A methodology of approaching such a widely discussed problem was long overdue. I have thought of a method by which any account on universals and particulars may be tested for its loyalty to its principles. There is no attempt at defining universals and particulars, because I do not intend to give one more way of attaching these labels. Enough has been said towards their definitions; but of course, it would be too much to expect an 'exhaustive definition' from any theory. So varied are the approaches. History is full of their controversy. Of course, some recent thinkers have attempted to replace the traditional nomenclature by the more technical one. And so, the problem changed the 'dress' but not the 'spirit'. By changing the form, we do not eliminate it.

It is but another version of saying that the words universals and particulars may be in the disciplines which are not truly, speaking, their 'home-discipline', but it is their idea which plays the game instead. Some of the ways in which the problem may be worded are, the problem of general words, abstract entities, individuals, part and whole, subject-predicate, quantification etc. Under each heading, we may have ingenious attempts made by the philosophers. But at times, the problem is unnecessarily made complicated due to an obsession for
modernism. Technicalities may not be called in always. Moreover, one should be vigilant enough to be aware of the shift in the position, from one level of discussion to the other. Otherwise it is quite possible that the technicalities which are employed to inculcate precision and clarity, will defy the purpose. They may cause more havoc than help the cause. It is worth observing that today, the locus of discussion is not words as such, but the context in which they are used; words, and objects, in themselves are neutral, but the context 'shades' them with 'universality' or 'particularity'.

This being an essay in contextual analysis, I have used the nomenclature which is appropriate to a particular context. Elsewhere, I have used them if necessary, but with some explanations, to suit the discussion of that context. However, I am thankful to those thinkers who originally employed a term and laid the convention. I have named them where I could. But, keeping in view the scope of my work, I have not attempted to investigate the inception of each term.

I consider that an attempt to define universals and particulars would appear as insipid and narrow as that of attempting to define each proper noun. Not that universals and particulars are proper nouns like Tom and Rama, but only in the sense that there is no end to the variety in which they may be defined, because they are open to many interpretations. (I am
not speaking of the position of 'Rama' in a sentence, but the 'meaning'). Rama may be a toy or a team, or a boy or a beam.

Hence, I have accepted the views of those who had some serious suggestions to make, and have observed that at times, they may not follow their prescriptions quite strictly. If so, then, either they do not heed consistency, or they forsake it for communication.

The method of approaching any such account is not arbitrary. It has been worked out, and stated in simple language; so that it is available to any thinker who has anything to say on the subject. And if such a method fails to have a workability of a mathematical formula, it is only because mathematics deals with symbols, and philosophy deals with individuals. And there is no unanimity over the understanding of the 'individual' as there is, over the mathematical symbol. No one will interpret '1' as '2', or \((a \times b)\) as \((a - b)\).

But however, when the concept of logical structure enters the discussion, a non-discrimination between universals and particulars may be argued out. But this is a remote explanation. It requires lengthy and intricate arguments.

But, if one chooses not to enter into the philosophy of logic, one can still answer the question, whether there is any distinction between universals and particulars, affirmatively.
This is because the immediate answer lies with the principle of classification, and only remotely, with the logical structure.

There are questions which may be answered either way. For example, it may be held that there are universals and also, there are no universals. But there are other questions which cannot be answered either way. For example, it cannot be held that there are particulars and also, there are no particulars. It is because particulars are so understood. In other words, the principle of classification which classifies a particular as 'particular' is more appealing and widely applied, rather than the one which classifies a universal as 'universal'. As a matter of fact, to refute a particular in order to make room for a universal or its parallels in an explanation, is to refute matter-of-fact, and make room for some elegant abstraction.

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