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WHENCE THE PARTICULAR-UNIVERSAL DISTINCTION?

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1. *Introduction*

Is there a fundamental division of objects into two classes, the particulars and the universals? In 1925 Ramsey set about addressing this question in his famous paper "Universals". Ramsey came to the sceptical conclusion that there was no such division between particulars and universals, the theory of universals being merely "a great muddle". Russell had already come down in favour of a fundamental division between particulars and universals in his 1911 paper "On the Relations of Universals and Particulars". Traditionally the claim that the particular-universal distinction is ultimate comes under pressure from competing forms of nominalism and realism. For the distinction cannot be ultimate for a nominalist who maintains that universals are merely collections of particulars. Nor can it be bedrock for a realist who holds that particulars are just bundles of universals. Russell therefore based his contention that the particular-universal distinction is fundamental upon two arguments. The first argument claims, against the nominalist, that at least one genuine universal (resemblance) must be admitted to ground the qualitative similarities between numerically diverse things. The second argument holds, against the realist, that different particulars must be admitted to ground the numerical diversity of qualitatively indiscernible things. But whilst Ramsey considered Russell's arguments "perfectly sound as far as they go" he did not think they settled the question whether the particular-universal distinction is ultimate. This is because for Ramsey the (purportedly) ontological distinction between particular and universal is inextricably bound up with the linguistic contrast between subject and predicate, a contrast he took to effect a subjective rather than logical division upon which "no fundamental classification of objects" could be based.

It is a misfortune that we know so little concerning the manner in which Russell responded (or may have responded) to Ramsey's scepticism about the particular-universal distinction. The written record that remains is to be found in the two short reviews that Russell wrote of Ramsey's posthumously

published volume *Foundations of Mathematics & Other Logical Essays*. The following remark exhausts what Russell has to say upon the issue:

> 'Universals' … is an important paper, but I confess that ever since its original publication I have been unable to make up my mind as to the truth or falsity of the theory which it advocates. (Russell [1931], p. 479; see also his [1932], p. 85)

Despite the paucity of evidence Ruth Marcus has maintained that Ramsey's scepticism about the particular-universal distinction acted as a "catalyst" for Russell's evolving views on particulars and universals, the connection between Ramsey's arguments in "Universals" and the trajectory of Russell's later metaphysical thought being, Marcus claims, "virtually inescapable" (see her [1993], pp. 181–3). In *Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (1940) and *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and its Limits* (1948) Russell abandoned his earlier view that particulars and universals constitute irreducibly distinct kinds and argued instead that particulars are just bundles ("complete complexes of compresence") of universals. According to this later view, particulars and universals enjoy the same logical type (if not complexity).

In this way, Marcus maintains, Russell incorporated Ramsey's conclusions into his own. But the connection Marcus makes out is far from inescapable. For there is strong evidence that so far from incorporating Ramsey's conclusions Russell never really came to terms with "Universals". On the one hand, Russell's later views are based upon the rejection of his earlier argument that we have seen Ramsey in fact accepted, the argument that particulars cannot be reduced to bundles of universals. Moreover, the considerations that Russell supplies to license this change of view are quite alien to the discussion of "Universals", these considerations being epistemological rather than logical in character:

> The main reason in favour of this view is that it gets rid of an unknowable. We experience qualities, but not the subject in which they are supposed to inhere. (Russell [1940], p. 98)

On the other hand, Russell continued to accept the master assumption that for the purpose of undermining the particular-universal distinction Ramsey considered it paramount to reject, the assumption that the subject-predicate distinction enjoyed anything more than a subjective significance (Russell [1940], p. 95). Indeed the following passage—an echo perhaps of the earlier reviews—suggests that Russell remained unable to make up his mind as the truth or falsity of Ramsey's claim that there is no logical distinction between subjects and predicates:

> Thus we are concerned with the distinction between names and relations, in regard to which we ask two questions: (1) Can we invent a language without the distinction of names and relations? (2) If not, what is the minimum of names required in order to express what we know or understand? And, in connection with this question, which of our ordinary words are to be considered names? As to the first of these problems, I have little to say. It may be possible to invent a language without names, but for my part I am totally incapable of imagining such a language. This is not a conclusive argument, except subjectively: it puts an end to my power of discussing the question. (Russell [1940], p. 94)

Note Russell's casual disregard here for a distinction that is vital to an appreciation of Ramsey's position, namely the distinction between a language where the name-predicate lacks logical significance and a language that lacks names altogether. The distinction is important because it is the former rather than the latter kind of language that Ramsey maintains we actually speak.

Finally, it is worth reflecting that—*contra* Marcus—it was no part of Ramsey's conclusion that particulars and universals must enjoy the same logical type. For although Ramsey was willing to countenance the possibility that there are particulars and universals of the same type he insisted only on the weaker conclusion that particular and universal need differ by no more than type:

> it becomes clear that there is no sense in the words individual and quality; all we are talking about is two different types of objects such that two objects one of each type, could be the sole constituents of an atomic fact (Ramsey [1925], p. 132).

Looking forward to Russell's later views promises to shed little light upon how Russell may have responded to Ramsey's challenge to the particular-universal distinction. However Herbert Hochberg has suggested that a rational reconstruction of the themes and arguments implicit in Russell's original 1911 paper "On the Relations of Particulars and Universals" reveals an underlying commitment to a compelling conception of the particular-universal distinction (Hochberg [1980], [2001*a*]). Hochberg does not consider Ramsey's arguments against such a distinction. But if Hochberg is right then an examination of this paper will reveal not only how Russell may have responded in detail to the arguments of "Universals". It will also become evident how we—as contemporary philosophers—should respond to Ramsey's challenge.

2. *Hochberg on Russell*

Russell's 1911 argument against nominalism, which also appears in *The Problems of Philosophy*, is a familiar one (see his [1911], pp. 111–2, [1912], pp. 54–5). His target is a version of nominalism that endeavours to avoid universals (whiteness, triangularity etc.) by appealing instead to resemblances between particulars. According to this view, a patch is called (e.g.) 'white' if it is exactly like in colour to a standard white patch. But this assumes there is a relation of exact colour-likeness that obtains between colour patches and *prima facie* this relation is a universal. To avoid commitment to this universal the same analysis must be applied to colour-likeness itself: a particular case is 'colour-like' if it is exactly like a standard case of colour likeness. But this, Russell declares, enjoins a vicious regress. For *prima facie* the relation of likeness that obtains between cases of colour-likeness is itself a universal. To avoid commitment to this universal the same analysis must be applied to likeness too, and so on. Russell concludes that likeness at least must be admitted as a universal, thereby removing any theoretical barrier to the admission of further universals.

Hochberg's reconstruction of this argument proceeds (roughly) along the following lines (see his [1980], pp. 196–7). Let "S" denote the relation of exact colour-likeness. Then the nominalist seeks to account for a and b both being (e.g.) white by appealing to the fact that they are exactly colour-like. But now consider a second case of two colour-like objects c and d. In order to avoid a commitment to the *universal* of colour-likeness, the nominalist must insist that the relation of colour-likeness (S) that obtains between a and b is distinct from the relation of colour-likeness (call it "S_1") that obtains between c and d. So to avoid universals the nominalist must undertake a commitment to the two facts:

(1) $S(a,b)$
(2) $S_1(c,d)$ (where $S \neq S_1$)

However, in order to account for S and S_1 both being relations of colour-likeness, the nominalist must posit a further relation of exact likeness (call it "S_2") that obtains between them. So the nominalist must also undertake a commitment to the additional fact:

(3) $S_2(S, S_1)$

But in order to avoid a commitment to another universal (*exact-likeness*) the

nominalist is also obliged to treat S_2 as a particular. The nominalist must then account for S_2 being a relation of exact-likeness by appealing to the further fact that it is exactly like another relation of exact-likeness (call it S_3). In this way a vicious regress ensues.

This sketch indicates no more than the outline of Hochberg's reconstruction. Nevertheless it enables us to isolate what Hochberg takes to be the critical move in Russell's purported proof of realism. In order to avoid the nominalist regress Russell insists that the relation of likeness that obtains between *a* and *b* be identified with the relation of likeness that obtains between *c* and *d*:

(α) $S = S_1$

But, as Hochberg points out, it does not follow from (α) alone that nominalism has been defeated and realism vindicated. To achieve this conclusion a further premise is required, for which Russell provides no (explicit) justification:

(β) if $S = S_1$, then S is a universal and not a particular.

The problem is that particulars are no less capable than universals of being common to many different facts: Socrates is common to a whole range of different facts (the fact that Socrates is wise, the fact that Socrates is snub-nosed), wisdom to another (the fact that Socrates is wise, the fact that Plato is wise). So even if—as Russell claims—S/S_1 is common to the different facts (1) and (2) it still does not follow that S/S_1 is a universal rather than a particular. In order to close this gap in Russell's argument Hochberg appeals to the idea that particulars and universals may be distinguished by the asymmetry of exemplification:

(β') If $S = S_1$ and if S is exemplified by *a* and *b* and S_1 is exemplified by *c* and *d*, then S is a universal and not a particular.

What then remains to complete Russell's proof of the existence of universals is an argument for the claim that:

(γ) (1) and (2) are such that *a* and *b* exemplify S, while *c* and *d* exemplify S_1, but *a*, *b*, *c* and *d* cannot be exemplified by anything.

If such an argument can be provided then not only will the gap Hochberg identifies in Russell's argument be closed. We will also have an answer to Ramsey's sceptical challenge to the particular-universal distinction.

Hochberg's key idea is that facts enjoy a structure or an ordering amongst their constituents that induces a distinction between particulars and universals. He develops one aspect of this idea via an objection to the foregoing reconstruction of Russell's argument (Hochberg [1980], pp. 199–200). Suppose there exist only the two objects a and b, objects that share but one common feature. In that case "$S(a,b)$" is true and the corresponding fact (1) obtains. But in this domain "$S_1(c,d)$" is false and (2) does not obtain. It consequently appears that Russell's argument cannot apply in this case. Hochberg responds to this difficulty by declaring that even in such a restricted domain an additional fact of colour-likeness obtains that allows the argument to gain application:

(4) $S(b,a)$

Hochberg offers two reasons for acknowledging that (4) is an additional fact to (1). First, the sentences "$S(a,b)$" and the sentences "$S(b,a)$" are logically independent. Matters may appear otherwise since "S" denotes a symmetric relation (*colour-likeness*). But it is not a logical matter that "S" is symmetric but requires an extra meaning postulate to make it so. Hochberg now appeals to what he takes to be a guiding principle of ontological analysis:

> I am taking a basic statement to be either an atomic statement or the negation of one. I am also taking it to be a fundamental principle of ontological analysis that logically independent basic statements require different truthmakers. (Hochberg [2001*a*], p. 178 n.4)

Then since (4) and (1) are the respective truthmakers for "$S(b,a)$" and "$S(a,b)$", and "logically independent basic statements require different truthmakers", it follows that (4) is different from (1). Second, Hochberg claims the "appeal to, or recognition of S as a *relation* must involve the recognition of its *direction* or *ordering*, whether the relation is symmetric or asymmetrical". Since (4) and (1) involve the application of S to a and b in two different directions or orders—that may be *represented* by the ordered pairs $<b, a>$ and $<b, a>$ respectively—it follows that (4) is distinct from (1). It will not do to respond—for the kinds of reasons that Hochberg has already given—that because S is symmetric (1) must be identical to (4).[1]

1. Hochberg also argues that the necessity for recognising order in the application of a relation becomes evident when we consider a three-term relation B that applies in the following way: $B\ (a, b, c)$, $B\ (b, c, a)$, $B\ (c, b, a)$, $\sim B\ (a, c, b)$. Because there is clearly a difference in the order of the first three facts represented "it becomes evident that order must be recognised in two-term facts as well" (see his [1980], p. 200). But just because there may be

Hochberg also claims that there is a structure inherent in a relational fact that comes into view when we distinguish between the different roles performed by the various constituents of such a fact. These roles will include, at least, *being a relating relation* (as Russell put it) and *being a term*. The recognition of the structure inherent in these facts obliges us to accept that the occupants of these roles are asymmetrically arranged by exemplification. It is in terms of the asymmetry of exemplification that particulars and universals may then be distinguished. (Hochberg [1980], p. 201, [2001*a*], p. 196):

(U_1) x is a *predicable* if and only if it *can be exemplified*.
(U_2) x is a *universal* if and only if (α_1) it is a *predicable* and (α_2) it *can be a constituent* of two atomic facts, neither of which contains another predicable.

Hochberg does not supply necessary and sufficient conditions for being a particular. Nevertheless, it is clear from his discussion that it is at least a necessary condition of x being a particular that *x cannot be exemplified by anything else*.

Hochberg argues for this conception of the particular-universal distinction by *reductio ad absurdum.* For suppose that exemplification fails to be asymmetric. Then, given that facts have structure, there will obtain five additional facts where the different constituents S, a and b occupy successively the different roles in the structure inherent to (1):

(L_1) $a(b,S)$, $S(b,a)$, $b(a,S)$, $b(S,a)$, $a(S,b)$.

But once it is admitted that any constituent can perform the role of *being a relating relation* and *being a term* in different facts, there seems nothing to prevent an arbitrary constituent performing both these roles in a single fact:

(L_2) $a(b,b)$, $b(b,a)$, etc.

Yet it would be "absurd" to admit the facts represented by (L_1) and (L_2). So we must accept the asymmetry of exemplification after all and the ontological division that is thereby induced. Then since S is exemplified by a and b in (1), and S is also a constituent of (2) that contains no other predicables, it follows that S is a universal.

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order involved in the application of a three-term non-symmetric relation it does not follow that there must be order in the application of a two-term symmetric relation.

3. *Relations and Truth-makers*

It cannot be denied that Hochberg has marshalled some powerful considerations in favour of the particular-universal distinction. But would Russell have recognised such considerations to be implicit in his argument for realism? Would Ramsey have thrown in the towel and declared that after all there is a fundamental division of objects into two classes, the particulars and the universals? Should we be convinced?

One might well worry that Hochberg's reconstruction cannot be true to Russell's intentions for the following reason: whereas the former makes essential appeal to the existence of facts the latter makes no (explicit) mention of such complexes. But it would take us too far a field to elaborate and assess this concern. Let us turn instead to Hochberg's contention that relations—regardless of whether they are symmetric or asymmetric—must have a direction and that consequently (1) must be distinguished from (4). Russell certainly appears to have held this view in *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903):

> A relational proposition may be symbolized by *aRb*, where *R* is the relation and *a* and *b* are the terms; and *aRb* will then always, provided *a* and *b* are not identical, denote a different proposition from *bRa*. That is to say, it is a characteristic of a relation of two terms that it proceeds, so to speak, *from* one *to* the other. This is what may be called the *sense* of the relation, and is, we shall find, the source of order and series. (Russell [1903], §94)

However, by the time that Russell came to draft his 1913 manuscript *The Theory of Knowledge* he had come to doubt whether sense or direction was a genuine feature of relations rather than the linguistic devices we use to express them. The issue arises when Russell comes to consider whether asymmetric relations (*before*, *greater*, *up*) should be distinguished from their converses (*after*, *less*, *down*). He remarks upon an important difference between "before" and "after", namely that "*A* is after *B*" may not be inferred from "*A* is before *B*". But from "*A* is before *B*", Russell reflects,

> it may be inferred that *B* is after *A*, and it would seem that this is absolutely the same 'fact' as expressed by saying that *A* is before *B*. Looking away from everything psychological, and considering only the external fact in virtue of which it is true to say that *A* is before *B*, it seems plain that this fact consists of two events *A* and *B* in succession, and that whether we choose to describe it by saying '*A* is before *B*' or by saying '*B* is after *A*' is a mere matter of language" (Russell [1992], p. 85).[2]

2. Kit Fine has independently elaborated a similar argument in favour of 'neutral relations' (see his [2000], pp. 2–6).

Russell goes on to draw the conclusion that at least some relations are "neutral", lacking a direction or sense:

> From what has been said, it follows that such words as *before* and *after*, *greater* and *less*, and so on, are not the names of relations; they always involve in addition to the relation, an indication as to "sense". For any such pair of correlative terms, there is only one relation, which is neutral as regards sense. (Russell [1992], p. 88)

What is important for present purposes is that it seems no less credible—indeed more so—to suppose that symmetric relations lack a direction: looking away from everything psychological and considering only the "external fact" in virtue of which it is true to say that $S(a,b)$, it seems plain that this fact consists of a and b together, and whether we choose to describe it as "$S(a,b)$" or "$S(b,a)$" is merely a matter of language.

Russell famously exhorted us to maintain a 'robust sense of reality' when engaged in ontological enquiry. This attitude is evidenced here when Russell insists that it is the same "external fact" that makes "A is before B" and "B is after A" true. Regardless of whether one shares Russell's sense of reality the argument he offers in favour of neutral relations provides a significant clue. It suggests that Russell—far from being guided by Hochberg's principle that logically independent statements require distinct truth-makers—in fact rejects this conception. For the statement that "B is after A" no more logically follows from "A is before B" (without the aid of an additional meaning postulate) than "$S(b,a)$" logically follows from "$S(a,b)$". But Russell still maintains that the same fact makes "B is after A" and "A is before B" true. The point here is not only interpretative; if one shares Russell's robust sense of reality this gives one reason to reject Hochberg's principle about truth-makers.

The principle that logically independent statements require distinct truth-makers encounters other difficulties that can only be touched upon here. One difficulty concerns the notion of "logical independence" it employs. Hochberg conceives of this notion in a formal rather than a material sense. For in a material sense "$S(a,b)$" and "$S(b,a)$" fail to be logically independent; it is not possible for "$S(a,b)$" to be true and "$S(b,a)$" false, nor for "$S(a,b)$" to be false and "$S(b,a)$" true. Hochberg is still right to insist that "$S(a,b)$" and "$S(b,a)$" are logically independent in a formal sense; to formally deduce (e.g.) "$S(a,b)$" from "$S(b,a)$" the further conditional premise "$(\forall x)(\forall y)(S(x,y) \supset S(y,x))$" is also required. Nonetheless it remains for Hochberg to justify the assumption that it is statements that are logically independent in the formal—rather than material—sense that require distinct truth-makers. For whereas the former notion concerns the kinds of transition that may be effected between sentences by the substitution of expressions, the latter notion appeals to what is possible

quite independently of language. Insofar as truth-makers are conceived as inhabitants of the world, as creatures that exist independently of language, it is far from evident that logically independent statements in the formal sense are compelled to correspond to distinct truth-makers. Of course if it is only logically independent statements in the material sense that demand distinct truth-makers then there will be no reason to distinguish (4) from (1).

More generally, Hochberg's principle that logically independent statements require distinct truth-makers commits him to a radical form of logical atomism. It obliges Hochberg not only to distinguish (4) from (1). It also obliges him to distinguish *a priori* between the universals that correspond to formally independent predicates of atomic statements. I do not mean to suggest that Hochberg's view of the world is necessarily mistaken but only that some fuller account is required of what recommends his view or, however robust our sense of reality may be, obliges us to accept it.

4. *Is there a Particular-Universal Distinction?*

Let us turn to Hochberg's argument that it is the structure inherent in relational facts that serves as a basis for distinguishing particulars from universals. It is significant that Russell in his 1919 paper "On Propositions" explicitly endorses an argument of this kind:

> In a fact which has three constituents, two can be distinguished from the third by the circumstance that, if these two are interchanged, we still have a fact, or, at worst, we obtain a fact by taking the contradictory of what results from the interchange, whereas the third constituent (the relation) cannot ever be interchanged with either of the others. Thus if there is such a fact as 'Socrates loves Plato' there is either 'Plato loves Socrates' or 'Plato does not love Socrates', but neither Socrates nor Plato can replace *loves* … The essentially non-interchangeable constituent of a fact containing three constituents is called a *dual* (or dyadic) *relation*; the other two constituents are called the *terms* of that relation in that fact. The terms of dual relations are called *particulars*. (Russell [1919], pp. 286–7)

This argument may well have been the subtext to Russell's 1911 argument against nominalism: it is because, Russell may well have thought, S is not an interchangeable constituent in (1)—because $a(b, S)$, $b(a, S)$, $b(S, a)$ are not even possible combinations of a, b and S—that S is a "dual relation" rather than a particular.

However, whilst this gives Russell reason to reject nominalism—it shows that S is not a particular—it does not establish a basis for affirming the general

distinction between particulars and universals. This is because some universals are not relations at all but monadic features. Even if relations cannot be interchanged with their terms in facts with (at least) three constituents it does not follow that particulars and their monadic features cannot be interchanged in facts with only two constituents. The fact that relations and their terms cannot be interchanged—*à la* (L_1)—therefore underdetermines whether particulars and universals (in general) are to be distinguished by an asymmetric tie of exemplification in the manner that Hochberg proposes. This might not have been a problem for Russell by 1919; by then he was willing to countenance the possibility that there are no monadic universals. But in 1911 Russell still held onto the view that there are universals expressed by one-place predicates (compare Russell [1911], pp. 108–9 and [1919], p. 287). And it is certainly a problem for Hochberg who wishes to distinguish particulars not only from relations but also monadic universals.

There are further, related difficulties that Hochberg's argument for the particular-universal distinction must face. His argument proceeds by *reductio* but it is in danger of being both too strong and too weak. On the one hand, the argument rules out the possibility of self-exemplification. But this may be too strong a result. Perhaps there are some universals that are self-exemplifying. On the other hand, the argument may be too weak. For nothing has been said to compel the Ramsey style sceptic to accept that the combinations of particulars and universals listed in (L_1) or (L_2) are impossible or absurd. Instead the sceptic may insist that—for all Hochberg has established—$a(S, b)$, $b(S, a)$ etc. are simply combinations that do not obtain. But if it remains to be shown that these combinations are either impossible or absurd then Hochberg has yet to supply an adequate basis for affirming the conception of the particular-universal distinction embodied in (U_1) and (U_2).

It is worth noting that Russell's argument in his 1919 paper includes an ingredient absent from Hochberg's account that may appear to speak to the concern raised. Russell holds the forms of facts come in pairs: "such that, given appropriate constituents, there is always a fact of one of the two corresponding forms but not of the other. Given any two particulars of a dual relation, say x and y, there will be either a fact '$x\ R\ y$' or a fact 'not – $x\ R\ y$'" (see his [1919], p. 287). This suggests the following counter to the sceptic. (L_1) or (L_2) fail to represent possible facts because neither they nor their negations obtain; it is neither a fact that (e.g.) $a(S,b)$ nor is it a fact that not-a (S,b), and so on. But this only forces the sceptic to question (i) whether there is the paucity of negative facts that the objection presupposes (that not-a (S,b) does not obtain) or (ii) more radically, whether the forms of facts must come in such pairs.

We have discussed at some length Russell's argument against nominalism and Hochberg's reconstruction of it. Let us suppose that Russell's argument has been vindicated (despite the doubts raised). Then it follows that at least one universal (*S*) exists. But this still does not suffice to establish Russell's further claim—the claim with which Ramsey took issue—that particulars and universals constitute distinct and irreducible kinds. For this claim requires not only that universals exist but also that particulars exist alongside universals. Here Russell relies upon a second argument already noted in the introduction (see his [1911], pp. 112–3): it is logically possible for qualitatively indiscernible things to co-exist in different places; since spatial relations presuppose diversity in their terms it follows that these things are numerically distinct; their distinctness cannot be accounted for in qualitative terms (they share all the same qualities); so particulars must be admitted to distinguish between them. Unfortunately, this argument fails to show that the items that distinguish qualitatively indiscernible things are not, in turn, universals instanced by some other kinds of thing (for example, regions of space-time). Ramsey made this very point at the outset of his discussion of universals:

> [Russell's] second argument … proves that a man cannot be identified with the sum of his qualities. But although a man cannot be one of his own qualities, that is no reason why he should not be a quality of something else. In fact material objects *are* described by Dr Whitehead as 'true Aristotelian adjectives' (Ramsey [1925], p. 112).

Indeed, for all that Russell's second argument shows, it remains an open possibility that exemplification 'goes all the way down', that everything is exemplified by something else and that there are no particulars. Since Hochberg relies upon this argument he fails to show that there are particulars in the sense he wishes to endorse (constituents of facts that cannot be exemplified by anything else).

5. *Conclusion*

In this note I have dwelt upon points of disagreement with Hochberg's reconstruction of Russell's arguments. But this should not blind the reader to the fact that there is a great deal to be valued in Hochberg's extended discussion of particulars and universals, not least that he raises to prominence a battery of important issues (about the directions of relations, the structure of facts, and so on) that have been unduly neglected by contemporary debate (see Hochberg [1978], [1984] and [2001]).

Some of the most significant difficulties I have emphasised are a consequence of the fact that universals admit of varied natures. There are relations that lack directions (neutral relations), relations that lack a fixed 'adicity' (multigrade relations), universals that are not relations (monadic properties), and, perhaps, universals that exhibit themselves. (The varied nature of particulars introduces a further dimension to the problem.) To respond convincingly to Ramsey's scepticism about the particular-universal distinction it will be necessary to provide a theoretically compelling account that reveals the unity underlying these differences between universals without blinding us to the other differences that (purportedly) obtain between universals on the one hand and particulars on the other. To return to the *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell writes: "It may be that there are complexes in which there is only one term and one predicate, where the predicate occurs as relations occur in other complexes".[3] This pinpoints one crucial task that will have to be undertaken to respond convincingly to Ramsey, the task of explaining what it means—in a principled rather than dogmatic way—for something to occur as a relation without being a relation.[4]

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3. See Russell [1992], p. 80. Later Russell went on to speak of "monadic relations" (see his [1918], p. 199, [1940], p. 94).

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