E. J. Lowe

PROPERTIES, MODES, AND UNIVERSALS

WHAT are properties? Do any exist? These are surprisingly difficult questions to answer satisfactorily. One might suppose that a property is whatever is denoted by a meaningful predicate and that, since there are many such predicates, there are many properties. But we know that matters cannot be as simple as that, because the supposition that every meaningful predicate denotes a property apparently leads to paradox. Assuming that properties, if they exist, are items that are predicable of other items, it seems that we must suppose the predicate 'is not predicable of itself'—or 'is non-self-predicable', for short—to be meaningful. But if this predicate denotes a property, it presumably denotes the property of being non-self-predicable. And hence, since 'is non-self-predicable' is a meaningful predicate, it must either be true or else be false that the property of being non-self-predicable is non-self-predicable. However, if it is true, then it turns out that that property is, after all predicable of itself; and if it is false, then it turns out that that property is, after all, not predicable of itself. So we apparently have a contradiction on our hands. There may be ways to evade this result, but at least it shows us that we cannot too lightly assume that every meaningful predicate denotes a property.[1]

None the less, it must be conceded that there is an intimate connection between predicates and properties, not least because our canonical ways of referring to properties—or, perhaps I should more cautiously say, our canonical ways of *attempting* to refer to properties—make use of predicates. The most obvious way of turning a predicate into a singular term which may purportedly be used to refer to a property is to take a predicate, say 'is *F*', delete the copula, and prefix to what remains the words 'the property of being', to give the noun phrase 'the property of being *F*'—for example, 'the property of being red', 'the property of being two miles from the centre of London' and, indeed, 'the property of being non-self-predicable'. Another way, which can only be used conveniently with simple predicates, is again to delete the copula and add to what remains the suffix 'ness', to give the abstract noun '*F*ness'—for example, 'redness', 'roundness', 'tallness' and so forth.[2] But, as we have seen, we have no guarantee that expressions of either form denote anything whatever, even if the corresponding predicates are perfectly meaningful. If we are to answer the questions posed at the outset of this paper—'What are properties?' and 'Do any exist?'—we need at the very least to provide acceptable accounts of both the *existence-conditions* and the *identity-conditions* of properties. That is to say, we need to be able to explain satisfactorily

what it is, quite generally, for there to *be* such a property as the property of being *F*, or *F*ness. And we need to be able to explain satisfactorily what it is, quite generally, for the property of being *F*, or *F*ness, to be identical with the property of being *G*, or *G*ness—on the assumption that these properties do indeed exist. But it is far from easy to meet either demand.[3]

It may reasonably be suggested, indeed, that we cannot hope to meet either demand unless we can first determine to what general ontological category properties should be assigned, if indeed they exist at all. Should we conceive of properties as being *universals* or as being *particulars*? Or could it be that the term 'property' is ambiguous and that in one sense it applies to universals of a certain type while in another sense it applies to particulars of a certain type? In any case, what exactly should we understand by the distinction between 'universals' and 'particulars', which are quite as much philosophical terms of art as is the term 'property'? Let me here lay my own cards on the table—or, at least, a few of those cards. I do not believe that the distinction between universals and particulars can be satisfactorily accounted for in spatiotemporal terms. I do not believe, for instance, that a particular may be defined as something that cannot be 'wholly present' in two different places at the same time or, correlatively, that a universal may be defined as something that *can* be 'wholly present' in two different places at the same time. It is not just that I have doubts as to what exactly could be meant by such talk of something's being, or not being, 'wholly present' in two different places at the same time—though I do have such doubts. Rather, it seems to me

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[1]What we have here, of course, is a version of Russell's paradox. I discuss it further in my 'Abstraction, Properties, and Immanent Realism', in Tom Rockmore (ed.), *The Proceedings of the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy, Volume 2: Metaphysics* (Bowling Green, OH: Philosophy Documentation Center, 1999), pp. 195-205. For an interesting recent diagnosis and treatment of the paradox, see D. W. Mertz, *Moderate Realism and its Logic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 222-5.

[2]Jerrold Levinson has argued that these two types of expression, '[the property of] being *F*' and '*F*ness', denote attributes of quite different sorts, which he calls *properties* and *qualities* respectively: see his 'The Particularisation of Attributes', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 58 (1980), pp. 102-15. He remarks that 'The most important characteristic mark of a quality as opposed to a property is variable quantifiability—that is, admitting of *some*, *more than*, *less than*' (p. 106). However, he acknowledges that 'it is open for someone to

resist seeing quality talk as invoking a notion of variable quantifiable abstract stuff' and that such a person 'will probably seek to replace "A has more φ-ness than B" by the more normal "A has φ in higher degree than B"' (p. 106n). This is a strategy that I am inclined to favour myself.

[3]I propose some ways of meeting these demands in my 'Abstraction, Properties, and Immanent Realism', but I do not rely on these proposals in the present paper.

[4]I discuss this and other senses of the expression 'abstract' in my 'The Metaphysics of Abstract Objects', *The Journal of Philosophy* 92 (1995), pp. 509-24 and in my *The Possibility of Metaphysics: Substance, Identity, and Time* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), Ch. 10.

[5]See further my *Kinds of Being: A Study of Individuation, Identity and the Logic of Sortal Terms* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), Ch. 3 and J. J. E. Gracia, *Individuality: An Essay on the Foundations of Metaphysics* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988).

that the proposal is flawed inasmuch as it rules out by definition the possibility of there being universals or particulars which do not exist 'in' space and time at all—in short, it rules out by definition the possibility of there being *abstract* entities belonging to these categories, in one fairly familiar sense of the expression 'abstract'.[4] It is in this sense that mathematical objects, such as numbers, sets and functions are often characterised as being 'abstract', as opposed to 'concrete', entities. There may, of course, be good reasons to doubt the actual existence of abstract entities in this sense: but so long as such entities *could* exist, and would be either universals or particulars if they did so, it cannot be satisfactory to *define* the distinction between universals and particulars in spatiotemporal terms.

My own view, which is by no means unique to me, is that the distinction between universals and particulars is most satisfactorily captured by appeal to the concept of *instantiation*—a concept which is needed in any case if we are to admit the distinction in question. Particulars instantiate—are, quite literally, *instances* of—universals, at least on the assumption that universals and particulars both exist. Universals, however, may also instantiate universals, namely, so-called 'higher-order' universals. But the difference between particulars and universals is that, simply in virtue of its being a particular, nothing whatever can instantiate a particular (unless, perhaps, we are prepared to say that every particular trivially instantiates *itself*, but no other particular).[5] This is not, so far, to deny that there may be universals which, as a matter of fact, are not instantiated by anything—'first-order' universals, for example, which have no particular instances. For the proposal is only that every universal, but no particular, is *instantiable*—that is, *can* or *could* have instances. This, it is true, rules out the existence of certain universals that some philosophers might want to include in their ontologies: for instance, on the assumption that there is such a property as the property of being both round and square and that this property is a universal, this is a universal which *could* not have any instances, given that any such instance would have to be both round and square. My proposed way of capturing the distinction between universals and particulars cannot accommodate the existence of such a universal, since it would qualify as a particular according to that proposal. However, this, it seems to me, is a much smaller price to pay than that paid by the spatiotemporal proposal rejected earlier, for that proposal could not accommodate the existence of a whole class of entities—abstract entities—that a great many philosophers are eager to include in their ontologies. Of course, in saying that the spatiotemporal proposal could not accommodate the existence of abstract entities, I am presupposing something that might perhaps be queried, namely, that the distinction between universals and particulars is both exhaustive and exclusive—that

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everything is either a particular or a universal, but not both. But I hope that that, too, is not unduly controversial.

With the distinction between universals and particulars in place, we can again ask whether properties should be conceived as being particulars or as being universals—or, perhaps, in different senses of the term 'property', as being both. In this connection, it is helpful, I think, to draw upon the often-made suggestion that properties may best be thought of as *ways of being*.[6] This is implicitly to deny that properties are *objects* or *things*, at least in a robust and fairly narrow sense of 'object' or 'thing'—the sense which corresponds, more or less, to the traditional concept of 'substance'. The thought, then, is that properties are *ways things are*. That being so, however, it is natural to try to distinguish between a 'way' two or more *different* things may be and a 'way' just one thing is—a 'way' that is necessarily unique to just one thing. And this would correspond, it seems, to the distinction between properties conceived as universals and properties conceived as particulars. According to this suggestion, the property of being red, for instance—assuming there to be such a property—is, when conceived as a universal, a way in which two or more different things may be coloured, such that, each of them being so coloured may be said to be coloured in the *same* way. And by 'in the same way' here is meant, quite literally, 'in the numerically identical way'. At the same time, however, one might want to speak, again quite literally, of the *particular* way in which one thing is coloured and refer to this as, for example, that thing's *particular* redness, or its *particular* property of being red, with the implication that no other thing could be coloured in that very same (numerically identical) way.[7] To put some more of my own cards on the table, I should reveal at this point that I believe in the existence of properties, conceived as 'ways', in both of the foregoing senses—that is to say, I believe in the existence of both *universal* 'ways things are' and *particular* 'ways things are'. The former I simply call *properties*—thus reserving the term 'property' henceforth for a certain type of universal—and the latter I call *modes*, partly out of deference to a long historical tradition which is exemplified, for instance, in the writings of John Locke.[8]

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[6]This is Jerrold Levinson's suggestion in his 'Properties and Related Entities', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 39 (1978), pp. 1-22; it has been widely followed.

[7]Jerrold Levinson is deeply sceptical about the notion of 'particularised ways', as he explains in his 'Why There Are No Tropes' (forthcoming). He suspects that those who think that there is a sense in which *a*'s being *F* is a numerically distinct property from *b*'s being *F* (where *a* and *b* are themselves distinct objects) have 'shifted attention from properties to states of affairs'. I can only speak for myself in saying that I conceive of *a*'s *particular* property of being *F* as being an entity which, while

it depends for its identity upon *a*, does not include *a* as a constituent, in the way that the state of affairs of *a* being *F* is naturally thought to do.

[8]I say more about Locke's view in my 'Locke, Martin and Substance', *The Philosophical Quarterly* 50 (2000), pp. 499-514.

[9]Cf. Mertz, *Moderate Realism and its Logic*, p. 25.

[10]As we shall shortly see, I want to say this only in case the flower is, as I shall put it, *occurrently* red: but this is a complication that may be ignored for the time being.

At this point, something should perhaps be said about *relations*, for I don't want to imply that there are only 'monadic' ways things can be. The property of being red—assuming it to exist—is, inasmuch as it is a universal, a way many things can be, in that each of many things can be that same way. But, in another perfectly clear sense, it is not a way *two or more* things can be, because it is not relational in character. By contrast, the relation of being taller than most certainly is a way two things can be, one with respect to the other. And the relation of being between is a way three things can be, one with respect to the other two. It is natural, then, to think of properties as being, as it were, 'monadic' relations—relations with only one relatum.[9] Of course, in saying this, we must be careful not to confuse the sense in which a property is a 'relation with only one relatum' with the sense in which the relation of identity—assuming there to be such a relation—is a 'relation with only one relatum', in virtue of the fact that identity is a relation in which a thing can stand only to *itself*. I shall not have much more to say in this paper about polyadic relations, but this is not because I do not think that they are important, much less because I do not think that they exist—for I most certainly think they do. Consequently, I also believe in the existence of the corresponding particulars— relational modes, as they might be called. However, 'monadic' relations or properties and the corresponding particulars—which I shall continue to call simply 'modes'—will do quite enough to keep us occupied for duration of this paper.

I have already mentioned the concept of *instantiation*, in terms of which, indeed, I define the distinction between universals and particulars. Particulars are instances of universals. But it is, in my view, vitally important not to confuse instantiation with the relationship—I won't say 'relation', for reasons which will become clear—between things and their properties. The latter relationship I like to call 'characterisation'. Some philosophers use the term 'exemplification' in this context, but I have another use for that which, as I hope to make plain, requires it to have a different sense from that of the term 'characterisation', as I use the latter. Characterisation, as I use the term, is a relationship between a particular thing and its *particular* properties, or modes. Suppose, for example, that a certain particular flower is red: then—assuming that there is such a property as the property of being red—I want to say that this flower has a particular redness, which is necessarily unique to that flower and which, in my sense of the term, 'characterises' that flower.[10] The flower's particular redness is a mode—a particular way that flower is—and one which for that reason may be said to 'characterise' the flower. Quite literally, the mode is a particular 'characteristic' of the flower. As I have already indicated, I am reluctant to say that characterisation is a *relation* between a particular thing and its modes. For then, it seems, we should have to conceive of

a thing and one of its modes as being the relata of a further *relational* mode, which would in turn 'characterise' (in my sense of the term) those two relata, one with respect to the other. And it is easy to see that in this way an infinite regress would be generated which would be at least unwelcome if not fatal.[11] Here, however, we can draw comfort from our earlier observation that not every meaningful predicate need be supposed to denote a property—or, in this case, a relation. Just because 'is characterised by' is a meaningful relational predicate, as it appears in the sentence 'This flower is characterised by its own particular redness', we need not conclude that that predicate denotes a relation in which the flower and its particular redness stand to one another.

The flower's particular redness—a certain mode of the flower which 'characterises' it—is an instance of the property redness, a universal. In short, modes instantiate properties. But the *flower* whose mode instantiates the property redness does not *itself* instantiate that property. The flower is not literally an *instance* of the property redness—only the mode is that. None the less, inasumuch as the flower is characterised by a mode which instantiates the property, there is a relationship—again, I won't say a *relation*—between the flower and the property and we need to give this relationship a name. This is what I call *exemplification*. However, as we shall soon see, there are two different ways, or senses, in which something like a flower may be said to exemplify a property such as redness—remembering here that by a 'property' now I mean a certain type of universal.

If the flower is not an instance of the property redness, is it an instance of any universal whatever? Most certainly it is, in my opinion. For example, if the flower is a rose, then it is an instance of the kind *rose*. Kinds are universals, but are not *properties*, where the latter are understood, as I have proposed, as being 'ways things are'. Being red is a way a flower may be, as is being tall or being delicate. But being *a rose* is not a way a flower may be: it is *what* certain flowers are, in the sense that they are particular instances of that kind of thing. To distinguish kinds, thus understood, from properties, I call the former 'substantial universals'. In my view, a particular thing's being an instance of a certain substantial universal can never be 'reduced to', or 'analysed in terms of', that thing's being characterised by modes of certain properties.[12] It may indeed be the case that things of certain kinds necessarily exemplify certain properties, but that does not imply that their being of those kinds simply consists in their exemplifying certain properties.

[11]This is often spoken of as 'Bradley's regress': for discussion, see Mertz, *Moderate Realism and its Logic*, pp. 49-51. I explain my own response to it more fully in my 'Locke, Martin and Substance'.

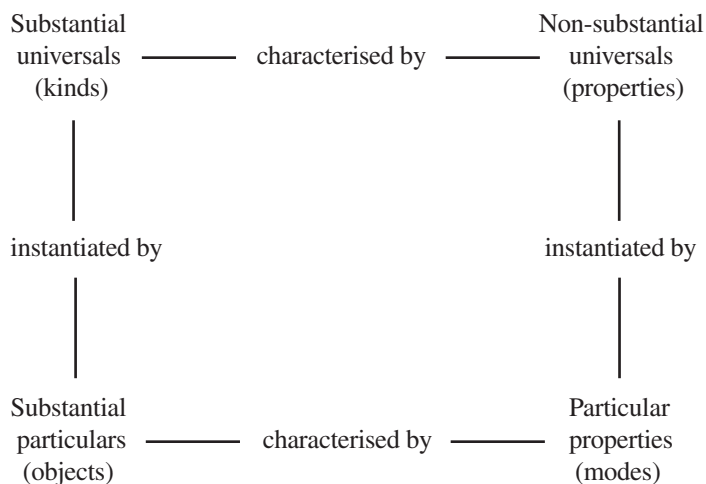[12]See further my *Kinds of Being*, pp. 157-8.

[13]See my *The Possibility of Metaphysics*, pp.

203-4 and my 'A Defence of the Four-Category Ontology' (forthcoming).

[14]For discussion, see Mertz, *Moderate Realism and its Logic*, pp. 98-104.

[15]See further my 'Noun Phrases, Quantifiers, and Generic Names', *The Philosophical Quarterly* 41 (1991), pp. 287-300.

What now begins to emerge is that, if the foregoing suggestions are correct, we need to acknowledge the existence of two quite distinct categories of particulars and two quite distinct categories of universals: a fourfold system of fundamental categories which forms the basis of what I call 'the four-category ontology'.[13] It is a system which, according to many commentators, is at least hinted at very early in Aristotle's *Categories*, but which he may or may not have abandoned in subsequent writings.[14] The categories in question are: (1) particular objects or substantial particulars, (2) particular properties or modes, (3) kinds or substantial universals, and (4) properties or non-substantial universals. The system may be represented by means of the following diagram:

Substantial   Non-substantial
universals ——— characterised by ——— universals
(kinds)   (properties)

|

instantiated by   instantiated by

|

Substantial   Particular
particulars ——— characterised by ——— properties
(objects)   (modes)

There are some features of this diagram which call for further elucidation. First of all, it will be noticed that it represents substantial universals or kinds as being *characterised* by non-substantial universals, that is, by properties, in a way which mirrors the characterisation of objects (substantial particulars) by modes. And it may be wondered what motivates this idea. The answer is simple. There is a class of statements which express what are sometimes called *generic* propositions and which, taken at face value, seem to be used precisely to say that some kind is characterised by a certain property.[15] An important sub-class of these statements constitute so-called *nomological* statements, or statements of natural law.

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An example would be the statement—which is false as it happens—'Roses are red', where this is not taken to be equivalent to the universally quantified statement 'All roses are red', nor to the existentially quantified statement 'Some roses are red'. What it appears to be saying—and what, according to the foregoing diagram it *is* saying—is that the property of being red, or redness, characterises a certain kind of flower, roses. Another, if slightly more stilted, way of saying the same thing would be to say 'The rose is red', where by 'the rose' is not meant any *particular* rose but, once again, the *kind* of which all particular roses are instances. Notice here that the reason why 'Roses are red' is false is not just that there are some particular roses that are not red, but rather that not every *kind* of rose is red. Contrast this with 'Violets are blue', which I take to be true, despite the fact that there may be certain defective or abnormal specimens of the kind *violet* which are not blue. Generic statements of this sort have, in a certain sense, a *normative* character: the most that they tell us about particular instances of a given kind is what *normal* instances of that kind are like, in a certain respect (for example, in respect of their colour).[16]

I concede that it may seem odd, to those who have not reflected on the matter before, to say that a property may characterise a substantial universal or kind: but this is precisely what the syntax of generic statements appears to imply and, in the absence of any compelling reason not to take this appearance at face value, I propose to accept the implication. This proposal has many of the advantages associated with the view that statements of natural law express relations amongst universals without some of the disadvantages of that view.[17] It has the advantage, thus, of making a logical distinction between a statement of law and the corresponding universal generalisation—between, for instance, 'Violets are blue' and 'All (particular) violets are blue'—but it does not appeal to the somewhat dubious notion that what 'connects' the universals involved in a law is a 'second-order' relational universal of 'necessitation'. According to the current proposal, what 'connects' the universals involved in a law is simply the familiar relationship—again, I won't say *relation*—of characterisation, which equally 'connects' objects to their modes. The welcome implication is that the copula 'is', as it appears in the generic sentence 'The rose is red', has a sense which is intimately related to the sense that it has in the sentence 'This rose is red', where 'this rose' denotes a *particular* rose.

[16]See further my *Kinds of Being*, Ch. 8 and my 'Kinds, Essence, and Natural Necessity' (forthcoming). Cf. Alice Drewery, 'Laws, Regularities and Exceptions', *Ratio* 13 (2000), pp. 1-12.

[17]For this alternative view, see D. M. Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). For further comparisons and criticisms, see my 'Kinds, Essence, and Natural Necessity'.

[18]See further my *Kinds of Being*, p. 140 and my 'A Defence of the Four-Category Ontology'.

[19]Cf. my *Kinds of Being*, p.170.

Here it may be wondered why we shouldn't go further and say that the copula has precisely the *same* sense in those two sentences. The answer has to do with the notion of exemplification, which I introduced earlier, and can be readily understood by looking again at the foregoing diagram. I remarked earlier that a substantial particular, or 'object' (as I am now using that term), never *instantiates* a non-substantial universal, or property—though it may be *characterised* by a mode of such a universal, in which case it may be said to *exemplify* the universal. However, from the foregoing diagram we can see that there are clearly *two* different types of relationship between objects and properties, only one of which we have identified so far. This first type of relationship obtains when an object is characterised by a *mode* of a certain property. The second type of relationship obtains when an object instantiates a *kind* which is characterised by a certain property. Thus, there are two different senses in which an object may be said to exemplify a certain property, or non-substantial universal: two different senses, thus, in which a particular flower may be said to 'be red' and so two different senses of the sentence 'This flower is red'.

This, at least, is what our diagram informs us. But does the proposal correspond to any ambiguity which can actually be discerned in such a sentence of natural language? I think it clearly does. For the predicate 'is red' in such a sentence can be understood either in an *occurrent* or in a *dispositional* sense.[18] If, as is the case in some languages other than English, we used verbs to ascribe colours to objects instead of adjectives, the distinction might be more obvious and would be registered at the level of surface syntax: we would distinguish, thus, between the sentences 'This flower *reds*' (dispositional) and 'This flower is *redding*' (occurrent), just as we distinguish between 'This sugar cube *dissolves* in water' (dispositional) and 'This sugar cube *is* dissolving in water' (occurrent). According to our diagram, the root of the occurrent/dispositional distinction is quite straightforward. For an object to be *occurrently F* is for that object to be characterised by some mode of *F*ness, whereas for an object to be *dispositionally F* is for that object to instantiate some kind that is characterised by *F*ness. In view of our earlier remarks, this proposal connects dispositions and laws in an obvious way: for an object to possess a certain disposition is just for that object to be an instance of a kind that is involved in a corresponding law.[19] Thus, the sugar cube possesses the disposition to dissolve in water because it is an instance of a kind—the *sugar* kind—of which it is a characteristic that it dissolves in water: as we say, 'Sugar dissolves in water', meaning thereby to express a law concerning the kind *sugar*.

This, then, is why I implied earlier that the copula in the two sentences 'The rose is red' and 'This rose is red' could not be taken to have exactly the same

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sense in each. In the latter sentence, the predicate 'is red' has both an occurrent and a dispositional reading, whereas there is only one natural reading of the former sentence, in which it purports to express a law. If pressed to say whether this reading is 'dispositional' or 'occurrent', we should say that it is 'dispositional'. And, indeed, there is much to be said for the idea—which is by no means new— that lawlike statements tell us how objects of certain kinds are normally *disposed* to behave or appear.[20] Think, for instance, of Kepler's laws of planetary motion, one of which states that planets orbit the sun in ellipses with the sun at one focus. Clearly, even if relativistic physics now implies that this law is not strictly true, its truth was never impugned by the fact that, for example, a planet might actually be deflected from its orbit by a passing comet. This is because the law did not purport to describe how each particular planet is actually moving, but only how planets are disposed to move under the influence of the sun's gravitational field (though Kepler himself, of course, would not have put it quite that way).

So far, we have seen that the four-category ontology, as represented by our earlier diagram, seems to accommodate many features of our everyday and scientific talk of objects and their properties. None the less, in the eyes of philosophers with penchant for desert landscapes, it will seem to be an extravagant ontology. Can it be satisfactorily defended against such critics? I believe so. Although I cannot hope to satisfy all the critics in the present paper, I shall look at some crucial points of difference between the four-category ontology and certain of its rivals and try to explain why I think that the four-category ontology has the edge over them.

Some philosophers who are happy to include universals in their ontology will think it extravagant of me to include what I call modes as well. Indeed, many philosophers who currently debate over the ontological status of properties assume that the only choice before us—given that we at least accept that properties do exist—is between conceiving properties as universals and conceiving them as particulars, with self-styled 'trope' theorists taking the latter view.[21] In this connection, I should remark that one reason why I prefer the term 'mode' to the term 'trope' to denote something in the category of *particular* properties, is that this preserves the traditional association between such entities and the correlative category of particular *substances*, or 'objects'. Trope theorists typically maintain that what we are apt to call 'objects' are no more, in reality, than 'bundles' of 'compresent' tropes. In contrast, I contend that modes are 'particular ways objects are', and as such are ontologically dependent upon objects in a much stronger sense than, according to a trope theorist, any trope can be ontolog-

[20]See again my *Kinds of Being*, Ch. 8 and also my 'What *is* the "Problem of Induction"?', *Philosophy* 62 (1987), pp. 325-40.

[21]For a defence of trope theory, see Keith Campbell, *Abstract Particulars* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

[22]See further my 'Locke, Martin and Substance'.

[23]Cf. C. B. Martin, 'Substance Substantiated', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 58 (1980), pp. 3-10.

ically dependent upon other tropes in a bundle of compresent tropes. Contrary to the supposition of some trope theorists, this does not commit me to some untenable doctrine of 'featureless substrata' or 'bare particulars' in order to explain in what sense an object, or particular substance, is 'more' than just a collection of particular properties.[22] According to my conception of objects, an object is not a complex which is somehow constituted by a collection of particular properties *together with* some further entity which is itself neither a particular property nor a propertied object. The mistake is to suppose that an object is even *partially* constituted by its particular properties, as this inverts the direction of ontological dependency between object and property. Particular properties are no more (and no less) than *features* or *aspects* of particular objects, which may indeed be selectively attended to through a mental process of abstraction when we perceive or think of particular objects, but which have no being independently of those objects and which consequently cannot in any sense be regarded as 'constituents' of objects. In this respect, the particular properties of an object differ radically from its *parts*, if it has any, for these are just further objects with particular properties of their own.[23]

Setting aside trope theory, then, for the foregoing reasons, I have to contend with those philosophers who accept that particular objects are not reducible to bundles of compresent tropes, but who none the less maintain that such objects only possess properties conceived as universals. For these philosophers, there are no such entities as 'particular properties', or, as I put it earlier, 'particular ways objects are'. Properties may still be regarded as 'ways objects are', but only as (identical) ways *many* objects may, at least in principle, be. It may be conceded that there may be properties which are exemplified by only one object, such as, perhaps, the property of being the first man to set foot on the moon (if we seriously think that there is such a property). But, even so, these properties are taken not to be dependent for their very identity upon the objects whose properties they are, in the way that particular properties or modes are naturally taken to be. Thus, even though, of necessity, there is only one object that can exemplify the property—conceived as a universal—of being the first man to set foot on the moon, that very property could have been exemplified by a different object from the object, if any, that actually exemplifies it. By contrast, this flower's particular redness—assuming there to be such a thing—could not have been possessed by any other object whatever, because its being *this* flower's redness is at least partly what makes it the particular property that it is.

But the challenge, now, is to say why we should believe in the existence of such entities as this flower's particular redness *in addition* to the corresponding universals, such as the property of being red. One reason that may be offered is

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that universals require particular instances—that there cannot be *uninstantiated* universals—and yet that particular objects, such as this flower, are not *instances* of properties, conceived as universals: rather, objects 'exemplify' such universals. Perhaps, however, this appeal to the distinction between instantiation and exemplification will be deemed to be question-begging in the present context. Furthermore, some philosophers do, of course, believe in the existence of uninstantiated universals, so that we cannot unquestioningly adopt the opposite point of view. Even so, it may be pointed out that if universals can exist uninstantiated, then they must apparently be *abstract* objects, in the sense invoked earlier in this paper—that is to say, they must be entities which do not exist 'in' space and time. Universals thus conceived are often described as 'transcendent' universals, or universals *ante rem*, as opposed to 'immanent' universals, or universals *in rebus*. And there is undoubtedly a problem in supposing that concrete objects, which exist 'in' space and time, could have as their properties only transcendent universals. For when we *perceive* an object, we perceive some of its properties—how else, in the end, could we know what properties objects have? And when objects interact causally with one another, the manner of their interaction is determined by their properties. Indeed, since perception itself is at bottom just a species of causal interaction between one object (the perceiver) and another (the object perceived), the first point is embraced by the second. And then the problem is that entities which do not exist 'in' space and time—the objects of mathematics being the paradigm examples—are necessarily causally inert, so that transcendent universals cannot play the role in perception and causation that at least some of the properties of objects are required to play.

This line of reasoning may suffice to show that properties conceived as *transcendent* universals are not enough, so that if that is what properties conceived as universals should be taken to be, then we need particular properties, conceived as concrete entities existing 'in' space and time, either in addition to or instead of such universals. But it does not suffice to show that properties conceived as *immanent* universals are not enough. However, the doctrine of immanence is subject to two different interpretations—and, I believe, on one interpretation it borders on incoherence while on the other it leaves us with a conception of universals which is no better, in the respects now crucial, than is the conception of universals as being transcendent. According to what I shall call the 'strong' doctrine of immanence, universals exist 'in' space and time in the sense that they may be quite literally 'wholly present' in many different places at the same time.[24] That is to say, the very self-same universal redness which is exemplified both by this flower and by that different flower is, according to this view, located *in its entirety* both in the

[24]For this notion, see, for example, D. M. Armstrong, *Universals: An Opinionated Introduction* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), pp. 98-9.

[25]I endorse this principle in my 'Abstraction, Properties, and Immanent Realism'.

same place as this flower and in the same place as that flower. It is not, then, that *part* of the universal is located in the one place and (another) *part* of it in the other place, for the universal is not considered to have parts in this sense. However, it is difficult to understand how anything meeting this description could literally be true. For the two flowers are undoubtedly in wholly different locations. And yet we are to suppose that all of the first flower coincides spatially with all of the universal and, at the same time, that all of the universal coincides spatially with all of the second flower. (I am, of course, assuming for the sake of the example—I take it uncontroversially—that both flowers are wholly red in colour.) But then it is hard to see how the first flower could fail to coincide spatially with the second flower. It is no use just insisting that this need not be so, on the grounds that universals behave quite differently from particulars where matters of spatiotemporal location are concerned. For it needs to be explained to us *how* they can behave so differently, despite genuinely being located in space and time. And I have never yet come across a satisfactory explanation of this purported fact. As it stands, then, it seems to be nothing more than a piece of unsupported dogma.

Indeed, we can press the case further against the adherents of this dogma, by challenging them to say how their thesis—that 'all' of a universal may simultaneously be located in two different places—presents a picture of the world that is intelligibly different from that presented by the trope theorist, who says instead that what may be simultaneously located in two different places are two distinct but exactly resembling tropes. How would the world present itself as being any different, to the minutest inspection—even, as it were, to the mind of God—according to the two allegedly different accounts? The alleged distinction appears to a distinction without a meaningful difference. So the upshot of our inquiries is that, if the 'strong' doctrine of immanence is advanced in opposition to a transcendent conception of universals, then this leaves its adherents either with an inexplicable mystery which borders on incoherence or else with a doctrine which, to the extent that it is intelligible at all, seems to collapse into the trope theorist's conception of properties as being one and all particulars.

There is, however, also a 'weak' doctrine of immanence to be taken into consideration. This just amounts to an insistence upon the instantiation principle— the principle that every existing universal is instantiated.[25] Applied to a universal such as the property of being red, it implies that this universal must have particular instances which exist 'in' space and time, but it doesn't imply that the universal itself must literally exist 'in' space and time. Assuming this doctrine to be correct, we must now return to the question of what, exactly, these 'instances' are, in the case of a property such as redness. Suppose it is contended, contrary to the

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tenets of the four-category ontology, that the particular instances of redness are just *objects*, such as this flower and that flower, rather than what I have been calling *modes* of such objects—this flower's particular redness and that flower's particular redness. Then again we have difficulty, I suggest, in understanding how an object's properties could have any bearing upon its causal transactions with other objects and how, more especially, we could discover an object's properties by perceiving it. For if there is, so to speak, nothing *about* the object—no discriminable feature or aspect of it—which relates it to each property (conceived as a universal) which the object is said to instantiate, so that it is only the object *simpliciter* or 'holus-bolus' which instantiates each of its properties, then it once again becomes a mystery how its being so related to those universals makes any difference *for us* and other denizens of the sublunary world of things in space and time.[26] It is for this reason, then, that I consider that, where properties are concerned, universals are not enough, whether these are conceived as transcendent or as (weakly) immanent. A belief in the existence of properties, conceived as universals, demands a belief in the existence of *modes*, conceived as particular instances of those properties which characterise objects exemplifying the properties in question.

In this paper, I have gone a little way towards answering our two initial questions—'What are properties?' and 'Do any exist?'—but have also left much unsaid. I have not even attempted to formulate a comprehensive account of the existence-conditions and identity-conditions of properties, which would need to be done in order to answer our two questions fully. But that very large task must be left to another occasion. At least I hope to have provided some good reasons for thinking that it is a task worth pursuing.

[26]See also my *The Possibility of Metaphysics*, pp.204-5. Responding to my claims there, Jerrold Levinson suggests, in 'Why There Are No Tropes', that instead of speaking—as I would wish to do—of seeing a certain leaf's *particular greenness*, it suffices to speak of seeing a certain *state of affairs*, the leaf's being green, or *that* the leaf is green. However, I do not regard seeing *that* as being literally a kind of *seeing*. I consider 'I see that *p*' to express a visually based judgment that *p*, rather than a report that one is seeing something: see my *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 132. And then my point would be that such a judgment needs to be based on something distinctive and relevant that *is* seen, quite literally, with the leaf's greenness being the obvious candidate in the present case. Moreover, it must be the leaf's *particular* greenness, because seeing involves a causal relation between the seer and the entity that is seen—and only spatiotemporally located particulars can enter into causal relations. Levinson offers as another candidate the leaf's green *pigment*, but I am not entirely convinced that this chemical substance—chlorophyll—is (ordinarily, at least) something that is *seen* when one sees that the leaf is green: rather, it is what makes the leaf appear green, or gives it its green colour. Moreover, even if the pigment *is* seen, it is at best just another green *thing*, like the leaf itself—and merely seeing something that is green is not enough to provide a basis for the visual judgement that one sees *that* the thing in question is green: seeing something *about* the thing must provide that basis, its (particular) greenness once again being the obvious candidate.