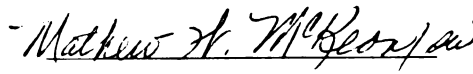


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RETURNING TO INDEPENDENT UNIVERSALS

By

Christopher Martin

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Returning to Independent Universals

By

Christopher Martin

A conception of properties that treats universals as entities having both abstract and concrete aspects offers a stronger explanatory account of the identity of properties across particulars than David Armstrong's version of immanent realism. Armstrong's realism of properties is an attempt to straddle a fence between nominalism and realism. In attempting to do so, he makes two major claims which are supported only by a primitive fact; he attempts to account for each of these claims by defining universals as repeatable particulars. After exposing several of the explanatory failings of Armstrong's realism of properties, I propose as an alternative a realism that treats universals as having both abstract and concrete aspects. After comparing this proposal to several of Armstrong's major points and subjecting it to his criticisms of other theories of realism, I conclude that this version of realism provides a stronger explanatory account of the identity of properties than Armstrong's immanent realism.

DEDICATION

"Your true educators and formative teachers reveal to you what the real raw material of your being is, something quite ineducable, yet in any case accessible only with difficulty, bound, paralyzed: your educators can be only your liberators. And that is the secret of all education: it does not lend artificial limbs, wax noses or spectacled eyes--rather, what can give these things is only the afterimage of education. Certainly, there may be other means of finding oneself, of coming around to oneself out of the daze in which one usually strays as in a gloomy cloud, but I know of none better than to reflect upon one's true educators and formative teachers."

~ Nietzsche

To my committee, my liberators, especially Matt McKeon, my chair and my chief, who have profoundly impacted my philosophical development.

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As a realist about properties, I maintain that many instances or particulars can express a single identical property, i.e. a universal, and that each universal property, in one way or another, must be abstract. David Armstrong proposes a realism of properties which construes universals and particulars as constituents of states of affairs; thus universals are particulars, and no particulars are abstract.¹ On Armstrong's view, universals and particulars are the ontological constituents of states of affairs. He argues that all entities are particulars and that universals are particulars that are repeatable.² In the early section of this paper I consider Armstrong's attempt to accomplish consistently the two tasks of locating universals only in particulars as particulars and of maintaining identity among various instances of a universal. I argue that Armstrong's theory, as an account of the apparent identity of properties in particulars, by locating universals in and only in states of affairs while maintaining that each occurrence of a universal is identical to other instances, has explanatory deficiencies. His suggestion that we accept the repeatability of universals as a primitive fact undermines his theory's explanation of a realism of properties. I suggest that Armstrong, by rejecting the abstract aspect of the universal that platonic realists advocate, has cut himself off from a persuasive explanation of why different instances of a universal are identical, i.e., one and the same. I suggest a version of realism that returns to independent universals with abstract and concrete

¹ This thesis is a consideration of two possible realisms of properties and does not address nominalist accounts of properties. References to property nominalism refer to trope nominalism.

² Armstrong's explanation of immanent realism, as presented and critiqued in this paper, is drawn from his three primary works on Universals; namely, *Universals and Scientific Realism*, vols. 1&2, *Universals: An Opinionated Introduction* and *A World of States of Affairs*. Where relevant, I mention changes between works and strive, at all points, to draw from Armstrong's most recent material.

aspects and argue that it is able to provide a better, which is to say, more persuasive, account of the apparent identity of properties.

I begin by briefly reviewing Armstrong's criticisms of transcendent realism and the specifics about his theory that stem from this critique. I then proceed in the second section to fill in and update Armstrong's position by explaining his more recent doctrine of states of affairs. In this section I focus on two of his claims that are of central importance in this paper; namely, 1) that universals are located in and only in states of affairs and, 2) that each instance of a universal is identical to itself in other instances, i.e. other states of affairs. I argue that without an account of how this is so, i.e., an account of how universals are both spatially located only in particulars and still identical to themselves in each instance, the explanatory power of Armstrong's theory is undermined. I consider two attempts to account for the compatibility of his claims. The first, which is Armstrong's, takes as a primitive fact that universals are a repeatable type of particular. After exposing the explanatory weakness of this claim, I turn to the second attempt, which suggests that universals have abstract as well as concrete aspects. After clarifying a few specifics of this theory, and comparing the explanatory strengths and weaknesses of each description, I conclude that the second, suggesting a return to independent universals, provides a more persuasive account for the identity of properties in particulars. This paper thus has two objectives: first, to show that Armstrong's immanent realism does not provide a persuasive account of the identity of properties and, second, to argue that a realism that returns to independent universals is able to provide a stronger account of a realism of properties than Armstrong's by providing an explanatory

account of what he posits as a primitive fact. I conclude that the second option is therefore worthy of further consideration and development.

Armstrong's Critique of Transcendent Realism:

Armstrong critiques transcendent realism in his earlier work on universals and uses several of these critiques as springboards to the construction of his own theory. Transcendent realism is generally considered to be the theory of universals proposed by Plato.³ Transcendent realism accounts for the similarity or identity of certain qualities in different particulars by reference to abstract universals or forms; i.e., an abstract universal is responsible for its respective quality in many particulars.⁴ Consider, for example, where Socrates says "and the same account is true of the just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and all the forms. Each of them is itself one, but because they manifest themselves everywhere in association with actions, bodies, and one another, each of them appears to be many" (*Republic*: 476a). Armstrong's chief criticism of transcendent realism is that it is a relational theory of universals. "According to this version, *a* has the property, *F*, if and only if *a* has a suitable relation to the transcendent universal or form of *F*" (1978a, 64). In the version of universals suggested by Plato, universals are distinct from particulars while being causally responsible for certain qualities in them. This is the view Armstrong criticizes when he

³Though Plato's dialogues as well as scholarship on Plato's forms have been a strong influence on this work, I am not directly concerned with Plato's actual theory of forms in this paper.

⁴ Whether instances of platonic forms are identical or similar depends on your interpretation of Plato's forms and, more precisely, which theory of forms you are referring to. If forms are interpreted as paradigm instances of particulars, for example, and their instances as deficient or imperfect exemplifications of their respective forms, then the instances resemble but are not identical to their respective forms. If, on the contrary, forms are ideas or concepts of qualities that are represented in particulars, each instance of a form may be said to be identical to other instances of the same form.

argues against a relational theory of universals; such a theory postulates distinct (abstract) universals that are responsible for the qualities of (in) concrete particulars.⁵ The question posed, then, is what is the relation between universals and particulars?

The relation regress, Armstrong's principle criticism of transcendent realism, seriously threatens transcendent realism by undermining its ability to appeal to a single universal to account for many particulars having (instantiating) one property.⁶ The relation in question is the relation between universals and particulars that presumably accounts for particular's having the properties they do.⁷ The criticism exposes the actual relation between universals and particulars as itself constituting a many, i.e. the number of actual relations between a universal and its participating particulars, in need of a one, suggesting that the relation itself is a universal as well. "The relation of *participation* is therefore a type having indefinitely many tokens. But this is the very sort of situation which the theory of forms finds unintelligible and insists on explaining by means of a form" (Armstrong: 1978a, 70). If we account for this difficulty by postulating a form of participation such that all the instances of participation

⁵ I do not consider at this point whether 'distinct' implies 'transcendent'. There is a clear difference between these two terms, e.g., a particular may be distinct from a form just because the form is also in many other instances, whereas transcendence implies abstract, e.g. a platonic heaven of forms. Whether Plato intends 'distinct' to imply transcendence or not, though I suspect not, I leave open for now.

⁶ Armstrong attributes this objection to Gilbert Ryle. 1939, 137-8. A cursory reading of the *Parmenides* shows that Plato was aware of similar difficulties as well. Cf. the third man criticism, *Parmenides* 132.

⁷ A related difficulty implicit in this conception is whether things have properties in virtue only of their relation to universals or whether universal properties can be said of or in the particular without any relation holding between the two entities. E.g., are forms really separate from particulars such that particulars instantiate forms only by a relation between two entities?

participate in this form, we are left wondering how to account for the relation between the form of participation and each instance of participation, i.e., another relation question is begged. For example, if we say that X and Y are both separate universals and that a and b are instances of these universals respectively such that a is an instance of X and b is an instance of Y, we would then need to account for the two instances of the participation relation holding between (X and a) and (Y and b). We would do so, following the method of this criticism, by postulating a single universal of participation. In this instance the universal of participation has as two of its constituents the participation between (X and a) and the participation between (Y and b). However, the relation between the instance of participation present in (X and a) and that present in (Y and b) and the universal participation, being two separate instances that are independent of the instance of participation holding between (X and a) and (Y and b), is now also a one-over-many, and therefore in need of an account. This account, to explain the relations between the first-order universal of participation and each instance of participation between a particular and a universal, requires a higher-order universal.⁸ This second-order universal of participation will then be instantiated in every instance where the first-order universal instantiates a relation of participation. We can account for these numerous instances, again, only by postulating a third-order universal of participation and so on *ad infinitum*. The problem is that an account of how a particular participates in a universal can never be given because each stage of the attempted explanation

⁸ The first-order universal cannot be self-predicating, i.e. cannot itself be an instantiation, because this pulls the form, and all others, into the infamous third-man regress. For a contemporary version of this criticism cf. Gregory Vlastos or Marc Cohen.

posits numerous instances of the universal of participation that can be accounted for only by appeal to a higher-order universal of participation which, again, has numerous instances. So the criticism is not so much that an infinite regress is endemic to relational versions of realism, but, what is far more important, that an account of the relation between universals and particulars can never be given because it must appeal at each step to a higher-order universal which is then justified by appeal to an even higher-order universal and so on *ad infinitum*. "It appears, then, that the relation regress holds against all relational analyses of what it is for an object to have a property or relation" (1978a, 70).

Another problem Armstrong has with transcendent realism is that it allows for the possibility of uninstantiated universals.⁹ An uninstantiated universal is a universal that does not presently or did or will not at some point be instantiated in (by) some particular. Universals, according to transcendent realists, are eternal entities. For all universals that are not eternally instantiated, i.e., do not have at least one instantiation for all eternity, there will be a time during which the universal exists without any instantiation. For example, if a new shape comes into existence and is in need of a universal, given that platonic universals are eternal, the universal must have existed prior to the shape coming into existence, and during this time was an uninstantiated universal.¹⁰

Uninstantiated universals arise from a rejection of what Armstrong refers to as a

⁹ This criticism, though mentioned in Armstrong's earlier work (1978a), is explicitly analyzed in *Universals: An Opinionated Introduction*: 1999, 75-7.

¹⁰ I do not accept Armstrong's argument for and criticism of uninstantiated universals. My aim here is only to explain his criticisms of transcendent realism. My reasons for rejecting his criticism are based, in large part, on which specific properties are universals, a topic for another time.

'principle of instantiation'. "Should we, or should we not, demand that every universal be instantiated? That is, for each property universal, must it be the case that it is a property of some particular" (1989, 75)? This principle can be made more demanding by building into it the further demand that every universal must *presently* be instantiated in some particular. A difficulty arises if we reject this principle and allow for the possibility of uninstantiated universals.¹¹ Consider what follows from such a claim. "Once you have uninstantiated universals you need somewhere special to put them, a 'platonic heaven,' as philosophers often say" (1989, 76).¹² Furthermore, given that uninstantiated universals are occupants of a separate realm, and that instantiated universals could very well have been or will be uninstantiated at some other time, it stands to reason, Armstrong suggests, that all forms are occupants of a platonic heaven.¹³ Given the need for a separate realm in which to locate forms, the difficulty accounting for the relation between universals and forms becomes

¹¹ One example of an uninstantiated universal might be a word from an ancient language that is no longer used. With many instances of the word, it is likely that we would require a universal of that word. Once the language is no longer in use, what account do we give of the universal representing the lost word? This is a poor example, however, because it is difficult to believe that a theory of universals, even one as extreme as Plato's at times seems, would require a universal for every word (or concept) that had more than one occurrence. I do not pursue this issue in this paper, but understand the question of what should count as a universal to be a very pressing follow-up to this project. Notice, however, that this also applies to a possible response to the relation regress, e.g., where is it clearly demonstrated that the one-over-many relation between universals and particulars is a many *in need of a one*?

¹² Armstrong's 'platonic heaven' reference, presumably, is a reference to Plato's divided line argument in *Republic* VI.

¹³ This objection could also be countered by dramatically reducing the number of universals. The essential idea is that the vast majority of particulars are conjunctions of a few universals with the consequence that we can dramatically reduce the number of necessary universals. See, for example, Plato's *Sophist*, 251d-257a. Depending on the size of the reduction, it is almost certain that one could maintain that what universals there must always be instantiated, in which case this criticism would no longer hold.

an even more daunting task; the transcendent realist is forced to cross not just space-time, but realms in his account of participation as well.¹⁴

A third criticism is that the causal properties of particulars stem from their relation to forms rather than from their internal nature.¹⁵ There is more to say about this third criticism than I can pursue here.

It should be clear, at least, that the chief difficulty for the transcendent realist is describing the nature of the relation between universals and particulars. “Transcendent realism makes a major error in keeping particulars and universals apart” (1978a, 75). One of Armstrong’s fundamental tenets of immanent realism, we will see, is that universals are located in and only in particulars as constituents of particulars. The question to consider, then, is how a universal may be located in and only in different particulars while being identical to itself in each particular. To examine these and other questions, we turn to Armstrong’s positive conception of universals and his notion of states of affairs.

Armstrong’s Response and Further Development:

Armstrong’s version of realism, building from his criticisms of transcendent realism, argues first and foremost that universals and particulars are inseparable. “There is no separation of particulars and universals.

¹⁴ The other criticism stemming from this argument, though not taken up here, is that such a view commits one to a blob rather than a layer-cake view of particulars (Armstrong: 1999, 77). A blob view of particulars conceives of a particular’s having a property as a relation between the particular and a universal. A layer cake view, on the other hand, accounts for properties by locating universals in things (*Universalialia in rebus*) and thereby giving particulars an internal structure that seems lacking in the view that attributes properties to particulars in virtue of the relations between a particular and its respective universals.

¹⁵ Cf. Armstrong: 1978a, 75.

Universals are nothing without particulars. Particulars are nothing without universals" (1978a, 113). Armstrong appropriately labels this version of realism 'immanent' as opposed to 'transcendent'. Transcendent realism argues that universals are independent of particulars, whereas Armstrong's immanent realism locates universals in and only in particulars. I will fill in Armstrong's position by examining his notion of particulars, universals and states of affairs separately and then bring them back together for a consideration of the main claims of his immanent realism.

Armstrong says of particulars that they may be 'thin' or 'thick'. A thin particular is "a thing taken in abstraction from all its properties"; a thick particular, conversely, is "a thing taken along with all its properties" (1978a, 114). This distinction arises, Armstrong suggests, by distinguishing what it is for a thing to be a particular, i.e. its particularity, from its non-particular aspects, i.e. its properties. Thin and thick particulars presuppose a substance-attribute view of particulars which permits or identifies a *heaccitas* or 'thisness' to particulars to which properties are attributed (1989, 95).¹⁶ Armstrong clarifies this notion in more recent work by clearly stating that the notion of a bare particular, though metaphysically (ontologically) disputable, is a useful mental abstraction. "[W]e are talking about the particular in abstraction from its properties. By 'abstraction' here all that is meant is that by a mental act of 'partial consideration' we consider the particular only in so far as it is a particular, we consider it only in its particularity" (1997a, 123).¹⁷

¹⁶ Cf. Leibniz's bare monads.

¹⁷ The plausibility of thin or bare particulars as real entities, rather than mere mental abstractions, is strongly tied to Armstrong's substance-attribute view of particulars. If he cannot uphold bare

Armstrong's thick particular is treated similarly across his three major works on universals from 1978 to 1997. The thick particular is the thin particular or *heaccitas* of a thing coupled with its properties. "The thick particular is to be the particular taken along with all and only the particular's non-relational properties" (1997a, 124). Armstrong denies that relational properties such as '2 feet from' or 'taller than' are properties of particular things. "Relational properties, although it is often useful to refer to them, do not have the same metaphysical importance as non-relational properties" (1997a, 124). Armstrong says elsewhere, however, that only properties, universals and states of affairs exist.¹⁸ If relational properties are not properties in a strong sense, i.e., are not properties of particulars that describe particulars, and are not included in (constituents of) states of affairs, what is their ontological status? Do relations constitute another ontological category? Armstrong does not consider this objection to his claim that only states of affairs, particulars and universals exist, but says only that to include relational properties in a thing "swells the particular beyond all compass. Particulars thus conceived will, as it were, overlap with each other" (1997a, 124). Armstrong may have a difficult time accounting for the ontological status of relational properties; it should nevertheless be clear that a thick particular is the particular with its various (non-relational) properties, i.e., the bare particular plus whatever properties are properties of the particular.

particulars as real entities, a position he espouses in earlier works but shies away from here, then it is not clear that a substance-attribute view suffices as a rejection of, or even argument against, the bundle-view of particulars. He seems to have retracted or conceded this point, a point which I see as crucial to his broad theory.

¹⁸ Cf. (1989, 94) and (1997, 1, 126).

Armstrong's properties are universals. What distinguishes universals from particulars is that universals are repeatable, particulars are not. "Universals are entities that are identical, strictly identical, in different instantiations, and so are the foundations *in re* for all genuine resemblances between particulars" (1997a, 21). Universals, by identically occurring in different particulars, are identical to themselves in each particular. The distinguishing mark of universals, Armstrong later remarks, is "their promiscuous repeatability" (1997a, 127); a single universal is capable of being in many places at once. Thus, for Armstrong, while universals are repeatable, particulars are not.

The second distinguishing fact about Armstrong's universals is that they are in and only in particulars; universals are constituents of particulars. "We can adopt the view whose Latin tag is *universalia in rebus* (universals in things). We can think of a thing's properties as constituents of the thing and think of the properties as universals" (1989, 77). Armstrong attributes this view to Aristotle.¹⁹ Recall that Armstrong rejects a relational realism in his critique of transcendent realism. A positive reaction to this criticism is to propose a realism where universals are literally *in* particulars as constituents. "So far from being removed from space-time, universals will, on this view, help to constitute space-time" (1997a, 40). A negative reaction is to say that universals are *only in* particulars, and not anywhere else. Considering both reactions, Armstrong is arguing that universals are in and only in particulars. The motivation is to construct a theory

¹⁹ Armstrong's view should not be thought more or less plausible because it may or may not be aristotelian. Armstrong appears to be referring to Aristotle's view of universals in the *Categories*, which is significantly altered, some contend outright reversed, in his later *Metaphysics*. Cf. Armstrong: 1989, 77 and 1997, 29.

that escapes the supposedly devastating view that requires a relation of some kind between universals and particulars. “A *moderate* or Aristotelian realist holds that universals are only in particulars, with the word ‘in’ subject to interpretation. The realism of this work is Aristotelian” (1997a, 22).²⁰ Coupled with the view that universals are repeatable entities, Armstrong is claiming that a single universal is identically expressed in any number of particulars; each occurrence of a single universal is identical to every other occurrence and each occurrence is in and only in its respective particular.

Armstrong introduces states of affairs not as a third type of ontological entity, but rather as a way of understanding the necessary interdependence between particulars and universals. “Particulars are particulars falling under universals and universals demand particulars. We can put this by saying that particulars and universals are found only in states of affairs” (1978a, 80). States of affairs do not constitute a new type of entity, Armstrong contends, because states of affairs just are the entities in which and from which universals and particulars are found. “For it is of the essence of particulars and universals that they involve, and are only found in, states of affairs” (1978a, 80). Armstrong defines states of affairs as “a particular’s having a property, or two or more particulars standing in some relation” (1978a, 113).²¹ In a later work, Armstrong explains the need for states of affairs as a confirmation for a particular’s having a property. He argues that *a* is F (meaning that a particular *a* is F where F is a

²⁰ Note that in his later work Armstrong mentions that the word ‘in’ is in need of further clarification. I pursue what Armstrong means by ‘in’ shortly.

²¹ Armstrong’s most recent definition of states of affairs is virtually identical. “An atomic state of affairs exists if and only if a particular has a property, or a relation holds between two or more particulars. These properties and relations are, of course, universals” (1997, 20).

universal and *a* is a bare particular) requires more than *a* and *F*. “However, *a* could exist, and *F* could exist, and yet it fail to be the case that *a* is *F*” (1989, 88). *F* and *a*, Armstrong argues, must be combined in or be constituents of a single state of affairs which is responsible for the fact that *a* is *F*. “The existence of *a*, of instantiation, and of *F* does not amount to *a*’s being *F*. The something more must be *a*’s being *F* – and this is a state of affairs” (1989, 88).²² States of affairs are identical with thick particulars; they are particulars whose constituents are bare particulars and its properties. “We will call the particulars, properties and relations the constituents of the states of affairs” (1997a, 20). Armstrong builds into his conception of states of affairs a rejection of the claim that any additional relation of any kind is required to unite particulars and universals.

There is no relation of instantiation over and above the states of affairs themselves... It is often convenient to talk about instantiation, but states of affairs come first. If this is a ‘fundamental tie’ required by relations as much as properties, then so be it. But it is very different from anything that is ordinarily spoken of as a relation” (1997a, 118).

Armstrong is attempting to shelter his theory from the need to account for any type of relation between universals and particulars. “The instantiation of universals by particulars is just the state of affairs itself” (1997a, 119). This is one of the principal aims of Armstrong’s work, to reject the claim that a wedge can be

²²States of affairs, in effect, serve as truthmakers insuring that particulars do in fact instantiate universals. The need for these follows from a particular, but not all, conceptions of universals. E.g., if universals are causal (or otherwise responsible for a things having a property) then it is not clear what purpose a ‘truthmaker’ and therefore a ‘state of affairs’ would serve. Though I do not discuss such a conception of universals in this paper, as it draws on complexities that are well beyond the scope of this work, I do submit that this argument commits Armstrong to an additional type of entity, and therefore increases the ontological expenditure of his theory.

driven between universals and particulars. Whether Armstrong succeeds or not at this will be considered shortly.

States of affairs, furthermore, are ontologically prior to particulars and universals. Armstrong describes states of affairs as facts. "The world is a world of states of affairs. The phrase 'state of affairs' will be used in the same way that Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* used the term 'fact'" (1997a, 19). A state of affairs as a fact of reality is ontologically prior to any consideration of its constituents (universals and particulars). Put slightly differently, Armstrong portrays universals and particulars as contingent upon states of affairs. He describes universals as "a gutted state of affairs: it is everything that is left in the state of affairs after the particular particulars involved in the state of affairs have been abstracted away in thought" (1997a, 28-9). Further on he states that "this conception of universals as state of affairs types... brings out the dependence of universals upon states of affairs. As such, it should at least incline us to accept the primary position of states of affairs..." (1997a, 29).

In 'the victory of particularity', written in 1997, Armstrong describes states of affairs as particulars. States of affairs have as their constituents universals and particulars. Armstrong argues that each state of affairs is a particular because something about it distinguishes it from other states of affairs. If two states of affairs instantiate the same universal, they will nonetheless have two distinct bare particulars. Likewise, if one (bare) particular has a state of affairs with one universal and another state of affairs with a distinct universal, each state of affairs is distinguished by the distinct universal. States of affairs are what we mean by particulars in our everyday parlance; a non-repeatable particular with

properties, i.e. a thick particular.²³ *"The thick particular is a state of affairs. The properties of a thing are 'contained within it' because they are constituents of this state of affairs"* (1989, 95).

We can return now to an earlier problem, namely, what does Armstrong mean by 'in' when he claims that universals are in and only in particulars? Armstrong's universals are constituents of states of affairs and states of affairs are thick particulars. States of affairs tie universals and particulars so intimately together that no relation between the two types of entities is needed. *"The instantiation of universals by particulars is just the state of affairs itself"* (1997a, 119). To say that universals are 'in' particulars (or states of affairs), then, must mean just that universals are constituents of states of affairs and are inseparable from (bare) particulars in states of affairs. This is what Armstrong understands by 'in' in the phrase 'universals are only in particulars'.

One concern with Armstrong's states of affairs doctrine is whether it really succeeds or not in tying universals and particulars close enough together to deny that a relation between the two types of entities exists. Micheal Devitt criticizes Armstrong by claiming that he has not successfully avoided the relation regress.²⁴ Devitt argues that Armstrong proposes 'F-ness is a' "and simply declares it to be non-relational and inexplicable: particulars are not *related* to universals, but bonded to them in a metaphysical unity" (Devitt: 1997, 98).

²³ First-order states of affairs are states of affairs whose constituents are particulars and universals only. A second-order state of affairs may have as one (or more) of its constituents another state of affairs. The state of affairs that is my car, for instance, is composed of the state of affairs that is my steering wheel, engine block, tail light and countless other lower-order states of affairs. Higher-order states of affairs can have as their constituents lower-order states of affairs as well as universals and particulars. Cf. *A World of States of Affairs*, 196-7.

²⁴ The following is one of the many interesting ideas raised by Devitt and Armstrong.

Devitt continues his criticism by claiming that “Armstrong avoids this grievous difficulty for realism [accounting for the relation between universals and particulars] by fiat... Do we have even the remotest idea of what the words ‘in’ and ‘have’ mean here [‘a has F-ness’ and ‘F-ness is in a’] if they are not construed as relational predicates?” (Devitt: 1997, 98).²⁵ Armstrong’s response succeeds only in justifying Devitt’s frustration: he asserts that a realist has two sorts of answer to the question of how two (or more) components of a thick particular are put together. The first replies that a relation of some kind exists between the two components. Armstrong briefly reviews his problems with this view and suggests a second response, that “while we can distinguish the particularity of a particular from its properties, nevertheless the two ‘factors’ are too intimately together to speak of a *relation* between them... Bare particulars and uninstantiated universals are vicious abstractions from what may be called states of affairs: this-of-a-certain-nature” (Armstrong: 1997b, 110). Armstrong admits that this response is “profoundly puzzling” and admits “Devitt is able to claim, not implausibly, that all I have done is to substitute inexplicable mystery for the relational view” (Armstrong: 1997b, 110). It is not clear, though, that Armstrong has even substituted anything for the relational view; all he has done, as Devitt contends, is replaced the terminology. Instead of ‘instantiation’ or ‘participation’ we get ‘state of affairs’.

²⁵ Gail Fine wages a similar criticism against Armstrong. “Surely it will not do simply to declare, as Armstrong does, that since relational immanent realism is vulnerable to a regress, nonrelational immanent realism must be true. Although it is ‘inexplicable’ and ‘profoundly puzzling’. Denying that universals and particulars are related, and then insisting that their union is simply inexplicable, is hardly satisfactory; Armstrong owes us more here” (1981, 268).

Another criticism, analogous to Devitt's, arises from Armstrong's description of the particularity of universals and concrete particulars as distinct types of entities. Armstrong (1997a, §3.6) considers David Seargent's proposal (1985, ch. 4) that universals be conceived of not as things or entities, but rather as 'ways' things are. Armstrong responds: "I demur at his suggestion that properties and relations are not entities" (1989, 31). Armstrong feels the same way about particulars. "The position being taken is that the particularity of particulars is not to be accounted for in terms of universals, or, indeed, in terms of properties taken as particulars. It is an irreducible feature of particulars, distinct from their properties" (1997a, 107).²⁶ So, for Armstrong, even as constituents of states of affairs, universals and particulars are two fundamentally distinct types of entities. Armstrong rejects, however, the view that universals can be uninstantiated and that particulars, except in thought, can be bare; universals and particulars are co-dependent entities and are united in states of affairs.²⁷ In fact, universals and particulars are contingent upon states of affairs. "[I]t is fundamental to the system being developed here that they [universals], like particulars, are contingent beings" (1997a, 38).²⁸ States of affairs unite particulars and universals, but it is not clear that they do so while escaping the need to account for why or how universals and particulars are so intimately intertwined. Recall that states of affairs can be understood as an attempt to reject

²⁶ Armstrong had earlier answered 'yes' to whether we really need a separate category for particulars. He goes on to proffer an epistemological and an ontological argument for the need of particulars as a type of entity independent of any other types of entities.

²⁷ Arguments for and against bare particulars are considered in Armstrong (1989, 94-6) and (1997, 123-6) as well as his earlier work, which is reviewed and updated in his most recent work.

²⁸ For a critique of this argument, see Dodd, 1998.

that a wedge can be driven between universals and particulars. Is this consistent with the depiction of universals and particulars as two distinct types of entities brought together in states of affairs, or does Armstrong's state of affairs terminology simply replace the older terminology of instantiation and participation? I think Devitt is right in arguing for the latter; Armstrong claims that universals and particulars are non-relational, but he also explicitly argues that they are both distinct types of entities, in which case, how can they not be related to one another in states of affairs? If his view is relational, furthermore, then he requires of himself, apropos his first criticism of transcendent realism, an explanation of how particulars instantiate universals, or how states of affairs tie universals and particulars closely enough to reject the claim that any relation between the two exists?²⁹ I don't buy it, nor does Devitt. I do not take up the issue here, but only remark that if universals and particulars are two distinct types of entities, something more than the claim that they are united in states of affairs is needed as an account of the (non)relation between the two.

Armstrong's Reconciliation:

Armstrong's conception of universals is an attempt to reconcile the nominalist notion of reality's being constituted only by concrete particulars with the realist notion that a single universal can have many instances (multiple realizability). I show, first, how Armstrong conceives universals as concrete entities. I then contrast this with his claim that universals can be multiply

²⁹ Cf. Fine (1981) and Devitt (1991) for similar concerns.

instantiated. Armstrong's claim that universals are multiply realizable is unsupported because it is at odds with his claim that universals are particulars. I also consider two options through which an account of these two claims may be given. I suggest that the best account requires accepting that universals are, at least in part, abstract entities, and propose a sketch of how such a conception of universals might work. I conclude that some version of transcendent realism is a better candidate for a realist theory of properties than Armstrong's immanent realism.

Despite their repeatability, Armstrong's universals are a type of particular. Armstrong distinguishes universals from particulars by stipulating that universals are repeatable, bare particulars and states of affairs are not. He attempts to tie universals intimately to a reality of particulars. To do so, he modifies the abstract/concrete distinction to include multiply instantiated universals as concrete particulars and rejects the view that abstract objects are spatio-temporal entities. Armstrong's abstract/concrete distinction is drawn on space-time grounds and, coupled with his thesis that universals are located in and only in particulars, permits repeatable universals to be in concrete particular entities. Armstrong's distinction, as I will show shortly, argues that abstract entities are outside of space-time and, as such, are unnecessary, and that concrete or particular entities are only and all those entities that are within space-time.³⁰ On this account, given that only concrete entities populate space-time, coupled with the claims that universals are constituents of states of affairs and that states

³⁰ This view is motivated in part by Armstrong's naturalism thesis. He defines naturalism, as it pertains to his work, as "the contention that the world, the totality of entities, is nothing more than the space-time system" (1997, 5).

of affairs are particulars (concrete entities), so also must universals be particulars (concrete entities).

What Armstrong means by 'particular,' 'concrete' and 'abstract' becomes clear by looking at his conception of abstract entities. Armstrong states that entities that are thought to be (postulated as) additional to the space-time system "are often spoken of as 'abstract'" (1997a, 8). Abstract entities include,

among other candidates, possible worlds, [transcendent] universals and classes.³¹ It will be part of the task of this work to argue that either such entities can be dispensed with or, as is preferable in general, that an account of them can be given *within* the space-time system, with that system taken to be a system of states of affairs (1997a, 8).

Again, when considering Reinhardt Grossmann's depiction of universals, Armstrong characterizes abstract entities as entities that are additional to space-time.³² Armstrong is in agreement with Grossmann insofar as Grossmann argues that properties and relations are universals. Grossmann's error, Armstrong claims, is that "all these things [properties and relations] he calls, in the unfortunate Harvard terminology, 'abstract'. They are not to be identified with, they stand apart from, that great particular, the space-time realm" (1997a, 136). It is clear, then, that abstract entities, for Armstrong, are entities that are additional to or otherwise outside of space-time. Further, given Armstrong's naturalism, these entities, as he says, are to be dispensed with or otherwise located within space-time. Universals are a perfect example of this shift from abstract to

³¹ It is clear that Armstrong does not intend immanent universals to be included in this category, given that they are by definition constituents of (in) particular states of affairs.

³² Cf. Grossmann, 1992.

concrete entities. Armstrong dispenses with the *universalia ante rem* (universals before things) depiction suggesting that universals are independent of particulars (and perhaps transcendent) and replaces it with the *universalia in rebus* (universals in things) depiction which located universals in and only in spatio-temporal particulars.

By rejecting abstract entities and identifying the whole of reality with and only with the space-time realm, i.e. 'that great particular', Armstrong reduces all entities to the category of particulars. The world is a world of states of affairs (Armstrong's oft quoted and seemingly favorite sentence), and states of affairs are particulars. Given that only particulars exist, I suggest that Armstrong has two slightly different conceptions of 'particular', respectively corresponding to his distinction between particulars and universals. In one sense, an entity is a particular just in case it has or occupies a single spatio-temporal location. Bare particulars and states of affairs fall into this category of particulars. Bare particulars are non-repeatable and therefore tied to their occupied spatio-temporal location. Likewise, every state of affairs has as one of its constituents a bare particular, and so is also spatio-temporally fixed.³³ In another sense, an entity is a particular just in case it lies (exists) within space-time, but need not be limited to a specific spatio-temporal location. Universals, in virtue of their repeatability, are such entities, i.e., fall into this second category of particulars. Universals are distinguished from bare particulars and states of affairs by their promiscuous repeatability. States of affairs and bare particulars are not

³³ Having an instance of a universals does not alter this because, *per* Armstrong's description, any single instance of a universal in a state of affairs is a particular instance that is located in and only in the given state of affairs.

repeatable and are consequently particulars in a concrete sense, whereas universals, in virtue of their repeatability, are particulars in a particular sense, but not a concrete one. By extending the category of particulars to include multiply realizable entities, Armstrong is able to describe universals as particulars and to push the meaning of 'abstract' to include all and only those objects which are outside of space-time.

A difficulty with this view, however, is that Armstrong's modification of the abstract/concrete distinction makes it difficult to conceive how any entity could be abstract. By claiming that space-time is composed only of particulars, i.e., repeatable and non-repeatable concrete objects, Armstrong defines abstract objects as entities outside of space-time and reduces all objects in space-time to particulars. This is convenient for Armstrong because it makes his argument for naturalism all the more likely to be true. However, if we have a different understanding of the abstract/concrete distinction, we might argue that an object is concrete just in case space or time limits it. An object is abstract, conversely, just in case it is limited neither by space nor time.³⁴ These are exhaustive categories, furthermore, because every entity either is or is not limited by space or time. This is a more specific interpretation of the abstract/concrete distinction than Armstrong offers; on his interpretation, a universal can be concrete without being spatio-temporally limited. Armstrong's universals are not spatially bound because they can always instantiate another (spatial) particular. Moreover, so long as a universal is instantiated in at least one state of affairs, a universal is not

³⁴ Cf. Jerrold Katz: 1998, 120-32 for descriptions of the standard interpretation of this distinction and for an interesting spin on the abstract/concrete distinction.

temporally limited either. If all entities are particulars, as Armstrong argues, then there is no use for a category of abstract objects; it is an empty set.

The more specific version of the distinction calls into question the status of Armstrong's universals. If universals are constituents of particulars and themselves particulars, are they abstract or concrete? A single instance of a universal, being a particular constituent of a concrete state of affairs, appears concrete. Armstrong argues that universals are concrete, repeatable entities. However, the universal *qua* universal, which is not the same as one instance of a universal but rather constitutes all of its instances, would seem abstract, i.e., limited neither by space nor time. If universal X can be in more than one location at once we can hardly claim that it is spatially limited, even though individual instances of it are, and even though the universal in each instance is just identical to itself in each other instance, e.g., the universal can always occupy another spatial location.³⁵ Likewise, if the universal itself does not perish when it ceases to be instantiated in a particular state of affairs, so long as it is instantiated in at least one other state of affairs, we can hardly claim that it is temporally limited.³⁶ So Armstrong's universals, under the traditional abstract/concrete distinction, appear abstract. Therefore, how we interpret the abstract/concrete distinction determines whether Armstrong's universals are abstract or concrete. Armstrong argues that they are repeatable concrete particulars, but relies on a somewhat

³⁵ I suppose one could argue that because universals are confined to particular instances and that each instance of a universal is a particular, the universal is a particular, but this claim fails to show how the universal as an entity with multiple instantiations is ever limited by space or time, i.e., it can always be instantiated in another spatial location at another time.

³⁶ Once again, I am avoiding the debate over uninstantiated universals and therefore assume for now that all universals have at least one instance.

weighted interpretation of the abstract/concrete distinction to do so, i.e., by expanding the category of concrete entities to include concrete entities that are repeatable, Armstrong is able to claim that universals are particulars, i.e., repeatable concrete entities. However, with this characterization, viewed under the traditional distinction, Armstrong's universals are in danger of being labeled abstract. It is ambiguous, therefore, which category of entities Armstrong's universals fall into, depending on how one chooses to make the abstract/concrete distinction.

We can now state the first of two claims that are of central importance to Armstrong's realism: universals are located in and only in concrete particulars as particulars. This is consistent with the nominalist claim that only concrete particulars exist. "For me, as a nominalist, the world is a world of individuals" (Goodman 1956, 15).³⁷ Keith Campbell defines nominalism as the claim that "there are only concrete particular objects - rabbits and foxes, chairs and tables, and so forth. These objects fall into groups resembling one another more or less closely. Such objects have in common their membership in sundry classes, but no genuinely common universal element" (1990, 17).³⁸ Armstrong's realism is consistent with the nominalist claim that only particulars exist.

The second major claim of Armstrong's realism is that universals are multiply realizable, meaning that a single universal can be wholly present in

³⁷ Nelson Goodman continues in his article to clarify the meaning of 'individual' and 'particular', especially by rejecting that classes are individuals (16-7). Goodman's nominalism "demands only that all entities admitted, no matter what they are, be treated as individuals" (17).

³⁸ Two other qualitative summaries of trope nominalism are Keith Campbell's "The Metaphysics of Abstract Particulars" and David Lewis's discussion of properties (50-69) in *On the Plurality of Worlds*. Campbell's article is a more thorough consideration whereas Lewis's chapter provides an instructive comparison between tropes and universals.

many places at once and identical to itself in each instance. This is what Armstrong means when he says that repeatability is the mark of universals, and is consistent with the principle realist tenet that instances of (universal) properties are identical to other instances of the same property. This accounts for the apparent identity of properties in different concrete particulars.³⁹

With these two claims we can see that one of the motivations for Armstrong's theory of universals is to straddle the fence between realism and nominalism. Armstrong attempts to incorporate the essential nominalist claim that the world is a world of particulars with a central realist claim that universals account for the apparent identity of properties in particulars. His aim is to establish a world of particulars, some of which are multiply realizable particulars, i.e. universals. By locating universals in and only in particulars, Armstrong avoids transcendent entities, and by claiming that universals are multiply realizable, he enables the identity of properties across different particulars. He offers a theory of universals that includes multiply realizable universals within a world of particulars. An account of the compatibility of these two claims, each being central aspects of Armstrong's realism, is needed. I turn now to a consideration of this issue and argue that Armstrong's explanation of how these two claims fit together is not persuasive. Following this I consider two ways in which the two claims may be coherently incorporated and argue that the second option, that we accept that universals have abstract as well as

³⁹ What the most important realist principle is would probably differ from individual to individual. For example, Plato might argue that the claim that universals are intelligible but not visible is the fundamental realist principle, Armstrong argues that they must be repeatable, and Aristotle might argue that they can only be 'said of' particulars. It is clear, however, that one of the principle claims is that a single universal is expressed or represented by (in) many instances.

concrete aspects, offers a stronger explanatory account than Armstrong's immanent realism.

Accounts of the two central claims under consideration here work against each other. The first claim, that universals are located in and only in particular states of affairs, seems intended to appease nominalists who argue that only concrete particulars exist. On Armstrong's view, reality is constituted by particular states of affairs whose constituents are bare particulars and particular instances of universals. The instance of a universal in a state of affairs is a concrete instance that perishes with the state of affairs. Armstrong's world is a world of particulars. The problem, however, is that this view lends no credence, and even suggests difficulties with, the claim that universals are multiply realizable. If we construe the world as a world of concrete particulars, what reason do we have to accept that certain particulars, namely universals, are identical to themselves in numerous instances, i.e., that one particular can be a concrete constituent of numerous particulars at one time, especially when the other two classes of particulars (bare particulars and states of affairs) do not share this characteristic? Not only does the characterization of the world as a world of particulars neglect to account for the repeatability of certain types of particulars, but even works against it by construing all other types of particulars as non-repeatable.

The second claim, while upholding the realist tenet that individual instances of properties are identical and that it is this abstract (meaning multiply realizable) nature of properties that accounts for the apparent identity of properties in different particulars, does not corroborate and even undermines the

first claim.⁴⁰ Under this claim, Armstrong is wearing the hat of a realist. He argues that universals are a type of entity that is repeatable such that one single universal is spatially and temporally locatable in numerous particular instances. On this view, while a particular instance or instantiation of a universal may perish with a state of affairs, the universal *qua* universal, so long as it is instantiated in at least one other state of affairs, is alive and well, i.e. exists. Because the universal is repeatable, an alteration of one instance has no effect on other instantiations of the same universal. Armstrong describes the situation like this: "Properties are not the sort of thing which can be destroyed (or created). The language of destruction and creation is simply inappropriate in connection with universals" (1978a, 112-3). Yet this is precisely what happens to particular (concrete) instances of universals; they are created, altered and destroyed. For example, I buy and store cardboard boxes as flat pieces of cardboard. I then fold them into rectangular and square shapes, instantiating the universals rectangle and square respectively. When I'm finished, I alter and ultimately destroy the concrete instances of the universals by collapsing the boxes. Throughout this process, however, I have not affected the quality or property of the universals rectangle and square, they represent the same quality whether instantiated in my boxes or not. The property, despite being wholly present as a concrete constituent of a state of affairs (first claim), is, more importantly, that property or quality of its various particulars that is unchanged despite changes to particular

⁴⁰ I assume, and have been assuming a familiarity with the notion of 'partial identity'. Namely, that two different particulars can be identical in respect to a single property without the particulars themselves being identical. Cf. Armstrong 1989: 2-5, 7 and, more significantly 1997: 17-8, 51-7.

instantiations. This is because a single universal is repeatably instantiated such that an alteration to one particular instance does not affect other instances. This counters the first claim, however, that any single instance of a universal alone constitutes the universal. With the second claim, the universal is identified by the transitive quality or property that is multiply located; whereas the first claim identifies the universal as a single instance of the universal. It is not obvious how a universal is both a constituent of a single particular (first claim) and a transitive property of many particulars (second claim). The second claim does not corroborate the first claim that a universal just is any given concrete instance of the universal in a given state of affairs.

Given the central importance of these two claims to Armstrong's broader theory, an account of their compatibility is needed. As things now stand, we have the description of universals as concrete constituents of states of affairs on the one hand and the description of universals as multiply realizable or repeatable properties on the other. To pull this account off, we need to understand how it is that universals coherently share both of these qualities or descriptions. Armstrong appeals to his notion of repeatability as a response to this challenge. If universals are repeatable entities, then a single universal, while maintaining the superficial appearance of a concrete constituent in a given state of affairs, also possesses the elusive quality of being able to be identically repeated or multiply realized as a concrete constituent in other states of affairs. More specifically, the universal literally is a concrete constituent of a particular state of affairs. This concrete constituent, moreover, is identically located or repeated as a concrete constituent of any number of other states of affairs;

universals are repeatable concrete constituents of states of affairs. The problem, as I further elaborate, is that he suggests we accept repeatability as a primitive fact, i.e., it is a primitive fact that a type of particular, namely universals, is repeatable.

Armstrong accepts as a primitive fact that universals are repeatable entities and suggests that we do so as well. The impetus to claim that the actual universals are multiply located, rather than separating each universal as a single entity from its multiple instantiations, follows from Armstrong's rejection of transcendent universals; if universals are only in space-time, what better place to locate them than, literally, in their respective particulars. And if they are in their particulars, they cannot be divided between them, apropos of Parmenides's sail, and so must be wholly instantiated in each particular.⁴¹ "If two different electrons each have charge e , then e , one thing, a universal, is to be found in two different places, the places where the two electrons are, yet entirely and completely in each place." Armstrong admits that this view seems "wildly paradoxical to many philosophers." He suggests that "You might try just accepting the multiple location of universals" (1989, 98).

The problem, however, is that Armstrong's suggestion takes as primitive the very claim that makes his theory of properties a realism of properties. Armstrong's claim that universals are repeatable constitutes his justification of the identity of properties in different particulars, but this claim is a primitive fact. Armstrong's justification for realism, then, is that you either accept or do not

⁴¹ Cf. Plato's *Parmenides*, 131.

accept his primitive fact; no further argument can be given. This, I claim, significantly reduces the explanatory strength of his realism; specifically, his realism's explanatory power turns on, or is reduced to, an intuitive acceptance or rejection of his primitive fact claim that certain concrete particulars are repeatable. I elaborate further, given that the *sine qua non* of property theory is the explanatory success of a theory, that the realism with the best explanation of apparent identity of properties is the most successful.⁴² Armstrong's realism does not provide a very strong account, and it is therefore worthwhile, as a realist, to consider a different version of realism with a plausibly stronger account or explanation for the apparent identity of properties in different particulars.

Armstrong might proffer, if asked, as a reason for accepting multiple realizability as a primitive fact that this is a central and crucial component of the best realist theory around.⁴³ Devitt argues that Armstrong does not account for the relation (or, more specifically, Armstrong's claim to a non-relation) between universals and particulars. Having rejected transcendent realism, in part, because of the difficulties of the relation regress, Armstrong attempts to unite particulars and universals in states of affairs which represent universals and particulars as 'non-relational entities' (1978, 108-11). Devitt characterizes this attempt to escape the need to account for instantiation or participation, as mentioned earlier, as replacing "the explanatory failings of relational realism with a complete mystery" (Devitt: 1997, 98). Armstrong concedes that his non-

⁴² I consider ontological economy to be a secondary factor to explanatory success, i.e., to be a further consideration once the explanatory success of a theory is determined. Cf. Oliver, 1996.

⁴³ This is based on Armstrong's response to a similar objection posed by Micheal Devitt.

relational view has problems, but claims that “It may be crooked, but it looks to be the best (realist) game in town” (Armstrong: 1997b, 110). Armstrong might similarly respond to the difficulty of accepting the multiple location or repeatability of universals as a primitive fact; it may be groundless, but it does nevertheless incorporate a key realist principle into his theory of properties.

Viewing Armstrong’s theory as an attempt to straddle the fence between nominalism and realism exposes the fact that he can do so only by admitting the central realist tenet, one every nominalist and his or her mother would reject, as a primitive fact. The first option, then, following Armstrong, is to claim the apparent repeatability of properties as a primitive fact. However, failure to propose an account, I argue, calls Armstrong’s claim to be espousing a realism of properties into question, especially because his primitive fact is what, and all, that grounds or constitutes his theory’s realism. Once the explanatory failings of Armstrong’s primitive fact are realized, his theory loses a significant amount of explanatory power, the life-blood of property theory. I do not think that construing repeatability as a primitive fact, given the importance of this claim to Armstrong’s realism, is a persuasive option and therefore intend, in the remainder of the paper, to compare this option with one that I argue has more explanatory value or success. The second option is to account for or to explain the identity of properties by returning to independent universals. In pursuing this option, I propose a return to an account of independent universals that construes universals as entities having both abstract and concrete aspects. I conclude that the second option, though ontologically more expensive than an immanent realism, provides a stronger explanation of the repeatability of

properties than Armstrong's primitive fact centered version of immanent realism.

Armstrong's Account of his Primitive Fact:

As demonstrated above, Armstrong attempts to account for each of his central claims by appealing to his primitive fact explanation of universals as repeatable entities. In this section I consider two options for explaining the apparent repeatability of properties in particulars. The first option is Armstrong's attempt to define 'property' such that its definition alone, as a primitive fact, accounts for the repeatability of properties. Extending the criticism concluding the previous section, however, I argue below that this attempt has explanatory failings, and, given the emphasis on explanations in property theory, is not a persuasive account of the repeatability of particulars. The second option is to consider or hypothesize that universals have abstract as well as concrete aspects, i.e., that each universal has a single abstract aspect which is independent of its concrete instances and that each concrete instance constitutes a concrete aspect of the universal. This view, in origin at least, is platonic, though not transcendent, and constitutes a major break from contemporary realist theory. I argue, nevertheless, that this view offers a substantive explanation of the apparent repeatability of properties in particulars as well as each of Armstrong's two central claims. This option, consequently, has more explanatory value than Armstrong's immanent realism.

The first option for explaining the apparent repeatability of properties, demonstrated by Armstrong's theory, is to define 'property' such that its

definition alone entails that some particulars, namely universals, are repeatable. As discussed earlier, Armstrong defines 'universals' as repeatable concrete particulars. Their alleged particularity, satisfying the first claim, is what accounts for how a single concrete instance of a universal, a concrete constituent of a state of affairs, constitutes the entire universal. Because it is a single universal that is repeated, each of its instances is identical to its other instances, satisfying the second claim. Armstrong proposes this definition of 'property' as an account for each of his two central claims.

Armstrong's response is reminiscent of an argument made by G.E. Moore in response to G.F. Stout's claim that properties of different particulars cannot be identical to one another. Stout argues that given A and B, two concrete particulars that are both round, we assert "that some particular example of an absolutely specific sort of quality belongs to A, and that a particular example of the same sort of quality belongs to B. We do not assert that it is the same instance of roundness in general which belongs to both" (1923, 117). More succinctly, he argues "local separation of the things is in the same sense local separation of the qualities (1923, 121). So on Stout's account, the local separation of two qualities or properties entails that the properties, like particulars, are separate, i.e., not one and the same. This argument is an early version of trope nominalism, which argues that no matter how closely two or more properties of different particulars might resemble one another, they can never be said to be *identical*. Moore counters Stout by arguing that particular objects and particular properties are two different kinds of entities; unlike concrete particulars, "one and the same quality can be in two different places at one time" (1923, 106).

Moore's characterization of qualities is indicative of Armstrong's definition of 'properties'; both authors contrast qualities (or properties) from particulars and argue that qualities, unlike particulars, can be multiply located, i.e., repeatable.

There are at least two reasons why we should question the explanatory value of this approach. First, Armstrong's primitive fact constitutes his theory's realism, so the explanatory worth of his theory is contingent upon accepting his primitive fact, and, being primitive, no argument is given for why we should do so. Second, though Armstrong's theory explicitly rejects independent universals, it tacitly implies that universals have a quality independent of single occurrences, suggesting that each individual instance of a universal does not, considered alone, constitute the universal. This independent quality of universals, furthermore, is analogous to and suggestive of the approach I suggest, that we accept that each universal has an independent and abstract aspect.

The claim that universals are repeatable particulars is what grounds Armstrong's theory in realism. The central realist tenet of property theory is that there are properties in virtue of which particular properties of concrete particulars are identical.⁴⁴ Armstrong incorporates this claim, the central realist tenet, into his theory by claiming that universals are repeatable particulars as a primitive fact; it is a primitive fact, according to Armstrong, that certain types of particulars are repeatable, and these particulars account for the identity of properties in different particulars. Armstrong's realism, therefore, is constituted

⁴⁴ Plato, Armstrong, Butchvarov and Katz, as well as other realists for properties, all argue that properties, in one way or another, are distinct ontological entities.

by his primitive fact claim; his theory is a realism of properties because it asserts, primitively, that universals are repeatable.

Armstrong's version of properties, furthermore, is a realism of properties only because of its primitive fact claim about the repeatability of universals. Armstrong's theory amounts to a nominalism with the one stipulation that certain particulars, namely universals, are identically repeatable. States of affairs and bare particulars are particular and concrete entities, apropos Goodman's nominalist claim that the world is a world of particulars.⁴⁵ In fact, all of Armstrong's entities are particular entities; there are no types of entities except particulars. Armstrong has stretched the conception of particular to include repeatable particulars, but even repeatable particulars are particular and concrete. Armstrong's world is a world of particulars.

Nothing in Armstrong's theory thus far is inconsistent with trope nominalism. Trope nominalists do object, however, to the claim that properties of different particulars can be identical to one another, and this is where, perhaps only where, Armstrong's theory differs from theirs. In Armstrong's theory, however, this is claimed only as a primitive fact, meaning that the only distinction between Armstrong's theory and a trope nominalist's theory is Armstrong's primitive fact that certain particulars are identically repeatable. This is a significant difference between the two views; my point is that it is based solely on an intuitive claim. I suspect that the distinction between nominalism and realism is based on more than intuitive grounds. Armstrong's claim to

⁴⁵ Cf. Keith Campbell's. "The Metaphysics of Abstract Particulars." 1997.

realism, then, is constituted by and only by his primitive fact that universals are repeatable particulars.

One is persuaded or unpersuaded by Armstrong's view only by whether one accepts or rejects his primitive fact. Armstrong's theory, in other words, is persuasive only to those predisposed to realism. And even those predisposed to realism, such as myself, may be unpersuaded by Armstrong's primitive fact that certain particulars are repeatable, and consequently unpersuaded that his realism is the best realism in town. The potential value of the discussion between realists and nominalists over properties is to compare the explanatory strength of each view's account of the apparent identity of properties and then to decide, based on the strength and breadth of the explanations, which view provides the best explanation.⁴⁶ If we start with intuitions, as Armstrong proposes, we cannot objectively compare theories in terms of their explanatory strength because how one gauges the explanatory strength of a theory will be biased by whether one accepts the theory's intuitive claims. Nominalists, for instance, reject Armstrong's primitive fact, and because this grounds his realism, no nominalist will be persuaded otherwise by the explanatory strength of his theory. Rather, the explanatory value of each theory should be independent of any individual's intuitions, and one should decide whether and to what degree they are persuaded by a theory only once its explanatory worth is duly determined. I propose a more radical and robust realism that attempts to

⁴⁶ The number and types of ontological entities is another important issue, but only once the initial explanatory value of each theory is assessed, i.e., economy is a secondary consideration; a theory whose explanation is much stronger than another theory, but which achieves its strength by appealing to more and different ontological categories, is still a stronger theory. For a thorough discussion of this point, see Oliver, 1996 2-11.

counter Armstrong's, and eventually the nominalist's, theory by appealing to abstract objects rather than primitive facts, thus providing a basis to believe that a single property can be multiply instantiated. The real worth of such a theory can be determined only when compared to other realist and nominalist views and judged by such criteria as explanatory worth and parsimony. I am well aware that most nominalists, and even many realists, balk at the notion of admitting abstract objects into one's ontology. However, if I can propose a version of realism that includes abstract objects but that, in doing so offers a strong explanation for the apparent repeatability of properties, then my proposal will be a more effective addition to the ongoing discussion than a realism such as Armstrong's that grounds its realism in a primitive fact that most other realists and all nominalists do not accept, or, more specifically, are not persuaded to accept.

The second reason why Armstrong's attempt to account for each claim by defining 'properties' as repeatable concrete particulars is unpersuasive is that he undermines his first major claim by tacitly implying that universals have an independent quality, i.e., that no individual instance of a universal constitutes the universal.⁴⁷ If this criticism is persuasive, Armstrong's definition of 'properties' is insufficient because it fails to explain the independent aspect of universals. Furthermore, the relation regress that Armstrong wields against other versions of a realism of properties will come back around to affect his own theory.

⁴⁷ Armstrong is not explicitly aware of this tacit implication and rejects the claim out of hand.

Armstrong locates universals, literally, in particulars as concrete and observable constituents of particulars; the concrete constituent of a particular is identical to or defined as the universal. By strictly identifying the universal with one of its concrete instances, Armstrong is committed to the consequence that if the concrete instance constituting the universal is changed in some way, so is the universal. Therefore, if you alter the concrete constituent of the particular that is the universal, you alter the universal. Under a platonic conception of forms, i.e., in which the form is independent of particulars, it is clear that a change to a particular instance, i.e. an instantiation, of the universal does not affect the universal because the universal and the particular are two separate, or at least distinct, entities. On Armstrong's view, however, the universal literally is a concrete constituent of the particular, so it is difficult to see how, on this view, certain changes to the concrete particular do not result in changes to the universal. Of course, when we alter or destroy a specific concrete instance of a universal, we do not, in the same way, alter or destroy the universal. For example, if we crush a tennis ball in a vice, we do not literally crush the universal sphericity. Likewise, when the tide washes over a circle drawn in the sand, we do not claim that the universal circularity, like the sand it was imprinted in, is washed out to sea. The problem, then, is whether we can coherently maintain this while advocating an immanent realism that strictly identifies the universal as a single concrete instance.⁴⁸ If we do not accept that we have crushed sphericity

⁴⁸ I am tabling for the time being the question of the status of a universal once it loses *all* of its instances, i.e., whether the universal of sphere is squeezed if the tennis ball that is squeezed happens by chance to constitute the very last instance of the universal sphere. I concede for now that any universal, to exist, must be instantiated, and return to modify this claim in the concluding section of the paper.

or washed circularity out to sea, we are committed to the consequence that there is a quality or qualitative nature to a universal property that is constant throughout the coming-to-be and perishing of its individual concrete instances.⁴⁹ More importantly, we are committed to accepting that the qualitative nature of the universal is not strictly identical with its concrete constituent's in particular instances.

Armstrong might respond that the universal ceases to be instantiated as soon as the concrete constituent of the particular which is the universal no longer instantiates or expresses the quality of the universal. For example, as soon as we begin to crush the tennis ball in a vice, it ceases to instantiate sphericity. We do not crush sphericity because the crushed particular no longer instantiates sphericity. Because sphericity is no longer instantiated in the crushed tennis ball, and is instantiated elsewhere in spherical tennis balls and other spherical objects, the universal property is unaffected by the crushing of a single tennis ball. This certainly sounds right, but is it consistent, i.e. can it consistently be maintained, given Armstrong's first major claim?

The problem with this reply is that Armstrong implicitly separates the quality of the universal from its concrete instance, and therefore reaffirms the criticism. Armstrong identifies the universal with a concrete constituent of the particular in which it is instantiated; if we could hold up the particular and shake it, we would literally be shaking the universal it instantiates (assuming it is not the universal of stability or rest). The concrete constituent of the particular can

⁴⁹ The phrase 'qualitative nature' is Butchvarov's. Cf. Butchvarov, 185. "The qualitative nature of a universal quality is completely independent of changes in the existence, identity, characteristics, relations and causal properties of the things in which it is instantiated".

change, however, without affecting the universal, e.g., the sand in which we inscribed our circle does not wash the universal out to sea with it. This is because the universal is instantiated in another particular, i.e., so long as a universal is elsewhere instantiated, any change to a single instance of it does not affect the universal. However, this line of thought appeals to the quality of a universal that is multiply located, rather than to any single instance, i.e., the universal is not identified by any single instance; rather, it is identified by the quality that is repeated in many instances. So Armstrong modifies his claim that any single instance of a universal constitutes the universal to state that the quality that is instantiated in a single instance of a universal constitutes the universal. The difference between these two statements is that the first strictly identifies the instance as the universal, a claim Armstrong professes to uphold, whereas the second distinguishes the concrete instance of the universal from the quality of the universal, i.e., the quality of the universal is not the concrete instance, but the repeated quality in a number of concrete instances. This shift distinguishes the universal or universal quality from its concrete instances. In making this shift Armstrong implicitly appeals to the quality of a universal independent of its (or any single) instances.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ There is a further problem underlying this argument which I have left out. Briefly, it is unclear how a universal can be a concrete constituent of many different particulars when the particulars have nothing but an abstract or generic quality in common, e.g., the universal seven is supposedly an identical constituent of '7', 'siete', 'VII' etc.... What is the concrete constituent of these instances that is identical? Another example of this is a functional type universal. For instance, suppose we have five mousetraps, but that each is made of a different material, and there is no superficial way in which each resembles any of the other four, i.e., they are identical in respect to their function, but their function is not a concrete constituent. We would say that they are all mousetraps, supposing a universal of mousetrapphood, but what is the common concrete quality justifying this claim?

Armstrong explicitly rejects any separation between the universal quality and its concrete instances. If we have indeed driven a wedge between them, then Armstrong is thrown onto his own chopping block by being asked to account for the relation between the two entities. As his criticism of other realisms of properties argues, the relation between them will then itself become a multiply instantiated property and thus a universal. The relations between the universal of instantiation and instances of instantiation will then require a second-order universal and the relation regress, Armstrong's chief criticism of other theories, comes full circle to affect his theory as well. In short, Armstrong's realism, despite its explicit rejections of this conclusion, is saddled with the burden of accounting for the relation between universals and particular instances of universals.

Given these two concerns with Armstrong's suggested definition of 'property', namely, that his theory's explanatory value is significantly diminished by realizing that his realism is only grounded in his primitive fact definition of 'universals', and that, despite claims to the contrary, he has the difficulty of accounting for the relation between universals and particulars, his account of the apparent identity of properties in different particulars is not as strong as realists might hope.

With this in mind, I turn to the suggestion that universals have abstract as well as concrete aspects. I argue that this approach, once developed, offers a stronger account, i.e. a better explanation, of the apparent identity of properties in different particulars than Armstrong's immanent realism. Specifically, it can substantiate Armstrong's primitive fact and further support his two major

claims. This interpretation, by offering fuller accounts of the central realist claims, provides a better explanation for a realism of properties than Armstrong's immanent realism.

A Rival Account of Armstrong's Primitive Fact:

Another way to account for the apparent identity of properties across particulars and, consequently, the two major claims of Armstrong's realism of properties, is to accept that each universal has an abstract aspect in addition to its concrete aspects or instances. On this view, the abstract aspect is independent of its concrete instances and constitutes the qualitative nature of the property. I pursue this possibility by first elaborating what I understand 'abstract' to mean. I then show how embracing an abstract aspect to universals substantiates Armstrong's primitive fact and further supports, with modifications, his two major claims. I then appeal to the views of like-minded authors to elaborate this proposal further.⁵¹ Finally, I consider this proposal in light of Armstrong's two chief criticisms of transcendental realism and conclude that this proposal provides a stronger explanatory account of properties than Armstrong's immanent realism.

Abstract aspects of universals have three major characteristics: they are neither spatial nor temporal, second, they represent the quality of universals that is unaffected by particular instances of a universal and, third, each universal has only one abstract aspect. Abstract aspects are neither spatial nor temporal, but

⁵¹ Property theorists might benefit by incorporating scholarship on Plato's forms into their theories of properties.

are nevertheless in space-time. The traditional characterization of abstract objects, alluded to earlier, is that they lack spatial and temporal existence.⁵² Jerrold Katz describes the traditional distinction; “An abstract object can have nothing about it that is spatially or temporally locatable, and a concrete object can have nothing about it that is neither spatially nor temporally locatable” (1998, 121).⁵³ Armstrong varies the distinction by stating that entities lack spatial and temporal location because they are outside space-time; Armstrong’s abstract objects are all and only those objects that are outside space-time. This variant, however, presupposes a naturalism of concrete and only concrete particulars; to argue that only concrete particulars can be constituents or inhabitants of space-time presupposes the point this theory is attempting to overturn and therefore unfairly determines the parameters of the discussion. I take it as an open possibility that reality may be constituted by both concrete and abstract objects.⁵⁴ Furthermore, in passing, I suggest that Plato’s forms, as presented in, e.g. the *Parmenides*, an implicit influence on the view hypothesized here, are entities which are inside space-time rather than occupants of a ‘platonic heaven’. Thus, as pertaining to this proposal, abstract aspects lack both spatial and temporal existence but are nonetheless constituents of space-time.

⁵² Though I accept this version as the traditional one, there are several different versions of the abstract/concrete distinction.

⁵³ Katz makes some intriguing modifications to the traditional distinctions. Though we are both involved in the same project, that of proposing a return of rationalism, I do not find his modifications necessary and do not pursue them here.

⁵⁴ An argument for this claim, given its size and importance, cannot be pursued here. However, both Katz and BonJour attempt to construct arguments in this vein. Cf. BonJour: 1998, 56-61 and Katz: 1998, 160-3.

The second defining characteristic of abstract aspects is that they represent the quality of universals that is unaffected by particular instances of the universals. Recall the criticism of Armstrong considered above that he tacitly implies that there is a quality to universals that is distinct from individual concrete instances of the universal. The problem with Armstrong's immanent conception of universals is that he is caught between the claim that a universal just is a single concrete occurrence with many repetitions and the claim that the universal quality does not change despite changes to any single concrete instance. With Armstrong's theory it is unclear, for example, how in leaving my basketball in the sun too long I have deflated the concrete particular basketball but not its concrete constituent sphericity. With a view that accepts that universals have both abstract and concrete aspects, we are able to explain how concrete instances of a universal come –to be and perish without affecting the universal quality by describing the universal quality independently of its concrete instances. The second characteristic of abstract aspects is that they represent the quality or property of a universal that does not change.

Finally, for every universal, though there are any number of concrete instances, there is only one abstract aspect. We can imagine why concrete instances of universals are differentiated; they are in different concrete particulars. We cannot differentiate two abstract aspects of a universal, however, because there is nothing to differentiate them. For this reason, each universal has one and only one abstract aspect. The universal, on this view, is properly thought of as a one-over-many such that its composite entities are at least one

abstract aspect and however many concrete instances instantiate the abstract aspect.⁵⁵

An acceptance of the claim that universals have abstract and concrete aspects is compatible, given certain modifications, with both of Armstrong's two major claims and, more importantly, substantiates his primitive fact, i.e., his intended account of the two claims. The first claim states that universals are located in and only in particulars as concrete constituents. Under a theory of universals advocating abstract and concrete aspects, concrete aspects would be located in and only in particulars. The first claim would be assimilated into the suggestion proffered here that a single universal with many instances has many concrete aspects (one for each instance). The original claim must be modified, however, to incorporate the abstract aspects of universals as well. On this reading, the universal is not in *and only in* concrete particulars, rather it is *in and also independent* of concrete particulars, where 'independent' refers to abstract aspects of universals that are not *in* particulars. This constitutes a dramatic alteration of the first claim, but is consistent with the suggestion that universals have abstract aspects and therefore follows from the rationale given in this paper for adopting such a view. The first claim would therefore read: universals are in and independent of particulars as, respectively, concrete and abstract aspects of the universal.

The second claim, that universals are multiply instantiated, requires only slight modification. Speaking in terms of the concrete aspects, which represent

⁵⁵ Whether a universal can consist of a single abstract aspect without any concrete instances, i.e., an uninstantiated universal, is taken up in a later section.

the greatest affinity between the view I am suggesting and Armstrong's, the universal is indeed multiply instantiated; a single universal has (is capable of having) many concrete aspects which are constituents of concrete particulars. On the view proffered here, each concrete aspect of a universal is distinct from each other concrete aspects while all are concrete aspects of a single abstract aspect. We have, as it were, a one-over-many; the sum total of the concrete aspects and the abstract aspect constitute the universal. However, I want to stress that the abstract aspect of a universal is not multiply instantiated; there is only one abstract aspect per universal. The repeatability of universals just is, then, the fact that one universal, *qua* abstract aspect, is responsible for many instantiations, *qua* concrete aspects; the many concrete instantiations mark the apparent repeatability of universals. What is missing in Armstrong's claim, which I further stipulate shortly, is that multiple instantiation is made possible and accounted for by the introduction of abstract aspects; without something similar, Armstrong's argument for realism remains an unsupported claim. The second claim states, then, that concrete aspects of universals are multiply instantiated. Once again, the modification stems from the introduction and need to differentiate the concrete from the abstract aspects of universals.

Accepting an abstract aspect to universals substantiates Armstrong's primitive fact that universals are repeatable concrete particulars. Recall that Armstrong defines universals as repeatable particulars and that this accounts for Armstrong's two claims; because universals are repeatable particulars, they are capable of being both concrete constituents of particulars and multiply located entities. The problem is that Armstrong's definition of 'universal', the peg upon

which his realism hangs, is ungrounded, i.e. a primitive fact. Given the weight that this claim carries, if Armstrong's theory is to maintain explanatory plausibility, it cannot be asserted as a mere primitive fact. Accepting that universals have abstract as well as concrete aspects substantiates this claim. Universals are identically repeatable because each concrete aspect of a universal is an instance of (instantiates) a single abstract aspect. More specifically, each concrete instance is identical to the other concrete instances of the same universal in virtue of their instantiation relation to a single abstract aspect, i.e., one abstract aspect is responsible for all of the concrete instances of a universal. By grounding the identity of concrete instances in their identical instantiation of a single abstract aspect, this theory provides an account or explanation of how and why various concrete instances of a single universal property are identical. If we accept that all concrete instances instantiate one abstract aspect, then it is in virtue of instantiating a single, i.e. the same, abstract aspect that each instance is identical to other instances; their identities lie in their identical relation to a single abstract aspect. This interpretation, therefore, is able to provide a plausible account or explanation of the identity of properties across particulars.

A few stipulations are in order. First, I should stress that the universals are not particulars, nor are they constituted only by particulars. On the view proposed here, universals have an abstract aspect and many concrete aspects. The concrete aspects are constituents of particulars and perish with particulars, but do not alone constitute the universal. To account for Armstrong's claim that universals are repeatable, we need to posit something in virtue of which each concrete instance is identical; hence the abstract aspect. The abstract aspect is not

a particular and is what constitutes the lasting quality of the universal amidst the coming-to-be and perishing of its concrete aspects. With the inclusion of the abstract aspect that is neither spatial nor temporal, universals are not particulars. Secondly, concrete aspects instantiate, but are not solely responsible for, the apparent identity of properties in concrete particulars. As stipulated above, the identity of concrete instances flows from their instantiation of a single abstract aspect; without a single abstract aspect establishing a commonality amongst concrete instances, as Armstrong's theory illustrates, we cannot account for identity. Finally, 'multiple instantiation' better represents this phenomenon than 'repeatable'. Repeatability crudely suggests that a single universal is able to be identically located as a concrete constituent in many particulars. This description is not quite right; no entity is repeated. Rather, each concrete, i.e. strictly concrete, instance is identical to other instances in virtue of its instantiation relation with the universal's abstract aspect. 'Multiple instantiation' is a more accurate term for this because it suggests that a single abstract aspect has multiple instantiations in various concrete instances. By focusing on the abstract aspect, which is neither spatial nor temporal, we do not run the risk of implying that a single concrete entity can be multiply located; rather, a single abstract aspect simply has multiple instantiations.

This proposal is markedly different from Armstrong's, but all of the differences follow from the attempt to substantiate the central realist claim that instances of a property are identical to other instances. Armstrong's theory does not support, despite advocating, this claim. I have substantiated it by proposing that universals have abstract aspects and suggesting that these are responsible

for, i.e. substantiate, the identity across a universal's concrete instances. All modifications to Armstrong's claims, small and large, follow only from an attempt to substantiate the primary realist tenet that remains unsupported in his account.

When Armstrong unconditionally rejects independent universals, he loses the ability to account for the identity of properties across particular instances. Armstrong rejects independent universals and replaces them with concrete repeatable. This does avoid significant difficulties associated with traditional realist theories, e.g., the problem of participation, but only by seeking refuge in the primitive fact claim that certain types of particulars are repeatable. This might not be so disturbing if it did not constitute his theory's claim to realism. With my proposal, I have attempted to construct a plausible argument for a realism of properties that returns to independent universals as an ontological entity useful in explanation. In the following section I hope to clarify further and direct this approach to properties by considering several authors who espouse comparable theories. Despite the close affinities between these authors and my broad theory, my aim in this section is not to consider the overt similarities, but to note the specific differences in hopes of further clarifying my proposal. I turn to the work of Daniel Devereux, Panayot Butchvarov and Katz to do so.

Devereux argues for an interpretation of Plato's middle theory of forms where forms are entities separate from particulars but responsible for immanent characters in particulars that express the properties of the forms.⁵⁶ "So the hot,

⁵⁶ Devereux's article accomplishes much more than is discussed here. I am interested in the comparable relation between Devereux's characterization of Plato's 'immanent characters' and forms and my proposal sketched here. The theory of forms considered in his article is derived

cold, etc. that are in such things as fire and snow are not forms; they are distinct entities, subject to coming-to-be and perishing. Let us call them ‘immanent characters’” (Devereux: 1999, 197). He offers a few distinctions between forms and immanent characters to elaborate what he means by each.⁵⁷ First, “immanent characters are perishable while forms are not” (Devereux: 1999, 200). Likewise on my view, concrete instances of universals in particulars are subject to coming-to-be and perishing, e.g., we can crush a tennis ball and in so doing witness the perishing of a concrete instance of sphericity. So long as it is instantiated elsewhere, however, we assume that the abstract aspect of sphericity has not changed.⁵⁸ Secondly, immanent characters in different objects are distinct; “corresponding to the single form largeness, there will be many immanent characters of largeness” (Devereux: 1999, 200). Thirdly, “it also seems that many immanent characters can be perceived by the senses; we can see the largeness in Simmias, and feel the heat in the fire. The forms of largeness and heat, however, can only be apprehended by reasoning” (Devereux: 1999, 200). One consequence in this shift in platonic thought from an earlier conception of forms which located forms in particulars, e.g. in the *Euthyphro*, is that it

from what some scholars believe to be Plato’s middle dialogues. One significant difference from the earlier Socratic dialogues, Devereux argues, is that forms are depicted as immanent rather than separate from particulars. Devereux contends that Plato made this shift in the *Pheado* (209-10).

⁵⁷ Most of Devereux’s claims are supported by references to various dialogues. Because I am not concerned with platonic exegesis, I am presenting his argument just as a description of how immanent characters, which are very similar to concrete instances, relate to platonic forms. Though there is certainly a resemblance, I do not wish to emphasize the relation between abstract aspects and platonic forms, only the similarities between concrete instances and immanent characters.

⁵⁸ Plato included at least the possibility of uninstantiated forms. I do not at this point claim the same for abstract aspects.

demonstrates that forms or universals do not need to be *in* a number of particulars for those particulars to instantiate the forms. “Forms are not in anything, and immanent characters are in only one thing. Once the distinction is made, the form becomes in effect a ‘one-over-many’” (Devereux: 1999, 212). My characterization of concrete aspects of universals as distinct instances which all participate in a single abstract aspect is similar; my view, like Devereux’s, proposes a ‘one-over-many’ relation between a single abstract aspect and many concrete instances.

While I agree with Devereux’s characterization of the relation between a single form and many immanent characters, I disagree with his language of separation. On Devereux’s account, forms are separate from immanent characters, i.e., forms and immanent characters are portrayed as separate entities. I suggest that Devereux’s distinction between forms and immanent characters is too distinct; on his view, immanent characters are instances of, but not aspects of, forms. On the view I have proposed, however, abstract and concrete aspects are aspects of one and the same thing; namely, the universal. Unlike Devereux’s view which construes universals and concrete instances of universals as separate objects, my proposal endorses a conception of universals that construes them as having both abstract and concrete aspects. Butchvarov offers a conception of universals that is similar to Devereux’s in differentiating the abstract quality of a universal from its particular instances.⁵⁹ Butchvarov also argues explicitly for uninstantiated universals. He does so first by distinguishing the qualitative

⁵⁹ Cf. Butchvarov. *Resemblance and Identity*. 1966. The arguments given here are taken from the concluding chapter where he considers, for the first time, an *ante rem* theory of universals.

nature of a universal from its occurrence in particular instances. "The qualitative nature of a universal quality is completely independent of changes in the existence, identity, characteristics, relations and causal properties of the things in which it is instantiated. The destruction of a circular thing makes no difference to the geometrical properties of the circle" (1966, 185). Butchvarov argues that the quality or qualitative nature of universals does not change with the coming-to-be and perishing of its instances, and that for this to be the case, the universal quality must be something distinct from its instances. "A universal quality is not the collection of its instances but rather the pervasive qualitative nature of these instances" (1966, 184). He extends this to argue that the universal quality is so independent of its instances that were all of its instances to perish, the universal, lacking any instantiation, would still exist. "The natural conclusion of this train of thought is that a universal quality may exist even if it has no instances at all" (1966, 186). It is not clear precisely how distinct Butchvarov intends the universal quality to be from its instances. What is clear, however, is that for Butchvarov the qualitative nature of a universal runs through, but is not identified with, any (and every) particular instance. Both Devereux and Butchvarov, then, firmly differentiate the universal (or universal quality) from its particular instances.

The relation between abstract forms and concrete or immanent characters has plagued philosophy at least since the *Parmenides*. Devereux concedes that this is a significant problem for his interpretation and shows that Plato was clearly aware of the difficulty. "According to the proposed interpretation, sensible objects somehow 'participate' in forms without having forms in them.

What exactly is involved in this ‘participation’? The *Phaedo* provides no answer...” (Devereux: 1999, 199).⁶⁰ I think the way around this difficulty is to view the relation in question as between an abstract aspect and a concrete aspect of one and the same entity rather than a relation between a concrete particular and a separate abstract object. The difference between these two is that the former represents the abstract and the concrete as two aspects of a single entity whereas the latter relates two distinct (one abstract and one concrete) entities. In other words, the onus for my proposal is to show how a single entity can have both abstract and concrete aspects. This is a slightly lighter onus than accounting for a relation that exists between an abstract and a separate concrete object because it is obligated to account only for how a single entity can have abstract and concrete aspects.⁶¹ To be sure, my theory still faces a robust version of the problem of participation, which I return to in the concluding section of the paper.

I turn now to the work of Katz to draw out the distinction that even though the abstract and concrete aspects of a universal are not separate objects, it is not the case that both aspects are components or constituents of each particular instantiation. Katz modifies the traditional abstract/concrete distinction by introducing ‘homogeneous,’ and ‘heterogeneous’ or ‘composite’ as two further classifications of objects.⁶² Homogeneous objects are objects that are either entirely concrete or entirely abstract. Homogeneous abstract objects are “abstract

⁶⁰ Cf. Devereux 199-200 for further examples of Socrates’ inability to account for participation.

⁶¹ The latter version, furthermore, seems to suggest a separate realm of existence for abstract objects. If so, then the problem becomes even larger because the realist is forced to explain how relations between abstract and concrete objects not only exist, but span realms as well.

⁶² Katz (145, n11) uses ‘heterogeneous’ and ‘composite’ as two designations for the same class of objects. Why he does so will be clear shortly.

all the way down, and [homogeneous] concrete objects are concrete all the way down" (1998, 121). Katz's heterogeneous or composite objects are objects that have both abstract and concrete components, i.e., Katz supplements the traditional categories of abstract and concrete objects by introducing a heterogeneous category of objects which consists of both abstract and concrete components. "The equator of the earth is a composite object. Its abstract component is a mathematical circle, its concrete component is a part of the surface of the earth..." (1998, 148).⁶³ A triangle on a chalkboard is another example; the chalk outline is a concrete component, the type triangle is an abstract object, and both are components of the composite object, i.e., the triangle on the blackboard. The abstract aspect of my proposal is comparable to the abstract component of a composite object. Likewise, the concrete aspect of my proposal is similar to the concrete component of a composite object; concrete components come-to-be and perish with the composite, abstract components do not.⁶⁴

Despite large affinities, there is an important difference as well, a difference that has 1) semantic, and 2) ontological facets, between Katz's and my views. First, in Katz's terminology, abstract objects are components of composite objects and cannot be differentiated by abstract and concrete aspects, i.e., for Katz, the entire universal, not just one of its concrete aspects, is a component of a

⁶³ Because the equator has a history, i.e. came into being and will eventually go out of being, and has been crossed many times in that history, the physical equator is a concrete component of the composite object equator (Katz, 138).

⁶⁴ Katz argues that composite objects are contingent because of their concrete components, which are contingent (Katz, 146).

composite object. Katz's terminology does not permit him to differentiate the abstract from the concrete aspects of universals.

Second, Katz's view commits him to arguing that the entire abstract object is a component of each of its concrete particulars. Katz's composite objects have both concrete and abstract objects as components. An abstract object, then, is a component of each object in which it is instantiated. Rather than describing universals as constituting a one-over-many relation with their particulars, Katz's view portrays them as being simultaneous components of any number of objects, i.e. a one-in-many characterization. While I agree in part with Katz's claim that some aspect of the universal is in each of its instances, I reject the suggestion that the entire universal is in each of its instances. This is one of the important circumstances that my proposal is designed to avoid.⁶⁵ My concern with Devereux and, to a less clear extent, Butchvarov was that their separation of the universal from its instances is too distinct, i.e., they treat the universal and its instances as separate entities, whereas I have argued that universals and particulars are not separate entities. I stipulate that universals have distinct abstract and concrete aspects, with the result that the entire universal is not a constituent of its particulars; rather, while its concrete aspects are constituents of particulars, its abstract aspect is independent of its particular instances. Thus, we should conceive universals as entities that are distinct and independent of, but

⁶⁵ One plausible route is to argue that the particular necessarily includes the concrete instance and that the concrete instance necessarily entails the abstract aspect and, in this way, the universal (abstract and concrete aspects) is a component of the composite particular. But it does not follow from this that the abstract aspect is a necessary component of the particular, only that the abstract aspect is responsible for one of the particular's components; namely, the concrete instance of the universal.

not separate from, particulars. In order to understand this, we must conceive each universal as being constituted by both abstract and concrete aspects.

Thus far I have cast doubt on the explanatory adequacy of Armstrong's theory of universals and suggested instead a realism of properties that returns to independent universals. There are many other issues that would need to be filled in in order to develop fully the theory sketched here. My aim in this paper, however, is to suggest that such a view is at least as much if not more capable of explaining or accounting for the apparent identity of properties than Armstrong's immanent realism. In the remaining section I return to two criticisms Armstrong wields against other versions of a realism of properties. After suggesting that the force of Armstrong's criticisms are not as strong against the proposal sketched here, I summarize the benefits and deficiencies of each view in an explanatory calculus and conclude that a return to independent universals promises a stronger account of properties than Armstrong's immanent realism.

The first and most significant criticism that Armstrong wages against versions of realism that separate the universal from its concrete instances is that such views are faced with the relation regress, which Armstrong argues commits them to a vicious and infinite regress. First, let me say that Armstrong's critique is directed against a transcendent realism of properties which construes universals solely as abstract objects which, Armstrong claims, are located outside of space-time. Notice, however, that my view, while advocating a return to independent universals, locates universals both in and independently of particulars, depending on whether one is referencing a specific concrete instance

or the abstract universal quality. If the universal is composed of its concrete instances and an abstract aspect, then there is not a relation between the universal and its concrete instances; rather, each concrete instance, in virtue of instantiating the abstract aspect, is a component of the universal. In this respect, the relation regress does not apply to the view of properties sketched here.

However, it might apply to the relation between each concrete instance and the abstract aspect, i.e., this view potentially faces the relation regress insofar as it is obligated to account for the relation between the concrete and abstract aspects of a single universal. While I do not have a definitive response to this difficulty, I would like to make a few comments that I hope recast the criticism and suggest that the relation regress does not necessarily follow from distinguishing the universal itself from its concrete instances. I also suggest that insofar as my theory is obligated and not yet able to clarify fully the relation between the abstract and concrete aspects of a universal, Armstrong's theory is in equally dire straits insofar as he is obliged to account for how states of affairs, which unite particulars and universals, are non-relational entities.

First, it is not the case with this view that a single concrete particular is multiply instantiated; each concrete instance of a universal is distinct from other concrete instances of the same universal. This marks a stark contrast to Armstrong's version that asks that we accept that certain concrete particulars are able to be multiply located. On my view, each concrete instance is identical to others only insofar as each instantiates the same abstract aspect as the others. Nor is it the case that the abstract aspect is multiply located, as this implies

spatio-temporal location, a quality that the abstract aspect importantly lacks. So there is no claim with this view that a single entity occupies multiple locations.

Second, because one of the entities in the relation between concrete instances and abstract aspects is abstract, it is not a question of the relation between various concrete instances or between one abstract aspect and many concrete instances, but rather how each single concrete instance instantiates the abstract aspect. It is not clear that a concrete instance's instantiating an abstract aspect necessarily entails a relation between two distinct entities. Before we can claim that a relation relates the two aspects of a universal, we need a clarification of the precise nature of instantiation. The relation regress assumes that a relation between the aspects or entities is necessary, so until it is shown that for a concrete instance to instantiate an abstract aspect, a relation must exist between the two aspects, this view is not necessarily committed to the relation regress. I propose, then, that we seriously consider what it means to be abstract and how abstract and concrete realities might relate with one another. I am not, admittedly, prepared to give such an analysis here. I simply want to point out that the question is how a concrete instance instantiates an abstract aspect rather than one of a necessary relation regress. My point is that the nature of instantiation is prior to the claim that a relation is necessary to bind the two entities. The uncertainty of the unity or combination of the two aspects of a universal is, for now, a fairly significant drawback to this view, but it is not the case that the drawback is that this view is committed to an infinite and vicious regress; rather, this view has some work to do in explicating at least the possible

ways in which a concrete instance might instantiate an abstract aspect of a universal.

Third, insofar as this proposal is being compared with Armstrong's immanent realism, one might equally ask Armstrong how it is that states of affairs tie universals to particulars without any type of relation holding between them. Armstrong claims that states of affairs are non-relational entities. He states that "there is no relation of instantiation *over and above* the states of affairs themselves" (1997b, 118). He shortly adds that

It is often convenient to talk about instantiation, but states of affairs come first. If this is a 'fundamental tie,' required by relations as much as properties, then so be it. But it is *very* different from anything that is ordinarily spoken of as a relation" (1997b: 118).

Devitt, as mentioned earlier, criticizes Armstrong for replacing the relation between universals and bare particulars with "a complete mystery" (Devitt: 1997, 98). Armstrong claims that "while we can distinguish the particularity of a particular from its properties, nevertheless the two 'factors' are too intimately together to speak of a relation between them" (Devitt: 1997, 108). So Armstrong claims that universals are instantiated by particulars, but that they are not related to particulars, i.e., states of affairs unite particulars and universals too intimately to speak of their union as a relation. Why can't I say the same for the non-relation between the abstract and concrete aspects of a universal? I might equally state that while we can distinguish the abstract aspect from a concrete instance of a universal, nevertheless the two factors are too intimately together to speak of a relation between them. Just as Armstrong's two distinct types of

entities are non-relationally united in a state of affairs, so are the abstract and concrete aspects of universals non-relationally bound together as constituents of the universal. I do not think that Armstrong's claim that states of affairs are non-relational entities is at all persuasive, but if he can claim that, there is no reason why I can't claim the same for the two aspects of universals. More to the point, if his theory is insufficient in this claim, then my theory's inability to account for the relation between the abstract and concrete aspects of a universal is not as serious a drawback in respect to the comparison between my theory and his. Worst case scenario: both theories are part of the same hypocrisy.

The second criticism Armstrong levies against transcendent realism is that it entails uninstantiated universals. For transcendent realists, universals are separate from particulars, suggesting that if no particular instantiates a universal, the universal need not cease to exist and may, in fact, exist as an uninstantiated universal. This is especially true for theories such as Plato's which argue that universals are eternal, i.e., never cease to exist. Armstrong places universals, both with and without instantiations, in a 'platonic heaven' which, he claims, is outside of or independent of space-time; on Armstrong's view, only concrete particulars populate space-time, and transcendent universals are certainly not concrete.

On the view sketched here, however, I do not accept that space-time can only be populated by concrete particulars, so my view is not committed to the existence of a 'platonic heaven'; rather, my universals are constituents of space-time just like concrete objects, except that they have aspects that are abstract. If I were to accept uninstantiated universals into this theory, however, I would

jeopardize the definition of a universal as a property that is expressed through an abstract aspect and concrete aspects. So, on my conception, despite being able to locate uninstantiated universals in space-time, I had best not for fear of altering my definition of 'universals' as properties with abstract and concrete aspects. Whether universals are eternal and whether the definition of 'universal' I have proposed necessarily excludes the possibility of uninstantiated universals, however, are questions for which I have no definitive answer. I am amenable, for the time being, to accepting that a universal cannot exist unless it has at least one concrete instance, given the definition of 'universal' proposed here. My proposal, then, in defining universals as necessarily having at least one concrete instance, does not fall prey to the criticism of uninstantiated universals.

Even if I did claim that universals can exist without concrete instances, however, my view would not fall prey to Armstrong's uninstantiated criticism. It is not difficult to imagine how a universal composed only of an abstract aspect without any concrete instances might exist. The abstract aspect would be located in space-time as an abstract entity like all other abstract aspects of universals with the one exception that it would not also have concrete aspects. This caveat does not entail any devastating consequences for the proposal *prima facie*. Furthermore, on Armstrong's view, a universal that is instantiated, then not instantiated, and later instantiated again, comes into and out of existence. Given the option of accepting that an abstract aspect of a universal exists despite not having a concrete instantiation, or accepting that universals come into and out of existence, I choose to accept that an abstract aspect can exist uninstantiated. Armstrong's criticism is that separating universals from particulars forces

universals into a 'platonic heaven'. While I am not sure what theories of universals this criticism would apply to, I can say that it does not apply to mine.

I have thus far sketched a conception of a realism of properties that is an alternative, and, I argue, an improvement upon, Armstrong's immanent realism. Which is to say, my proposal is as, if not more, persuasive in its attempt to account or explain the apparent identity of properties across particulars. Given that the theory with the most persuasive and parsimonious explanatory value should be the theory realists advocate for properties, I therefore conclude that a return to independent realism offers a better realist account of properties than Armstrong's immanent realism. To see this, we need, in conclusion, to consider and compare the costs and benefits of each view.

I have shown that Armstrong's realism is based in his primitive fact claim that certain concrete particulars are repeatable. If you do not accept his primitive fact, however, his theory does not persuade you otherwise, i.e., if you do not accept his primitive fact, you would not endorse his theory. Furthermore, his primitive fact is what supports his two major claims about properties, so if his primitive fact is questionable, then his two major claims are proportionately not very well supported. Another deficit of Armstrong's theory is that it seems committed to independent universals. If this is true, then Armstrong's theory is equally required to account for the relation that he argues is the death knell for theories of transcendent or independent universals. Armstrong's theory's advantage, especially in terms of the view it is contrasted with here, is its economy; Armstrong admits only particulars into his ontology. However, the value Armstrong gains from this is lessened once we realize that he actually

includes three distinct types of particulars in his theory, e.g., bare particulars, universals and states of affairs, all of which, he argues, are distinct and necessary. These I take to be the most significant explanatory failings of Armstrong's theory of properties. His theory's claim to be the best realism in town is contingent upon his theory's being the strongest account a realist can give of properties. I don't think this is the case; my proposed view, by returning to independent universals, significantly strengthens the realist's argument for properties.

My proposal, first and foremost, expands the ontological category of entities to include abstract aspects of universals, which is to say, my theory posits abstract aspects of universals that are independent of particulars. This is a hypothesis that my theory makes which, if the explanatory payoff avails itself, is worth accepting. By returning to independent universals, my proposal is able to substantiate the identity of properties across particulars with a plausible account; the cost is that we accept that space-time is populated by abstract aspects of universals as well as concrete particulars. Where Armstrong requires three distinct types of particulars, my theory advocates one category of particulars and another of abstract objects or entities. Thus far, having substantiated Armstrong's primitive fact and consequently further supported the two major claims of his theory of properties, while reducing the ontological cost of abstract aspects by noting Armstrong's numerous types of particulars, my proposal should have a considerable lead in terms of explanatory value and parsimony over Armstrong's immanent realism.

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