nominalist, *ES* relate perfect particulars. But it is not *QS* or its irreflexivity which grounds the difference between the entities bearing it to one another. Those entities, which are Just Similar, are also just different. *QS* is an underived relation. Irreflexivity is a derived quality. This is one difference between them. By itself

it would be enough to provide a crucial difference between the way in which difference is grounded for the realist and the nominalist. Add to this the point that qualities standing in *QS* are just different, in a totally unmysterious way, and the emptiness of the nominalist's move to the irreflexivity of *ES* becomes clear. That move gains him nothing and succeeds only in cloaking the real force of his position. It is this which we must now consider.

What I have just called "the real force" of the nominalist's claim is this: The non-identity of perfect particulars is primitive for the nominalist. The entity (a perfect particular) in one complex which helps to ground the color of the perceptual particular associated with that complex differs primitively from every other such entity both in that complex and in any other complex—including complexes associated with perceptual particulars which bear *ESP* to the first perceptual particular. I wish to argue against the claim that there are perfect particulars. In order to do so I will argue, indirectly, against the claim that these supposed entities do differ in some primitive way. First I will consider the nominalist's position in its abstract form. Then I shall examine two concrete, historical, examples of the nominalist gambit.

There are two major paths open to the nominalist. First, he can, while maintaining that the difference among perfect particulars standing in *ES* is primitive, attempt to provide us with criteria which are satisfied each time this difference appears. Second, he can deny that there is any need for such an accompanying difference to be pointed out. Again he will maintain that difference among perfect particulars is a rock-bottom affair. Since both of these alternatives rest upon the claim that difference among perfect particulars is primitive, doubt thrown upon that, even indirectly, endangers the nominalist's entire structure.

Consider, again, formulas (III) and (IV);

$$(III) \text{ ESP}(p_1, p_2) = \text{def. } (F)(F(p_1) \equiv F(p_2))$$

$$(IV) \text{ ESP}(p_1, p_2) = \text{def. } (F_1)(F_1(p_1) \rightarrow (EF_2)(F_2(p_2) \\ \& \text{ ES}(F_1, F_2))) \& (F_1)(F_1(p_2) \rightarrow (EF_2)(F_2(p_1) \\ \& \text{ ES}(F_1, F_2)))$$

(III), recall, is the realist's formulation of exact similarity among perceptual particulars. (IV) is the nominalist's formulation. In both cases there is a clear sense in which '*ESP*' is a derived (relational) predicate. In (III) the only names which appear are '*p*<sub>1</sub>' and '*p*<sub>2</sub>'. We can easily replace them

with variables of the correct type. Let us, therefore, consider  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  to be, for the moment, variables. Now consider the formula:

$$(V) \text{ Man}(x) = \text{def. } (\text{Rational}(x) \ \& \ \text{Animal}(x))$$

Formulas (III) and (V) differ in an important way. Both have, on their left side, a derived predicate. One of these, in (III), is relational; the other is not (V). This is unimportant. On the right side of (III), however, in the definiens, we have no names. On the right side of (V) there occur, we can imagine, two names. If there is some hesitancy to accept 'Animal' and 'Rational' as names, remember that I could have, as easily, substituted ' $(R \ \& \ S)(x)$ ' for the left side and ' $(R(x) \ \& \ S(x))$ ', or any other such expressions, for the right side.<sup>2</sup> Definitions, in an improved language, are mere conveniences. They amount to a form of shorthand. There is, therefore, an important difference between the derived predicate on the left-hand side of (III) and that on the left-hand side of (V). We might say that the ontological standing of the derived predicate in (V) is greater than that of (III). No one who feels free to deny high ontological standing to "logical properties" like transitivity and symmetry should have any qualms about denying, in equal measure, ontological standing to *ESP* if it is defined as in (III). Whereas transitivity is a "logical property" among relations, *ESP* is a "logical property" of perceptual particulars.

Consider now, the difference between (III) and (IV). On the right side of (IV) we do not have the names of any perceptual particulars (we are making the same assumption about the replaceability of ' $p_1$ ' and ' $p_2$ ' that we made earlier), nor of any perfect particulars. But there does occur '*ES*'. Does the presence of '*ES*' render (IV) more like (V) than (III) or not?<sup>3</sup>

This will depend upon the sort of thing *ES* is. The role of *ES* in the nominalist's world is to connect perfect particulars into what amount to ordinary qualities. That is, for the nominalist the following formula explicates what it is for a perceptual particular to have a quality:

$$(VI) F(x) = \text{def. } (EF_1) (F_1 \# x) \ \& \ ES(F_1 a_1)$$

Here the relation (of what sort remains undetermined) denoted by '#' is the one holding between a perfect particular,  $F_1$ , and the perceptual particular it is in. We suppose that ' $a_1$ ' denotes a representative perfect particular grounding whatever quality  $F$  happens to be. Thus a perceptual particular will have a quality just in case one of the perfect particulars in it bears *ES* to each member of a certain group of other perfect particulars.

It is impossible not to be taken by the resemblance between this view and the one considered in discussing Wolterstorff's position earlier in this study. There we found that the entities Wolterstorff called 'aspects' played a unique role in defining the limits of a quality class. It was also found that the appropriate aspects (e.g.,  $g$ ,  $g^*$ ,  $g^{**}$ ) of those perceptual particulars ordinarily said to be qualitatively similar stood in a unique "similarity" relation. It was unique in that no aspect stood to any perceptual particular in this relation, nor did any set of perceptual particulars stand in it. Moreover, the aspects bearing this relation to one another could all do service in defining a given quality class and no others. It should, by now, be apparent that Wolterstorff's aspects are really perfect particulars in disguise. His claim that in addition to resembling one another they resemble the things of which they are the aspects is merely camouflage. We have already raised a criticism of it. It serves to conceal Wolterstorff's failure to provide an account of the special sort of similarity obtaining between, as he says, resembling aspects. By making both the claim that aspects resemble the things whose aspects they are (perceptual particulars in the present instance) and the claim that these things resemble one another, one makes it appear as if no special account is necessary for similarity among aspects (or aspects and perceptual particulars). Just as we know what it is like for two red spots to resemble one another, we know—the camouflage is designed to convince us—what it is for two aspects to resemble each other. But, as we found in considering Wolterstorff's claims, there is a vast difference between the sorts of similarity holding amongst perceptual particulars and those among aspects. What Wolterstorff fails, as a nominalist, to provide us with is what we are now seeking from nominalism in general. The connection with Wolterstorff's paper is instructive. Both the nominalist of perfect particulars and, shall we say, the nominalist of quality classes have a common goal—the de-ontologizing of qualities. But the former nominalist is more subtle than his ally. The quality class nominalist's difficulties arose, it will be remembered, because perceptual particulars were complex while qualities seemed to be simple. The perfect particular nominalist avoids this difficulty by making the entities into which he analyzes qualities—i.e., perfect particulars—simple entities.

To return to the main thread of our inquiry, we should now see more clearly that it is the relation *ES* which needs examining. For the realist exact similarity occurs only between perceptual particulars and is a derived relation of low ontological standing. We saw *that* in comparing (III) and

(V). As with exact similarity, so, for the realist, with Near Similarity<sub>1</sub>. The only difference occurs in the case of Near Similarity as explicated in (I). Here there appears on the right-hand side of the formula the expression 'QS'. I have said that 'QS' is an underived relation. Strictly speaking it is. But I have, in a way which up until now has done no damage, equivocated in my use of 'QS'. I have used 'QS' as both the name of the underived property (relational) which grounded the similarity (Near Similarity) of perceptual particulars whose colors were Just Different (i.e., the perceptual particulars appeared next to one another on the color chart), and I have used it as a device to explain a species of ways in which qualities may resemble one another. That is, I have used it to ground one form of color-similarity among perceptual particulars and also as if it were identical with or only slightly more specific than what I have called the relation of being Just Similar.

In fact what grounds, for the realist,<sup>4</sup> the Near Similarity of the patches adjacent to one another on the color chart is a (relation) quality of the second Type which we can denote by 'C<sub>1</sub>QS'. If we consider the Near Similarity of patches separated from one another by a single patch their similarity is grounded by their colors exemplifying another underived relation of the second Type denoted by 'C<sub>2</sub>QS'. Clearly C<sub>2</sub>QS and C<sub>1</sub>QS and . . . C<sub>2+n</sub>QS are all different relations. They are not even extensionally equivalent. As for similarities in color among perceptual particulars so with all the other modes of Near Similarity. Thus with perceptual particulars Nearly Similar in *shape* we have higher level relations like S<sub>1</sub>QS, S<sub>2</sub>QS, and so on. All of these relations are of the *kind* "Qualitatively Similar" (QS), where that means that they ground Just Similarity among qualities of lower levels. I have been using 'QS' in this second way so that it too is a derived relation of a very low ontological standing. Formula (VII) makes this clear:

$$(VII) \quad QS^2(F^1, G^1) = \text{def. } (ER^2)(R^2(F^1, G^1)) \vee (EF^2)(F^2(F^1) \& F^2(G^1))$$

The super-scripts (in *this* formula) indicate the Type of the predicates. According to (VII) two qualities are, let us now say, Quality Similar, if either there is a relational quality of a higher Type which they jointly exemplify or if there is some non-relational quality of a higher Type which they, individually, exemplify. There are restrictions which must, however, be placed on the first disjunct of the right side of (VII). It need not be

the case that the exemplification of *any* higher-Type quality (relational) by two qualities makes them similar. We do not, after all, suppose that the exemplification by two perceptual particulars of a relation always renders *them* similar. But there are large numbers of cases in which the explication of the similarity of qualities rests upon their standing to one another in a higher-Type relation. Pitches, for example, are qualities of audial perceptual particulars. Two such perceptual particulars (tones) may be Near Similar. We can account for this by introducing higher-Type properties exemplified (relationally) by the pitches of these tones. The details are not relevant here.<sup>5</sup> Relational higher-Type qualities will be introduced, typically, in cases where serial orders and series' are involved—as in the case of tones and pitches. Thus we ground the "similarity" of tones of E-sharp and F, in terms of their place within a serial structure, and the relational qualities they exemplify in occupying those places.

In any event, it is clear from (VII) that the second use to which I have previously put 'QS' is one in which it is a derived quality whose definiens includes the name of no underived quality. It is, therefore, completely on a par with (III)'s treatment of *ESP*. The realist's treatment of similarity is, then, uniform throughout. He is not committed to anything like *ES* as the nominalist is. What grounds the various sorts of similarity for the realist is always, in the final analysis, a relational or non-relational quality. That these qualities are of different Types makes no difference. For they are all of the same category—namely attributes. And for the realist they are all universals. Can the nominalist do as well?

What can he do with *ES*? There are, so far as I can see, four alternatives. These are: (1) to make it an underived relation; (2) to make it into another sort of basic tie or nexus; (3) to offer an analysis of it in terms of classes; (4) to admit it as an "internal relation." I will not discuss this last maneuver, since it is not currently a popular gambit. It should be noted, however, that most nominalisms make use of ad-mixtures of these alternatives and, hence, one can find evidence of a doctrine of internal relations in many of them. It is, moreover, hard to see why the move to internal relations, if it is to be made anyway, should be made now. It could as easily be made when the relata are perceptual particulars. Internal relations are not classes. So there is no reason why the difficulties of companionship and imperfect community, or any like difficulties, should arise. A quality could as easily be identified with an internal relation exemplified by all the *perceptual* particulars which, ordinarily, we should say have that

quality, as with a group of *perfect* particulars each of which is internally related to all the others. The sole difference is that if we choose perceptual particulars for the relata of our internal relations, we will be forced to postulate one such relation for every simple, most determinate quality in the realist's world. Otherwise we would be identifying one internal relation with every quality. In the case of perfect particulars we need not do this. The perfect particular nominalist who admits internal relations need not claim, and is not claiming, that the perfect particulars which, as he says, ground an instance of similarity are qualitatively similar. All he need say is that each element in a group of perfect particulars which grounds a case of similarity bears to all and only each other element in that group the internal relation of *ES*. Different groups may still bear, within themselves, the same internal relation. But there is no real economy here. It is largely uninteresting to the ontologist, whose aim is to catalogue the world's entities, what the exact number of the entities in each category is. It is largely uninteresting whether there are  $n$  qualities of the first type or  $n + i$  (where  $i \neq 0$ ) qualities of the first type. For the ontologist to admit one entity into a category is as good as admitting an indefinite number. To move to internal relations in the case of perfect particulars, then, is actually less economical than moving to them earlier in the game. For the perfect particular nominalist admits into his ontology everything that the nominalist who moves to internal relations at the earlier stage does. What is more, he admits perfect particulars. He has at least three categories of things in his world. His ally in admitting internal relations only need admit two such categories. Again, he is no better off than the realist with respect to Occam's Razor, since he admits both perfect particularity and internal relations as categories to the realist's single category of quality. There is an important sense, of course, in which an internal relation is not an entity. But to explore that sense will require a study of the doctrine of internal relations which I will not attempt.<sup>6</sup> I am willing to leave open the possibility that the nominalist who admits internal relation(s) can maintain his position (nominalism) against the arguments of the realist. But again I ask "at what cost?"

The third of the alternatives I mentioned requires the nominalist to offer an interpretation of *ES* in terms of a class or classes. Suppose there are only nine perfect particulars in the world,  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_9$ . Then the nominalist can either identify *ES* with the entire class of  $x_1$  thru  $x_9$ , or with sub-classes of that class, or with a class of those sub-classes. Now *ES*



is supposed to unite certain limited groups of perfect particulars into classes which serve to ground derived relations like *ESP*. If the nominalist chooses to identify *ES* with the entire class  $\{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_9\}$ , his analysis may be inadequate. It will be inadequate if any of the perfect particulars,  $x_1$  thru  $x_9$ , are not, in fact, serving to ground the same "quality." Suppose, that is, that the sets:

- (i)  $\{x_1, x_2, x_3\}$
- (ii)  $\{x_4, x_5, x_6\}$
- (iii)  $\{x_7, x_8, x_9\}$

were, in fact, the way the perfect particulars were arranged. Set (i)'s elements all ground or are correlated to one quality, set (ii)'s another quality, and set (iii)'s a third quality. If this or anything like it is the case then *ES*'s being identified with the set containing  $x_1$  thru  $x_9$  will fail to reflect the fact that, for example,  $x_2$  and  $x_8$  are not connected with one another at all. *ES*, remember, is supposed to be some sort of similarity. Making *ES* the class of all perfect particulars, then, is inadequate because not all perfect particulars are similar to each other. There is, so far as this issue is concerned, no similarity spanning all perfect particulars.

Clearly, 'ES' as it is used in (IV) denotes a species rather than an individual. If we choose to give it an interpretation in terms of classes our interpretation must reflect this.

The classes (i), (ii), and (iii) are, let us imagine once more, the way perfect particulars are arranged. On the second of our three alternative class interpretations of *ES* we will identify *ES*, or more precisely various *ES* relations, with each of these classes. Thus, supposing class (i) to serve in grounding quality  $F_1$ , (ii) in grounding  $F_2$ , and (iii) in grounding  $F_3$ , we will identify  $ES_1$  with class (i),  $ES_2$  with (ii), and  $ES_3$  with (iii). It should be clear that alternatives two and three go hand in hand. For now we can re-introduce our original *ES* as the class of all such  $ES_n$  classes. This interpretation of *ES* and its specifications seems to solve the problem which we encountered in the first alternative class treatment of *ES*. We now have a way of reflecting both the fact that (a) not every perfect particular is similar to every other perfect particular; and (b) there is a sense in which all perfect particulars share in one *sort* of similarity relation. The introduction of different sets for each  $ES_n$  reflects (a), while the introduction of *ES* as a species (here, a set of sets) reflects (b).

Unfortunately there is a more basic problem in identifying *ES* with

classes of perfect particulars in this way. I have said that sets (i), (ii), and (iii) are, in fact, the way our world is arranged. Now let us form the following sets:

- $$\begin{aligned} \text{(iv)} & \{x_2, x_3, x_4\} \\ \text{(v)} & \{x_5, x_6, x_7\} \\ \text{(vi)} & \{x_8, x_9, x_{10}\} \end{aligned}$$

There is no quality grounded by any of these three sets. Yet they are all, equally with (i), (ii), and (iii), sets of perfect particulars. The difference, one is tempted to say—one wants to say—is that whereas (i), (ii), and (iii) each are united by an  $ES_n$  relation, neither (iv), nor (v), nor (vi) are united by an  $ES_n$  relation. But, however one is tempted, one cannot say that. We are, after all, *identifying* each such relation with a class of perfect particulars. We are not, therefore, entitled to make use of any such relation to define acceptable classes of perfect particulars. The case here is similar to the earlier one in which we tried to define quality classes. There we said:

The set of all red objects . . . is determined by the quality denoted by 'red.' An object is an element of that set if and only if it is red. Membership in the class may be defined in terms of exemplification of the quality. But if one wishes to construe qualities as being classes, one cannot define the class of red objects in the way just noted. For, in that case, it is the exemplification of the quality red which is defined in terms of membership in the class of, as it were, red objects. Under that condition, to maintain that the price of membership in the class of red objects is exemplification, by an object, of the quality red, is to maintain nothing more than the truism 'membership in the class of red objects is the price of membership in the class of red objects.' But surely there are conditions met by some objects and not by others which entitle the former to membership in the class of red objects.<sup>7</sup>

The parallel between the cases is exact. We cannot identify  $ES$  with classes of perfect particulars because we have no way, other than by using  $ES_n$ 's, of marking off classes corresponding to qualities from those which do not. It is only because I can specify that there are such relations as  $ES_1$ ,  $ES_2$ , and  $ES_3$  that I am able to say that (i), (ii), and (iii) are bona fide sets of perfect particulars while (iv), (v), and (vi)—for which there exist no corresponding relations  $ES_4$ ,  $ES_5$ , and  $ES_6$ —are not bona fide. If therefore, I choose

to interpret *ES* in terms of classes it will turn out that any set of perfect particulars whatsoever determines an  $ES_n$  relation. But that, of course, is completely unacceptable since it is tantamount to producing similarities among perceptual particulars where none exist. The interpretation of *ES* in terms of classes, then, is inadequate. I will turn to the other alternatives.

Consider alternative (1), where *ES* is an underived relation holding among perfect particulars. Again we can consider two versions of this alternative. The first version makes *ES* a species of relations holding among each set of perfect particulars which ground qualities. Thus the perfect particulars serving to ground a quality *F* exemplify  $ES_1$ , those serving to ground quality *G* exemplify  $ES_2$ , etc. For each distinct quality there will be a distinct  $ES_n$ . The second version makes *ES* the actual relation which holds between perfect particulars grounding a quality. Thus the perfect particulars grounding quality *F* all jointly exemplify *ES* while those perfect particulars grounding *G* also exemplify *ES*. Of course, according to this version, none of the elements of the set of perfect particulars which ground *F* bear *ES* to any of the elements of any set of perfect particulars grounding any other quality. Whereas each  $ES_n$  (first alternative) is transitive, *ES* (second alternative) is non-transitive.

I will begin by treating the first alternative version. According to this version every perfect particular is an element of one and only one set,  $n$ , such that the elements of that set bear  $ES_n$  to one another and neither bear  $ES_n$  to anything outside the set  $n$ , nor bear any other  $ES_i$  (where  $i \neq n$ ) to any perfect particular. This assures us that no single perfect particular is an element of more than a single  $n$ , and so no such particular is correlated to more than a single quality. This is a simplifying assumption which will enable us to avoid having to face certain irrelevant problems.<sup>8</sup> Each  $ES_n$  will differ at least extensionally from every other  $ES_n$ . But note that we will also have at least two sorts of difference holding amongst the perfect particulars. Each perfect particular, that is, will first of all differ from *every* other perfect particular in what we have already called a primitive way. But, in addition, each perfect particular will differ from *every perfect particular which is not related to it by some  $ES_n$* . Suppose, for example, that perfect particulars  $p_1, p_2, \dots, p_9$  are arranged as follows:

- (i)  $ES_m(p_1, p_2, p_3)$ : that is,  $\{p_1, p_2, p_3\}$  is the set of things exemplifying  $ES_m$ .
- (ii)  $ES_n(p_4, p_5, p_6)$ : that is,  $\{p_4, p_5, p_6\}$  is the set of things exemplifying  $ES_n$ .

- (iii)  $ES_o(p_7, p_8, p_9)$ : that is,  $\{p_7, p_8, p_9\}$  is the set of things exemplifying  $ES_o$ .

Each perfect particular  $p_1$  thru  $p_9$  differs from every other such perfect particular in the primitive way. But  $p_1$ , for example, also differs from  $p_4, p_5, \dots, p_9$  in a way in which it does not differ from  $p_2$  and  $p_3$ . The difference, of course, is that  $p_1$  bears  $ES_m$  to  $p_2$  and  $p_3$ , whereas it is not exactly similar to any of the other perfect particulars. As for difference, so for sameness. While  $p_1$  is, in a sense, the same as or "similar" to  $p_2$  and  $p_3$ , it is not the same as  $p_4$  thru  $p_9$ . That is,  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  both bear  $ES_m$  to  $p_3$  (or  $p_1$  and  $p_3$  both bear  $ES_m$  to  $p_2$ , etc.). On the other hand,  $p_1$  and  $p_4$  (or  $p_5, \dots, p_9$ ) are *both* not exactly similar to anything. For each of the sets of (i)-(iii), there is a way in which each element of those sets differs from every element of a different set. Thus  $p_1, p_2, p_3$  each differs from every element of the sets of (ii) and (iii) in that they are all  $ES_m$ ;  $p_4, p_5, p_6$  each differs from every element of the sets of (i) and (iii) in that they are all  $ES_n$ ;  $p_7, p_8, p_9$  each differs from every element of the sets of (i) and (ii) in that they are all  $ES_o$ .

We have, then, a particular  $ES$  relation (e.g.,  $ES_m, ES_o$ , etc.) corresponding to each set of perfect particulars which ground a different quality. Or, to put it another way, we have a separate  $ES$  relation for every separate quality. So for each universal that the realist puts in his ontology the nominalist, if he explains  $ES$  in the above manner, has a counterpart in his ontology—namely an  $ES$  relation. This version of nominalism, then, does not even provide the illusion of being ontologically economical.

The second version of this alternative (that  $ES$  is an underived relation) may be formulated as follows: There is a single relation,  $ES$ , such that each perfect particular bears  $ES$  to a certain set of other perfect particulars where this set corresponds to one and only one quality. Thus, if we again assume there to be exactly nine perfect particulars,  $p_1$  thru  $p_9$ , we will have an arrangement of the following sort:

- (iv)  $\{p_1, p_2, p_3\}$  is the set grounding quality  $F$ , each element of which bears  $ES$  to all and only the other elements.
- (v)  $\{p_4, p_5, p_6\}$  is the set grounding quality  $G$ , each element of which bears  $ES$  to all and only the other elements.
- (vi)  $\{p_7, p_8, p_9\}$  is the set grounding quality  $H$ , each element of which bears  $ES$  to all and only the other elements.

Here, again, there are two ways in which each perfect particular can differ from its fellows. First, it differs in the primitive way from every other perfect particular, and second, it differs from all those perfect particulars which are not exactly similar (bear *ES*) to it. Again, this second form of difference is in no way "reducible" to the first form of difference, because not everything is different in the second way, while everything is different in the first way.

Notice, however, that according to this version we are not committed to a different *ES* relation for each different set of exactly similar perfect particulars. We do not, that is, explain the second form of difference by saying that each of the different perfect particulars bears a different *ES* relation to every other. Instead, the difference between, e.g.,  $p_1$  and  $p_9$ , is explained in terms of the different perfect particulars to which each bears the same relation, *ES*. And so this version allows the nominalist at least the illusion of economy. For while the realist has one universal for each quality (he says the quality is a universal), the nominalist has only a single relation, *ES*, and different sets of perfect particulars corresponding to each quality.

Yet the difference between these two versions of the nominalistic alternative which treats *ES* as an underived relation is really not very great. For both must, in the end, recognize the existence of universals. An argument of Russell's will serve to bring this out. He writes:

. . . it may be as well to examine and dismiss the theory which admits only particulars, and dispenses altogether with universals. This is the theory advocated by Berkeley and Hume in their polemic against 'abstract ideas.' Without tying ourselves down to their statements, let us see what can be made of this theory. The general name 'white,' in this view, is defined for a given person at a given moment by a particular patch of white which he sees or imagines; another patch is called white if it has exact likeness in colour to the standard patch. In order to avoid making the colour a universal, we have to suppose that 'exact likeness' is a simple relation, not analysable into community of predicates; moreover, it is not the general relation of likeness that we require, but a more special relation, that of colour likeness, since two patches might be exactly alike in shape or size but different in colour. Thus, in order to make the theory of Berkeley and Hume workable, we must assume an ultimate relation of colour-likeness, which holds between two patches which would commonly

be said to have the same colour. Now, *prima facie*, this relation of colour-likeness will itself be a universal or an 'abstract idea,' and thus we shall still have failed to avoid universals. But we may apply the same analysis to colour-likeness. We may take a standard particular case of colour-likeness, and say that anything else is to be called a colour-likeness if it is exactly like our standard case. It is obvious, however, that such a process leads to an endless regress; we explain the likeness of two terms as consisting in the likeness which their likeness bears to the likeness of two other terms, and such a regress is plainly vicious. Likeness at least, therefore, must be admitted as a universal, and, having admitted one universal, we have no longer any reason to reject others. Thus the whole complicated theory, which had no motive except to avoid universals, falls to the ground.<sup>9</sup>

Russell's argument is designed to work against the nominalist who construes qualities to be sets of what I have deemed perceptual particulars standing in *various* likeness relations. But with a few changes it works as well against the view we are presently considering.

On this view, two perceptual particulars are said to have the same quality if and only if there is a perfect particular in one which is exactly similar to a perfect particular in the other. Following Russell, we admit that the nominalist can thus avoid having to admit that the qualities of the perceptual particulars are universals. But we now ask about the status of the relation of exact similarity holding between the two perfect particulars. Is that not a universal? That is, if the first two and the last two of four perfect particulars  $p_1, p_2, p_3, p_4$  each bear  $ES$  (or  $ES_n$ ) to one another so that it is the case that both ' $ES(p_1, p_2)$ ' and ' $ES(p_3, p_4)$ ', is it further the case that the relation relating  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  is identical with the relation relating  $p_3$  and  $p_4$ ? Is it, in short, the case that ' $ES$ ' denotes a universal? If the nominalist answers negatively he will be forced, by parity of argument, into the same sort of regress which Russell takes note of. He must, therefore, admit at least one universal quality. The difference is that he admits as a universal "quality" something(s) which is (are) clearly more problematic than the things the realist admits as universal qualities.

Notice that Russell's argument, or this variation of it, works equally well against both versions of the nominalistic alternative we are considering. Whether exact similarity, as it obtains among perfect particulars, is a single relation or a manifold of relations, the same question can always be asked about the status of that relation(s); namely, 'is it a universal?'

Immediately after he presents the argument quoted above Russell goes on to say:

It is true that the above argument does not prove that there are universal qualities as opposed to universal relations. On the contrary, it shows that universal qualities can, so far as logic can show, be replaced by exact likenesses of various kinds between particulars. This view has, so far as I know, nothing to recommend it beyond its logical possibility. (Russell, p. 112)

Now, similarly, it is true that  $ES$  or  $ES_n$  are relational. But there is an interesting difference between the view which admits  $ES$  as a single relation obtaining amongst all the different sets of perfect particulars which ground qualities, and the view which postulates a different  $ES_n$  for each set of similar perfect particulars. The difference comes out if we consider, again, the ways in which these differing versions account for the second sort of difference among perfect particulars which I took note of before. That, remember, was the sort of difference which did obtain between perfect particulars which *were not* exactly similar to one another but which did not obtain between perfect particulars which *were* exactly similar to each other.

The first version, the one admitting distinct  $ES_n$  relations for each quality we ordinarily recognize, accounts for difference of the sort in question in terms of the exemplification by the elements of each distinct set of perfect particulars of a distinct  $ES_n$  relation. But if Russell, or more precisely my version of Russell's argument, is correct there will be very little difference between considering each  $ES_n$  to be a relation and considering each  $ES_n$  to be a non-relational quality. If, that is,  $ES_n$  is, in each case, a distinct universal, it will only be important in a strictly logical sense whether  $ES_n$  is a true relation or a non-relational quality. For even if  $ES_n$  is non-relational it will not follow that things previously understood to be dissimilar will now be similar. Perfect particulars different in the sense we are now concerned with (call it 'different<sub>2</sub>') each exemplified, where  $ES_n$  was understood to be relational, a different  $ES_n$ . This separated each set of perfect particulars from every other set. But if  $ES_n$  is, for every  $n$ , understood to be non-relational, we still maintain each case of difference<sub>2</sub>. For now each set of perfect particulars grounding a distinct quality will contain just those elements which exemplify the non-relational quality  $ES_n$ , where each  $ES_n$  is a different non-relational universal quality. It is, therefore, a feature of the version of nominalism which treats  $ES$  as a *species*

of underived relations whose specifications are the particular  $ES_n$  relations, that it is not intrinsically a relational view of qualities. All I mean by this is that little would be altered if the things (the  $ES_n$  relations) this version of nominalism uses to ground qualitative sameness ( $ESP$ ) were changed from relations to non-relational qualities. And if that change were made, there would be no longer any reason to think of the particular  $ES_n$  relations as anything but universal.

The alternative, on the other hand, appears to be an intrinsically relational view of qualities. That version, remember, treats  $ES$  as a single underived relation, rather than a species of relations. It accounts for two perfect particulars being different<sub>2</sub> not in terms of different relations exemplified by each, but in terms of the different perfect particulars to which each bears the same relation. We apparently could not alter  $ES$ , if it is understood in the way it is here, from a relation to a non-relational universal quality. For if we did, that difference<sub>2</sub> would disappear. Every perfect particular would exemplify the non-relational quality  $ES$ . But, as a matter of fact, not every perfect particular is exactly similar to every other perfect particular. Moreover, if  $ES$  were non-relational, it could no longer serve to ground qualitative sameness among perceptual particulars. For, then there would no longer be any difference, so far as the analysis of these situations went, between the case where two perceptual particulars do stand in  $ESP$ , and the case where they are totally unlike. In both of these cases all the perceptual particulars would be associated with complexes of perfect particulars (i.e., the qualities in their associated complexes would really be perfect particulars) every one of which exemplified the universal non-relational quality  $ES$ . In other words, formula (IV) would look something like:

$$(VIII) \quad ESP(p_1, p_2) = \text{def. } (F_1)(F_1(p_1) \rightarrow (EF_2)(F_2(p_2) \& (ES(F_1) \& ES(F_2)))) \& (F_1)(F_1(p_2) \rightarrow (EF_2)(F_2(p_1) \& (ES(F_1) \& ES(F_2))))$$

But, if  $ES$  is construed to be a non-relational universal quality which is exemplified by *all* perfect particulars, then every perceptual particular will bear  $ESP$  to every other perceptual particular (on the assumption that all perceptual particulars have some quality or other). This, of course, would be unacceptable. I conclude, then, that the version of nominalism which construes  $ES$  to be a single underived relation is an essentially or intrinsically



relational view of qualities, in that it grounds qualitative sameness with an essentially relational device.

But, again, neither version of the nominalistic alternative which treats *ES* as a relation can succeed in avoiding being committed to at least one universal. And, as Russell says, "having admitted one universal, we have no longer any reason to reject others" (Russell, p. 112). The only "advantage" which seems to accrue to the nominalist is the complexity of his world—one with perceptual *and* perfect particulars as well as universal qualities. And, of course, the question remains about the nature of the relation *ES*. Just as in our consideration of Wolterstorff's theory of aspects we noted the possibility that aspects are not merely similar but, in fact, identical, so we are obliged to do the same for those perfect particulars standing in *ES* to one another. We shall see, below, in discussing the Platonic theory that there is considerable pressure to ask how, if any two things which are similar differ, it is that they do differ.

Having considered three of the alternatives open to the nominalist in his interpretation of *ES*, I will now turn to the last. On this alternative *ES* is construed to be not any sort of entity, but, instead, a basic *form* of connection like the connection which binds the qualities coordinated to a perceptual particular into a complex.

The dynamics of this view are much like those of the alternative which assigns the status of underived relation to *ES*.<sup>10</sup> On the view that *ES* is a nexus of some sort it will be maintained that just those perfect particulars serving to ground a particular quality are bound up by *ES*. The perfect particulars of different qualities will not be bound to one another by *ES*. Thus, again in a world consisting of just nine perfect particulars, the nominalist who espouses this alternative may arrange his world according to the following scheme:

(vii)  $p_1 + p_2 + p_3$  grounds quality *F*.

(viii)  $p_4 + p_5 + p_6$  grounds quality *G*.

(ix)  $p_7 + p_8 + p_9$  grounds quality *H*.

I indicate that perfect particulars are tied by the nexus *ES* by writing their names on either side of the sign '+'. It should be understood that '+' does not denote an entity, but a mode of connection in the same sense that the copula is sometimes said to do so. In any event, what we ordinarily call the quality '*F*' is, on this interpretation, the three perfect particulars  $p_1$ ,  $p_2$ , and  $p_3$  bound together by *ES*. Again, the ordinary quality *G* is the

three entities  $p_4$ ,  $p_5$ , and  $p_6$  bound together by the same *ES*. As with the qualities *F* and *G*, so with *H*.

There is a way in which, on this view, each perfect particular differs from every other perfect particular. This sort of difference, call it 'difference<sub>1</sub>', is the primitive difference which is maintained across all the alternative treatments of *ES*. Is there, corresponding to the difference<sub>2</sub> which we encountered in treating *ES* as a relation, any further sort of difference among perfect particulars if we take *ES* to be a nexus? So far as I can see there is not. In the world in which *ES* was a relation it made sense to say of two perfect particulars that they differed in that either (where *ES* was treated as a species of relations) one perfect particular was a relatum of a relation that the other did not exemplify, or (where *ES* was itself the relation exemplified by perfect particulars) one perfect particular was related to some other perfect particular while the second perfect particular was not related to that perfect particular. There was, in short, a relational difference between certain perfect particulars in the world where *ES* was a relation. This difference<sub>2</sub> held only between perfect particulars which did not ground the same quality. Perfect particulars which did ground the same quality did not differ in this way. But, now, what sort of difference is there between  $p_1$  and  $p_9$  which is not also a difference between  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  in a world where *ES* is a nexus? Neither  $p_1$ ,  $p_2$ , nor  $p_9$  exemplify any relational qualities, so this cannot provide a sense for the claim that  $p_1$  differs from  $p_9$  in a way it does not differ from  $p_2$ . All that can be said is that  $p_1$  is bound to  $p_2$  whereas it is not bound to  $p_9$ . But that is not a difference between  $p_1$  and  $p_9$  any more than it is a difference between, say, a shade of red and a shade of green that the red is the color of one perceptual particular while the green is the color of another perceptual particular.<sup>11</sup> For consider a world like the one we have just now sketched, but in which the places of  $p_2$  and  $p_9$  are exchanged. That is, in this new world  $p_1 + p_9 + p_3$  grounds quality *F*, whereas  $p_7 + p_8 + p_2$  grounds quality *H*. Only if there were some form of difference between  $p_2$  and  $p_9$  unlike the difference between  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  would this switch make any real difference. Lacking such a difference there is no difference between the two worlds. That is there is no difference between the two worlds other than the difference engendered by the fact that  $p_2$  and  $p_9$  differ primitively. To put it another way, the second world differs from the first world only insofar as a different entity is in each of the complexes mentioned in (vii) and (ix). But this difference can be com-

pletely accounted for in terms of the primitive difference (difference<sub>1</sub>) which obtains between any and all perfect particulars.

I will say that, insofar as they can only differ in this primitive manner, perfect particulars are *bare* in a world where *ES* is a nexus.<sup>12</sup> The nominalist who treats *ES* in this manner, therefore, introduces an irreducible mystery into his world. For, strictly speaking, there is not any *difference* between what grounds the quality *F* in his world and what grounds the quality *G*. The perfect particulars which he puts into a complex bound by *ES* are no more similar to one another than they are to any other perfect particulars. Or, to put it another way, there are no differences between the complexes of perfect particulars bound by *ES* other than that they are just different complexes. The complex  $p_1 + p_2$  is as different from the complex  $p_1 + p_2 + p_3$  as it is from the complex  $p_4 + p_5 + p_6$ . The only alternative to this clear deficiency is to introduce, at least implicitly, another feature into the nominalist's world.

According to the nominalist each and every perfect particular differs from every other perfect particular in a primitive way. Now he will say that each of the perfect particulars in a complex bound by *ES* are similar to one another in some primitive way. And this similarity is restricted to within complexes. It is not, moreover, *ES* which constitutes this similarity. *ES* is only the tie which binds such similar perfect particulars into complexes. But to see this is to see the failure of the whole enterprise. We started out trying to discover the nature of *ES*. *ES* was supposed to ground the similarity obtaining amongst perfect particulars which were coordinated to perceptual particulars having a common quality. We considered the possibility that *ES* was a nexus binding such perfect particulars together. But now we find that we are faced with another sort of similarity among perfect particulars. This primitive form of similarity obtains between only those perfect particulars bound into a complex by *ES*, but it is not identical with *ES*. We have, in a word, gotten nowhere. For where formerly we had *ES* to consider now we have this new form of similarity to consider. It does not require much thought to see that we have embarked upon a regress every bit as vicious as the one Russell takes note of in his argument against construing qualities to be particulars. The way out, of course, is to recognize that instead of different perfect particulars, each exactly similar to every other, bound up into a complex, there are single quality universals. It is, in fact, natural to make this switch from nominalism to realism after considering the possibility that *ES* is a nexus. For the difficulty with that

view is simply a result of the diversity of the perfect particulars which serve to ground each quality. If they were not diverse there would be no need to postulate the new sort of similarity which sets off all the members of one complex of perfect particulars joined by *ES* from every other perfect particular. At the same time the attempt to construe *ES* as a nexus serves to illuminate the point that what grounds sameness among perceptual particulars is essentially a unity. For the realist such a thing is a quality universal. There is also a more general point. All of the nominalistic gambits I have considered fall back, in the last analysis, upon the claim that certain entities, the perfect particulars, can be both exactly similar and yet just different. This, it is clear, is the central mystery and dogma of the nominalist's theology. In the next chapter I will consider essentially this same point in the context of the treatment it gets at the hands of Plato—or, in any event, my version of Plato. There is a sense in which we have reached rock-bottom with this central mystery. We cannot argue against it directly because, I believe, it is logically airtight. On the other hand, one may echo Russell's remark and say that this is all that the theory has to recommend it. For in the last analysis it answers the question "What grounds the similarity of perceptual particulars?" only at the expense of raising a more difficult question, "What grounds the similarity of perfect particulars?"

I have tried to point out certain crucial difficulties in the various alternative treatments which the nominalist can give to *ES*. I think I have shown that three of these alternatives are untenable. The fourth, the treatment involving internal relations, I have not argued against. But its availability will be of little comfort to those familiar with the morass of problems surrounding the doctrine of internal relations. In pointing out the difficulty of offering an interpretation of *ES* I have tried to cast doubt upon the nominalist's whole enterprise. For him, remember, *ES* is the crucial tie which serves somehow to connect perfect particulars grounding single qualities. But if *ES* remains a mystery the nominalist's entire structure of perfect particulars is a castle in the air. While I have not shown that every interpretation of *ES* is a failure I have tried to show that some of the more straightforward and seemingly appealing interpretations are inadequate. It seems likely that more elaborate treatments of *ES* will exhibit essentially the same inadequacies. I say this because I believe, though I will not attempt to show, that more elaborate interpretations of *ES* will be in large measure variations on one of the themes I have treated here.

## NOTES

1. I have argued this elsewhere. See, e.g., Sec. II, note 5, above.
2. I would then have been following Bergmann's line in *Realism* (Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1967), p. 93.
3. The argument of the last pages is derived from Bergmann in *Realism*, pp. 93-96.
4. Bergmann, *Realism*, pp. 103-108, contains a good discussion of this. Also see, for discussions of Elementarism, the view that there are no underived properties of types higher than 1, H. Hochberg, "Elementarism, Independence, and Ontology," in *Philosophical Studies*, vol. xii, 1963, pp. 36-43. Reprinted in Edwin B. Allaire, *et al.*, *Essays in Ontology* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), pp. 22-29.
5. But see Bergmann, *Realism*, pp. 104-106; and see G. Bergmann, "Synthetic A Priori," in *Logic and Reality* (Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1964), pp. 272-301.
6. But see Bergmann, *Realism*, Part I, Chapters 3 and 5.
7. See p. 6, above.
8. Among them the following: If a perfect particular  $p_1$  can ground quality  $G$  as well as  $F$ , then the set of elements  $p_1 \dots p_n$  which grounds  $F$  can be the same set which grounds  $G$ . But we can still suppose the two  $ES$ 's to be different—one for  $F$ , one for  $G$ . But then what does this difference amount to?
9. Bertrand Russell, "On The Relations of Universals and Particulars," in *Logic and Knowledge*, R. C. Marsh, ed. (New York, Macmillan, 1956), pp. 111-112.
10. See Bergmann, *Realism*, pp. 6-12 and pp. 42-70 for an account of the need to distinguish fundamental connections (or nexuses) from ordinary relations.
11. See above, pp. 5ff for a defense of this claim.
12. And they are "bare" in a more radical sense than so-called "bare particulars" have been said to be bare. Bare particulars do, according to some, exemplify—though not contain—qualities. But the bare perfect particulars we have encountered cannot even be said to exemplify qualities.

## IV:

### *Platonism and the Rejection of Universals*

Up to this point I have restricted myself to a discussion of the nominalism/realism dispute without regard to any of the concrete, historical embodiments which that dispute has taken. It is time now to consider two cases in point.

The first of these will involve coming to grips with a theory which we may as well call 'Platonism.' That term has, to be sure, been used to apply to any number of views—the view that there are "abstract singular objects," that there are really things called 'classes,' etc. However appropriate the choice of 'Platonism' is as a name for *those* views, I believe my own adoption of the term has the advantage of applying to certain views which are to be found in Plato's *Parmenides*. Still, I do not want to claim that what follows is the whole truth or, even, nothing but the truth about the Platonism of the *Parmenides*. What value it does have will result from its making possible a perhaps deeper understanding of what has become widely accepted as Plato's theory over against the general logical background of some of the problems he was dealing with and which I have been concerned with up until now.

In a nutshell, my thesis is that Platonism is essentially nominalistic; that its logical structure is very similar to certain of the gambits I explored in the last chapter; and that certain of the difficulties with it which are revealed in the *Parmenides* come as a result of an implicit acceptance of the realist's critique coupled with an unwillingness to relinquish that central nominalist dogma which the critique requires. The Platonist, I will argue, implicitly agrees that things which are similar cannot also differ without differing in some way. Yet he cannot see that, structurally, this leads directly to realism and shared qualities, or universals.

Let us suppose there to be three perceptual particulars, *a*, *b*, and *c*. We can imagine them being as follows: *a* and *b* are exactly the same shade of red while *c* is some shade of green. Thus *a* and *b* are qualitatively similar to one another, in one of the senses we examined earlier, but dissimilar to *c*. We might also imagine *a* and *c* to be of exactly the same shape, say round, while *b* is square. Thus *a* and *c* are similar to each other while both are not similar to *b*. We might describe this situation as one in which objects *a*, *b*, and *c* are both alike and unlike.

In the *Parmenides* Zeno seems to think that a situation like the one above, in which objects are both alike and unlike, involves an absurdity. Socrates proposes:

'If things are many,' you say, 'they must be both like and unlike. But that is impossible: unlike things cannot be like, nor like things unlike.' That is what you say, isn't it?

Yes, replied Zeno.

And so, if unlike things cannot be like or like things unlike, it is also impossible that things should be a plurality; if many things did exist, they would have impossible attributes. (*Parmenides* 127E)<sup>1</sup>

In what follows this passage, a classic statement of Platonism, Plato makes it clear that he does not regard the kind of situation I have described as an absurdity at all. But he does suggest that another closely related circumstance could never be the case, that *it* would involve an absurdity. He writes:

Do you not recognize that there exists, just by itself, a Form of Likeness and again another contrary Form, Unlikeness itself, and that of these two Forms you and I and all the things we speak of as 'many' come to partake. Also, that things which come to partake of likeness come to be alike in that respect and just in so far as they do come to partake of it, and those that come to partake of Unlikeness come to be unlike, while those which come to partake of both come to be both? Even if all things come to partake of both, contrary as they are, and by having a share in both are at once like and unlike one another, what is there surprising in that? If one could point to things which are simply 'alike' or 'unlike' proving to be unlike or alike, that no doubt would be a portent; but when things which have a share in both are shown to have both characters, I see nothing strange in that, Zeno; nor yet in a proof that all things are one by having a share in unity and at the same time many by sharing in plurality. But if anyone can prove that what is simply Unity itself is many or that Plurality itself is one, then I shall begin to be surprised. (*Parmenides* 128E-129C)

Plato, in this famous passage, is insisting on the special nature of the Forms as contrasted with ordinary thing—those which may be both alike and unlike. Now Zeno and Parmenides believed that the world could not possibly consist of a plurality of things while Plato believed that it certainly does.

Moreover, the doctrine of Forms, which will shortly (130B-E) be elaborated as a theory of qualitative similarity, is introduced as a way of avoiding the Parmenidean conclusion. It is important when considering the theory of Forms as an account of qualitative similarity to keep in mind that the Platonist also is concerned with Parmenidean Monism. Any attempt to capture the logical structure of Platonism which, while providing an account of qualitative similarity, fails to keep the door closed on Parmenidean Monism must be accounted—on Plato's terms anyway—a failure.

Plato, at (129B), seems to be suggesting that Zeno's mistake comes as a result of his failure to distinguish things which are *simply* alike from those which are alike but *not simply* alike. The most natural way of interpreting these remarks is, I believe, as follows: In order for things like perceptual particulars  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  to be both alike and unlike they must not be simply alike and unlike. This means that there must be some respect(s) in which they are alike and some respect(s) in which they are unlike. The case I described above is an example of this. Such a case, for Plato, is best understood as one in which the similar but yet dissimilar objects—here  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$ —are not simple or homogeneous<sup>2</sup> but rather complex and non-homogeneous. For  $a$  and  $b$  to be similar or dissimilar is understood to be a function of their constituents. In the language we have been using, we may say that difference or sameness among perceptual particulars is a function of the entities which are constitutive of the complexes coordinated to those particulars.

The natural complement of this view is that those things which have but one character may not be both alike and unlike. With respect to their color, for example,  $a$  and  $b$  are simply alike. It would make no sense to suppose that *in that respect alone* they are both alike and unlike. Of course, Plato is not only concerned with objects like  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$ . The Forms themselves also concern him. Now Plato makes his point about sameness and difference being derivative in the context of what may be called "contrary qualities" (i.e., plurality and unity, likeness and unlikeness, etc.), but it is possible to generalize it to all the Forms. Thus any Form  $F$ -ness which has the quality  $F$  is simply or absolutely  $F$ .<sup>3</sup> Anything extrinsic to being an  $F$  is extrinsic to  $F$ -ness. While individual men may be tall or short, lean or fat, Man-ness is none of those things. What then could it be for  $F$ -ness to be both  $F$  and something else? Unless  $F$ -ness had some other character besides  $F$  it could not. Hence  $F$ -ness could not be both alike and unlike something else. Now this view only makes sense if one agrees



that to differ is to differ in a quality. Since, for Plato, anything which partakes of a Form, say *F*-ness, deficiently resembles it, he must admit that any ordinary *F* thing both resembles and dis-resembles *F*-ness. If deficient resemblance is understood as a symmetric relation, then *F*-ness would both resemble and dis-resemble, be like and unlike, all other *F* things. To allow this, of course, would be to surrender to Parmenides. So Plato might suggest that *F*-ness does not deficiently resemble any *F* thing. The rationale for such a move might be the suggestion that, after all, there is no *character* of *F*-ness in which it fails to resemble *any* *F* thing. *F*-ness perfectly resembles *every* *F* thing.<sup>4</sup> And, certainly, the Platonic model implies that each form is not *unlike* any object which partakes of it. For *F*-ness to differ from, be dissimilar to, or be unlike anything else, *F*-ness must possess some character or quality lacking in the other entity. Thus *F*-ness is not both like and unlike any single entity.

Now I have argued as I have to promote two views. The first of these is implicit in much of what I have just said. It is the view that at least some of the Forms themselves have the qualities which other entities come to have by partaking of those Forms. That is, there is some *F*-ness which is *F*. That Plato did indeed hold this view is born out not only by passages in the *Parmenides* but in *Phaedo* (100c) and elsewhere.

The second view, arising from the doctrine that to differ or be dissimilar is to differ or be dissimilar in some respect, might be called the principle of the Discernibility of Non-identicals. That is, for there to be a plurality of entities, there must be differences between them. I believe a reasonably good case can be made that Plato held a position like this. Such a position, it should be noted, is pre-supposed by the Parmenideans. Thus Zeno et al. require that if there are "many," then the "many" must be unlike. Plato apparently agrees that this is so. His argument with the Parmenidean arises over whether it is possible for there to be such unlikeness, not over whether dissimilarity is necessary in a pluralistic domain. While arguing that there is, indeed, unlikeness in the world and, hence, a plurality of things, Plato insists on a special unity for the Forms. While ordinary things may legitimately be thought of as having parts, moreover, the Forms may not be thought of as having parts in that way.

By preserving the unity of the Forms Plato hopes to avoid the "problem" of things which are simply alike being unlike as well. If the Forms are divisible then the parts of each, constituting a plurality, must be unlike. But for reasons I shall discuss shortly these parts must also be alike. Plato,

who accounts for the similarity and dissimilarity of ordinary things as noted above, is committed to the principle of the Discernibility of Non-Identicals. But if the Forms had parts these parts would have to be indiscernible. Thus, committed to an account of similarity and dissimilarity designed to meet the Parmenidean attack on the possibility of Pluralism, Plato is constrained to deny that the Forms are divisible.

This, of course, is the connection between Platonism and the theory of perfect particulars. For Plato to divide the Forms would have been for him to adopt the essential strategem of the perfect particular theory. The divided Forms would then give rise to the same question which Plato sought to *answer* by making use of the device of the Forms—i.e., how can things be both alike and unlike? For, once divided, the “parts” of any single Form would all be alike and yet different, unlike. In all essentials this is the same question the realist puts to the nominalist who adopts a perfect particular theory. Perfect particulars, or “aspects” in Wolterstorff’s case, which ground the qualitative similarity of two objects are supposed to be Exactly Similar. Yet they differ. The realist, echoing the Parmenidean whose principle Plato agrees to, asks how this can be. Clearly this is precisely what bothers Plato and drives him to leave the Forms indivisible. We may read the *Parmenides* from 130E to 133 as a history of Plato’s struggle to keep the Forms undivided. In these sections, where Parmenides is allowed to voice a series of objections to the doctrine of Forms, his main thrust is always towards getting Socrates to split Forms into parts. Plato, it seems clear, wishes to resist this line of attack in the strongest way.

First Parmenides seemingly gets Socrates to agree that the Forms are distinct (130B-C) from ordinary things.<sup>5</sup> Next through the metaphor of the sail (131B-C) he forces Socrates to admit that for the Forms to be in the objects which partake of them requires that the Forms be divisible, i.e., not a unity. The critical point here is Socrates’ initial agreement (131) that for each of the many to partake of a Form they must receive a share of the Form. It is this hypothesis which Parmenides tries to refute. Socrates agrees, on the basis of the sail example, that a Form may not be “received” by the many things partaking of it and still remain a unity. I will suggest later on that it is at precisely this point that Plato, despite his unwillingness to divide the Forms and adopt the gambit of perfect particulars, gives up and becomes a nominalist. In any event Socrates is next compelled to agree that neither can the Forms be received by being divided among the things partaking of them. Parmenides’ literal arguments here seem weak. They

rely upon the treatment of Forms as analogous to material things. But one can, making use of some of Parmenides' premises (which Socrates lets go unchallenged), construct an argument which is more compelling.

Suppose the form *F*-ness is divided up among the many things which partake of it. Since each of these things becomes an *F*-thing, and hence is like or similar to each other *F*-thing only by partaking of *F*-ness, the parts of *F*-ness generating this likeness must in *some* way be similar. Parmenides clearly presupposes something like this when he suggests (131C-D) that the parts of the Form largeness have some size. (In fact, one of his criticisms is that the size of these parts will be small rather than large.) If this similarity of the parts of *F*-ness is not assumed, then there appears to be no reason why receiving one of these parts as opposed, for example, to a part from some other Form would bestow the quality *F* upon an object. Moreover, the parts of *F*-ness would have to be absolutely similar or alike. Since it is in virtue of their relation to *F*-ness that the things which are *F* are alike, the separate parts of *F*-ness to which each *F*-thing is directly related must not introduce points of dissimilarity among the *F*-things. In this respect the supposed parts of a Form are entirely analogous to those perfect particulars standing in some *ES* relation.

Suppose *a* and *b*, which are the same shade of color, are both of that shade in virtue of partaking of some form *F*-ness. Now suppose that *F*-ness is divisible into parts, say *F*-ness<sub>*p*</sub> and *F*-ness<sub>*q*</sub>, and that *a* is related to *F*-ness<sub>*p*</sub>, *b* to *F*-ness<sub>*q*</sub>. Now *a* and *b* are not only similar in shade, they are dissimilar in shape. Let *a* be round by partaking of *G*-ness and *b* be square by partaking of *K*-ness. Further, the part of *G*-ness which is related to *a* is *G*-ness<sub>*p*</sub>, the part of *K*-ness related to *b* is *K*-ness<sub>*q*</sub>. Clearly *F*-ness<sub>*p*</sub> and *F*-ness<sub>*q*</sub> must be somehow related, since, i.e., *b* is like *a* because it is related to *F*-ness<sub>*q*</sub> and unlike *a* because it is related to *K*-ness<sub>*q*</sub>. If *F*-ness<sub>*q*</sub> were not somehow related to *F*-ness<sub>*p*</sub> in a way in which *K*-ness<sub>*q*</sub> was not related to *F*-ness<sub>*p*</sub> then being related to *F*-ness could not account for *b*'s being like *a*.<sup>1</sup> Thus *F*-ness<sub>*p*</sub> and *F*-ness<sub>*q*</sub> are alike in that they are responsible for *a* and *b* being similar. But *F*-ness<sub>*p*</sub> and *F*-ness<sub>*q*</sub> must not differ or be unlike in any respect. For if being related to *F*-ness<sub>*p*</sub> is what makes *a* similar to *b*, which is related to *F*-ness<sub>*q*</sub>, then if *F*-ness<sub>*p*</sub> differed at all from *F*-ness<sub>*q*</sub> one would suppose that *a*'s being related to *F*-ness<sub>*p*</sub> provided a point of difference between it and *b*. But the form *F*-ness does not provide a point of difference between *a* and *b*. It does just the opposite, providing a point of similarity. Hence the parts of *F*-ness must not differ at all. We can easily

extrapolate this argument to the case of the perfect particulars grounding the similarity of two perceptual particulars. Thus, suppose  $p_1$  and  $p_2$  are similar in a quality. We have used the expression ' $NS_1(p_1, p_2)$ ' to describe this circumstance. The perfect particular theorist grounds this similarity as in (II) above (p. 27).

$$(II) \quad NS_1(p_1, p_2) = \text{def. } (EF_1)(EF_2)(F_1(p_1) \ \& \ F_2(p_2) \ \& \\ ES(F_1, F_2))$$

The relation  $ES$  which relates, in this case,  $F_1$  and  $F_2$  only obtains between two or more perfect particulars when the various perceptual particulars with which they are associated are similar. The perfect particulars are, as it were, the ground of that similarity. Thus the perfect particulars, e.g.,  $F_1$  and  $F_2$ , cannot differ—be dissimilar—on pain of the perceptual particulars failing to be similar.

If, then, a Form has parts these parts must be simply or absolutely alike. Yet these parts would constitute a plurality. Thus we would have a plurality of entities with no differences between them. This, of course, is a violation of the Parmenidean assumption which Plato has already accepted. Plato, then, is forced to maintain that the Forms cannot be received by being divided among the things partaking of them.

Notice that this argument is applicable both on the hypothesis that Forms are received by ordinary things, which would render them identical with perfect particulars, and on the hypothesis that Forms remain apart from ordinary things. In effect we have a general argument against the divisibility of the Forms. Equally important, the argument incorporates the basic agreement between the Platonist and the Parmenidean. Plato's admiration for Parmenides seems clear. What makes his replies to the Eleatics so hard for him to come by are his fundamental agreements with them.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of Parmenides' next objection to the Forms, the Third Man Argument (TMA). The difficulties Plato encountered in dealing with the TMA have been well explained.<sup>6</sup> I only wish to note how in the TMA we have the classic example of Plato's recognition that a plurality of Forms for a single quality would destroy his theory. We may also get a feeling for Plato's determination to keep each Form a unity in a deeper sense than I have yet suggested.

I just now argued that Plato could not allow the Forms to be divided. If, e.g.,  $F$ -ness has parts the theory of Forms will not do its job. But the

argument did not entirely depend upon conceiving of  $F\text{-ness}_p$  and  $F\text{-ness}_q$  as parts of a single Form,  $F\text{-ness}$ . It is the combination of the absolute similarity and distinctness of these supported parts which Platonism cannot allow. We may, I believe, think of the TMA as having a conclusion which is a variation on the theme of Plato's unwillingness to divide the Forms.

The TMA purports to show that the theory of Forms entails that instead of there being a single form, e.g.,  $F\text{-ness}$ , in virtue of which ordinary objects like  $a$  and  $b$  are alike there is an endless series of Forms for each such likeness. Now the TMA is generally thought to be a problem for Plato because of the indefinite multiplication of Forms it seems to entail. But, viewed from the perspective offered by the argument sketched above, why this multiplication is such a problem becomes clearer.<sup>7</sup>

If we return to our original example we have  $a$  and  $b$  being similar in shade. The similarity in shade is supposed to be accounted for by both objects partaking of single form, e.g.,  $F\text{-ness}$ . Now the TMA purports to show that, since the form  $F\text{-ness}$  is itself similar to  $a$  and  $b$  there must be another, *distinct*, form  $F\text{-ness}_1$  to which  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $F\text{-ness}$  are all related. Again, since  $F\text{-ness}_1$  is also similar to  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $F\text{-ness}$ , still a third *distinct* form,  $F\text{-ness}_2$ , is required to ground their similarity, and so on *ad infinitum*. If the TMA is indeed sound then when there occurs a similarity like that of  $a$  to  $b$  we are faced with an indefinite series of distinct forms  $F\text{-ness}$ ,  $F\text{-ness}_1$ ,  $F\text{-ness}_2$ , . . . ,  $F\text{-ness}_N$ . Now  $F\text{-ness}$  is supposed to ground the similarity of  $a$  and  $b$ .  $F\text{-ness}_1$  is supposed to ground the similarity of  $F\text{-ness}$  to  $a$  and to  $b$ . But  $F\text{-ness}_1$  also, in effect, is a further ground of the similarity of  $a$  to  $b$ . This is so, since the author of the TMA seems to suppose that  $F\text{-ness}$  is really only similar to the ordinary objects in the way that they are similar to one another. (Thus, e.g., ". . . Largeness itself and the other things which are large." *Parmenides* 132A.) Again  $F\text{-ness}_2$  grounds not only the similarity of  $F\text{-ness}_1$  to each of the other objects, but the similarity of each of those objects to one another.

In consequence we have precisely the same similarity—that obtaining between all the entities which are  $F$ 's—being accounted for by a variety of Forms. Now just as in the argument above against the divisibility of the Forms we suggested that  $F\text{-ness}_p$  and  $F\text{-ness}_q$  could not differ at all, but must be absolutely alike, here we may assert the same of  $F\text{-ness}_1$ ,  $F\text{-ness}_2$ , etc. Since each of these forms grounds the same similarity (although each is introduced to account for the similarity of its immediate predecessors in the series of Forms to each of their predecessors<sup>8</sup>) none of them may

provide a point of difference between any of the similar entities.  $F\text{-ness}_i$  and  $F\text{-ness}_k$  each grounding a specific similarity of, e.g.,  $a$  and  $b$  (as well as the other similar entities) cannot differ at all. If they did then, we may suppose,  $a$  and  $b$  would be similar in more than a single way.  $F\text{-ness}$ ,  $F\text{-ness}_1$ , and all the others in this series must, then, be supposed not to differ in any respect. But as such they constitute a plurality of entities in violation of the principle of the Discernibility of Non-identicals.

The difficulty attendant upon the TMA is that we are faced with a multiplicity of absolutely alike Forms. They differ without there being any difference between them. Platonism, having bought the fundamental principle of Parmenides, is forced to deny that there may be a plurality of Forms for a single kind of similarity.

Platonism's response to the Parmenidean critique is what makes it nominalistic as opposed to realistic. The nominalization of Platonism has two main stages:

- (1) The separation of the Forms,
- (2) The particularizing of the Forms.

Both of these stages involve a series of sub-stages. The first step may be viewed as Plato's response to the argument that unless the Forms are separated they must be divisible. This, we have seen, involves a violation of the Parmenidean premise. Plato, accepting that premise, will separate the forms. Having done that he has no alternative to particularizing them.

Interestingly enough it is the separation of the Forms from ordinary objects which, from the time of Aristotle, has given non-Platonists that feeling of unease. Nominalists tend to pounce upon the separateness of the Forms as a major error in Platonism. Yet separating the Forms leads to nominalism, not realism.

In the *Parmenides*, Socrates originally allows the Forms to be received by those ordinary objects which partake of them. Aristotle, as is well known, tells us that Socrates never did separate the Forms. Plato, on the other hand, perhaps in response to Parmenidean criticism did make the separation. At *Parmenides* 131-131E we have Parmenides criticising Socrates' theory of what the relation called 'partaking of' involves. The arguments here are designed to show that Forms cannot be both unities and received by or "in" the things which partake of them. At 131E, after running through his arguments, Parmenides asks:

Well, then, Socrates, how are the other things going to partake of your Forms, if they can partake of them neither in part nor as wholes?

Really, said Socrates, it seems no easy matter to determine in any way.

Parmenides' arguments, then, have the effect of forcing Plato to give up either the unity of the Forms or their immanence in ordinary objects. Since to give up the unity of Forms is to give up the fundamentals of Platonism's answer to Parmenides the second alternative is adopted.

I have just said that separating the Forms leads Plato to particularize them and become a nominalist. What I have in mind is this: In our original example  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  were similar and dissimilar in a variety of ways. The similarity in shade of  $a$  and  $b$  is a circumstance which can be set off from the circumstance of the dissimilarity in shade of both  $a$  and  $b$  from  $c$ . One way of distinguishing these two circumstances is by construing the shade  $R$  of  $a$  and  $b$  to be a universal quality shared by them (as well as all other things of that shade) but not shared by  $c$ . We may thus suggest that  $R$  is in both  $a$  and  $b$  (or, to apply our previous device, in the complexes coordinated to both  $a$  and  $b$ ), but not in  $c$ . Now unless we maintain that  $R$  is *wholly* in both  $a$  and  $b$  we will not have distinguished the similarity of  $a$  and  $b$  from, e.g., the dissimilarity of  $a$  and  $c$ . To see this we need only examine the alternative. Let  $R^a$  be the part of  $R$  which is in  $a$  and  $R^b$  be the part of  $R$  in  $b$ . Remembering that  $c$  was green we can let ' $G^c$ ' stand for that part of the shade,  $G$ , which is in it. Now the names of the entities in  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  are unduly suggestive of the relations among them. If  $R^a$  is really distinct from  $R^b$  then, insofar as it is distinct, it is no less distinct than  $G^c$  from  $R^b$ . Clearly  $R^b$  must be somehow related or similar to  $R^a$ , or we would not have accounted for the similarity of  $a$  and  $b$ . If  $R^a$ ,  $R^b$ , and  $G^c$  are all merely distinct entities, then there is no reason why the presence of  $R^b$  in  $b$  should render  $b$  similar to  $a$  while that of  $G^c$  in  $c$  should render  $c$  dissimilar to  $a$ . This argument, as should be clear, is an analog of the argument I offered above with respect to the divisibility of the Forms. (It is also an analog to the earlier argument in which we concluded that the relation  $ES$  could not be construed in extension—i.e., as a class.) Just as we concluded before that the Forms are unities, we must do the same here. For suppose we suggest that while  $R^a$  and  $R^b$  are distinct entities they are exactly similar to one another.  $G^c$ , on the other hand, while no more distinct from  $R^a$  or  $R^b$  than they are

from each other, is not *exactly similar* to either. We would then have a relation obtaining between  $R^a$  and  $R^b$  which did not obtain between either of them and  $G^c$ . Thus having  $R^b$  in  $b$  would render it similar to  $a$ , while  $G^c$  being in  $c$  would make  $c$  dissimilar to both  $a$  and  $b$ . But, as in the argument against the divisibility of the Forms, we would then be left with a distinction between  $R^a$  and  $R^b$  without any corresponding difference. What reason is there, in other words, to treat  $R^a$  and  $R^b$  as distinct entities rather than saying that a single entity,  $R$ , is present in both  $a$  and  $b$ ?

Unless we are forced, perhaps by arguments like those Parmenides uses, to separate  $R$  from  $a$  and  $b$  we have a realistic view of the similarity of  $a$  and  $b$ . But Plato does separate the Forms and in doing so gives up the basis for a realistic theory—namely shared qualities. Thus, even though Plato recognizes an entity over and above  $a$  and  $b$  there is no particular reason to treat  $R$ -ness as a universal, since the dichotomy universal/particular depends upon exactly that which Plato gives up to Parmenides—the difference between entities which may remain undivided while shared in by separate entities and those which must be divided to be shared in by separate entities.<sup>9</sup> Nor, of course, should it be imagined that Plato's insistence upon the Many-One relationship of partaking turns Forms into universals. Many-One relationships do not entail a theory which incorporates universals. Each of a pair of twins bears the relation "child of" to its mother, yet the mothers of twins are no less particulars than the twins.

That Platonism does not recognize universals is even clearer if we consider the second stage of its nominalization. The Forms are particularized in several ways. First, of course, by being separated from ordinary things they lose their status as universals. Next, for a rather complicated bundle of reasons, they are thought of (in at least some cases) as having the qualities derivative of their names. The function of this "Self-Predication" is, in part, to give a sense to the notion of "partaking."

The realist understands universals to be common qualities or characters. The relation between an object like  $a$  and the universal  $R$  is no more and no less than the relation between any object and its most determinate, simple qualities. Partaking, on the other hand, is not a relation between objects and their qualities. This being the case it is important to describe as clearly as possible what partaking comes to.

Platonism treats partaking as involving imitation or resemblance. The objects which partake of the Forms come to resemble them, be images of them, or imitate them. We may think of Self-Predication as a part of



the doctrine of imitation or resemblance. Large things are, though in a deficient way, like Largeness, i.e., they are large. Beautiful things are, though deficiently, like Beauty itself, i.e., beautiful. To partake of *F*-ness is to be, though deficiently, like *F*-ness. But what, to paraphrase Berkeley, could be like one *particular* large thing but another *particular* large thing? To object that Forms are not *things* misses the point, which is that they are particulars. Perhaps they are super-particulars, having those qualities that they do in some superior manner, but they are no less particulars for all that.<sup>10</sup>

All that remains is to show how Platonic nominalism proves metaphysically inadequate. Not surprisingly its inadequacy is a direct consequence of its background. When I began this discussion of Platonism I described the two forces tugging at Plato: Parmenides' principle of the Discernibility of Non-identicals, and the feeling that to be shared is to be divided. In trying to have it both ways, Plato can have neither.

In a sense the TMA points up this inadequacy. Originally we asked what distinguishes the similarity of *a* and *b* from the dissimilarity of *a* and *c*. The Platonist responds by saying that both *a* and *b*, but not *c*, deficiently resemble the Form *R*-ness. The TMA, in effect, repeats the original question. Since *a* and *b* resemble *R*-ness what is to keep us from asking what it is that distinguishes the similarity of *a*, *b*, and now, *R*-ness from the dissimilarity of *a* and *c* (or, for that matter, of *R*-ness and *c*)? The conclusion of the TMA is that *a*, *b*, and *R*-ness must partake of—resemble—*R*-ness<sub>1</sub>. Since the TMA establishes an infinite regress we will always be able to repeat the original question.

Each time we ask what it is that makes for the similarity of *a* and *b* we are told, in essence, that *a* and *b* are similar to one another in that both are similar to a third entity, *R*-ness. There is, then, nothing in principle which distinguishes this answer from the answer that what marks off the similarity of *a* to *b* is that both *a* and *b* resemble some third red object, say *d*. But surely this is no answer at all. For now we will ask about the similarity of *a* and *d*.

So Platonism differs from the most appealing of the perfect particular theories in several ways. First, Platonism separates the entities which ground the similarity of perceptual particulars from those particulars. The forms of nominalism discussed earlier leave the grounds of similarity in the similar objects. Forms are separated, perfect particulars are not. Second, as a result of Plato's unwillingness to divide the Forms and violate the

principle of the Discernibility of Non-identicals, the Forms are unities, while the perfect particulars grounding a case of similarity among perceptual particulars are distinct from one another. The perfect particular theorist suggests, of course, that certain perfect particulars are related by *ES*. Thus, they are exactly alike and yet different. For Plato this makes no sense. But both Platonist and perfect particular theorist end up without universals: the former because the Forms are separated super particulars, the latter since perfect particulars are unseparated particulars.

In the next chapter I will describe what amounts to an attempt by G. E. Moore to join Platonism and perfect particularism.

#### NOTES

1. All *Parmenides* references are from F. H. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides* (New York, Bobbs-Merrill, n.d.). I should emphasize that the Platonism I am concerned with in this chapter is that of the *Parmenides*. In earlier (and later) works Plato's opinions are rather different.

2. See Cornford's remark about homogeneity and the Parmenidean use of the term 'alike', p. 68.

3. Cornford argues (pp. 88-90) that Plato did not adopt this view. I believe he is in error as a result of confusing the issues of whether a Form has the relevant character and the way in which it has that character.

4. Of course, given all the distinctive traits which Forms are supposed to have, this isn't really so. But that is irrelevant to my point since those differences are differences in a quality.

5. It is not clear that the Platonism of the *Parmenides* includes the separation of the Forms.

6. See G. Vlastos, "The Third Man Argument in the *Parmenides*" in *Philosophical Review*, LXIII (1954), 319-349. Also see W. Sellars, "Vlastos and 'The Third Man,'" in *Philosophical Review*, LXIV (1955), pp. 405-437, and see S. Marc Cohen, "The Logic of the Third Man" in *Philosophical Review*, LXXX (1971), pp. 448-475.

7. Textually it also makes sense to treat the TMA, which follows the arguments about divisibility, as being much like those arguments.

8. See S. Marc Cohen, especially pp. 465-469, for an account of the manner of generation of the hierarchy of Forms in the Third Man Argument.

9. For an absolutely first-rate elaboration of this point see Alan Donagan, "Universals and Metaphysical Realism," in Loux, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-158.

10. The analogy between Forms and Standards is equally beside the point. That which is the standard pound is as much a particular object as any other pound objects.

## V:

### Moore's Platonism

In the preceding chapter I developed an account of Platonism which suggested that that theory was fundamentally nominalistic. Two of the factors which contribute to that nominalist bias are Plato's determination to separate the Forms and his clear insistence on Self-Predication as a way of explaining what the relation called 'partaking of' comes to. In this chapter I will examine a set of views which G. E. Moore held at an early stage in his career. In particular I shall treat the opinions he expressed in his paper "Identity."<sup>1</sup> I hope to show that Moore, at that stage in his intellectual development, attempted to work out what amounts to a hybrid form of Platonism—Platonism joined with a theory of perfect particulars.

In "Identity" Moore argues that the qualities of ordinary objects, including those that I have called perceptual particulars, are perfect particulars. He says, that is, that the qualities of an individual object are peculiar to it and to no other object. Thus he writes:

The view we have accepted is that in some cases where two things are truly said to have a common predicate, there exists in each a predicate exactly similar to that which exists in the other, but not numerically identical with it. ("Identity," p. 111)

By 'predicate' Moore here means 'quality' as I have used that term. Moore's argument for this position is rather complex. But before examining it we might consider what motivated him to argue that predicates are perfect particulars.

I suggest that one of the reasons Moore argues as he does is that he wishes to avoid being committed to the view that there are bare substances, or as some say, "bare particulars." In a passage in Moore's *Principia Ethica* the following appears:

. . . with the greater number of properties of objects— those which I call the natural properties—their existence does seem to me to be independent of the existence of those objects. They are, in fact, rather parts of which the object is made up than mere predicates which attach to it. If they were all taken away, no object would be left, not even a bare substance; for they are in themselves substantial and give to the object all the substance that it has.<sup>2</sup>

It appears from this passage that Moore believes ordinary objects to be constituted exclusively out of what are commonly said to be their qualities. These objects contain, as parts, nothing besides their qualities. Now, if one believes that in order for *ordinary objects* to differ they must differ in a constituent part, one opens the door to the possibility that, contrary to what Moore thinks, there are bare substances. For suppose it is thought not unintelligible that two ordinary objects have all the same qualities. Following Moore's remark that these qualities are the parts of the ordinary objects and exhaust its substantiality we might be led to conclude that what, at first sight, seemed to be two objects is in fact a single object. This would be our conclusion if we believed, additionally, that nothing could be true of the group of qualities which we commonly take to be an ordinary object other than that it contained, for example,  $n$  parts. Moore's remark in *Principia Ethica* establishes his acceptance of the first of the two conditions under which he would have been motivated to argue for perfect particulars. That he also believed that nothing could be true of a collection of qualities, other than that it contained a certain number of parts, is also clear. I will quote a passage from "Identity" later on in which this belief of Moore's is evident. Now if one maintains all these things and wishes to remain faithful to the fact that there are two ordinary objects which have all the same qualities, one may feel moved to introduce bare substances to account for their being two. One could maintain, that is, that objects were collections of their parts, having no substantiality over and above those parts; that the qualities of the objects were common parts of both; and that the objects yet differed. For one would maintain that each object contained a part—a bare substance—not present in the other object. The bare substances would be particulars—in a sense in which the qualities would not—peculiar to one and only one ordinary object. In order to avoid the move to bare substances, Moore, who was deeply aware of the prejudice against such things in the philosophical tradition of Empiricism, would be tempted to deny that when two ordinary objects have the same quality there is something which is a common part of both. In short, one would be tempted to propose the doctrine of perfect particulars. Then again granting that two ordinary objects can have all the same qualities, it will still be possible to maintain the difference between two perfectly similar ordinary objects. For there will be no part of one which is also a part of the other. Again, one will be able to maintain, for the time being anyway, that nothing is true of the collection of parts other than that it is a collection having  $n$  terms. I propose, there-

fore, that Moore's arguments for the existence of perfect particulars are motivated, at least in part, by his desire to avoid bare substances.<sup>3</sup>

What, then, are Moore's arguments for perfect particulars? To begin with Moore argues for perfect particulars indirectly by arguing for what he calls "numerical difference." The issue is this: is there more than a single basic way in which entities can differ from one another? Moore answers that there is both "numerical difference" and "conceptual difference." By "conceptual difference" Moore seems to mean the following: Two spots may both be the same shade of color but different shapes; if so they differ conceptually in that they have different qualities. Again, Moore also means by "conceptual difference" the difference between different qualities. Thus the shape of one of the spots differs conceptually both from the shape of the other spot as well as from the color shared by the two spots. There are, then, two senses of "conceptual difference." In the first place ordinary objects may be conceptually different from one another, and in the second place the qualities of these objects may be conceptually different from one another. It is less easy to explain what is meant by "numerical difference." It is, perhaps, easiest to try to explain what is involved by contrasting a case of numerical with one of conceptual difference. This is Moore's own method of explanation:

What the above discussion is designed to bring out is that, even when we assert truly that two things have the same or a common predicate, there is a serious difficulty in deciding exactly what it is that is true. Our first suggestion was that the predicate of each was in no sense different from that of the other, and that the two things differed from one another only in the sense that they had different predicates. We may label this view as that which holds that no difference except *conceptual* difference is involved in two things having the same predicate. On this view when you say there are two things, you mean that they differ conceptually only, i.e., it is impossible that the difference implied in duality should be other than conceptual difference. It follows that to talk of two things exactly alike, or with no conceptual difference, is to talk sheer nonsense—mere words. But so extreme a judgment seems open to suspicion. Even if there are no two things exactly alike, it seems far from self-evident that there could not be. It was then suggested that there may be; and this view I propose to label as that which holds that beside conceptual difference there is also involved in two things having the same predicate, another

kind which may be called *numerical* difference. ("Identity," pp. 106-107)

Numerical difference seems to be, then, something present both in hypothetical cases of two precisely similar ordinary objects—where conceptual difference is ruled out by the terms of the hypothesis—and in the everyday case of two objects having a common predicate. Moore seems to be saying that because we may have to admit a non-conceptual (i.e., numerical) form of difference in the hypothetical case we may also have to admit it in the run of the mill cases. He might argue as follows: All that is present in the hypothetical case is also present in the everyday case. The precisely similar hypothetical objects consist solely of their qualities. So do the everyday objects with a single common predicate. But in the hypothetical case conceptual difference is not present. Yet the objects are, by hypothesis, two. There is, therefore, some other form of difference present in the hypothetical case, called numerical difference. In the everyday case there is conceptual difference present—one object has a quality missing in the other and vice versa. But there are only qualities present in the everyday case, just as there are only qualities present in the hypothetical case. So, while there is conceptual difference present in the everyday case, there is also numerical difference present. The two ordinary objects, in short, differ both conceptually and numerically. This argument is informal and not very compelling. For while we were forced to propose numerical difference in the hypothetical case we are not forced to admit it in the ordinary case. We can just as well say that numerical difference is a special form of difference present only in the hypothetical and similar cases. Moore is telling us, in effect, that there is nothing special about the hypothetical case—so by parity of argument we should find numerical difference present in the everyday case. But Moore has other arguments which we will explore in a moment. First, though, let me add another remark about numerical difference. Just as Moore explains that there are two sorts of things which can differ conceptually—in fact two sorts of conceptual difference—he also maintains that not only ordinary objects can be said to differ numerically. Thus, immediately after his remarks about numerical difference among ordinary objects, he writes:

But if we thus admit a separate kind of difference, compatible with the absence of conceptual difference, it is plain that this kind of difference may separate from one another not only the things, which we have said possess a common predicate, but also the predicates of each

which we have hitherto said to be one and the same predicate. And hence our first view may be wrong not only in asserting that the two things differ from one another in one sense only, but also in asserting that the predicate of the one is in no sense different from that of the other. ("Identity," p. 107)

What Moore is saying is that if we admit that there is numerical difference as well as conceptual difference among ordinary objects we are likewise constrained to admit that numerical difference can obtain between conceptually identical predicates. Thus, of the shades of color of the two spots mentioned above, Moore is arguing that these may be two entities rather than a single entity present in both spots: that, in short, they are what we have called perfect particulars. Numerical difference thus is being held to apply in both the case of conceptually identical spots and conceptually identical shades of color.

What, then, are the arguments Moore offers for the claim that there actually is a form of difference different from conceptual difference? His argument takes the form of a *reductio* of the view that there is no such thing as numerical difference. He writes:

Let us suppose that there is no such thing as numerical difference. In that case, when two things have the same predicate, the only difference between them consists in the difference between two different predicates, one of which belongs to one and the other to the other. But what are the *things* to which these different predicates belong? We predicate of the things both a common predicate, and a different predicate of each. Either then we must say that the things are the different predicates, and that it is to those that the common predicate belongs; or else we must say that the things are another pair of different predicates, to each of which one of the first pair and to both of which the common predicate belongs. But in either case the common predicate belongs to or is predicated of that which is different in each of the things. And when we say it has this relation of belonging or predication to each of two different things, we certainly may mean that it has the same relation to each of them. ("Identity," p. 108)

In this first part of his argument Moore seeks to establish that the things which can *have* a common quality, under the supposition that there is only conceptual difference, must themselves turn out to be qualities. In fact, they are precisely the points of conceptual difference obtaining between the two

ordinary objects—that is, the things of which the common predicate is predicated are the conceptually different predicates present in the collections into which ordinary objects break down. It is crucial in understanding this portion of Moore's argument that we accept his claim that the qualities of an object give that object all the substance it has. It is, quite literally, nothing other than those qualities. Thus when we say to begin with, that two different things have a common quality, adding that the term "different" in the last clause can only mean "conceptually different," we may be led to believe that *these things* must themselves be the conceptually different predicates in each ordinary thing. For the ordinary things can only differ conceptually, which is to say in a quality.

There is, again literally, no other difference between them. Moore interprets this to mean that the only different things are the different predicates. What Moore has done, in effect, is to analyze conceptual difference among ordinary objects into conceptual difference among predicates. Thus the conceptual difference of the ordinary things which are commonly said to *have* qualities is held to be nothing more than the conceptual difference of their different predicates. In a sense, the ordinary things disappear for Moore and all that remains are the conceptually differing predicates. These predicates are the only *things* which, it turns out, are left to have the common predicates predicated of them. Moore is led to think by his previous analysis of ordinary objects into qualities that conceptual difference among ordinary objects is also analyzable, without residue, into conceptual difference among predicates. And if this is true then only the predicates can be the things he seeks. But it is not wholly legitimate for Moore to make this move. While the conceptual difference of two ordinary objects is explained in terms of the conceptual difference of one or more pairs of their predicates, it is not identical with that latter form of conceptual difference. There are even, quite clearly, cases of the latter sort of conceptual difference which are not cases of the former sort of conceptual difference and vice versa. Thus the conceptual difference of two different shades of color is an example of the second sort of conceptual difference but not of the former. Again, the case of the spots of a single shade but different shapes is a case of the former sort of conceptual difference which, though it involves it, is not a case of the second sort of conceptual difference. But Moore was unable to believe that something could be true of the ordinary objects, namely that they differed in a variety of ways, which was not true of their sole constituents—the predicates—which might differ in only one way.



That Moore was indeed unable to believe this is clear from the very next lines of his argument:

Accordingly our two must each be analysed into: (1) point of difference; (2) relation of predication; (3) common point; of which (2) and (3) are absolutely identical in each. But, if this is so, the things turn out to *be* merely their points of difference. Of the group (1) (2) (3), which is what we originally supposed to constitute a thing, nothing can be true except that they are three. We cannot say of (a) (2) (3), which is what we originally called the one thing, that *it* is different from the other (b) (2) (3). It is only (a) and (b) which differ from one another and are two. In fact our original supposition was that (3) could only be predicated of (a) and (b), not of anything else. And if this supposition holds it is plain that anything else which we might try to predicate of the group, as such, would turn out to be predicated only of (a) and (b). We can never by any possibility get a number of predicates to combine in forming a new thing, of which, as a whole, anything can be predicated. ("Identity," pp. 108-109)

It is this passage which I had in mind earlier when I said Moore believed that nothing could be said of a collection of qualities—the group (1) and (3) (with (2) added in the passage from Moore)—other than that it had  $n$  terms. It is this which prompts him to collapse the conceptual differences of ordinary objects into those of their predicates. For it is easy to see why someone might think, as does Moore, that (a) (2) (3) and (b) (2) (3) (where 'a' and 'b' denote the *conceptually different* predicates of the two ordinary objects) are not *really* different but that only (a) and (b) *really* are.

What is meant is that the difference of (a) (2) (3) and (b) (2) (3) comes down to or is a product of the difference of (a) and (b). It is a relatively easy matter to lose sight of *that* and end up maintaining that the difference of the former pair isn't really a difference at all. And then, since the only different things left are (a) and (b) it is an even easier move to the claim that these two must in fact *be* the things of which (3) is predicated.

Moore continued his line of thought:

We must start, on this theory, with two points of difference—two simple predicates having conceptual difference from one another[:]

this is essential to there being two at all. And then we may try to form new things, also differing from one another, by finding predicates of these points of difference. But whatever we find and however many we add, we still leave the points of difference as they were—*the only things of which duality can really be predicated* [my italics]. For anything we predicate of them, and the relation of predication itself, may always both belong to some other point of difference, so that every property by which we may try to distinguish our new thing from the old, will merely identify part of the new thing with something else, without producing any whole, which, as a whole, differs from everything else in the world, in the way in which our original points of difference differ from one another. (“Identity,” p. 109)

In this passage Moore draws what he regards as the necessary conclusion from his premises that there is only conceptual difference and that in predicating a predicate of a thing we are always predicating it of another predicate. His point is that it is not possible to form from the predicates which one attributed to a thing (another predicate) any new thing of which something may then be predicated. For the predicates which we can attach to our original points of difference by way of predication can as easily be the predicates of some other point of difference (a third predicate). Attaching such predicates to our original points of difference does not, then, give us a new thing—the pair consisting of the old point of difference and the predicate attached to it—for each, but rather serves to provide a point of sameness between each of these original points of difference and the third point of difference of which the same predicate is predicated. But such a situation is fatal to the view that there is only conceptual difference. For, now, suppose that in addition to the two original ordinary things having one common predicate and one different predicate there are a third and a fourth thing, each with two predicates such that they, too, share a predicate and differ in a predicate. Now let the predicate in which the third thing differs from the fourth thing be the same predicate by which the first thing differs from the second. Again, let the predicate by which the fourth thing differs from the third thing be the same predicate as that by which the second thing differs from the first. In that case Moore would have us identify the first thing with its point of difference from the second. Similarly with the third and fourth things. But in that case the first and third things come to be identified with one and the

same predicate, while the second and fourth things also become identified with a single predicate. An example proposed by Hochberg may help to set the point straight:

Consider four things: a white square, a white circle, a black square, a black circle. Assume, for simplicity, they have no other non-relational properties. Call them Peter, Paul, Mary and Joan. To say that Peter is white, on the view Moore wishes to refute, is to say that the predicate white is related by predication to the predicate square; the latter being the point of difference with the white circle, Paul. Moreover, Peter is identified with the predicate square. But, to say that Mary is black is to say that black is related to square, by predication, and to identify Mary with the predicate square, since that is the point of difference with the black circle, Joan. We thus identify Peter with Mary.<sup>4</sup>

It is as easily shown that we identify Joan and Paul. But that is the absurd consequence which Moore wished to show follows from the doctrine that there is only conceptual difference. Clearly Peter and Mary are different. The analysis in terms of conceptual difference alone, according to Moore, fails to reflect this difference. It will not help, of course, to introduce other predicates since, and this is Moore's point, precisely the same thing can still happen. Moore goes on to argue that, once we identify the point of difference with the ordinary object (e.g., Peter with square), it will not help to introduce relational differences. It will not help to argue that since, e.g., Peter is to the left of Paul while Mary is to Paul's right Peter and Mary do differ after all. For, remember, Peter is square and Mary is square (i.e., they are both identical with a single shape) and it has not been demonstrated that the thing they are cannot be both to the left and right of Paul. Thus Moore writes:

We can never say, "This red differs from that red, in virtue of having a different position"; or "in virtue of having a different spatial relation to this other thing"; or "as being the one I think of now, whereas that was the one I thought of then." The positions differ, the spatial relations differ, my thinking now differs from my thinking then; but it is always the same red which is at both positions, and is thought of at both times. And whenever we attempt to say anything of the red at this position, as, for instance, that it was surrounded by yellow, or that it led me to think of a soldier's coat, exactly the same must be

true of the red at that position, which was surrounded by blue or led me to think of a house on fire. We are unable to distinguish the two except by their relation to other things, and by whatever relations we attempt so to distinguish them we always find we have not succeeded. We can never say, "The red I mean is the one surrounded by yellow, and not the one surrounded by blue." For the one surrounded by yellow is also surrounded by blue: they are not two but one, and whatever is true of that which is surrounded by yellow is also true of that which is surrounded by blue. . . . If any one asserts or implies that a difference between this and that can be established by the fact that this is related to one thing whereas that is related to something different, he cannot without contradiction deny numerical difference. For this and that cannot have different relations, unless the relation possessed by the one is not possessed by the other. Unless, therefore, the one has a difference from the other over and above the difference of relations, it will be true of one and the same thing that it both has and has not a given relation to something else. ("Identity," pp. 109-110)

Only by assuming that, for example, red surrounded by yellow cannot be surrounded by blue can the introduction of relations help us. But Moore argues that to assume this is just to assume that that red surrounded by yellow differs numerically (since there are no other conceptual differences) from this red surrounded by blue. Again, in the last paragraph of the quoted remarks, Moore argues that specifying that one thing is related to a second while a third is not so related to the second will not provide a point of difference between the first and third things. Only, he says, by again assuming that the first and third are not identical to begin with does it follow that the same thing is not both related and not related to another thing. He is saying, in short, that unless one recognizes numerical difference one will be committed to the contradiction that one thing is both related and not related to another thing.

This is the end of Moore's argument for numerical difference. But it is also the basis for his position with respect to perfect particulars, viz., that the qualities of objects are perfect particulars. He tells us:

I conclude then that there is such a thing as numerical difference, different from conceptual difference. And since this result has been obtained by pointing out truths in which a thing conceptually the

same is said both to have and not to have a given relation to something else, we have also answered a second question, and have shown that there not only may be but are things exactly similar; and further, since the things, which turned out to be so, were instances of what we originally took to be a common predicate of two different things, it is also plain that a common predicate, in its application to one thing, may differ numerically from the same predicate in its application to another. ("Identity," pp. 110-111)

We are now at the point where Moore is claiming that a quality of things held to be conceptually identical with respect to that quality is in fact a plurality of entities. Since, moreover, these entities are conceptually identical Moore is claiming, in effect, that qualities are perfect particulars. And, as we have seen, a large part of his argument to this end rests on the implicit collapse of his distinction between conceptual difference as it applies to ordinary objects and conceptual difference in its application to the qualities of those objects. For unless this collapse is made it will not follow that the thing of which a predicate is predicated is always another predicate. And without this step Moore's argument fails as a *reductio*. What is interesting from our point of view is the nature of the confusion implicit in the collapse. For it is a confusion of the ways in which objects like perceptual particulars may be alike and the ways in which the qualities of those particulars may be alike. We explored several of these ways in the chapters above.

But it is equally interesting to examine the positions Moore feels compelled to take after he concludes that qualities are perfect particulars. It is here, we shall see, that the hybrid Platonism I spoke of is revealed.

After concluding his argument for the numerical distinctness of the qualities of conceptually alike objects Moore goes on to consider objections to his view. The first objection is very much like the one Russell raises against the view that there are only particulars.<sup>5</sup> The numerically different predicates which are parts of objects of which a single quality is predicated are similar things. In Moore's terminology they have "identity of content." ("Identity," p. 112) Moore puts the objection:

Does not this identity of content between the things consist in their both having the same predicate—a common element? But, if so, then, on your view, this common predicate would itself be two; and these two predicates would again need a common element to explain their

identity of content, which would again be two, and so on *ad infinitum*. So that, if you once admit a single pair of exactly similar things, for each pair thus admitted you have to admit an infinite number of other pairs. And (it may be added) if this is not absurd enough, each pair will be entirely indistinguishable from all the others, so that you will not even be able to distinguish your first pair as your first, from those which it implies. ("Identity," p. 112)

Moore answers this objection by denying that it is relevant to his theory. He writes:

For I do not hold that in *every* case, where a common predicate is truly asserted, the predicates are two. I found myself forced to maintain that in some cases they were so. But it seems to me that, as a matter of fact, wherever two predicates are exactly similar, their relation to that which is the same in each of them, is quite different from the relation of each to that of which it is the predicate. That there may be said to be in each an identical element I admit. But this identical element appears to me to be not only the 'same, but also *one and the same*. ("Identity," pp. 112-113)

Let us review. Two ordinary objects have a quality truly predicated of them. Moore says that in this case there are numerically different predicates, or perfect particulars, in each object. These numerically different predicates, however, bear a relation to one another which Moore refers to as "having identity of content" or being "exactly similar." The objection to his theory is that if this be so then the identity of content of the numerically different predicates must be another quality predicated of the numerically different original predicates. But, the objection goes on, in that case what is predicated of the numerically different predicates will not be a single thing, but two more numerically different predicates. Perfect particulars piled on perfect particulars, as it were. And so an infinite regress is generated. Moore's reply amounts to a concession that the identity of content, the exact similarity, of numerically distinct predicates of the sort in question is not always another quality truly predicable of each. Instead, he now says that there is an element, one and the same element, which is "in" each member of the pair of numerically different original predicates. Moreover, the relation of each of the numerically different predicates to this element is a relation different from the relation of each of those predicates to that of which they are the predicates. In short, the numerically different predicates

are *predicated* of ordinary objects. But the identical element *in* each of the numerically different predicates is neither predicated (in the same sense) of them, nor are they predicated of it.

In a sense Moore's answer to this objection is to give up the claim against which Russell argued; that is, he admits that there are at least two sorts of things—predicates which may differ both numerically and conceptually (perfect particulars) and these new "elements." The vicious regress Russell cites above depends upon the insistence that there are no universals. By this was meant in part the view that there is nothing numerically identical in different objects—that there is such a thing as mere numerical difference. But Moore admits that there are numerically identical elements in numerically different predicates. He thus avoids Russell's objection by, in essentials, giving in to it.

Before moving to a direct consideration of what Moore means by "the elements" in predicates, I wish to consider another objection he raises and replies to. Actually Moore's reply to this objection will provide us with a basis for the examination of what he means by "elements."

The objection concerns the relation between a predicate and the element in it and the relation between two numerically different but exactly similar predicates. Moore puts it:

If in the case of two exactly similar things there is always also a third thing, . . . which is *one and the same* and different from either, must there not also be a fourth related to the first and third, as the third is related to the first and second; and a fifth related to the second and third in the same way, and so on *ad infinitum*? In other words, if, as Plato would say, the similarity between two particulars is to be explained by the similarity of both to one and the same idea, must not the same explanation be given of the similarity of each to this idea? ("Identity," p. 113)

This objection, as Moore plain sees, is none other than the Third Man Argument (TMA) originally urged against Socrates in Plato's *Parmenides*. There, as we remember from the last chapter, it is argued:

[*Parmenides*:] Again, there is another question.

[*Socrates*:] What is that?

[*Parmenides*:] How do you feel about this? I imagine your ground for believing in a single Form in each case is this: when it seems to

you that a number of things are large, there seems, I suppose, to be a certain single character which is the same when you look at them all; hence you think that Largeness is a single thing.

[*Socrates*:] True, he replied.

[*Parmenides*:] But now take Largeness itself and the other things which are large. Suppose you look at all these in the same way in your mind's eye, will not yet another unity make its appearance—a Largeness by virtue of which they all appear large?

[*Socrates*:] So it would seem.

[*Parmenides*:] If so, a second Form of Largeness will present itself, over and above Largeness itself and the things that share in it; and again, covering all these, yet another, which will make all of them large. So each of your Forms will no longer be one, but an indefinite number. (*Parmenides* 131E-132B)

In both the TMA and in the particular version or variation of it which Moore raises against his own position one of the crucial premises is that the Form (or "element") bear to its likenesses (or the predicates) the same relation which they bear to one another. For unless this is the case there is no temptation to suppose that still a new Form or element will make an appearance each time we introduce a Form or element to ground the similarity of the other entities. There must be a *common* element when and only when numerically different things are exactly *similar*. But Moore has not claimed that the *element* in each of the numerically different predicates is exactly *similar* to either of those predicates. Hence he does not need to claim that a new element surfaces for the pair composed of one of those predicates and the element and the other predicate. Moore does choose this way out of the difficulty. He writes:

if . . . the objection is to a definition of exact similarity which consists in saying that two things are exactly similar to one another when each is exactly similar to a third thing, then I admit that such a definition is invalid. Certainly if the relation of the idea to each of its particulars were exactly the same as their relation to one another, we could not define their relation to one another by means of their relation to it. We should have to admit that exact similarity was an unanalysable relation, and that ideas, even though there might be infinite numbers of them, were superfluous hypotheses so far as it



was concerned, and could not be inferred from its reality. ("Identity," pp. 113-114)

In this passage Moore openly admits the distinct role of the elements *in* the predicates. That role is to provide a ground for the exact similarity of those predicates or perfect particulars. The relation each predicate or perfect particular bears to the shared element in both of them (and, by extrapolating, in all other exactly similar predicates or perfect particulars) together with that element is the ground of the exact similarity holding amongst the predicates. And this exact similarity, though it goes unsaid, is in turn the ground of the similarity of the perceptual particulars which are similar in quality. The pattern Moore's arguments exemplify is clearly that attributed to the nominalist in previous chapters. Moore's introduction of so-called elements into his discussion may be viewed as his way of interpreting what I spoke of in Chapter III as the relation *ES*. For Moore, *ES* is a defined relation whose definiens mentions both the thing he calls 'elements' and the relation of an element to the predicates it is, as Moore says, in.

Moore presents his answer to the difficulty he has formulated just above by agreeing that that objection does, though only through his failure to be more explicit, touch his theory. He says:

And this objection does not, as did the last, fail altogether to touch my theory; for I did intend to *define* the relation of exact similarity between two things as involving relation to a third thing, and not merely to make the gratuitous and irrelevant assertion that, whenever two things are exactly similar, there is also such a third thing. To meet this objection, then, I must assert, what has not been made plain hitherto, that the relation between the idea and its particular is *not* the same as that of one particular to the other: that the idea is not exactly similar to its particular. ("Identity," p. 114)

It is interesting to note the change in terminology in the last sentence. Here he no longer speaks of "elements" and "predicates," but "ideas" and "particulars." Clearly he means by "idea" the thing he earlier called an "element," and the "particulars" he mentions are his earlier "predicates." In any case it is interesting to see how, and Moore surely recognized this, Platonic terminology fits so nicely with Moore's own theory. But to return to Moore's response to the objection:

And this assertion does, I admit, seem strange at first sight. If they

are not exactly similar, what, it may be asked, is the difference between them? We grant you they have numerical difference, but you yourself admit that they have no conceptual difference, and what more than this can be meant by exact similarity? My answer is that something more than this *is* meant by exact similarity, namely, the fact that each of the things said so to be has a peculiar relation to a third thing, numerically but not conceptually different from them, which they have not to one another. This third thing is the Platonic idea, or, as we may now call it, the universal. And this third thing is not exactly similar to either of the particulars, just because there is no fourth thing to which it has the relation which they have to it. (Identity," p. 114)

In his reply Moore makes use of the term 'universal.' It is important to recognize that he uses that term differently from the way I have been using it. When I described the view called 'realism' I suggested that the realist believes that the things Moore calls 'predicates' are universals. But what Moore means by 'universal' are these things called 'elements' which he thinks are much like those things Plato calls 'Forms' or 'Ideas.' For Moore the qualities of ordinary objects are perfect particulars.

Moore's universals appear to be much like one of the sorts of things I took note of in Chapter III in attempting an interpretation of *ES*. There I said the nominalist might propose to interpret *ES* as a species of undervived relations,  $ES_1, ES_2, \dots ES_n$ . I went on to point out that these relations,  $ES_1$ , etc., were not intrinsically relational. They could easily be construed as non-relational properties of each of the elements of a set of exactly similar perfect particulars, with the proviso that they be understood to be universal properties common to each of the similar perfect particulars. So considered, there is not much difference between each  $ES_n$  and each universal element which Moore finds in numerically different (but *not* conceptually different) predicates. Each is common to more than a single perfect particular or predicate, and the relation obtaining between each of  $ES_n$  (or Moore's universals) and its perfect particulars is clearly unlike the relation obtaining between the perfect particulars themselves. That latter relation is exact similarity (*ES*) which, consistent with Moore, might be restated as follows:

- (i) If  $x$  is exactly similar to  $y$ , then there is a  $z$  numerically different from both  $x$  and  $y$ , but conceptually the same as both of them

(i.e., not conceptually different from either of them), to which both  $x$  and  $y$  are related by a "peculiar relation."

And the elements fitting the description of  $z$  in this definition are "universals." According to Moore we may also feel free to think of these universals as Platonic Forms. But if my account of Platonism is correct this is not quite so clear. I have said that the Forms are themselves particulars. Yet it is not clear that the things Moore calls elements are also particulars. He says that they are universals. What might he mean?

Since the relation between any two exactly similar predicates and the element which is conceptually identical with either of them is, clearly, supposed to be a many-one relation, we might be led to believe that elements are universals while, in contrast, the predicates themselves are particulars. But the distinction between universal and particular *as it arises in the first place* for Moore is set in terms of whether the predicates of conceptually identical perceptual particulars are themselves always numerically different. That is, the universal/particular distinction is originally concerned with the question of shared predicates or qualities. Moreover, Moore's final position, in which he introduces "elements," is derivative of arguments which depend upon understanding perceptual particulars to be made up out of their predicates. The predicates, in sum, are *in* the perceptual particulars. In the final analysis, then, the question of whether elements are universals is intelligible only (if at all) as the question of whether the element related to exactly similar predicates is literally shared *in* those predicates. Moore, of course, refers in the passages cited to elements as being *in* predicates. But it is unclear what he understood by this. If he meant that literally the same relation ("*in*") obtained between elements and predicates as obtained between predicates and perceptual particulars then certainly the elements are universals. But then it appears entirely *ad hoc* to deny that the element in two numerically different but exactly similar predicates is not, in fact, a *pair* of exactly similar elements, while maintaining that two conceptually identical perceptual particulars contain numerically different but exactly similar predicates. On the other hand, if elements are not shared by the predicates which they are in, then what is left of the claim that they are universals?

If this last is the case then Moore's remarks, comparing elements to Platonic Forms, are very much to the point. For the Forms are not universals at all. Moore, in fact, does not see this. But in failing to see it he

remains unaware of the inadequacy of his own position. Plato separates the Forms to keep them undivided. But Moore divides the predicates. If he allows the elements in predicates to remain undivided then he must answer the question of how only those elements may remain undivided while in more than one thing. And to provide an answer to that question would be to provide one to the question which, because he had no answers, drove Plato to separate the Forms from ordinary objects. If elements may remain undivided when shared, why cannot predicates? If, on the other hand, Moore separates the elements from both predicates and perceptual particulars he gives up their claim to be universals. Giving this up he no longer has a plausible account of exact similarity. For he is then reduced to saying that two conceptually identical predicates are exactly similar in virtue of being conceptually identical to a single element. But the element, though conceptually identical to both of these predicates is not exactly similar to either of them—which is why we are not to ask what it is that grounds the conceptual identity of predicates and element(s). This clearly is no answer at all. Two things resemble one another in virtue of *resembling* a third, but we may not ask about *that* resemblance.

In fact Moore, at this point in his career, had no clear position, and, perhaps, never evolved one. If he was truly committed to the view that elements are universals there would have been no need to say that they do not differ conceptually from the predicates they are in. For the answer to the question of what it is that makes conceptually identical predicates exactly similar would be that they share a single common element. It would be gratuitous, at best, to say that this shared element resembles the things which share it. Moore's commitment to such a resemblance bespeaks the equivocal position he held. On the one hand his position was drawn to the side of realism—he seems to recognize a need to keep "elements" undivided. Yet, on the other hand, he treated predicates as perfect particulars and adopted a variant of Platonic self-Predication, i.e., the resemblance of predicates and elements. Both of these positions are essentially nominalistic in motive.

So Moore can be thought of as having come up with a blend of Platonism and a perfect particular theory. Much of it was a result of his having failed, early on, to distinguish among varieties of what he called 'conceptual difference.' This, in turn, was a result of his commitment to the view that ordinary objects (perceptual particulars) could not possibly have logical properties which their constituent parts lacked—that ordinary objects could

not differ numerically while having all the same shared predicates. At the same time Moore recognized the force of the arguments against nominalism, and made overtures toward realism. He was later to move more decisively in that direction,<sup>6</sup> which is, in my opinion, much to his credit.

## NOTES

1. G. E. Moore, "Identity," in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1900-1901, pp. 103-127. Further references to this source will be presented in the text.
2. G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1954), p. 41.
3. See H. Hochberg, "Moore and Russell on Particulars, Relations and Identity," in *Studies in the Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, E. D. Klemke, editor (Chicago, Quadrangle Press, 1969). Moore, I might note, continued to deny the truth of the (numerical) identity of indiscernibles until at least 1920. See his "External and Internal Relations" in his *Philosophical Studies* (New Jersey, Littlefield, Adams and Co., 1959), pp. 276-309.
4. Hochberg, p. 159.
5. See above, pp. 40-41.
6. G. E. Moore, *Some Main Problems of Philosophy* (New York, Collier, 1962), pp. 332-412.

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