

## RESEMBLANCE, IDENTITY AND UNIVERSALS

### **The main objective of the Paper :**

The age-old controversy between realism and nominalism—whether the universals are genuine ontological realities, or, mere empty names with no reality affixed to them—received a new direction in modern times when a group of European nominalists came forward with a novel weapon usually branded as the Resemblance theory to combat the realistic theory of universals. The doctrine of universals advocated by traditional realism—especially of the Aristotelian type—may be designated as the Identity theory, because it maintains that the universals are common characters, i.e., qualities, relations etc., which repeat themselves *identically* in or between the individual members of a given class of objects. Contrasted with the general metaphysical orientation of the realistic theory of universals which took different forms at different times, ranging from Aristotle's *universalia in rebus* (universals in things) to Russell's 'subsistent entities' carefully distinguished from the 'existent' physical and mental objects, the Resemblance theory of the modern neo-nominalists professes to be a specimen of common-sense philosophy. It proclaims that the so-called 'metaphysical' universals are to be totally dispensed with as redundant hypotheses in explaining the ultimate structure of the universe, because the mere fact of observed resemblance among different particular objects of nature, which alone are existent entities, is sufficient to solve all the problems which were sought to be solved by the traditional realists by their metaphysics of universals<sup>1</sup>.

The main objective of the present paper is to examine as to how far this ambitious claim of the modern neo-nominalists to substitute the infinite variety of universals<sup>2</sup> by a single category of resemblance is a realisable project. But this requires at the outset a preliminary survey of the foundational reasons on which the realistic theory of universals is supposed to rest.

### **The reasons for admitting the ontological reality of the universals :**

The realists postulate the objective existence of universals in the shape of identities for more than one reason. First, they hold

that the external nature which confronts us in our everyday experience is not a just anomalous amalgam of individual objects but seems to be neatly organised into several 'kinds' or 'classes' the members of which share some identical features in common. All the white objects of the world, for example, form a distinct class of their own because the quality whiteness is found to be repeated identically in each one of them. If, on the other hand, the objects of the world were unique in their own way having nothing in common, then no laws could be promulgated about them, no generalisation could be made and consequently the progress of science and knowledge in general, which obviously depends on generalisation, would come to a standstill. But the enormous progress made in the field of science points to the fact that generalisation about the objects of nature is possible, or the promulgation of laws relating to the behaviour of natural objects is an attainable goal. But this could never have been done unless things of nature were classified into several kinds by virtue of their possession of certain identical features in common.

As W. Stanley Jevons puts it : " Science ... is the detection of identity, and classification is the placing together, either in thought or in actual proximity of space, those objects between which identity has been detected. Accordingly the value of classification is co-extensive with the value of science and general reasoning "3. From these observations the realists conclude that the universals are genuine ontological identities which provide an objective foundation for the classification of and generalisation about the objects of nature.

Moreover, the realists urge that unless there are recurrent universals in the shape of identical qualities and relations, our conceptual cognition could never have started. The possibility of conceptual cognition is a basic assumption for both science and philosophy, and the objective existence of identical universals makes such conceptual cognition possible. In a world of perpetual flux where no quality repeats itself or no relation recurs, no concepts could ever be acquired; or even if they could be obtained innately without needing to acquire them, they could never have been applied to anything. Acquisition and application of concepts presuppose recurrent identity, in some form or other, in the

objective world. A perpetually changing world characterised by the non-recurrence of any identical qualities of relations cannot be conceptually thought about but only immediately experienced in a kind of incommunicable mystic intuition. Hence any philosopher like Heraclitus, Bergson or an Indian Buddhist who advocates a kind of fluxtional ontology is logically committed to a precarious epistemological position that all conceptual cognition is radically erroneous—a systematic distortion of Reality. Thus the answer to the “question whether the object of an idea really contains a universal, or whether, it is nothing but a set of particulars... follows from the mere assumption that (conceptual) knowledge is possible, and this assumption we have made throughout. Unless there are universals there are no identities; and unless there are such identities a false report must be rendered by every perception, judgement and inference”.<sup>4</sup>

Again, the above epistemological consideration demonstrating the existence of objective universals can be further strengthened, argues a realist, by linguistic consideration, i.e., consideration about the structure and function of language. Any language is composed of words and the words in a given language can be conveniently divided into two classes, namely, proper names and general words, the general word being negatively defined as any word which is not a proper name. “The classification of words into proper names and general words is exhaustive, so that all words which are not proper names are necessarily general words”<sup>5</sup>. The distinction between the proper names and general words is easy enough to see. A proper name refers to a particular person, thing or place whose name it is. The only way of referring to a particular thing in its particularity or uniqueness is by using a proper name. But the general words refer not to one particular person or one particular place; their whole point and usefulness is that they can be applied to any one of a whole range of particular objects, things, events or situations. The word ‘town’ or ‘man’ refers not to any particular town or particular man, but applies indifferently to any town or any man one cares to take. The question naturally arises—wherefrom do these general words derive their generality? How is it possible that a single word can refer to a set of entities in general? The answer given by the realists is that they can do so by virtue of the fact that the individual members of a given class share an identical quality I. P. Q...3

or relation in common, and just as proper names refer to the discrete individuals in their unique individuality so the general names refer to these common identical qualities shared by the individuals. On this theory, there will be no distinction in principle between a proper name and a general word so far as their function in a given language is concerned. Both of them refer to one and only one thing, though the 'thing' referred to by the proper name will be ontologically different from that referred to by a general word. In the former case it would be an unique individual, in the latter case it would be an identical quality or relation shared by the individuals. Hence any successful use of general words, holds a realist, pre-supposes recurrent identities in the objective world.

**The Resemblance theory explained : the given fact of resemblance capable of performing the very same functions supposed to be performed by the universals.**

From the above discussion it is clear that the realists advocate the existence of identical universals mainly for three reasons :- (i) The universals provide an objective basis for the classification of natural objects. (ii) They constitute the ontological foundation which makes conceptual cognition possible. (iii) They justify the significant use of general words. But a neo-nominalist argues that all these three problems — taxonomical, epistemological and linguistic — can be successfully accounted for by his Resemblance theory without taking recourse to any identical universal. The existence of an objective universal repeated identically in many particular objects at the same time would raise many awkward questions, viz., how can a self-same property characterise different particular objects without violating the principle of contradiction etc. So the Resemblance theory does not allow a universal to be a feature reproduced in a number of particular objects numerically identical in each of them. According to this theory, the features or qualities of any given object are as particular and localised as the object itself. The quality of whiteness found in different white objects are numerically different from one another. No property can belong to two different individuals at the same time. But the fact that properties are as much particulars as individuals which they characterise is not incompatible with their being similar as a matter of

fact. This similarity among a group of objects is an empirically given phenomenon which is ultimately responsible for their being grouped together into a class. The Resemblance theory does not abolish universals. It merely gives a new meaning to this concept. It asserts that what is meant by saying that there are universals is that objects can be classified into groups or classes according to their likeness or unlikeness. To say that there is a universal 'white' is to say that there are objects each of which is white and they resemble each other in being white<sup>6</sup>. There is nothing subjectivist in the theory of Resemblance, since it holds that resemblance is a relation which holds objectively among a group of objects. Things of nature would be grouped together into classes or kinds on the basis of resemblance even if there were no minds to perceive them.

Hence it is not true to say that the modern nominalism does not recognise any objective basis for the classification of objects. It does recognise that the classification of objects is objectively determined. But the objective foundation of natural classification is not a self-identical universal as is supposed by the proponents of the Identity theory; it is the relation of resemblance which holds objectively among a group of objects. It is on this basis of resemblance that generalisation is made.

A nominalist points out that the realistic view of natural classification that the objects of nature are classified by virtue of their possession of some self-identical features in common or 'real essences' as Aristotle would call them, is exposed to the following fatal objections :—

First, even granting that the objects of nature share some real essences in common, the latter cannot be known by the human mind. Had we known these real essences of objects, argues a nominalist, we could have predicted *a priori* the nature and behaviour of each individual objects belonging to a certain class. But this we simply cannot do. We are to wait upon experience to know in what way a particular object behaves in different circumstances. We possess, of course, a great deal of probable knowledge inductively established which enables us to say what the behaviour of the object is likely to be. But the very fact that this knowledge is probable only is itself a proof that we do not know the real essence of objects. But a nominalist does

not have to face this difficulty since he believes that the resemblance on the basis of which classification is made and generalisation is done is an empirically given phenomenon.

Secondly, the realistic theory of classification deludes us in making us think that the objects of nature can be parcelled off into neat and sharply divided compartments according as each object possesses a certain characteristic or certain other characteristics in common. But the division between natural kinds is not as precise and exclusive as it is supposed to be and it seems to collapse in the face of some border-line cases which do not appear to belong to one species but which fall in somewhat between the two. In these cases, we arbitrarily force them into one species rather than another. From these observations, a nominalist concludes that the classification of natural objects does not depend on the discovery of an objective universal allegedly common to all members of a class. The classes, on the other hand, have their foundation in the similitude of things and this similitude subsisting among them enables us to generalise in their case.

To the question of the possibility of conceptual knowledge and applicability of general words the Resemblance theory answers that an explanation of these phenomena does not necessarily require an identical feature to be repeated in the objects which a concept or general word applies to. To frame or apply the concept or that is, the meaning of the general word 'white' it is not necessary that a self-identical 'whiteness' be repeated in all the white objects. The white colours in different white objects are numerically different from each other; yet we do and can apply the same general term 'white' to each of them simply because all of them closely resemble certain standard white objects or class-exemplars as they are sometimes called. Every class, according to this view, has, as it were, a "nucleus, an inner ring of key-members, consisting of a small group of standard objects or examples"<sup>7</sup>. What particular members of a given class constitute the exemplars of that class entirely depends upon our arbitrary decision or choice. The exemplars for the class of white things might be a bunch of jessamine flowers, scraps of white clouds floating in the autumn sky, a bit of white chalk or a piece of white paper. All these objects resemble themselves closely in being white and

their resemblance is immediately given to our experience. Now, once the exemplars of white class of objects have been decided by us, we ask ourselves whether the other members of the class resemble these class-exemplars as closely as they resemble one another. If they do, we apply the concept 'white' to each of them.

But what degree of resemblance is sufficient for the purpose of framing a concept or applying a general word is sometimes difficult to decide. One may wonder whether a worn-out dirty white handkerchief sufficiently resembles the above mentioned class-exemplars to be called white at all. In such border-line cases we are to depend again on our choice or decision. But our choice here would not be wholly arbitrary, it would be pragmatically determined. It would depend on our need and interests. This is "borne out by the fact that a dress designer or a painter would give two different names to the colours of two pieces of material, both of which I should call red"<sup>8</sup>.

From the above discussion, it is evident that the objective basis for the use of general words is not immutable. Concepts, that is, the meaning of general words are not *necessarily* imposed by the given manifold of experience, though the fact of similarity which is an empirically given phenomenon plays an important role in the formation and application of concepts. The concepts are devices to be evaluated according to their utility, open to change and adjustment if they prove their unsuitability or break down under the strain of use to which they are put. It should be conceded, therefore, that for the nominalist language contains a conventional element as its essential characteristic that cannot be over-looked in any language, irrespective of what particular philosophic purpose this language is to serve.

This analysis of the structure of a class on the basis of observed resemblance towards a set of exemplars or standard objects at once disposes of one of the classical objections that has been usually levelled against the Resemblance theory. The objection is as follows :

It has been said<sup>9</sup> that the concept of resemblance has no intelligible meaning at all unless we specify the respect to which things resemble one another. Things of nature resemble one another in *different respects*. White things resemble one another in one respect while red things resemble one another in a different

respect. To ignore this and to say simply that the things called white just resemble one another without specifying the respect in which they resemble is to indulge in anomaly and chaos, because that would not distinguish the resembling white objects from the class of red objects which also have resemblance among themselves. Therefore resemblance always means resemblance *in respect of*. But in what respect does the class of white objects resemble one another? Obviously in respect of whiteness. In other words, white objects resemble one another in respect of being instances of or characterised by a self-identical universal called whiteness. In this way, an analysis of the concept of resemblance logically commits us to the concept of an objective universal which the Resemblance theory so carefully tries to get rid of.

As an answer to this objection, the proponents of the Resemblance theory put forward their theory of class-exemplars which we have discussed already. A class is formed, according to them, not because the members of a class are characterised by a self-identical universal, but because they closely resemble a small group of individual objects belonging to that class which are arbitrarily chosen by us as forming their nucleus or exemplars. Hence the objection arising out of the phrase 'resemblance in respect of' can be easily answered by substituting it by a different phrase 'resemblance towards'. The individual members of a given class resemble one another *not in respect of* a self-identical universal, but *towards* a group of individual objects which are chosen by us as forming their nucleus. Hence the formation of a class, urges a nominalist, does not require any self-identical universal as its basis; it can be explained in terms of the individual objects themselves without taking recourse to any corresponding universal.

This answer of the nominalist, points out an opponent, merely pushes the problem a step behind, but the objection still remains unanswered. The question, "In what respect do the objects resemble one another?" Can still be legitimately asked with regard to the exemplar-objects themselves, though it does not arise about the other members of the class. About the members other than the exemplar-objects of a given class, it is said that they resemble as closely as the exemplar-objects resemble one another and this is a perfectly intelligible statement. But it



makes no sense to say that the exemplar-objects resemble one another as closely as they do resemble one another, since that would not be an informative statement at all, but a sheer tautology. Therefore we are compelled to conclude that the exemplars of the class of white objects resemble one another in respect of whiteness, i.e., all of them are instance of a self-identical universal called whiteness.

As an answer to this objection, the Resemblance theory points out that a given class may have alternative sets of exemplars; and when the question is asked in what respect do the exemplar objects resemble one another, we do not attempt the absurd task of comparing those things with themselves and thereby commit ourselves to tautology, but we compare them with the other alternative sets of exemplars of the same given class. We have said already that the exemplars of the class of white objects consisted of a bunch of jessamine flowers, a scrap of autumn cloud and a piece of chalk. But they could equally be said to consist of a patch of freshly fallen snow, a white marble statue of Lord Buddha and a cinema screen. And when the question is asked in what respect do the first set of exemplar-objects of the class of white things resemble one another, it is answered that they resemble as closely as the second set of exemplar-objects resemble one another. In this way, the alleged absurdity of tautology can be avoided.

**Is 'resemblance' an irreducible ultimate category of reality? An analysis of 'exact resemblance' reveals that it is not.**

It should be noted here that the Identity theory of universal does not deny that the individual members of a given class do resemble one another in some way or other. To deny this would mean closing one's eyes to a most glaringly obvious fact of our everyday experience. Hence in so far as the givenness of the fact of resemblance in the external world is concerned, there is no conflict between the Identity upheld by the traditional realists and the Resemblance theory sponsored by the neo-nominalists. But the controversy between them arises as soon as the question of the ontological status of the fact of resemblance is raised. According to the Identity theory, the empirical fact of resemblance is not as primitive and ultimate as it is usually supposed to be; it can be reduced to or deduced from a more fundamental fact—the fact of identity. All

the white objects of the world do resemble one another *because* all of them are characterised by a self-same quality 'white' i.e., all of them are instances of a self-identical universal called 'whiteness'. It is here that the Resemblance theory joins issue and puts forward its thesis that the resemblance among different individual members of a given class is an autonomous fact of experience which cannot be in any way reduced to identity<sup>10</sup>. Hence the real issue between the Identity theory and the Resemblance theory centres round one fundamental question : Can the fact of resemblance be reduced to identity, or is it an irreducible ultimate category of reality ?

To illustrate their view that the so-called cases of resemblance are ultimately rooted in identity, the proponents of the Identity theory point out to what is usually known as 'exact' resemblance. When two objects resemble each other *exactly* in one respect or other in such a way that the slightest difference between them is not discernible, it can be said with absolute certainty that the points in which they resemble each other are *identically* present in both of them. The colours of the two postage stamps of the same issue and denomination resemble each other exactly, since no difference between them in respect of brightness and intensity can be detected. Hence the particular shade of these two postage stamps is identically the same. So we find that if two specific shades of colour are exactly similar in respect of chroma, intensity and saturation, then, so far as their *quality* is concerned, they are not two shades but one. If they are not one, where do they differ ? It cannot be said that they differ from each other in so far as they occur in or belong to two different positions in space, because it is neither the things in which the shades occur nor their spatial positions that are in question. Our main concern here is only the shades, and if we keep our attention confined to shades, it is admitted that no difference is there. There is nothing in the nature of the first shade itself which can keep it apart and make it 'other' from the second shade. To point to some difference between the shades other than one of shade, e. g., things and their spatial relations, would, thus, be irrelevant. Either, then, the two exactly resembling shades of colour are literally one, or we contradict ourselves. To admit that in respect of shade there is no difference and to say at the same time that the shades are two

and exactly similar is to talk incoherently. The position of the Identity theory that the cases of exact resemblance can be reduced to identities is thus exceedingly strong.

But the proponents of the Resemblance theory may here take a different line of attack. The principal argument of the Identity theory in reducing the cases of exact resemblance to those of Identity was that, because we do not observe any difference of content between the so-called exactly resembling qualities, they therefore should be treated as identical. But the Resemblance theory may point out here that the fact that we do not observe any difference of content in the cases of exact resemblance has not the slightest tendency to prove that the resembling qualities are *really* identical in nature. At best it can prove that as a matter of fact they are indistinguishable from one another. But indistinguishability and identity are not interchangeable concepts. In spite of their apparent empirical indistinguishability, it is perfectly *conceivable* that the so-called exactly resembling shades of colour may still admit of very delicate gradation in respect of their intensity and the brightness which our imperfect mechanism of eyes (even with the use of powerful instruments) cannot detect. In this way, by denying the very possibility of exact resemblance, the defenders of Resemblance theory try to prove their thesis that resemblance is an ultimate fact of reality which cannot be derived from identity.

Now, a direct disproof of this kind of argument is impossible since it rests upon a distinction between appearance and reality. What it seeks to prove is that different non-identical entities *appear* to be indistinguishable in our so-called experience of exact resemblance and this appearance of indistinguishability is misunderstood by us as their identity. But still this argument of the Resemblance theory is fundamentally weak. The defenders of the Identity theory might ask here: Just as it is *conceivable* that the different exactly resembling shades of colour are really different in respect of their brightness and intensity, why should it not be equally conceivable that they are really identical in nature? Moreover, the empirical evidence *points to* the existence of identical qualities. To deny their existence would mean closing one's eyes to the fact of experience for the sake of a theory. When a conflict arises between the dictates of experience and a

reasoned theory, it is the former which is to be retained at the cost of the latter.

Thus an analysis of the meaning of exact resemblance logically leads us to the notion of identity. Exact resemblance means a qualitative identity distributed at least in two cases of itself. But it should be noted here that though two different objects may be identical *in point of quality or character*, the objects themselves are numerically different, they are two, not one. The meaning of exact resemblance says nothing at all about substantial identity or the persisting identity of continuant through changes of its quality and relation. Only the qualities and relations of the continuant are here in question.

One of the chief defining characteristics of universal is that it must be identically present in the individual members of the same class at the same time. Now we find that the specific qualities of the object satisfy this fundamental definition of universal, i.e., they can be identically repeated in different objects. Hence they are universals in an important sense of the term. But these universals are absolutely specific in the sense that they are incapable of any sub-division into further kinds; they cannot stand as the genus with some lower species subsumed under them. *This* shade of colour or *that* degree of blueness cannot be further divided into sub-classes. Hence the reality of specific universals in the shape of identical qualities and relations must be admitted.

**The 'inexact resemblance' does not pre-suppose any identity and hence to be taken as ultimate**

The above analysis of the meaning of exact resemblance is sufficient to show that a realist has enough reason for holding the opinion that the different cases of exact resemblance can be reduced to qualitative identity. But a neo-nominalist raises a fresh issue here. The phenomena of exact resemblance are very rare occasions of the world. Most cases of resemblance that we come across in our daily life are cases of inexact resemblance, i.e., resemblance less than the maximum intensity. We say that the different shades of the colour 'blue'—navy blue, cobalt blue, ultramarine blue etc.—resemble one another in being blue; but in spite of that, resemblance holding between them is not exact in the sense that each one of them differs from the other in intensity

and brightness : one is either more or less intense and bright than the other. Moreover, blue is said to resemble green *more* than it resembles red. This is also a case of inexact resemblance. In other words, all cases of inexact resemblance admit of degrees—‘more’ or ‘less’. Now, what are we to say about them? Are we to say that these cases of inexact resemblance should equally be reducible to qualitative identities? Encouraged by their success in the attempt of reducing the phenomenon of exact resemblance to that of identity, the realists jump to a hasty conclusion that all cases of resemblance, be they exact or inexact, can be reduced to some form of identity or other. It is here that a neo-nominalist joins issue with a realist. He argues that even if a realist is justified in contending that the phenomenon of exact resemblance can be reduced to qualitative identity, this conclusion about exact resemblance cannot be indiscriminately extend over to the cases of inexact resemblance. That would leave the cases of inexact resemblance an unexplained mystery. If a self-identical universal called redness be equally present in all the different shades of red and if this be the only ground of their resembling with one another, then it follows logically that they should resemble one another exactly; there should not be any difference in brightness and intensity in the various shades of red colour. But this is not the case. Though all of them resemble one another in being red, yet each shade differs from every other shade in respect of intensity and brightness. Hence the position of the realist that all cases of resemblances are reducible to qualitative identity leave no room for a proper explanation of the phenomenon of inexact resemblance. The realists, when they make all cases of resemblance derivative, appear to forget that resemblances have degrees of intensity, that objects resemble one another ‘more’ or ‘less’. And this degree of inexact resemblance cannot be successfully accounted for unless we take it to be ultimate.

But a realist may argue that it is rather the position of the nominalists than that of his own which leaves the phenomenon of inexact resemblance an unexplained enigma. For a proper explanation of inexact resemblance, it is logically necessary to postulate a genuine identity in the objective world. How can we speak with any meaning of ‘more’ or ‘less’, if it is to be ‘more’ or ‘less’ of nothing? Hence it is held that a self-identical universal is realised ‘more’ or ‘less’ in its different particular instances, and

that is the reason why they resemble not exactly but 'more' or 'less'. When two characters resemble each other inexactly, i.e., in a degree less than the maximum intensity, their similarity will be found on analysis to be based on partial identity; there will be a core in both that is the same, though this identical nature will be attended in the two cases by other differing features which serve to distinguish them.

If this be so, argues a nominalist, we should be able to mark off in thought, if not in reality, the area that the different inexactly resembling shades of colour have in common. But it will be probably admitted by all that it is beyond us. As each shade of colour is a simple unanalysable entity, we cannot break up colour 'blue' into components, one of which belongs only to itself, while the other common factor turns up in other shades of blues or in other species of colour such as red, blue, green, yellow etc. This point has been very clearly illustrated by Cook Wilson. He asks us to "take, for example, redness and blueness, which we naturally call species of colour. If we eliminate all that is meant by colour, nothing whatever is left, or, if, we suppose some differentiating element left, it would have to be something different from colour. Thus the difference between red and blue would not be one of colour, whereas it is colour in which they agree and colour in which they differ".<sup>11</sup>

One has to face this paradox when one tries to abstract an identical colouredness in different species of colour, or, an identical blueness in different shades of blue. But still different species of colour or different shades of the colour 'blue' resemble one another 'more' or 'less' and this inexact resemblance holding among them, argues a nominalist, must be treated as ultimate when it is beyond our comprehension to discover any identical element lying within them.

But even admitting with the neo-nominalists that the cases of inexact resemblance cannot be reduced to any sort of identity since no identical element can be discovered in their cases, the objection of the realists still retains its force: How can we measure the variation in the degree of resemblance—its 'more' or 'less'—unless we postulate some identical element with reference to which it is pronounced to be more or less? What is the referent of this 'more' or 'less'? To this the neo-nominalists answer that

this measurement of the variation in the degrees of resemblance can be successfully accounted for even without taking recourse to any self-identical universal. This can be illustrated in the following way by taking into account one kind of sense-quality, viz., colour.

Different species of colour, e.g., red, green, yellow etc., and different shades of colour belonging to the same species, e.g., royal blue, navy blue, ultramarine etc. of the species 'blue' constitute an order or series. This order is intrinsic in the sense that no extraneous factors other than the diverse hues themselves determine the order. The nature of the order is exhausted by the hues themselves. Each species of colour or each shades of a specific colour has its fixed position in its intrinsic order, which cannot be occupied by other species of colour or other shades of colour. In the intrinsic order of hues, some hues are nearer other hues and further from others. In the same way some shades are nearer other shades and further from others. Thus red is to orange as orange is to yellow; orange is to yellow as yellow is to green; yellow is to green as green is to blue. In the intrinsic order of hues, any hue stands where it stands because it is that hue. The reason why (say) a yellow is to a green as a green is to a blue is that yellow is yellow that a green is green, and a blue is blue. The reason offered for this may be tautologous. But the denial of this tautology is self-contradictory. To say that some yellows might not be to green as green is to blue is to say that some yellows might not be yellows that they are. This is true of any hue in the order. The different species of colour are given the same name 'colour' not because all of them have some identical 'colouredness' in common but because they resemble one another; and they resemble one other because all of them belong to the same intrinsic order. This explains at once why a hue and a sound do not resemble each other in any sense of the term resemblance : they belong to different intrinsic orders and hence are not comparable with one another in any way. Now the degree of resemblance—its 'more' or 'less'—can be explained, urges a nominalist, with reference to this intrinsic order of hues. The diverse hues or diverse shades of the same hue resemble each other 'more' or 'less' as they are nearer to or further from each other in their intrinsic order. Thus the statement "Orange resembles red more than Purple" means that orange is nearer red than purple in the intrinsic order of hues. In any such context as this one, where colours are compared as 'more'

or 'less' resembling 'more resembling' or 'less resembling' will refer to the distance between hues compared. The distance consists of the number of hues which lie between the hues that are in question. Thus there are more hues between blue and red than there are between yellow and red. And, in this sense blue is further from red than yellow; or conversely, yellow is nearer red than blue. Thus "yellow resembles red more than blue" means what is meant by "yellow is nearer red than blue in the intrinsic order of hues." In the same way, 'more' or 'less' resemblance holding between various shades of the same specific colour can be explained with success without postulating a self-identical universal corresponding to them.

Hence we find that the claim of the realists that to explain the variation in the degree of resemblance—its 'more' or 'less' one has to postulate a self-identical universal which is realised 'more' or 'less' in its different instances—is fundamentally weak because no such identity can be discovered there. But these cases of inexact resemblance, claims a nominalist, can be successfully accounted for without taking recourse to any self-identical universal by the Theory of Intrinsic Order<sup>12</sup> of qualities as delineated above. The thesis of the neo-nominalist, therefore, that the phenomena of inexact resemblance are irreducible ultimate facts of the world still stands.

### **Concluding remarks**

From the above discussion it is perhaps clear that the term 'resemblance', instead of being univocal, is equivocal. There are at least two distinct and basic senses of resemblance, one of which cannot be reduced to the other. In one of these two basic senses, resemblance is used with reference to characters that are exactly the same. When used in this sense, the term in question designates a qualitative identity that is repeated in at least two cases of itself and it does not admit of any degree. In this sense resemblance cannot be taken as an ultimate primitive fact of experience reducible to the cases of identity.

And yet we do make sensible statements about degrees of resemblance—its 'more' or 'less'. This phenomenon of what is usually called 'inexact resemblance' cannot, therefore be treated on a par with that of exact resemblance and should be comprised within the second one of the basic senses of resemblance. It is



not rooted in any kind of identity whatsoever and hence is to be treated as an ultimate category of the world. The controversy between neo-nominalism and traditional realism seems to emerge from a basic confusion between these two fundamentally distinct senses of the term 'resemblance'.

Thus when the Western neo-nominalists deny the ontological reality of universals on the basis of the relation of resemblance among the individual members of a given class of objects, a relation which they take to be an ultimate irreducible fact of experience, —they appear to forget that the world abounds with the cases of 'exact resemblance', an analysis of which eventually leads us to the admission of recurrent universals in *rerum natura* in the shape of absolutely specific (meaning thereby—not admitting of any degrees) identical qualities. Again, the traditional realists, in their zeal to reduce all phenomena of experienced resemblance to qualitative identities, are so much pre-occupied with 'exact resemblance' that they seem to overlook the fact that there are also degrees of resemblance, that the objects of nature resemble one another 'more' or 'less',— a fact which cannot in any way be accounted for by the objects' possession of an identical universal in common. In this respect, therefore, the contention of the neo-nominalists that the relation of resemblance is the *ultimate basis* for the classification of objects and other related epistemological and linguistic problems mentioned earlier in this paper, should be taken to be true. These considerations have led us to conclude that both neo-nominalism and traditional realism are one-sided and dogmatic in their approach to the problem of universal. Both the theories have their own elements of truth as well as their peculiar points of error, and hence one should go beyond both realism and neo-nominalism to formulate an adequate theory of universal.

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#### NOTES

1. That the relation of experienced resemblance among the particular objects of nature may be an adequate substitute for the so-called universals admit-

ted by the realists was first suggested but not fully developed by Russell in modern times (1912) in the following Philosophically pregnant line : "If we wish to avoid the universals *whiteness* and *triangularity*, we shall choose some particular patch of white or some particular triangle, and say that anything is white or a triangle if it has the right sort of resemblance to our chosen particular". — B. Russell, *Problems of Philosophy* (London : Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 96. But what sort of resemblance among the particulars is required for the formation of a class was not clearly specified by Russell in his book. This task was later undertaken in all seriousness by the modern neo-nominalists, and H. H. Price developed a complete theory of what he calls the "Philosophy of Ultimate Resemblance" on the basis of the above casual suggestion made by Russell. see H. H. Price, *Thinking and Experience* (London : Hutchinson's University Library, 1953), pp. 732. My present paper is in many respects an attempt to spell out some of the points not made explicit by Price.

2. Cf. "...nearly all the words to be found in the dictionary stand for universals" — Russell, *ibid.*, p. 93.
3. W. Stanley Jevons, *Principles of Science*, London : Macmillan, 1874, pp 673-74.
4. B. Blanshard, *The Nature of Thought*, Allen & Unwin, 1948, Vol. I., pp. 580-81.
5. R. I. Aaron, *The Theory of Universals*, Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1952, p. 138.
6. See A. D. Woozley, *Theory of Knowledge*, London : Hutchinson's University Library, 1949, p. 93.
7. H. H. Price, *Thinking and Experience*, London, Hutchinson's University Library, 1953, p. 20ff.
8. A. D. Woozley, *ibid.* p. 92.
9. A. Pap, *Elements of Analytic Philosophy*, New York: Macmillan, 1949, p. 78.
10. In one of the appendices of his *A Treatise on Human Nature*, Hume, the British Empiricist, gave the first suggestion that the fact of resemblance can be ultimate without being derived from identity. See Hume's *Treatise*, ed. L. A. Selby Bigge (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1958), p. 637. Hume seems to have arrived at the conclusion while reflecting on Locke's account of generalisation and resemblance. John Locke, the founder of the British School of Empiricism, said in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* that our task in generalising consists in seizing the common identical elements in the resembling wholes. Two composite wholes may be said to resemble each other if amongst their constituent simples, at least one simple will be found common to the two groups. Having thus put forward this account of generalisation and resemblance, Locke was confronted with a genuine difficulty. If resemblance consists in observing a common simple component in the two resembling composites.

then it ought to follow that there cannot be any resemblance among the simples themselves and that consequently we cannot generalise in their case. And yet as a matter of fact the simples do resemble each other and we do generalise in their case. Locke proposed a very superficial solution to this difficulty. He wrote : "When (the simple ideas like) white, red and yellow are all comprehended under the genus or name 'colour', it signifies no more but such ideas as are produced in the mind only by the sight, and have entrance only through the eyes". *ibid.*, III. iv. 16. The above extract from the *Essay* shows that Locke sought for a common characteristic *extrinsic* to the simples. For instance, white and red are both *visibilia*, they 'are produced in the mind' in the same way, and so may be said to resemble each other in this respect. But this amounts to saying that the entities with which Locke now deals are in fact composites and not simples, consisting of two characteristics, for example, (a) being white and (b) being visible. If so, his problem remains unsolved.

Hume seems to have become aware of the inadequacy of this Lockean theory of resemblance and he realised that something must at least be said about resembling *simples*. So he added a brief note on resemblance in the appendix to his *Treatise* (ed. Selley-Bigge, Oxford, 1958, p. 637) in which he suggested that resemblance among different simple ideas is an unanalysable ultimate fact of experience. The modern Resemblance theory of the neo-nominalists is merely a development of this suggestion. It has developed it by applying Hume's suggestion not merely to simples, but also to complexes. It holds that the entities, be they simple or composite, resemble one another without being grounded in identity.

11. Cook Wilson, *Statement and Inference*, Oxford, 1926, Vol. I., p. 358.
12. For a detailed discussion of this theory, see R. W. Church's small but very illuminating monograph entitled *An Analysis of Resemblance* London : Allen and Unwin, 1952.

