

# REALISM AND NOMINALISM:

DO PROPERTIES EXIST?



**Yes:**

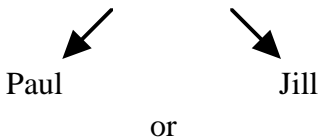
**Are properties universals or Abstract Particular?**

**No:  
Extreme Nominalism**

Properties (e.g., blueness) do not exist at all. Rather, the only things that do exist are concrete particulars (e.g., individual blue things) and the “property words” (e.g., the word “blue”) that are true of them.

Key: Properties do not exist at all. Concrete particulars & groups of concrete particulars are the only things that are real.

The word *blue*  
is true of



The set of red concrete particulars:  
Paul, Jill, an apple, a fire engine, a brick }

**EXTREME NOMINALISM**

In sum, extreme nominalism, realism, & nominalism are different positions about the ontological status of properties. Extreme nominalists accept only the existence of concrete particulars (& sets of such particulars along with words true of them), nominalists embrace concrete and abstract particulars (along with sets of abstract particular), and realists assert the reality of concrete particulars and properties understood as universals, that is, an entities that can be exemplified by many concrete particulars at once. Charts adapted from *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, 204-6.

Are properties universals then one is a realist.

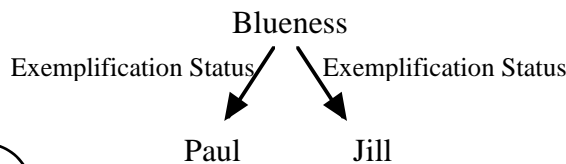


Paul and Jill have the very same property, blueness, in each of them. Properties are one-in-many; they can be possessed by many concrete particulars are at the same time. The relationship between a property like blueness and concrete particulars like Paul and Jill is called exemplification, predication, or the instancing relation (one is an instance of the other). Properties are called universals, that is, multiply exemplifiable entities that can be had by many things at the same time. The red exemplified by Paul is identical to the redness exemplified by Jill.

If affirms abstract particulars, then one is a nominalist.



Nominalists accept the existence of properties but hold that they are particular, individualized qualities called abstract particulars that cannot be possessed by more than one concrete particular. The term abstract is not used in a standard metaphysical sense, namely something that exists outside space and time, but in an epistemological sense, namely, as something that is brought before the mind by disregarding other things in its environment. For example, if one disregards the shape, smell, or size of a rose, but focuses only on its color, the rose’s redness is abstract in the epistemological sense.



**REALIST PICTURE OF QUALITY AGREEMENT.**

