

Remarks on Grandi's Comments

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Received: 13 June 2008 / Accepted: 1 July 2008 /
Published online: 25 July 2008
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Abstract This note is a reply to some of Giovanni Grandi's comments on my paper "Berkeley's Contingent Necessities."

Keywords George Berkeley's necessity · Truth · Resemblance · Abstraction

My purpose in discussing abstraction was two-fold. One was to sketch Berkeley's arguments. The other was to lead into a discussion of definition. It was *not* my purpose to show that all Berkeley's criticisms were on-target. Although Berkeley *assumed* that the proponents of abstract ideas accepted the conceivability criterion of possibility,¹ it might be difficult to find any place where Locke explicitly does so. Although Locke appears to be the focus of Berkeley's attack, the criticisms might be more effective against Descartes.

I really don't know what to say about resemblance. Berkeley claims it is a necessary connection. If it is, then there are necessary connections among ideas. This would seem to imply that there are natural kinds independent of human acts of sorting. Indeed, the notion of a necessary connection *suggests* that ideas constituting a kind are not properly distinct, which places doubt on the contention that all existents are particulars. But if one "loosens" the notion of necessary connection, puzzles arise. In the cases of causation and perception, the "necessary connections" have existential implications. If resemblance *qua* necessary connections also has existential implications, I am not sure where those existential implications occur. If it is just applying a common name to two objects, that seems too loose. If it is

¹See Draft Introduction, in *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, edited by A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, 9 volumes (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1948–1957), 2:125.

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something like “hard wiring” in the mind, i.e., dispositions to make certain kinds of judgments in certain conditions,² one wonders why it would be limited to resemblance (if it is) and why it would be deemed a necessary connection.

I am not satisfied with my contention that resemblance is *created* by acts of will, since it seems to do away with the contention that resemblance is a necessary connection; resemblance would be the effect of an act, not the act itself. So, I remain puzzled regarding resemblance.

² I take this to be the Cartesian notion of an innate idea. See Daniel E. Flage and Clarence A. Bonnen, “Innate Ideas and Cartesian Dispositions,” *International Studies in Philosophy* 24 (1992): 60–85.