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Re-Clothing Moreland-Style Bare Particulars

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RESUMEN

La versión tradicional (en su variante realista) de la teoría de los particulares "desnudos" (*bare*) sostiene que las entidades particulares concretas son entidades complejas constituidas por universales y un particular desnudo: una entidad no repetible y carente de propiedades que instancia o ejemplifica las propiedades del particular concreto y que funciona como individuador de dicho particular. Una objeción, formulada primeramente por Sellars, a esta teoría sostiene que ella implica la proposición contradictoria según la cual los particulares desnudos no tienen propiedades y, sin embargo, ejemplifican propiedades. Una versión más reciente, elaborada principalmente por J. P. Moreland, de la teoría de los particulares desnudos intenta esquivar esta objeción por medio de la distinción entre dos sentidos en que puede entenderse la ejemplificación de propiedades. En este artículo, (i) se presenta esta nueva estrategia para salvar al particularismo desnudo de la objeción planteada por Sellars; (ii) se elabora una versión de la objeción de Sellars que, se argumenta, puede aplicarse de manera efectiva tanto a la nueva versión del particularismo desnudo como a la tradicional; (iii) se desarrollan dos posibles respuestas a la objeción elaborada; y, finalmente, (iv) se muestra que ninguna de ellas es convincente.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *particulares desnudos; universales; ejemplificación de propiedades (tipos de); ontologías constituyentes*.

ABSTRACT

Non-trope theoretic traditional bare particularism conceives of ordinary concrete particulars as complex wholes constituted by universals and a 'bare particular': a property-less, non-repeatable entity which functions as property-bearer and individuator of the ordinary, 'thick' particular. Sellars-type objections to traditional bare particularism claim traditional bare particularism to involve the contradictory proposition that bare particulars have no properties and yet exemplify properties. Moreland-style bare particularism is a new version of bare particularism which aims to block Sellars-type objections by distinguishing between two types of property exemplification and refining thereby the sense in which bare particulars are said to have no properties. In this paper, (i) I present this new strategy for bare particularism, (ii) set out a version of the Sellars-type objection which, it is argued, applies no less to old bare particularism than to Moreland-style bare particularism, (iii) elaborate two possible replies to this version, and (iv) show that neither of them is persuasive.

KEYWORDS: *Bare Particulars; Universals; Property Exemplification (Types of); Constituent Ontologies*.

Bare particularism and bundle theories are two important rival conceptions about the nature of familiar concrete particulars. According to the latter, concrete objects are not irreducibly fundamental beings, but complex wholes having an internal structure of more primitive constituents. This structure consists in a collection of properties (usually understood as universals)[1] standing in a contingent relation of 'compresence': substances are 'clusters' of properties which have nothing but these properties as their constituents.[2] Like proponents of bundle theories, defenders of bare particularism also subscribe to the general idea that substances are not ontologically primitive entities but derivative constructions arising from simpler constituent items: both bundle ontologists and bare particularists are 'constituent-whole' theorists.[3] And they also agree that universals are constituents of concrete objects. Against bundle theories, however, bare particularism rejects the idea that the internal structure of concrete objects can be accounted for in terms of universals alone. Along with its universals, they believe, a material object must in addition have a '*bare*' or 'thin' particular (hereafter BP) as an internal constituent: an absolutely propertyless, non-repeatable entity which, alongside the properties, makes up the concrete individual or 'thick' particular.

The idea of introducing a particular among the constituents of ordinary objects might seem to be borne out by some basic metaphysical considerations. First, when conceived as universals, properties can be shared by several objects at the same time: they are *multiply* exemplifiable entities. But given the essentially recurrent character of universals, the claim that concrete particulars are entities having properties as their sole constituents seems to leave unexplained the unrepeatability or numerical oneness that is distinctive of particular beings. As Aristotle observed, 'a substance cannot consist of universals because a universal indicates a *such*, not a *this*' (*Met* VII 13, 1039a15).[4] In this sense, universals, however they were bundled, would be able to account for *how* things are, yet not their radical thisness or particularity.[5] Secondly, the idea of a bundle of properties appears to be in conflict with the intuition that the objects we experience are not collections of free-floating, ontologically detached qualities. Where there is a red sphere, as Garcia puts it, there is more than 'redness' and 'sphericity': there is something which is red and spherical by virtue of exemplifying or having these properties [Garcia (2013) p. 2]. And this seems to suggest that there must be something over and above objects' properties, some ground of ontic inherence which, being not itself a property, may play the role of property-bearer.[6]

So, in light of these considerations, there appears to be something attractive in introducing BPs as internal constituents: unlike abstract universals, BPs can *prima facie* perform the twofold function of individuating concrete particulars and exemplifying properties.[7]

But while support may be given to bare particularism from the side of BPs' particularity, serious objections have been levelled against the theory from the side of BPs' bareness. One of these objections – advanced first by Sellars (1952) (hereafter 'Sellars-type objection') – claims bare particularism to be a self-contradictory theory. The core of this criticism is captured by what Armstrong calls the 'antinomy of bare particulars' [Armstrong (2008) p. 79]. On bare particularists' view, an individual object is analysed as a composite of properties together with a BP as individuator and property-exemplifier. But, insofar as BPs are property-exemplifiers, they are not bare. Therefore, either BPs are bare and do not exemplify properties, or they exemplify properties but are not bare: we cannot keep both.

In recent decades, however, especially due to the work of J. P. Moreland (1998, 2000), a new, enhanced version of bare particularism has emerged. This new-wave of bare particularism has tried to block the Sellars-type objection by distinguishing between two types of property exemplification and refining thereupon the precise sense in which BPs are said to have no properties.

In a previous article I have tried to show that bundle theories – both traditional and more recent, refined versions of it – are subject to difficulties when it comes to the question of whether they can be seen as self-standing and complete enterprises of analyses of concrete objects, that is, of whether full 'recipes' for such objects can be given in terms of universals only.[8] In this essay I shall concentrate on bare particularism, and more specifically on the new version of it put forward mainly by Moreland (hereafter 'Moreland-style bare particularism'). In doing so, my overarching aim is to expand and reinforce the case against constituent ontologies advanced in my previous paper: both the bundle theory and bare particularism, whether the old versions of them or the new ones, fail to provide us with a satisfactory account of ordinary objects.

I divide the article into four parts. First, in Section I, I present the Sellars-type objection more extensively, offering some considerations that might help us understand why this objection, in spite of its apparent unsophistication, does indeed pose a serious challenge to proponents of bare particularism in its traditional version. This will allow me to moti-

vate and contextualise Moreland's version of BPs, which I present in Section II. In Section III, I raise a common objection to traditional bare particularism, an objection which, it is argued, is also effective against Moreland-style bare particularism. In Section IV, I present two possible strategies – one adopted by Morganti (2011), the other by Moreland and Pickavance (2003) – for escaping this objection. I argue, however, that neither of them is persuasive. A brief concluding section summarises the article's main ideas and sketches the outline of an account of the nature of ordinary concrete particulars which differs from both (new and old) bare particularism and bundle theories.

I

As mentioned earlier, the Sellars-type objection is based on the idea that bare particularism contains two contradictory components. As is usually formulated, the argument is straightforward. According to bare particularism, it is true that

(1) BPs are bare in that they are propertyless.

But, according to this theory, it is also true that BPs do exemplify the properties of their host concrete particulars – they exemplify those properties which, in addition to the BP, constitute the thick, ordinary particular itself. So, bare particularists agree that

(2) BPs exemplify properties.

However, if (2) is true, then (1) – the objection goes – cannot be true. A simple substitutivity test suffices to see why. Given that (1) unpacks what comes notionally included in the subject-term of (2), we should be able to replace the subject 'BPs' in (2) for its equivalent 'propertyless particulars'. When we do so, however, (2) turns out to be equivalent to the self-contradictory statement that

(3) propertyless particulars exemplify properties,

or, to put it in its crudest form, that 'BPs are not bare.'[9]

Now, the burden of the Sellars-type objection strongly relies on the idea that BPs must exemplify the properties of those substances into

which they enter as constituents. And this assumption seems to be justified in light of the actual practice of bare particularists, since they ascribe to BPs not only the role of individuators of concrete objects, but also of property-bearers.

Yet one might wonder whether this ascription is really necessary. In fact, what seems intuitive from our common experience is that there must be *something* to which properties are attached, not that this something must be the *BP*. Even more, we would intuitively think that it is the ordinary object *itself* that bears its properties: we speak of objects' properties as *their* own properties. If so, why not simply reject (2) and say instead that that which works as property-exemplifier is not the BP but rather the concrete particular itself?

At the beginning of this essay I characterised bare particularism (and bundle theories) as a sort of constituent-whole ontology. And I said in passing that ontologies of this sort conceive of concrete particulars as entities whose reality derives from more primitive constituents. Call this claim the "Constituent Ontologies' Ontological Claim" (COC). Philosophers who endorse COC usually take it to imply that the ontological constituents of which a concrete particular is composed *exhaust* the reality of that concrete particular: metaphysically considered, as Loux explains, for constituent ontologists concrete particulars 'are *nothing more* than the items that go together to constitute them' [Loux (2002), p. 112].[10] Now, so interpreted, COC has an important methodological implication: the full analysis of what a concrete particular is – the necessary and sufficient condition for its peculiar way of being – must be given in terms of those entities which enter into it as ontological constituents and the functions they perform: its *definiens* entails nothing more than this.[11] Call this implication the "Constituent Ontologies' Methodological Claim" (CMC). What I want to suggest is that proposition (2) is a consequence of CMC.

Consider a concrete object, *c*, having certain properties (say P, for short). At first, one would expect the bare particularist ontologist to give the following analysis of *c*: *c* is P plus a BP, say *b*. This, however, would not be the complete analysis of *c*. For the properties of a concrete particular are not free-floating properties, but properties which are exemplified. Thus, the object *c* is a unity of *exemplified* properties plus the BP, *b*. Let us add to this line of reasoning the following uncontroversial principle: for every property P, if P is exemplified, then P is exemplified by something.[12] Now, the properties of *c are* exemplified: for *c* is a unity of

exemplified properties. But, given CMC, the fact that *c* is a unity of exemplified properties must be explained, as well as any other feature of it, by reference to its constituents and the functions they perform: the object *c* itself cannot play any role in the explanation of its own being. Therefore, at the basic level of metaphysical analysis, what functions as the *literal* or primitive bearer of *c*'s properties cannot be *c* itself: it must be one of its primitive constituents. This does not mean that the concrete object itself cannot be said to have or exemplify properties at any level: *c* does have P. The point, rather, is that the concrete object *c* can be said to have P only in a derivative sense: *c*'s having P is a fact that is needed of further explanation – the explanation being that one of *c*'s primitive constituents functions as the literal exemplifier of *c*'s non-literally having P. Now, if the literal bearer of *c*'s properties must be one of its constituents, then either *b* is the literal exemplifier of P or P is the literal exemplifier of itself. But the second option is absurd. Hence, what functions as the literal exemplifier of P – that which, in so doing, gives rise to *c* as a derivative unity of exemplified properties – must be *b*, which is precisely what (2) contends: BPs exemplify properties.[13]

II

Proponents of Moreland-style bare particularism recognise that there are two levels of property exemplification that must be distinguished in the analysis of concrete particulars. And they also recognise that the literal exemplifier of the properties we associate with a concrete particular cannot be the concrete particular itself, but rather its BP. However, they claim the Sellars-type objection to rely upon a coarse, oversimplified interpretation of their view. As they see things, it is precisely the distinction between two levels of property exemplification that provides a clue as to where to look for an answer to the Sellars-type objection. For, they think, the distinction between two levels of property exemplification allows us to distinguish between two different ways or senses in which the exemplification relation occurs. In turn, this allows us to distinguish between two senses in which the 'bareness' predicated of BPs in (1) can be understood. The strategy, then, does not consist in denying claim (2), but rather in refining it and, on this basis, qualifying (1). Let us see how the strategy goes.

Take again our concrete object *c* having P. According to Moreland-style bare particularism, it is true that *c* is constituted by P plus *b*. And it

agrees as well that *b* is the literal exemplifier of P. Yet, it claims, the relation of exemplification between *b* and P differs *in type* from that holding between *c* and P. Specifically, *c*'s having P pertains to the 'rooted-in' (or 'seated within') type of exemplification, while *b*'s having P corresponds to the 'tied-to' (or 'linked to') type [Moreland (1998) p. 257].[14] Now, what makes this distinction important for the way in which BPs are said to be 'bare' is that, as suggested by the prepositions 'in' and 'to' which Moreland uses for characterising, respectively, P(*c*) and P(*b*), the former is an *internal* relation, while the latter a merely *external* one. To Moreland's mind, this would allow specifying a sense in which BPs do exemplify properties and a sense in which they do not. Simply put, the idea is that while it is true that *b happens* to exemplify P (to be tied to P), it always remains bare *in itself*: BPs are not bare in that they exemplify no properties, but only in the qualified sense that they are dispensed with any internally grounded property; in other words, in that they have no essential features.[15] Note that for *b* to exemplify P in the tied-to sense does not mean that *b* could have exemplified *no* properties. In fact, Moreland explicitly advocates the view that BPs 'do not exist unless they possess properties' [Moreland (1998), p. 257].[16] As Moreland formulates it in a later article, the idea is rather captured by the distinction between

(4) $\Box(x)\Box\exists P\ (Px)$

and

(5) $\Box\exists P(x)\Box(Px)$,

where 'x' and 'P' ranges over BPs and properties, respectively.[17] According to (4), for every BP, there is some property it exemplifies. Proposition (5), by contrast, claims that there is a property that every BP exemplifies. On Moreland-style bare particularism, (4) is true yet (5) is not. BPs must exemplify some property or other in order to exist. But they need not exemplify the properties that they actually exemplify, and, in this sense, all properties of BPs are contingently exemplified by them: although *b* is in effect tied to P, it could have been tied to Q, R, or any other property whatsoever.[18]

The exemplification relation between a concrete object and its properties occurs differently. Following Moreland (who claims to be fol-

lowing Aristotle), suppose that our concrete object *c* is the dog Fido and that P is the property brown. According to him,

> Fido is a substance [an Aristotelian substance] constituted by an *essence* which contains a diversity of capacities internal to, within the being of Fido as a substance…The capacities are grounds for the properties like brownness that Fido comes to have. When a substance has a property, that property is 'seated *within'* and, thus, an expression of the *inner nature* of the substance itself. [Moreland (1998) p. 257]

The notion of nature as an internal ground of properties plays the crucial role here: properties are said to be exemplified by concrete particulars in that they are internally grounded on, or included in, objects' own natures.[19] Problems might seem to arise from Moreland's undifferentiated use of the terms 'essence' and 'inner nature' in this passage.[20] For although one might agree that 'brown' is a property arising from Fido's inner nature, Fido's brownness, at least on Aristotelian grounds, would normally be considered as one of its accidental or contingent properties (whereas properties like 'being mammal' or 'un-feathered' would be considered as natural *and* essential properties of Fido), and therefore Moreland's equation between 'natural' and 'essential' seems inadequate. Regardless of this, however, Moreland's central point (i.e. that there is a distinction to be made between two types of property exemplification) continues to hold –or, at any rate, as far as this (prima facie) problem goes. As Garcia suggests, in fact, the problem can be avoided by construing the 'concrete particular/property' exemplification relation as a sort of relation that can allow *both* the rooted-in ('natural' and essential) and tied-to types of exemplification [Garcia (2013) p. 9]. Thus, a property like 'being brown' will be said to be merely tied to, or non-essentially exemplified by, Fido; contrastingly, a property like 'being un-feathered' will be said to be rooted in, or essentially exemplified by, him. And this twofold possibility is sufficient for drawing the difference between the ways in which concrete particulars and BPs instantiate properties: it is *always* false that a BP exemplifies some necessary property; it *never* includes or has properties in the rotted-in sense.

On this basis, and to recapitulate, we can see why advocates of Moreland-type bare particularism claim the Sellars-type objection to be an oversimplification of their view. At bottom, bare particularists would agree that, as they stand above, (1) and (2) are in fact incompatible propositions. Yet, as they stand above, (1) and (2) do not express bare particularists' view. For, in their correct forms, (1) is

(1*) BPs are bare in that they lack *essential* properties (or in that no property is 'rooted in' them),

whereas (2) is

(2*) BPs *non-essentially* exemplify properties (or are 'tied to' properties).

And (1*) and (2*) are perfectly consistent propositions, for there is no contradiction in saying that

(3*) particulars lacking essential properties non-essentially exemplify properties.

III

Is the Moreland-style strategy for bare particulars sound? In order to address this question, at least three options are open: either one focuses on the rooted-in/tied-to distinction itself, or on the rooted-in connection said to hold between concrete objects and properties, or else on the tied-to relation said to hold between BPs and properties. Here I want to focus on the third one.[21]

Proposition (1*) claims BPs to be 'bare' only in the qualified sense of lacking essential properties. Following Baker – who anticipated Moreland's distinction several years before him – we can restate the point by saying that while it is false that BPs are completely 'naked of properties', they are nonetheless entirely 'nude of *nature*': they are not propertyless, but rather nature-less entities [Baker (1967), p. 211].[22] This seems hard to prove, however. Consider this traditional argument:[23]

(P_1) According to Moreland-style bare particularism, as (1*) states, a BP has no essential properties (or no nature).

(P_2) But Moreland-style bare particularism must attribute essential properties to BPs. A list of these properties includes '*being particular*', '*being simple*', '*being unrepeatable*', among others.[24]

(C) Therefore, Moreland-style bare particularism is incoherent.

(P_2) implies that there are a number of properties that must pertain essentially to BPs and, therefore, that (P_1) is simply false. What is the force of (P_2)? Take the property 'being simple'. Could simplicity pertain to BPs merely in the tied-to sense? Suppose a BP, *b*, were tied to it. Given Moreland's own account of this specific type of exemplification relation, it follows that *b* merely *happened* to be simple. Even more, since, on Moreland's view, there is nothing *within b* which may ground the link between *b* and the properties it happens to instantiate, it follows that it is possible for *b* to be tied to *any* property: *b* could have exemplified the property of 'being complex'. But, of course, a complex BP would not be a BP.[25] The same can be said about the other properties in the list: they all correspond, as Loux points out, to categorical features of BPs, and it is impossible for something to be what it is if it fails to exhibit those features which give to it its peculiar categorical form. Therefore, it is false that BPs lack essential properties [Loux (2002), p. 121]. They must at least wear some non-contingent, conceptually demanded 'minimal clothes'. So BPs are neither propertyless nor nature-less.

IV

If the foregoing objection succeeds, Moreland-style bare particularism seems to be in no better position than old bare particularism: it can be shown to be internally inconsistent. Is there any way of escaping this objection? Two possible strategies could be the following: (i) to assume that BPs have actually some internally rooted minimal clothes and try somehow to incorporate this claim into a new version of the theory; or (ii) to stick to the idea of BPs' radical bareness and deny that the alleged minimal clothes are real properties. In what follows I discuss each of these strategies, arguing that both are problematic.

Strategy (i): Can bare particularism be reformulated so as to accommodate the idea that BPs have some basic necessary properties? In a recent paper, M. Morganti has assumed that it can.[26] The basic idea that seems to underwrite his position is that, even if the concept of a 'quasi-unclad BP' cannot be equated to that of an 'absolutely unclad BP', the need for postulating some sort of particular principle within the internal structure of concrete particulars is still pressing. And this would permit us to adopt a 'generally deflationary attitude that…gets translated into the thought that it is better to simply stop worrying about the internal (in)consistency of

the notion of a BP, and accept the idea that the bareness of BPs is compatible with their possessing minimal clothes' [Morganti (2011) p. 187].

This line of reasoning typifies a tendency, which pervades metaphysical debates within the context of constituent ontologies, to think of problems about concrete particulars within the limits of a very restricted conception of our available ontological alternatives: either one endorses the bundle theory or bare particularism; hence, the weaknesses of the one are virtues of the other. In the concluding section I will suggest that this dichotomous framework is not compelling. Here, however, I want to assess (i) on more specific grounds.

Constituent ontologies claim ordinary objects to be derivative wholes of more basic constituents. Bare particularism claims ordinary objects to be constituted by universals plus a BP. Moreland-style bare particularism claims universals to be rooted-in ordinary particulars. Now, the minimal properties predicated of BPs, as the argument above shows, are exemplified by them in the rooted-in sense. And these properties, like those rooted in thick particulars, are universal: for all BPs have them in common. But this seems to suggest that BPs have universals as constituents: otherwise a third distinct type of property exemplification relation (or sub-type within the rooted-in type) would have to be introduced in our ontology, namely one which, being of the rooted-in type, does not amount to a constituency relation. But suppose a BP, b, has universals as constituents. If this were so, then, necessarily, another BP, say b_1, would have to be posited within it: for, on bare particularism's grounds, no entity can be constituted by universals alone. So, the explanatory model which is said to hold at the level of concrete particulars will be *reduplicated* at the level of BPs. And the problem, of course, does not stop here. For b_1, as the argument above shows, will also have universals as its minimal clothes, in which case, given the reasoning so far, a further BP, b_2, will have to be introduced as b_1's constituent; and so to infinity. Therefore, strategy (i) entails an infinite proliferation of BPs at the level of ontological constitution.

Strategy (ii): Like (i), (ii) recognises that BPs have some minimal clothes. Unlike (i), however, (ii) acknowledges that, if these clothes are necessary properties (and therefore constituents), then minimally clothed BPs cannot be incorporated into any coherent version of bare particularism. Consequently, it proposes that the minimal clothes ascribed to BPs in

(P_2) are simply not properties and, therefore, that (P_2) does not contradict (P_1). Moreland and Pickavance endorse this strategy when writing:

> We believe that properties said to be necessary of bare particulars are not genuine properties; these include simplicity, particularity, unrepeatability, and those of the three categories of transcendental, disjunctive, and negative properties. [Moreland and Pickavance (2003), p. 10]

In addition to the categorical properties enumerated in (P_2), here the authors refer to transcendental, disjunctive, and negative properties. Relevant examples of these properties are 'being colored if green', 'being green or not green' and 'being not green', respectively. Properties in the two first categories would be said to be necessary of BPs because they can be truly predicated of *every* entity, and therefore of BPs, because they are entities. Negative properties, on the other hand, would seem obviously predicable of BPs insofar as they can be obtained simply by negating predicates opposite in meaning to those that refer to properties from the other categories (if BPs are simple, then they also have the property of 'not complex', and so on).

Now, the authors' claim is that all these properties (including those in the categorical class), though linguistically predicable of BPs, do not refer to any *positive determination* of them; in other words, that there is no characteristic of BPs corresponding to these linguistic predicates as their ontic counterparts: they are *merely* linguistic predicates having no ontological correlation [Moreland and Pickavance (2003), p. 9]. This creates room for conceptualising and meaningfully describing BPs, without having to presuppose that they have any positive nature.

Let me now assess this strategy by focusing on each of the mentioned property-categories.

Strategy (ii), I think, might plausibly be adopted in connection to disjunctive and transcendental properties. The former, in fact, seem to derive its universal applicability from some fact pertaining to logical disjunction, not from any characteristic inherent to the nature of those objects of which they are predicated: that 'it is green or not green' is true even of an uncolored object. Likewise, the universal applicability of transcendental properties seems entirely to rely on the nature of the properties: 'colored if green' can truly be predicated of any entity not because of something in the objects, but because of the semantic relation holding between the concepts 'color' and 'green'.

Ironically, however, the case of negative properties is more complex. No doubt, negative grammatical predicates such as 'is not P' are meaningfully predicated of a thing because of its *lacking* a positive property: when 'not P' is truly predicated of *x*, this is not because *x* has the characteristic of 'being not P' as one of its ontic attributes. Even so, nevertheless, one might plausibly argue – as does Mertz, for example – that for the proposition '*x* is not P' to be true, 'not P' must *indirectly* correspond to, or be grounded on, at least *some positive* ontic determination of *x*, a determination that allows excluding P from qualifying *x* and that functions as the truth-maker of the proposition '*x* is not P' [Mertz (2003), p. 19]. For instance, in the proposition '*x* is not a universal', though 'not a universal' does not refer to the positive determination of being-not-a-universal, it does correspond with, or imply, the positive property of being particular: otherwise 'the truth of negative assertions would be arbitrary denial and would tell us nothing about reality' [Mertz (2003), p. 19]. But if this analysis is correct, then, contrary to the authors' purpose, the possibility of attributing negative necessary properties to BPs implies they have some positive necessary determinations after all.

Now, even if we concede that negative properties do not directly refer to, nor indirectly imply, any positive determination of BPs, the claim that the properties in the categorical class have a merely linguistic status seems problematic. And if strategy (ii) is going to succeed, *all* the properties in the list must be shown to be merely linguistic entities. One might reply that 'unrepeatability' is a negative property in disguise: it is only the absence of repeatability [Moreland and Pickavance (2003), p. 10]. But what about simplicity and particularity? According to Moreland and Pickavance, simplicity is analogous to negative properties: it should be understood as 'the absence of any sort of complexity'. And when they come to particularity, they quickly dismiss the case by tersely contending that 'it may be similarly treated' [Moreland and Pickavance (2003), p. 10]. Yet the authors only state these claims, giving no independent argument to demonstrate them. And lacking independent motivation, their explanation seems to be an *ad hoc* solution, a *deus ex machina* aimed to save bare particularism from internal inconsistency.[27]

This can be supported through two basic remarks. First, proponents of Moreland-style bare particularism, as most proponents of that theory, are realists about properties. As I pointed out earlier, indeed, one of the very motivations for introducing BPs as internal constituents is that universals cannot provide us with a criterion of numerical identity. Sec-

ondly, proponents of Moreland-style bare particularism, as most realist about properties, embrace universals because they can explain attribute agreement between different entities. In fact, in the same article we are considering, Moreland and Pickavance explicitly defend this idea: one arrives at the conception of properties as real, multiply exemplifiable universals in an attempt to account for resembling objects [Moreland and Pickavance (2003), p. 6]. Now, the minimal clothes that BPs have according to (P_2) are shared by, or repeated in, every BPs: all of them have these characteristics in common. So, given Moreland and Pickavance commitment to property realism, one would expect them to explain this fact by BPs' jointly exemplifying or participating in the same universals: given their own conception, they *require* universals in order to explain this fact. However, when faced with the claim that BPs must have some properties – and in fact all of them the same properties – they simply renounce their realist commitments, instead favouring some sort of *sui generis*, circumscribed nominalism about properties: when attributed to BPs, properties are merely linguistic entities. Their qualitative identity, then, remains unexplained.[28]

Concluding Remarks

The Sellars-type objection claims traditional bare particularism to entail the self-contradictory statement that BPs are propertyless entities that exemplify properties. Moreland-style bare particularism tries to block this objection by defending that BPs are only 'tied to' the properties of their host concrete particulars, whereas, in themselves, they are dispensed with any necessary, 'rooted-in' property – they do exemplify properties but have no nature.

In this article I have argued that although it introduces important qualifications, Moreland's attempt to rescue bare particularism is not wholly without difficulties. For even if one concedes that BPs are merely tied to the properties of the complex objects into which they enter as constituents, they have some rooted-in, necessary properties *of their own*, and therefore they are not in themselves absolutely unclad. Pressure remains, however, to salvage bare particularism, given that a bundle of universals fails to explain the particularity of objects and the grounds of property inherence. Yet strategies (i) and (ii) have both been shown to be problematic. So, what can we do? Is there any alternative for the realist philosopher?

Proponents of bare particularism – and bundle theorists – embrace the basic ontological claim that, as COC states, familiar particulars are *derivative* complex entities having primitive constituents. Following from their interpretation of COC, they also endorse the methodological claim, expressed in CMC, that the ontological features of familiar particulars (their repeatable characteristics and radical unrepeatability) must be explained by reference to, or in terms of, these constituents: the primitive constituents give us the necessary and sufficient explanatory conditions of the derivative wholes into which they enter. CMC functions as a framework-constrain which any ontology of the constituent sort must accommodate. In trying to remain within the framework of CMC, bare particularists are led to the problematic idea of an essentially characterless particular as individuator and property-exemplifier.

An Aristotelian-inspired view about the nature of concrete particulars will deny, however, this framework.[29] On this view, a familiar object is a particular, a 'something *this*' having attributes. These attributes, furthermore, are repeatable universals. Thus, familiar objects have a certain structure: they are not mere 'blobs'. Yet neither their attributes are constituents nor their particularity arises from any more primitive constituent.[30] As it sees things, the notion of a concrete particular – or, at any rate, of those particulars that it considers proper *substances* – does not need to be explained by reference to *any* other category prior to it.[31] For the notion of a substance is a primitive category. As such, it has both explanatory and ontological priority over the entities we associate with it, rather than the other way around: a substance is an irreducibly fundamental entity, the explanation of which cannot get below the substance itself. If this view holds true, one is not bound to endorse either bare particularism (old and new) or bundles of universals (old and new). Moreover, one can continue to uphold a realist conception of properties as universals. The cost, however, is that one has to reject constituent ontologies altogether.

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NOTES

[1] Nominalist versions of the bundle theory claim concrete particulars to be constituted by tropes. I shall not consider these versions here. Henceforth I use 'property' and 'universal' interchangeably.

[2] Some recent versions of the bundle theory – most notably Van Cleve (2001) and Rodriguez-Pereyra (2004) – decline to *identify* concrete objects with bundles of universals: a concrete particular *has* only universals as constituents, but it is not *identical* with these constituents. The standard view, however, is that for concrete objects to *have* only universals as constituents means that, metaphysically considered, they are *nothing more than* these constituents. I have given some arguments against Rodriguez-Pereyra's *sui generis* version of the bundle theory in Robert (2019).

[3] The 'constituent-whole' terminology was first coined by Wolterstorff (1970). See Van Inwagen (2011), p. 403, n. 8.

[4] See also *Met* VII 8, 1033b20 ff.

[5] Proponents of tropes do not face, of course, this problem: though abstract, a trope is a particular and, therefore, unrepeatable entity. Trope-theoretic thinkers who invoke BPs regard them as trope-bearers and unifiers, rather than as individuators.

[6] On this point see also Davis (2013), p. 397; Denkel (2000), p. 431-2.

[7] These are not the only functions BPs are usually taken to perform. A more complete picture of this issue can be found in Garcia (2013) and Hoffman/Rosenkrantz (1994), p. 48.

[8] See Robert (2019).

[9] Similarly, Sellars formulates (2) in the passive as 'Universals are exemplified by bare particulars', the logical translation of which is

$$(x) \cdot (\exists \varphi)(\varphi x) \rightarrow \neg (\exists \varphi)\ (\varphi x)$$

– or: $(x)\ [(\exists \varphi)(\varphi x) \rightarrow \neg (\exists \varphi)\ (\varphi x)]$ (see Garcia [2013], p. 7) –, and which means that 'if a particular exemplifies a universal, then there is no universal that it exemplifies'. See Sellars (1952), p. 184, n.1

[10] That this is so is particularly clear from the fact that constituent ontologists (with the two exceptions mentioned in n. 2) endorse the so-called Principle of Constituent Identity, which claims that

$$(x)(y)\ [(z)\ (z \text{ is a constituent of } x \leftrightarrow z \text{ is a constituent of } y) \rightarrow x = y],$$

where 'x' and 'y' are concrete objects. See Moreland (1998), pp. 252-3; Loux (2002), p. 152. In other words, for any (prima facie) two or more concrete objects sharing the same constituents, they are (really) one and the same object.

But this principle is true only if COC is interpreted in a strong, reductionist way, that is, only if the derivative wholes (concrete objects) are taken to be *nothing more than*, or *identical with*, their primitive constituents. Again, see Robert (2019) for an assessment of this version of the bundle theory.

[11] As Loux puts it: '[On the constituent view], we can provide a *complete* "recipe" for complex things by identifying the items that counts as their constituents' [Loux (2002), p. 112; my emphasis]. See also Wolterstorff (1970), p. 111.

[12] This is not to say that it is impossible for a property to be non-exemplified, but only that, if it is exemplified, then there is something that exemplifies it. The point I am making is meant to be neutral with respect to Platonic realism.

[13] Different interpretations of the problem I have been discussing can be found in Hoffman and Rosenkrantz (1994), p. 49 and Loux (2002), pp. 99-100.

[14] Moreland takes the 'rooted-in/tied-to' terminology from Connell (1988), p. 90.

[15] Bergman (1967), pp. 46-7, foreshadowed this idea when pointing out that, being wholly external to the properties it exemplifies, 'a [bare] particular provides no clue whatsoever as to which universal or universals it may or may not exemplify' [Bergman (1967), pp. 46-7]. I owe this reference to Garcia (2013), p. 8.

[16] This follows from a general theory of existence – endorsed by Moreland, among others – according to which it is a necessary truth that every entity exemplifies at least some property to exist. Applied to BPs, it implies that it is true that, necessarily, for any BP, *b*, *b* exists if and only if there is at least one property, P, such that *b* exemplifies P. For a defence of this conception of existence, see Moreland (2001), pp. 134-9. For my purpose, suffice to say that, as Moreland himself clarifies, this conception is formulated on the basis of broad metaphysical considerations going beyond the issue of BPs, and that, as we will see in what follows, it is compatible with BP's bareness understood in the sense proposed by Moreland. See Moreland (2003), p. 9.

[17] Moreland and Pickavance´s formulation [Moreland and Pickavance (2003), p. 8] omits the modal operators in (4) and (5). I am grateful to an anonymous referee for suggesting that they should be added.

[18] See Moreland and Pickavance (2003), p. 9.

[19] The 'inclusion' idiom is due to Alston (1954), p. 257.

[20] The terms 'essential', 'natural', 'internally grounded', 'rooted-in', and their cognates are used interchangeably by Moreland.

[21] Comments on the first issue can be found in Mertz (2001). With respect to the second, an immediate problem that arises is that the idea that concrete objects have all their properties in the rooted-in sense seems to be incompatible with the possibility of change and accidental predication. Space does not allow me to elaborate on this.

[22] See also Bergmann (1967), p. 24: 'Bare particulars neither are nor have natures'.

[23] A version of the following argument is given by Hoffman/Rosenkrantz (1997), pp. 17-20. See also Garcia (2013), p. 8; Loux (2002), p. 121; Mertz (2001), p. 50; Morganti (2011), p. 185.

[24] Other necessary properties that bare particulars would have include transcendental, disjunctive and negative properties. I will come back to this below.

[25] A similar objection has been raised by Mertz (2001), p. 51.

[26] Morgati himself does not favor bare particularism. However, the objection he raises against it (that bare particularism would entail some form of supersubstantivalism about space) starts from the idea that any plausible form of bare particularism must recognise that BPs have some internally rooted, basic properties.

[27] To be fair, the authors explicitly say that their strategy is 'not idiosyncratic or *ad hoc*'. But in support of this claim they only quote the authority of Husserl, who would have endorsed a similar view. This proves nothing – or, if it does, it proves that strategy (ii) is not idiosyncratic, not that it is not *ad hoc*. Even more, they acknowledge that Husserl says what he says 'without specific regard to bare-particular theory'. See Moreland and Pickavance (2003), p. 10. But this, on my view, seems to reinforce the claim that strategy (ii) is merely *ad hoc*.

[28] I take the phrase 'circumscribed nominalism' from Morganti (2011), p. 187.

[29] I will not enter here into the details of this view, but only state one central idea that defines it and that makes it different from constituent ontologies' reductionist approaches. The Aristotelian-inspired view I am referring to has been mainly defended by Loux (1978) and (2002). See also Van Cleve's closing remarks in Van Cleve (2001), p. 130.

[30] On properties which do not compose or constitute the objects having them, see R. Adams' remarks in Adams (1979), pp. 7 ff..

[31] Artefacts are not considered substances on this view.

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