SIMILARITY AND LANGUAGE

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INTRODUCTION

1. Stated in general terms, the following essay centres around similarity and its relation to our language. The subject has numerous dimensions. We are not unaware of that. However, our analysis, needless to say, does not cover all of them. Nor was it ever intended to do so. That way, the essay is clearly inexhaustive. Should we really have aspired to make it exhaustive? The essay confines itself, as it must, to a restricted area; its conclusion is mainly twofold :

(1) that similarity is a basic and unique relation, not fully analysable in terms of its cognate, i.e. identity,

and (2) that, further, on similarity depends the intelligibility of our language, to be precise, a most significant part of it.

These conclusions, however, do not make any claim to embody new truths discovered by us. The truths, in a general way and substantially, have already been known to philosophy. What we have tried to do is mainly to reanalyse, reemphasise and reconfirm them; and this endeavour, if we may say so, has not perhaps been altogether without any newness about it.

2. But how is all this, i.e. the projected reanalysis, re-emphasise and reconfirmation worth it? The following is the answer.

Similarity, undeniably, has a fundamental place in our thought and language. "... there is nothing more basic to our thought and language than our sense of similarity", says Quine.[1] Yet, unhappily, the notion is far from clear. There, indeed, is a considerable degree of obscurity about it. To quote Quine once again, "The dubiousness of this notion is itself a remarkable fact."[2] So, whatever analysis happens to lend any degree of clarity to the notion of similarity has an undeniable philosophical value of its own. Isn't philosophy, among other things, a relentless attempt to think clearly?

Our success in achieving the clarity as regards similarity (because of its basic character) will, in turn, tend inevitably to illuminate many other matters, we mean those which presuppose similarity or involve reference to it in some other senses.

1 Vide Ontological Relativity and Other Essays, Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1969, p.116.
2 Ibid.

Take first the basic fact of communication, that we talk about things and individuals. This would have been totally impossible without similarity. Similarity is, in fact, one of the minimum preconditions of it. "World must exhibit similarities. ... If everything were unlike anything else", says Austin, "there would be nothing to say."[3]

Similarity makes possible the use of a word. In fact, the very learning of it. The former presupposes phonetic similarity between the present utterance of a word and the past utterance of it; the latter requires that the different circumstances in which the same word is used must be similar.[4]

Also, similarity, among other things, explains induction. For, "every reasonable expectation", says Quine, "depends on resemblance of circumstances, together with our tendency to expect similar causes to have similar effects."[5]

In the same way, Similarity is inbuilt in number

3 Vide Philosophical Papers, Oxford University Press, London, 1979, p.121.
4 Vide Ontological Relativity and Other Essays, Columbia University Press, New York and London, p.117.
5 Ibid.

of things, e.g. in the concept of measurement, in certain figurative uses of language, in the association of ideas, and so on.[6]

Notwithstanding all this, study of similarity, on its own account, or its relation to language as a part of that, does not appear to have occupied philosophers to the extent it should have. "The proper analysis of the concept of resemblance", as is very rightly observed by O'Conner, "is of some importance for philosophy for several reasons, but it has not received from philosophers attention proportionate to its importance."[7] The particular area of philosophy which, in actuality, has developed around the concept of similarity, seems really to exhibit, if one may say so, a degree of peculiar imbalance : the major part of it seems, in fact, to have been occupied by what may be called the problems relating to the explanation of similarity, i.e. the various theories about universals and those denying their existence. No one denies the philosophical importance of these theories. But, incidentally, they

6 Vide "On Resemblance", Proceedings of the Aristotlean Society, 1945-46, p.48.
7 Ibid, p.47.

have, among other things, come to obscure the study of similarity as such. And this unfortunate tragedy is also not a matter to be ignored. Now, it is in this background that our analysis below assumes the value it may claim for itself.

3. My indebtedness to Mr M. Chakravarty, my teacher, from whom I have learnt whatever little I know in my subject and under whose supervision this essay has been completed, cannot be stated in language. I do not know whether this essay, in its present form, would satisfy the standard he had althrough been relentlessly insisting on. I am deeply indebted to Mrs Manjulika Ghosh, another teacher of mine, who, as my additional supervisor (after Mr. Chakravarty left this University to join Hyderabad Central University in October'80) has helped me by many valuable suggestions. Further I record my debt of gratitude Prof. Llewelyn for his most valuable criticisms in the light of which certain portions of this dissertation have been revised.

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Chapter 1

TYPES OF SIMILARITY

Similar things are similar in many senses, and in this chapter an attempt has been made by us to distinguish and classify them. This will ensure some degree of tidiness for our work, which is valuable. What is more valuable, however, is a prospect of some incidental insight into the nature of similarity itself.

1. The criteria for our purpose might well become available to us if, on an exploration at the level of language, we could discover two or more such predicates of similarities as would be mutually exclusive and, as, together, would cover all similarities and similarities alone. There indeed are examples elsewhere of required criteria of division having been obtained in the same way by philosophers. Take, for instance, the division of meaningful statements into those that are true and those that are false, or of sentences into those that are meaningful and those that are meaningless. Likewise, one divides actions into moral and non-moral ; the predicates 'moral' and 'non-moral' apply to characterise

actions alone; they are mutually exclusive and, together, they cover all actions. And there are many more such examples.

But can we obtain some criteria of this kind for our projected division of similarities? One, we suppose, cannot perhaps be certain a priori about that. That is, pending actual exploration of the words and phrases which are used to describe similarities, one is not perhaps in a position to know definitely that some of them would exclude each other, and at the same time, could be predicated of all similarities and similarities alone. At any rate, such criteria, in theory, are not without some advantages. Firstly, the results they might yield would be exhaustive, that is, the sub-classes of similarities obtained on their basis would cover all similarities. More, it would ensure a kind of purity also in the sense that nothing which is not an instance of similarity could ever usurp a room in the sub-classes of similarity.

Yet there is a limitation about the criteria because of which we are dissuaded from undertaking any search for it. The required predicates of similarity

which are to constitute them are, as we have said, to be mutually exclusive and applicable to all similarities and similarities only. But such predicates, if discovered, might prove to be too few to do justice to all the distinctions among similarities. One who has in mind especially the purity of the resulting sub-classes of similarities might be inclined to look for the required criteria at a metaphysical level, i.e. in the possible essence which is common to all instances of similarity. But the move is bound to be futile, which is obvious. For, the common essence, if there really is any at all, can serve only to unite similarities and not to distinguish their different types.

For our criteria, we are thus led to fall back primarily on what may be called the minimal constituents of similarity. Similarity, after all, is a relation holding between two or more terms. The terms may be differe different; likewise, the relation also may assume different forms. And our criteria for distinguishing various types of similarity will derive primarily from those differences. That is to say, we shall distinguish similarities after :

(1) the terms which are called similar,
and (2) the peculiarities of similarity-relation
itself.

This method will have certain practical advantages. Firstly, the range of terms as such as also that of relations as such have already been sought to be organised by philosophers under different schemes of classification. So, naturally, in attempting to divide similarities into various types in terms of criteria derived from the consideration of the relation which is similarity and the range of its objects, we shall have ready at hand some valuable working model to guide us. Secondly, the method has already been put to application by some similarity-philosophers. Such philosophers include, among others, R.W.Church[1] and D.J. O'Conner[2] who follows Church in the matter. Our special indebtedness to these philosophers will be clearly manifest all through our discussion below. We shall draw liberally upon the results of their investigation.

1 Vide An Analysis of Resemblance, George Allen & Unwin, London.
2 Vide "On Resemblance", Proceedings of the Aristotlean Society, 1945-46, pp.47-76.

I

1. The terms of similarity-relation may broadly be divided into

(a) those that may be called <u>particulars</u>, <u>and</u> (b) those that may be called <u>non-particulars</u>.

Particulars are supposed to include objects (e.g. 'the books on this table', 'faces of human beings', etc.), and events (e.g. earthquake, headache, marriage, etc.). Non-particulars, on the other hand, are being taken to include qualities (e.g.heavy, square, red, etc.), and relations (e.g. below, parallel, being brother of, etc.). Accordingly, we can divide similarities into

(1) those that hold between particulars, <u>and</u> (2) those that hold between non-particulars.

The second, i.e. (2), is called by O'Conner <u>simple</u> or <u>underivative</u> similarities. As opposed to this, the first class of similarities, on the other hand, is called <u>complex</u> or <u>derivative</u>. The epithet 'complex' is not inappropriate at all. For, an object (or event), being nothing more than its qualities, the similarity between one object (or event) and another may well be understood in terms of qualities, i.e. as similarity between one set of qualities and another set of qualities.

2. Simple (or underivative) similarity is more fundamental than the complex (or derivative) similarity. The latter has been said to hold between two events or between two objects. So, for one who would not identify object and event, i.e. would believe that they differ at the level of ontology, there may be two types of complex similarity :

(1.1) one holding between two objects,

(1.2) the other holding between two events.

Similarity, simple (underivative) similarity, which has been said to hold between qualities or relations, becomes distinguishable into two types, that is,

(2.1) one holding between qualities,

(2.2) the other holding between relations.

We may, following O'Connor, call :

(1.1) similarity of objects,

(1.2) similarity of events,

(2.1) similarity of qualities,

(2.2) similarity of relations.

Let us now go into the details of these four types of similarity, that is, among other things,

(a) into their possible rationale,

(b) into their possible ramifications,

and(c) into their possible peculiarities.

3. To start with (1.1), i.e. <u>similarity of objects</u> and (1.2), i.e. <u>similarity of events</u>.

3.1. Are they truly distinguishable? This would, naturally, depend on two things, namely :

(i) whether objects are really distinct from events; or only same things under different names;

<u>and</u> (ii) whether similarity holding between <u>objects</u> has any peculiarity which is not present in that holding between <u>events</u>.

(<u>a</u>) The word 'object' has often been taken in for employment in certain special senses.[3] Likewise, the word 'event' also has come to assume certain special senses in the writings of some philosophers.[4] But while we talk of objects and events here, we do not have any of such special senses in mind. We take them to stand for what ordinarily are called objects and events. Thus, for us, as exemplified already, this book, the wooden pencil, the candle stick and such like are objects, while, an earthquake, a flash of lightning and such like are events.

3 E.g. Wittgenstein.
4 E.g. Russell and Whitehead.

Understood in this way, objects and events may be said to differ from each other in certain respects which appear quite basic.

John Wisdom[5] in his Problems of Mind and Matter distinguishes events from facts.[6] Using that as a model we may perhaps say that objects are at a time, while an event occupies a period of time. The plausibility of this distinction may be said to derive from the fact that by it we can well account for why we can speak of an event (e.g. an earthquake) being of a shorter or longer duration, though we cannot, in the same way, say that an object (e.g. this table) is of a shorter or longer duration.

Analogously, the difference between object and event may also be defined by reference to their respective relations to space. Objects are extended in space and are also localisable in space. But this is not entirely true of all events. Take, for example, such events, as are exemplified by our mental acts, e.g. a fit of anger, a toothache, and the like. They are none of them spatially extended like objects;

5 See p.31 (Paper back edition, 1963).
6 Fact, however, for Wisdom, is not the same as what we call object.

though, like objects, they may only be localisable in the space occupied by the body of the person who is angry or in the space occupied by the teeth which is aching.

From the above two distinctions between objects and events follows as a corollary a third distinction. In the language of O'Conner it may be stated as follows :

> ...the spatio-temporal characteristics of events are intrinsic to the natures of the events in a way in which the corresponding characteristics of objects are not intrinsic to their natures. Although we may in defining the essence of an object exclude from the difinition of its relational properties, we cannot do this in the case of events. We must define events primarily by their relational properties.

(b) This third distinction is, by itself, interesting. However, it assumes some special importance for us. For, in our eyes, it tends to provide a basis for an affirmative answer of a kind to (ii) above, in other words, to say that there is a significant difference between similarity of objects on the one hand and similarity of events on the other. The difference is this. The definition of the similarity that holds between events must comprise description

7 Vide "On Resemblance", Proceedings of the Aristotlean Society, 1945-46, p.71. (Italics ours).

of the common relational properties of the events; but the definition of the corresponding similarity between objects may well go without the description of the common relational properties of the objects.

3.2. We have mentioned above certain points which distinguish objects and events from each other. These points are doubtless significant enough to provide a rationale for the alleged distinction between <u>similarity</u> of objects and <u>similarity</u> of events. Nonetheless, they do not mark any absolute separation between events and objects; that is, do not exclude all possibility of their overlapping. As recognised by O'Conner, there indeed are certain border-line cases which may be viewed both as events and as objects. To follow O'Conner's example of "flashes of lightning" and that of "Candle Flame". The former are normally called events; however, if they last for some hours one would well be inclined to call them objects. Correspondingly, the latter is commonly regarded as an object, though, from a point of view, there would be nothing wrong in treating it also as a series of events. However, examples of

such border-line cases, according to O'Conner, tend really to prove

> ... that there are a very large number of general properties common to objects and events ...

Recognition of this fact that events and objects may share common properties has an important implication. It leaves us with one more kind of similarity under (1), (i.e. similarity of particulars or derivative similarity). This new kind of similarity is that between events and objects. Thus we have now in all three kinds of derivative similarities, viz.

(1.1) similarity of objects,

(1.2) similarity of events,

and (1.3) similarity between objects and events.

4. (1.1), (1.2) and (1.3) above are examples of what we have chosen to call derivative (or complex) similarity. As distinguished from them, (2.1), i.e. similarity of qualities, and (2.2), i.e. similarity of relations, have been classed as examples of underivative (or simple) similarities. O'Conner has

8 Ibid, p.70

two alternative expressions to designate them. He calls (2.1) material similarity and (2.2) formal similarity.[9] Let us now get into a discussion of the two.

4.1. Qualities are often distinguished, after Locke, as primary and secondary. Primary qualities are said to comprise solidity, extension, motion, rest and number; while all qualities besides these, e.g. colours, sounds, smells, etc., are said to be secondary. Primary qualities are supposed to be objective in the sense of being inseparable from the objects and ~~xxxxxx~~ existing actually in them. Secondary qualities, on the other hand, are supposed to be subjective and separable from their objects : they are said to be foisted on the objects by the perceiving minds in which they truly exist.

This distinction of primary and secondary qualities is not universally accepted. As we know, it is denied by many, e.g. Berkeley. Anyway, we shall not go into the rightness of otherwise of the denial. In fact, the distinction by itself, or whether it is valid or not, is not at all a direct concern or ours here. However, assuming hypothetically that the dis-

9 Ibid, p.58.

tinction holds good, what we want to enquire is whether or not from it we can proceed to make a corresponding distinction in the range of the similarities of qualities. That is, we want to see whether or not we can speak of (i) similarity holding between primary qualities and (ii) that holding between secondary qualities.[9(a)]

Take the latter, that is, the secondary qualities. We may indeed talk of similarity between them. Nothing seems to come in the way. Consider, for example, the following expressions. 'Her complexion resembles that of her mother', 'The two fruits taste alike', 'The smell of lemon grass resembles the smell of lemon', and so on - these are common in our speech. There is indeed nothing wrong about them.

But the case of primary qualities is very different. We seem debarred from talking about them in terms of similarity or its equivalents. Similarity-language does not seem to be appropriate at all for them. For one does not normally say, e.g. "The number of children in this room is similar to the number of children in that room", and the like. What one would

9(a) As far as we understand, there is nothing particularly wrong about such an hypothetical enquiry. However, in case it appears so to anyone, he may treat the enquiry on our part as non-existent; that will not, in any way, prejudice the central issues of our discussion.

ordinarily say instead is rather "The number of children in this room is the same (or is identical with) as the number of children in that room", and the like. Primary qualities are talked of in terms of sameness; and similarity and sameness are not the same.

Primary qualities, then, cannot be said to be similar in the ordinary sense, i.e. in the sense in which we speak of the similarity of secondary qualities. But can there be any special sense in which we can talk of the similarity of primary qualities? O'Conner seems inclined to admit one.[10] It is suggested to him by Russell[11] who speaks of equivalent or equal sets being similar, thereby meaning by similarity their numerical identity.

But is this, strictly speaking, to count as an example of similarity of primary qualities at all? We don't know. O'Conner seems somehow wrong on this point. The similarity spoken of by Russell between two sets, say, S^1 and S^2, is not exactly the simila-

10 Ibid, p.56.
11 Vide Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy, Published by Simon and Schuster.

rity that may be said to hold between the number of S^1 and the number of S^2, i.e. between a primary quality of one and that of the other. It is rather to be construed as the similarity holding between two sets, i.e. between S^1 and S^2 (in respect of number); but sets are sets, and not primary qualities. So that, similarity of sets spoken of by Russell is, properly speaking, not an example of similarity of the so-called primary qualities. To say this is perhaps enough. We need not commit anything more as regards the nature of the sets.

But why is it that the primary qualities (number, motion, solidity, and the like) are impervious to description in similarity-language? Why are we prohibited from saying that they resemble or are similar to each other? What, exactly, is peculiar about them vis-a-vis secondary qualities which, contrarily, are well amenable to being called similar? Finding an explanation of this or making an attempt in the direction, we suppose, may not be altogether irrelevant or uninteresting.

As opposed to the secondary qualities, the so-

called primary qualities are essentially (or predominantly) quantitative, in the sense that they represent various quantitative dimensions of objects and events. In fact, for one, who looks upon quality and quantity as separate categories, the phrase 'primary quality' is a total misnomer. Being modes of quantity, the relations are amenable to being read in terms of what is called exact identity. There is indeed an apparatus to ensure this; it is the apparatus of counting, measurement, etc. The concept of similarity does not really fit in at all as a frame for understanding them.

Similarity is essentially a qualitative concept ; as a descriptive category its application is confined to the relations of qualities (it is pointless to limit them by calling secondary) possessed by objects or events. In talking about relations of objects and events, similarity-language provides a qualitative substitute for (or a supplement to) the quantitative language of exact identity.

The so-called qualities known to us as primary since Locke are, in fact, to be treated as the

quantitative or numerical aspects of objects to which they are said to belong. They come to be confused in the minds of philosophers with qualities perhaps because of grammatical illusion. The illusion seems to arise from the fact that the uses of the words designating the so-called primary qualities, e.g. 'solid', 'extended' etc. in our language are grammatically non-different from those of what are to count as quality-words per excellence, e.g. 'blue', 'benevolent', 'sweet', 'cold', etc. We say, 'The sky is blue', 'Sugar is sweet', 'Ice-cream is cold', and so on; and likewise, we also say, 'The table is square' , 'Mercury is heavy', 'The sun is large'. The grammatical status of 'square', 'large' or 'heavy', is absolutely alike that of 'blue', 'benevolent', 'sweet' or 'cold'. The so-called primary qualities, insofar as they are amenable to counting and measurement, are, for that reason, to be fitted to thinking in terms of the concept of exact identity, which, as we have said, is not the same as similarity or its equivalents. The primary qualities are, in fact, to be kept out of the range of similarity-language; which is to mean that for us

there is no such sub-class of (2.1), i.e. similarity of qualities, which might be called similarity of primary qualities.

We are, however, aware of a possible attempt to restore similarity for the so-called primary qualities in an indirect way. It consists in understanding the similarity of the so-called primary qualities as that between sets of relations and, thereon, in subsuming it as a particular sub-class under (2.2), i.e. similarity of relations. The obvious base of this attempt is the metaphysical position that the so-called primary qualities "are reducible to relational characteristics"[12] of things. It is argued,

> Consider ... the so-called primary qualities of matter. Is the position of a thing logically separable from its relations to other things, or its shape thinkable apart from the relations which the parts of its surface bear to each other and to the objects which bound it? Motion, velocity, mass are in a similar position. I am not sure that I ought not to go further and say that all the so-called primary qualities are reducible to relational characteristics ...[13]

12 See, e.g. A.C.Ewing, Idealism, Mathuen & Co. Ltd., London, (1933), p.190.
13 Ibid.

But the idea that the so-called primary qualities are relations seems, in fact, wrong; so the question of subsuming the so-called similarity of the former to that of the latter cannot arise.

It may well be the case that some, (e.g. position, mass, velocity, etc.) or even all, the so-called primary qualities are not thinkable except in terms of the relational characteristics of the objects. But what does that tend to indicate? Only that awareness of the so-called primary qualities of an object depends on the awareness of its relational properties. And nothing more. It provides no ground whatever for reducing to the so-called primary qualities to relations.

The assimilation, for us, is, in fact, impossible, because the difference between the so-called primary qualities and relations is, on our analysis, a bit too basic. The former, as we have said, are impervious to characterisation in terms of similarity epithets. This is not true of the latter. Similarity does hold among relations, and we do talk of relations being similar.

4.2. Thus, as we do not admit any division of qualities into primary and secondary, we are not in a position to make a corresponding division in the similarity of qualities, namely, that holding between primary qualities on the one hand, and that holding between secondary qualities on the other. Nonetheless, qualities do not present a world which is homogeneous. They are amenable to division in other ways which are not insignificant. Thus, in the first place, we can distinguish qualities which are sensory and those that are non-sensory. The former are divisible into simple and complex, and so are the latter. This way, we get four types of qualities, namely

(a^1) simple sensory qualities, (e.g. milk-whiteness, visibleness, tangibleness, equality, squareness, etc.)

(a^2) complex sensory qualities, (e.g. eating opium, playing golf, etc.)

(b^1) simple non-sensory qualities, (e.g. pain, pleasure, etc.)

(b^2) complex non-sensory qualities, (e.g. our sentiments, etc.);

and, corresponding to them, naturally, four types of similarity of qualities under (2.1), namely,

($2.1a^1$) similarity of simple sensory qualities,

($2.1a^2$) similarity of complex sensory qualities,

($2.1b^1$) similarity of simple non-sensory qualities,

($2.1b^2$) similarity of complex non-sensory qualities.

Of these four types, ($2.1a^2$) and ($2.1b^2$) are not so much a source of any special philosophical problem. The former is understandable in terms of ($2.1a^1$) and the latter in terms of ($2.1b^1$). However, this cannot be so said of ($2.1a^1$) and ($2.1b^1$). They have, in philosophy, become a source of some special problems and that is on account of the simplicity of the qualities between which they hold. The qualities being simple, one does not, naturally, find anything common to them by which their similarity might be defined. And this ~~fact~~ leads some philosophers, e.g. Austin[14], among others, to maintain that simple qualities are not similar in any ordinary sense; so that 'similarity'

14 Vide "The Meaning of a Word", Philosophical Papers, Oxford University Press (1970)

of any species of qualities which are simple would be a misnomer. The view is interesting. However, we shall undertake the discussion of it only in a more appropriate context hereafter.[15]

5. We may now turn to (2.2), that is to say, the similarity of relations.

There is indeed a bit of oddity about the similarity holding between relations vis-a-vis those we have so far considered, i.e. similarity of objects, that of events or of qualities. For, similarity being itself a kind of relation, in talking of the similarity of relations we are in fact talking about a kind of relation among relations and not among entities which are not relations. But in what sense can there subsist relation among relations? Relations, obviously, are not related to one another in the way objects or qualities are. If the latter are said to be related materially, the relation between the former

15 Vide infra chap.4 (Similarity and Language), pp.164-173.

is to be called a formal one. Which means in being concerned with similarity of relations, we are concerned with what may be called in the language of O'Conner[16] 'formal or structural' similarity as opposed to the 'material' similarity holding between objects or qualities.

Anyway, let us get into our task of distinguishing the various types of similarity of relations.

Above, we have distinguished similarities of particulars into different kinds according to the different types of particulars between which they hold. The same model has been followed by us also in distinguishing the different types of similarities holding between qualities. So, if we have to carry this principle of division further on to the similarities of relations, what naturally becomes incumbent on us is to base ourselves on a dependable chart which sorts out the different types of relations. And the chart, we shall accept, is the one which has been worked out by Russell.

16 Vide "On Resemblance", Proceedings of the Aristotlean Society, 1945-46, p.58.

5.1. The main principle by which Russell distinguishes various kinds of relations bears on two very fundamental properties of relations. These properties are transitiveness and symmetry. Relations may or may not possess either of these two properties. Accordingly, follow six different types of relations to which Russell[17] gives the following names :

(1.a) Symmetrical relation,

(1.b) Non-symmetrical relation,

(1.c) Asymmetrical relation,

(2.a) Transitive relation,

(2.b) Non-transitive relation,

(2.c) Intransitive relation.

(1.a) A relation which is such that xRy always implies yRx is called (1.a), i.e. symmetrical. The relations spouse, equal to, and such like are examples of symmetrical relations.

(1.b) A relation which does not possess symmetry in this sense is to be called (1.b), i.e. non-symmetrical relation. E.g. brother, sister, etc.

17 Vide Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy, Chap.V; Principles of Mathematics, Chap.XXVI; also Our Knowledge of the External World, pp.56-59. In this connection see L.S.Stebbing, A Modern Introduction to Logic.(Harper Torchbook), pp.166-169.

(1.c) Relations which possess the opposite property of symmetry, that is, which is such that xRy always excludes yRx, is called asymmetrical relation. E.g. wife, husband, nephiew, son, and so on.

(2.a) A transitive relation is such that whenever it occurs between A and B and also between B and C, it holds between A and C. Example, before, after, greater, above, and the like.

(2.b) A relation is non-transitive whenever it is not transitive. For example, brother, sister.

(2.c) An Intransitive relation is such that if it holds between A and B and also between B and C, then it never holds between A and C. For example, father, one year older, and the like.

Now we may, corresponding to the six varieties of relations, distinguish six types of similarities of relations which are as follows :

(2.2a^1) Similarity of symmetrical relations,

(2.2a^2) Similarity of non-symmetrical relations,

(2.2a^3) Similarity of asymmetrical relations,

(2.2b^1) Similarity of transitive relations,

($2.2b^2$) Similarity of non-transitive relations,

($2.2b^3$) Similarity of intransitive relations.

5.2. It is desirable that we define precisely each of these six types of similarity of relations. The task is by no means easy to accomplish; and we are not sure at this stage whether we are really capable of that. For, there remains something to be done at a more basic level. It is to make an attempt towards defining the similarity holding between relations as such, of which the six types, distinguished by us, are but six variants. We shall do it, once again, following Russell.[18]

In defining similarity of relations as such Russell takes as a case of it the similarity holding between the relation of one place to another, say, of a country and that of their correlates, say, on the map of the country. In more concrete terms, it is the similarity holding between the relation of Calcutta

18 Vide Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy, Chap.VI., Published by Simon and Schuster.

to Darjeeling and that between the two corresponding positions on the map of West Bengal. The relation on either side is a space-relation; so that, in defining similarity of relations, which Russell does, in fact, is to define similarity of two space-relations. Both the relations are of the same logical type, and so their similarity is one between relations that are 'homogeneous'.[19]

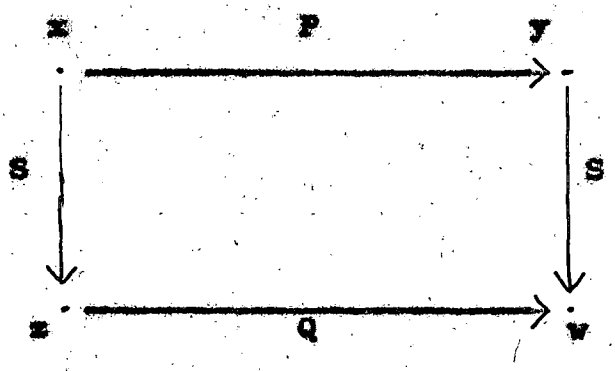
But how, precisely, is this similarity defined by Russell? The two relations are said to be similar when there is between them a one-one relation such that its domain and converse domain are respectively the field of the one and that of the other. In Russell's own language :

> We may define two relations P and Q as "similar", or as having "likeness", when there is a one-one relation S whose domain is the field of P and whose converse domain is the field of Q, and which is such that, if one term has the relation P to another, the correlate of the one has the

19 Russell is not particular about defining similarity holding between heterogeneous relations, on the ground that "...the notion of likeness is not very useful as applied to relations that are not homogeneous.", Ibid, p.53.

relation Q to the correlate of the other, and vice versa.[20]

The position is explained by Russell in the lines quoted below with the help of this figure.



Let x and y be two terms having the relation P. Then there are to be two terms z, w, such that x has the relation S to z, y has the relation S to w, and z has the relation Q to w. If this happens with every pair of terms such as x and y, and if the converse happens with every pair of terms such as z and w, it is clear that for every instance in which the relation P holds there is a corresponding instance in which the relation Q holds, and vice versa ...[21]

20 Ibid, p.53-54.
21 Ibid, p.54.

And this is what, Russell says, he desires to secure by his definition of similarity of relations.[22]

II

6. Our classification of similarities has so far been based on a reference to the various kinds of terms between which they may be said to hold. It is now to be carried further forward by us in accordance with the one other way we have mentioned,[23] *viz.* in reference to certain relevant peculiarities of similarity.

6.1. Similarity is a relation itself. On the other hand, we have, after Russell, distinguished above relations into the following kinds, namely :

22 Ibid. p.
23 *Vide* above, p.3.

(1.a) Symmetrical relation,

(1.b) Non-symmetrical relation,

(1.c) Asymmetrical relation.

(2.a) Transitive relation,

(2.b) Non-transitive relation,

(2.c) Intransitive relation.

So, in classifying similarities a very natural possibility for us to explore is whether we can read in similarity (which is a relation) each or any of the above six types of relations. That is, whether we can, having the six types of relations in mind, interpret similarity in terms of one or more or each of them.

Similarity is commonly looked upon as an instance of symmetrical as also of transitive relation. And this holds good no matter whether the similarity is material or formal.

Take two particulars, a and b which resemble materially in being, say, green. The similarity of a and b, in this case, is obviously symmetrical; because aRb here is such that it implies bRa. Take

a second example involving three particulars a, b and c which resemble, again, in being green. Here also, as in the preceding example, the similarity of a, b and c is symmetrical. For, while aRb implies bRa and bRc implies cRb, aRc implies cRa. And the similarity is transitive also, because aRb and bRc imply aRc. This can be illustrated in the like manner also in respect of the common cases of formal similarity, as for example, that between two or more classes or between two or more relations.

But are all similarities symmetrical and transitive? Or, is it that there are also instances of similarity which are to be characterised in opposite way, i.e. as asymmetrical and intransitive? Let us look into the matter. On it will depend whether we are entitled to distinguish, namely :

(3.1) symmetrical-transitive similarity,
and (3.2) asymmetrica-intransitive similarity.

6.2. There indeed are cases where it seems possible to categorise similarity as instances of

asymmetrical-intransitive relation. We are going to mention below two such cases, remaining non-committal about whether or not there are more.

(a) The first is to be found in circumstances in which, among other things,

(i) the terms of similarity are at least three,

(ii) incidents of similarity are, at least, two, and (iii) we compare the similarities in terms of words signifying degree, i.e. in terms of such words as 'more', 'less', and the like.

Take colours, say, yellow, orange, and red. Suppose one says, 'Yellow is similar to orange, orange is similar to red, and red to yellow'. This undoubtedly is a description of a similarity which is symmetrical and transitive. For, obviously, it accords with the form of symmetrical relation mentioned above, viz. aRb implies bRa and bRc implies cRb, as also with that of transitive relation, viz. aRb and bRc imply aRc.

But the situation becomes different as we bring in the comparison of the three colours in respect of their degree, and, accordingly, introduce words like 'more' or 'less' in our statement. That is, as soon

as we recast our statement to read as

(i) 'Yellow is more similar to orange that it is to red',

or as (ii) 'Red is less similar to yellow than it is to orange',

or in similar other ways. Neither fulfils the requirement of symmetry or of transitiveness. Both tend to fit in, on the other hand, exactly with the contrary of it. For, in the first place, if we say (i) and (ii) then we cannot say 'Orange resembles yellow more than it resembles red'; nor can we say that 'Orange is less similar to red than it is to yellow'. And this analysis will cover all like examples. A few instances. 'The first son resembles his father more than the second son', 'The first daughter resembles her mother less than the second daughter', 'India is more similar to Greece than to England', 'Orange is less like blue than it is like yellow," and so on.

(b) The second kind of similarity which is perhaps understandable as an instance of an asymmetrical-intransitive relation is what is called 'family resemblance' by Wittgenstein.

This kind of resemblance is said to hold, for example, among 'games' or 'members of a family'. It excludes anything being possessed in common by all the members of a class; it is said to consist rather in 'similarities overlapping and criss-crossing', 'overall similarities', 'similarities of detail',[24] and the like. This particular brand of similarity, because of its obvious peculiarity, has come in naturally to trigger off some new philosophical interest in the concept of similarity. It has, in fact, figured quite prominently in numerous philosophical discussions in recent years.

Anyway, let us explain our point of looking at 'family resemblance' as a possible instance of asymmetrical-intransitive relation. We may do it this way.

Take A, B and C who are members of the same family. Suppose that A resembles B in respect of x, and B resembles C in respect of y. We say that the three resemble in a sense. But this is not a case in which

24 Vide Philosophical Investigations, Tr. G.E.M. Anscombe, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, (1963), p.32.

we can say that similarity that holds between A and B holds also between A and C.

So, we have ground to confirm our envisaged distinction of similarities into

(3.1) those which are symmetrical-transitive, and (3.2) those which are asymmetrical-intransitive.

6.3. In (a) above we have mentioned two sentences, viz.

(i) 'Yellow is more similar to orange than it is to red',

and (ii) 'Red is less similar to yellow than it is to orange'.

The sentences can hardly make a claim to any absolute singularity for themselves. For, obviously, in language there are many more such sentences. Indeed many, many. A few examples.

(iii) 'Two dogs resemble each other more than they resemble a wolf',

(iv) 'The two brothers resemble each other less than they resemble their father'.

These two examples are not exactly like the earlier ones, i.e. (i) and (ii). In either of (i) and (ii) the comparison is confined to two instances of similarity. In (i) the similarity is between 'yellow and orange' and between 'yellow and red'; and in (ii) it is between 'red and yellow' and between 'red and orange'. But (iii) and (iv) are both of them different. In each case the comparison covers three instances of similarity. Thus in (iii) we have similarity between 'dog^1 and dog^2', between 'dog^1 and the wolf' and 'the dog^2 and the wolf'. Likewise, in (iv) the similarity is between 'son^1 and son^2', between 'son^1 and the father' and between 'son^2 and the father'.

Each of our four examples above covers three terms, e.g. 'yellow', 'orange' and 'red', or 'dog^1', 'dog^2', and 'the wolf' and so on. We could also mention examples involving more than three terms. But to have three or more terms is not necessary in all cases where we talk about similarity in terms of expressions designating degree. Nor, again, is it necessary for that purpose to use the two words

'more' or 'less' and their cousins. For, one can xxx well say : 'The two copies are exactly similar', or 'The two brothers are more or less similar'.The sentences designate degrees of similarity. And each involves only two terms. This, however, is not to mean that one cannot have such sentences covering more than two terms. There indeed are sentences of this kind which may refer to an indefinite number. E.g. 'The brothers are more or less similar to one another', 'The books are exactly alike one another', and so on.

Anyway, all this, viz. sentences designating degrees of similarity, the number of terms they involve, etc. are by themselves not of much importance. They are important because they tend to provide us with a new principle for the classification of similarities, namely, classification according to degrees.

The principle yields two types of similarity. Borrowing expressions from H.H.Price,[25] we shall

25 Vide Thinking and Experience, Hutchingson University Library, London, p.14.

call them :

(3.3) 'exact' similarity,

and (3.4) 'total' or 'complete' similarity.

(a) Similarity, Price says, "has two dimensions of variation. It may vary in intensity, it may also vary in extent." Now we have exact similarity between two things when the similarity between two things shows the maximum degree of intensity.

Two things to be noted about exact similarity at this point.

One : being the maximum in the range of the variation of similarity in respect of intensity, exact similarity is not itself amenable to variation. This is obvious.

Two : no one object as a whole can be exactly similar to another taken as a whole. The two objects may be exactly similar only in one particular aspect of them. To illustrate the point, let us take two pieces of paper. Say, they are unlike each other in respect of shape, size and thickness, so that neither

as a whole is exactly similar to the other. Yet they may be exactly similar in being, say, white.

There are some philosophers who are inclined to dismiss exact similarity as an unrealised ideal. Exact similarity, for them, is a myth. The ground for this position is inductive. It consists in showing that, on occasions, two things considered exactly alike at the beginning manifest unlikeness on closer inspection subsequently. This indeed is a fact which no one would deny. Yet as is pointed out by Price,[26] it is a bit too inadequate for its job, namely to justify a sweeping denial of exact similarity. For, there also are many cases where "there is no discoverable inexactness in a resemblance."[27] E.g., the resemblance between two one rupee notes in respect of shape or size, that between two parts or a piece of white paper in respect of their whiteness.

(b) When we say that two things are exactly

26 Ibid, p.15.
27 Ibid.

similar, what is taken in consideration is a certain selected aspect of the two things. But in the case of what we have chosen to call their complete similarity, there is no such selection. The notion of complete similarity involves reference to all aspects of the two things.

Can two things <u>in practice</u> resemble each other in every respect? Some, e.g. Leibniz, as we know, deny that they can. Even if they were otherwise similar, they must, it is said, differ in certain spatial and temporal characteristics. Those define their respective identities which in turn provide ground for referring to them as <u>two</u> things instead of one. Anyway, we are not going to oppose this position nor to support it. Similarity, which is <u>absolutely</u> complete, may indeed be an ideal limit which can never be reached. Yet one cannot deny sense to the phrase 'complete similarity'. For, reference to it is unavoidable when we observe similarities among things varying <u>in extent</u> and what want to describe them. Take <u>A</u> and <u>B</u>, on the one hand, and <u>C</u> and <u>D</u>, on the other. Suppose that <u>A</u> and <u>B</u> resemble

each other in all respects except one, while C and D resemble in all respects except two or three. Tax To describe such a situation we say 'The similarity between A and B is more complete than that between C and D', or 'The similarity between C and D is less complete than that between A and B'.

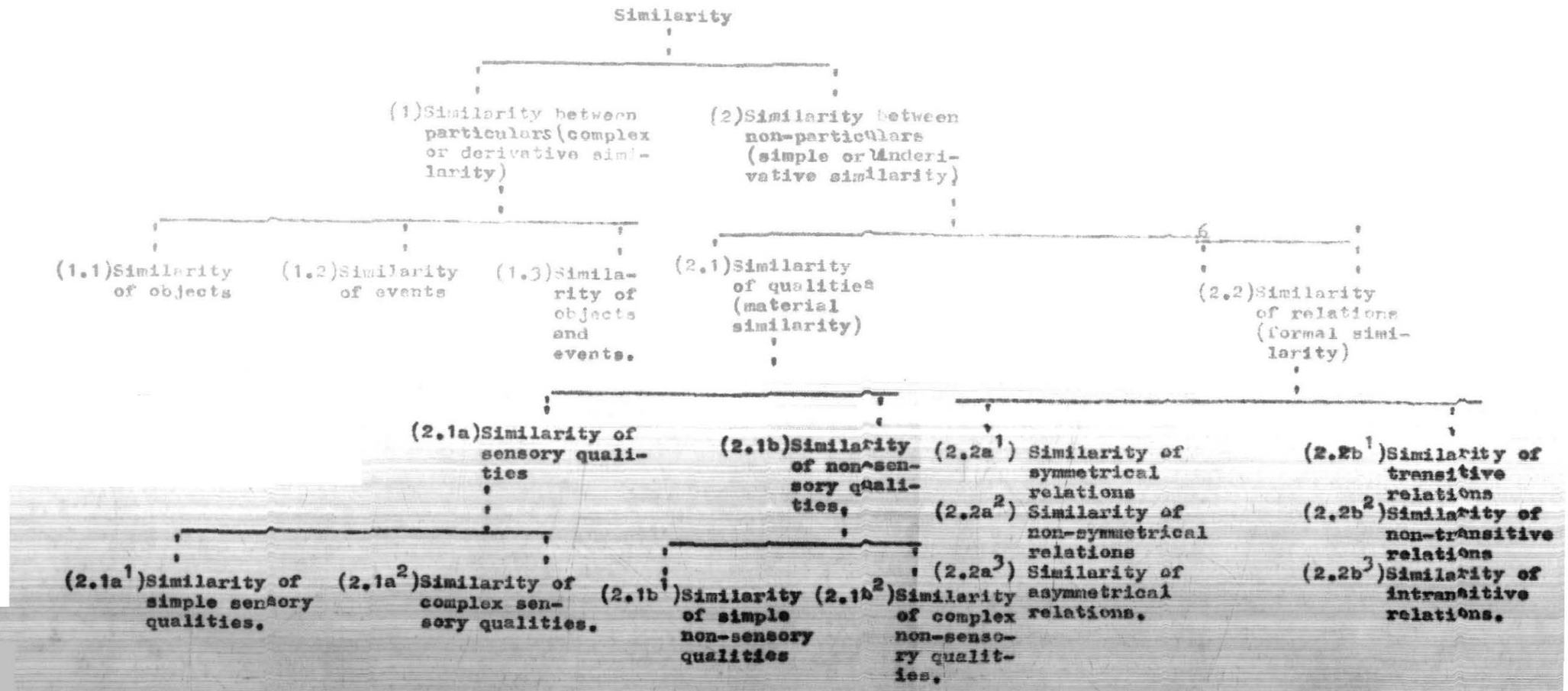
Exact similarity, we have said, is not amenable to variation, being the maximum point in the range of the intensity of similarity. The maximum of complete similarity may be an unattainable ideal. What is attainable is only various degrees of approximations to this ideal. We need reference to the phrase 'complete similarity' to describe these variations.

III

To m sum up now.

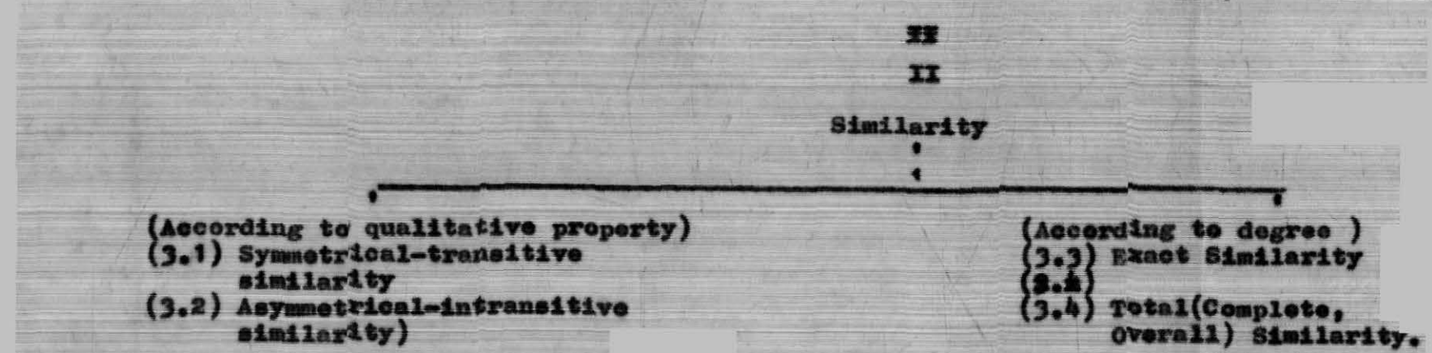
We started with two principles according to which, we said, our projected classification of similarities was to be carried out. One of these two principles,

as we can remember, is to take into consideration the various kinds of terms between which similarity-relation may be said to subsist. The other consists in taking into consideration the peculiarities of similarity-relation itself. As above, in I and II respectively, the two principles so far have yielded two parallel sets of similarity-sub-classes which, finally, may now be schematised as follows :


Similarity
(1)Similarity between particulars (complex or derivative similarity)
(2)Similarity between non-particulars (simple or underivative similarity)
(1.1)Similarity of objects
(1.2)Similarity of events
(1.3)Similarity of objects and events.
(2.1)Similarity of qualities (material similarity)
(2.2)Similarity of relations (formal similarity)
(2.1a)Similarity of sensory qualities
(2.1b)Similarity of non-sensory qualities.
(2.2a¹) Similarity of symmetrical relations
(2.2b¹)Similarity of transitive relations
(2.1a¹)Similarity of simple sensory qualities.
(2.1a²)Similarity of complex sensory qualities.
(2.1b¹)Similarity of simple non-sensory qualities
(2.1b²)Similarity of complex non-sensory qualities.
(2.2a²) Similarity of non-symmetrical relations
(2.2a³) Similarity of asymmetrical relations.
(2.2b²)Similarity of non-transitive relations
(2.2b³)Similarity of intransitive relations.

II

II


Similarity
(According to qualitative property)
(3.1) Symmetrical-transitive similarity
(3.2) Asymmetrical-intransitive similarity)
(According to degree)
(3.3) Exact Similarity
(3.4) Total(Complete, Overall) Similarity.

Chapter 2

SIMILARITY AND IDENTITY

We have taken similarity to be a relation. That indeed it is. There is little in our linguistic usages, as far as we could see, by which we might be led to misconstrue it otherwise, e.g. as a quality or substance or such like. Our business now is to find an account of similarity *vis-a-vis* its cognates.

1.1. The cognates, on a random listing, may be said to cover, *inter alia*, such relations as are designated by 'likeness', 'equality', 'equivalence', 'parity', 'parallelism', 'agreement', 'correspondence', 'commonness', etc. But this apparent multiplicity need not be taken too seriously. For, each such relation, we suppose, may well be understood as a variant or mode of a wider relation which is *identity* or *sameness*. Thus we assimilate the cognates of similarity under the common matrix of identity, partial or complete, pure or modified. This has a methodological advantage : it ensures a degree of simplicity for our enquiry.

But getting straight into our job, i.e. undertaking a comparison of similarity with identity, proves a bit inconvenient on account of one particular reason. The reason, interestingly, is 'similarity' and ' identity',the words themselves. Both are abstract substantives, and being so they tend, like other abstract substantives, to present "the aspect of a blank and very high wall",[1] to produce in us a sense of helplessness about them ; we do not know how, exactly, to deal with them. So, evidently, what is necessary for us, as a matter of method, is to replace the notion of similarity and that of identity by some less abstract or less intangible substitutes for each. Such substitutes, for us, are mainly two :

(1) Uses of such words or phrases as 'similar', 'similarity', 'resemblance', 'to resemble', and their synonyms (s-words) in language and the uses of such words of phrases as 'identity', 'identical', 'same', 'sameness' and their variants (i-words).

1 Truth, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey (1964),p.2.

(2) Sentences stating similarity (s-sentences) and those stating identity (i-sentences).

We distinguish (1) and (2), because the 'use of a s-word' and a 's-sentence' do not seem to mean exactly the same thing. And the same is to be said also about the 'use of an i-word' and an 'i-sentence'. Take the s-sentence 'A is similar to B in being red'. The sentence involves the use of a s-word and is at the same time a s-sentence, i.e. sentence stating similarity. But must a s-sentence employ a s-word? What about the sentence 'A and B are both red'? It exemplifies a s-sentence but not the use of any s-word. Likewise, consider 'A is identical with B' which is an i-sentence exemplifying at the same time a use of an i-word. But we can well have the same i-sentence also without the use of an i-word, e.g. 'A is B'. But is not 'is' in 'A is B' an i-word in the sense that it is a synonym of the word 'identical'? The point is not without all force. Yet it remains true that 'is', insofar as its use in our ordinary language is concerned, is not an explicit synonym

of 'identical' or a synonym in any absolute sense; for, 'is' may be employed also to designate relations other than identity, e.g. causal relation (as in 'Knowledge is power' which means 'knowledge produces power'), implication (as in the case of 'To assert that p is to believe that p'), and so on. 'Is' may be made absolute synonym of 'identical' only by definition.

S-sentences or i-sentences taken by themselves, are independent respectively of any s-word or i-word. The function of a s-sentence in language is to record or state a similarity-situation; while that of a s-word may be said to categorise or name it as such. Thus the s-sentence above, 'A and B are both red', ends its job by recording or stating a similarity-situation. But the other sentence, 'A is similar to B in being red', insofar as it involves a s-word, records a similarity-situation and, at the same time, also names or categorises the situation as one of similarity. The same analysis holds good of i-sentences and i-words. While an i-sentence, qua itself, is supposed only to depict an identity-situation, an i-word is used to name it explicitly as

such. In short, the function of a s-word and an i-word may be said to provide labels respectively for what is stated by a s-sentence and what is stated by an i-sentence.

Thus in a less abstract or less intangible form, i.e. in the form in which it would perhaps be less difficult for us to handle it, our business of understanding similarity in reference to identity would amount to

(a) that of understanding s-sentences in reference to i-sentences, or,

(b) of understanding the use of s-words in reference to the use of i-words.

1.2. It would be enough for our purpose to follow only (a). This reformulation alone, however, does not seem enough to clear the path to our business completely. (a) tends to become a source of some special difficulty. The difficulty arises all over the identification i-sentences.

Samples of s-sentences are not difficult for us

to obtain. They can well be modelled after different types of similarity sorted out by us in the preceding chapter. But which sentences, exactly, may be said to count as unmistakable examples of i-sentences? We don't have any equivocal and ready answer on this point. Identification of i-sentences in language is not too easy a job. We are not in possession of any clear guideline for the purpose. What is more serious, the matter is considerably obscured by controversies among philosophers. So, as a preliminary, it seems essential that we should undertake some analysis with a view to isolating instances of genuine and relevant i-sentences.

We may take off with the following which apparently are paradigm instances of i-sentences.

(a) ' 1 = 1 '

(b) ' 2 + 3 = 3 + 2 '

(c) 'Gourishankar = Everest '

(d) 'Nehru = The first Prime Minister of India'.

What is peculiar about these sentences is that the component terms of each of them are distinct occurrences of the same or distinct singular terms referring undividingly to the same object. But a problem arises

over the sign '=' in them, the functioning of it. What, exactly, does it purport to do? May it be said to go between the object referred to by the one term and that referred to by the other? Or, should we understand it as going between the signs in which the terms consist? Quine apart, most philosophers are inclined to accept the former alternative. These philosophers tend to interpret the role of the sign '=' as being that of upholding a claim to relate the objects referred to by the terms by way of identity; and, thereon, they are led to react adversely against the notion of identity or i-sentence itself, on the ground that the claim is spurious. Thus, for example, Hume would find nothing relational in the so-called relation of identity sought to be upheld by '=' in the above sentences, because it appears to him to relate an object to itself. Similarly, according to Wittgenstein, "to say of one thing that it is identical with itself is to say nothing"[2]. And the same position is upheld by Bradley when he says that such sentences

2 Tractatus, 5.5303.

"while professing to say something" "really say(s) nothing".[3] For, in each of these sentences the predicate is not different from the subject, and "... if you predicate what is not different, you say nothing at all."[4] Thus, taken as typical specimens of i-sentences, the sentences of the kind under consideration disillusion Hume, Bradley and Wittgenstein among others ; they find in them no record of relation; nor any informative value.

Quine, however, has no occasion to be disillusioned by the examples of i-sentences. The sentences, on his interpretation, are not to be taken as purporting to posit any relation of identity between objects. Thus The '=' in them, according to him, is a 'relative term'[5] joining the signs in which the component terms consist. And understood in this light, i-sentences of the above kind need not be necessarily uninformative. (c) and (d) in our examples do indeed contain information. Identity that is a

3 The Principles of Logic, Vol I, Oxford University Press, London (1963), p.141.
4 Appearance and Reality, Oxford (1897),p.17.
5 Word and Object, Cambridge (1960), p.115.

relation, according to Quine, is to relate objects, not to join signs. Not just that. The objects must also be numerically different. This means that the sine-qua-non of a genuine i-sentence is that its component terms must be s such as have different referents. The following lines quoted from Quine and read together would perhaps sum up his position.

> Identity is expressed in English by those uses of 'is' that one is prepared to expand into 'is the same object as'.[6]

> Identity is intimately bound up ~~which~~ with the dividing of reference. For the dividing of reference consists in settling conditions of identity : how far you have the same apple and when you are getting into another.[7]

Thus it is widely agreed that sentences like (a)-(d) are not genuine examples of i-sentences. In whatever other way one may characterise them, they cannot be viewed as records of any relation between objects. They are not in fact cognates of s-sentences

6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.

and are, in that sense, irrelevant for us. That is to say, there is no point in undertaking to understand s-sentences in reference to them; for s-sentences, whatever else they may be, are, basically, records of relation between objects.

Thus examples of genuine i-sentences are not available to us within the range of tautologies, which do not express any relation at all. So we fall back upon such non-tautologies as

(e) 'Socrates is wise',

(f) 'Roses are red',

(g) 'This is that shade of green',

and such like.

They seem to provide genuine instances of i-sentences, i.e. sentences which express the relation of identity, on proviso that we are prepared to expand them, as per Quine's dictum, respectively into

(h) 'Socrates is the same person as a wise man',

(i) 'Roses are the same objectsx as some red things',

and (j) 'This shade of green is identical with that shade of green.'

The sentences satisfy the two basic conditions laid down by Quine. They posit relations between objects. That is one thing. Besides, the objects referred to by their component terms are not also the same.

For Bradley, however, sentences of the kind (e)-(g) can count as i-sentences only in a qualified sense. Unqualified identity, and therefore, an unqualified i-sentence is, for him, an "ideal"; "Where there is no diversity there is no identity at all ..."[8] There can be no two objects between which identity may ever be said to hold; and accordingly, there can be no sentence which can truly claim to express it. Every identity, according to Bradley, is "identity-in-difference" or only "partial identity". "Identity without difference", says Bradley, "is nothing at all. It takes two to make the same ...";[9] and this

8 Appearance and Reality, Oxford (1897), p.526.
9 The Principles of Logic, Vol.I, Oxford University Press, London (1963), p.141.

"numerical distinction", as said by him further, "is not distinction without difference ..."[10] "Without difference in character there can be no distinction, and the opposite would seem to be nonsense."[11]

We shall not go into the tenability or otherwise of the Bradleyan analysis of identity or of his idea of identity-in-difference or partial identity. That, in fact, is not necessary. We have ruled out the claim of tautologies (a)-(d) to exemplify i-sentences. So, the only sentences that remain, for us, to fall back upon as the samples of i-sentences are those like (e) to (g). Indeed we shall treat them as i-sentences. What, really, is wrong in that; if we remain non-committal about the exact nature of the identity they express? Bradley's view that they can make a claim to state only partial identity or identity-in-difference does not seem to come in the way, even if it is taken for true; for, identity, no matter that

10 Appearance and Reality, Oxford (1897), p.531.
11 Ibid, p.532.

it is partial or with difference, is, after all, a mode of identity.

1.3. Thus we have sorted out a few sentences as samples of i-sentences. The problem for us is one of deciding how s-sentences stand in relation to them. A priori there are at least four possibilities. They are as follows :

(1) S-sentences and i-sentences are two distinct and mutually exclusive classes of sentences, so that there is no question of one being understood in reference to the other.

(2) S-sentences and i-sentences are two logically indistinguishable classes of sentences, so that the range of one would be co-extensive with that of the other, and to understand one would mean understanding the other.

(3) A s-sentence must necessarily be understood in reference to some i-sentences and not conversely, so that i-sentences (and for that matter, identity-relation) are to be looked upon as more fundamental than s-sentences (and for that matter similarity-relation).

(4) Every i-sentence must necessarily be understood in reference to some s-sentence, and not conversely, so that s-sentences (and for that matter, similarity-relation) are to be viewed as more fundamental than i-sentences (and for that matter, identity-relation).

We shall examine the four possibilities.

1.4. (1) has indeed very little plausibility which is not hard to see. We are not aware of any philosopher who has, in actuality, seriously maintained that s-sentences and i-sentences are two mutually exclusive classes of sentences and, therefore, neither has any relevance whatever for the purpose of understanding the other. A casual glance at the range of the two types of sentences will provide us with instances which are contrary to this possible supposition. To mention just a few such instances; that will be enough to illustrate our point.

Consider, for example, the following s-sentences :

(1.4a) Glass and diamond resemble in being transparent.

(1.4b) The two sisters are alike in being talkative and extravert.

What are the components, sentential or otherwise, in terms of which (1.4a) is to be analysed? Whatever other things the components may or may not include, they must obviously include at least two sentences, namely,

(i) Glass is transparent,

and (ii) Diamond is transparent.

(i) and (ii) are the inalienable elements of (1.4a) : the latter would not be there and would be completely unintelligible without the former. But (i) and (ii) are both i-sentences. So i-sentences are not absolutely unrelated or external to g-sentences and, therefore, not also in all cases inessential or irrelevant for the interpretation of the latter. Likewise, (1.4b) also contains a number of i-sentences without which its meaning cannot be understood. These i-sentences may be taken to comprise, e.g.

(iii) Sister^1 is talkative,

(iv) Sister^1 is extravert,

(v) Sister^2 is talkative,

(vi) Sister^2 is extravert.

Thus any supposition to the effect that *s*-sentences and *i*-sentences belong to distinct sentential categories and have nothing to do with each other is palpably wrong. In *some* cases at least, as we can see, *s*-sentences presuppose *i*-sentences and are unaccountable without them. But it is to be made explicit that in saying so we do not intend to say that *s*-sentences in *all* cases do, as a matter of fact, or as a matter of necessity, refer to *i*-sentences. We are, in fact, not in a position to commit anything as regards this possibility. So it would be judicious to remain non-committal pending further enquiry, to be precise, examination of (3) hereafter.

Our rejection of the supposition that *s*-sentences and *i*-sentences are absolutely distinct and mutually exclusive may be confirmed also, conversely, by an analysis of *i*-sentences. True, we are not in a position to make any commitment to such effect as that *i*-sentences in all cases necessarily presuppose *s*-sentences as their logical components, pending consideration of (4) above. Yet there indeed are

some i-sentences which seem to involve s-sentences as their components and are, on that account, unintelligible without reference to the latter. Let us take

(1.4c) Socrates is wise,

(1.4d) Roses are red,

two examples of i-sentences, to illustrate the point. Whatever else it may or may not involve (1.4c), i.e. 'Socrates is wise', would be unintelligible unless it is taken to refer to such s-sentences as

(vii) Socrates resembles a wise man in respect of possessing wisdom,

(viii) Socrates resembles a wise man in respect of being a lover of truth,

and so on. Similarly, (1.4d), i.e. 'Roses are red', also derives its sense by referring, among other possible things, to such s-sentences as

(ix) Roses are similar to red things in respect of colour,

(x) Roses are similar to red things in respect of being pleasing to the eyes,

and so on.

Thus (1), the supposition that s-sentences and i-sentences are totally different, and are understandable in all cases without any reference whatever to each other appears wrong. But should it be taken to imply that the two classes of sentences are logically indistinguishable? Obviously not. The matter, in fact, cannot be decided pending exploration of (2) which embodies such a hypothesis.

1.5. To take up (2). Are i-sentences and s-sentences logically indistinguishable from each other? Do they really belong to one and the same class of sentences under different names? One could indeed answer affirmatively if it were, among other things, such :

(1) that, in all cases, the information which a s-sentence purports to communicate could be conveyed to us exhaustively in terms of one or more i-sentences,

or (2) conversely, that in all cases the information which an i-sentence purports to communicate could have been communicated to us exhaustively in terms of one or more s-sentences.

Neither of the two alternatives, we are afraid, will hold good. Failure of (1) may be illustrated by reference to common examples of s-sentences. Take

(1.5a) The two brothers resemble each other.

(1.5b) The two brothers resemble in being tall.

To describe in terms of i-sentences (1.5b) implies

(i) Brother (1) is tall,

and (ii) Brother (2) is tall.

(i) and (ii), then, are no doubt information which (1.5b) purports to convey. But, obviously, that is not the sufficient ground for saying that (1.5b) is logically indistinguishable from (i) and (ii). To maintain such a position one is to show that the former says nothing more than the latter. But this does not seem plausible. (1.5b) does not just say (i) and (ii) ; it purports, in addition to that, to describe the relation that holds between brother (1) and brother(2) on account of (i) and (ii) being true. Thus a s-sentence, while it may cover what its component i-sentences say, says a lot more.

Thus a s-sentence has an informative job of its own. The information it purports to convey to us is not reducible exhaustively to that contained in its component i-sentences. As a matter of fact, the informative content of a s-sentence qua s-sentence seems in a way independent of i-sentences. This becomes clear, among other things, on consideration of the example of s-sentence (1.5a), viz. 'The two brothers resemble each other'.

This s-sentence says that a certain relation of similarity holds between two individuals. This is clear by itself. But may not all these be said to depend on one or more i-sentences which this s-sentence may possibly be said to involve?

The peculiarity of this s-sentence vis-a-vis (1.5b) is that it does not spell out explicitly in what specifically the similarity consists. Now, consider those philosophers who are not inclined to look upon similarity as necessarily definable in terms of any common or identical property. For such philosophers, the s-sentence need not have to refer to

any i-sentence at all; so that, for them there is no i-sentence in terms of which the informative content of the s-sentence may be said to come in for being formulated. The informative content of the s-sentence, in their eyes, is independent of that of any possible i-sentence. The question of reducing the former to the latter does not arise.

But what about those who are prone to define similarity of things in terms of their common property? Are they not committed to admit one or more i-sentences as the component of the s-sentence, 'The two brothers resemble each other'? Well, in the s-sentence, there is no explicit reference to any particular aspect in which the brothers are said to resemble. So, naturally, the philosophers are not in a position to spell out the alleged i-sentences in concrete terms, i.e. in terms of such sentences as :

(i) Brother(1) is tall,

(ii)Brother(2) is tall,

and so on. Nonetheless, they would maintain that the s-sentence involves i-sentences of the following form:

(i) Brother(1) is x,

(ii) Brother(2) is x,

and so on. But how can these bare forms of *i*-sentences bear in any way on the informative content of *s*-sentences? Being themselves devoid of informative content, they add nothing to the informative content of the *s*-sentence; which means the *s*-sentence without them loses nothing by way of the information it purports to convey.

1.6. Thus (1) and (2) are both untenable. *S*-sentences and *i*-sentences are not two distinct or mutually exclusive classes of sentences. Nor are the two such as are, contrarily, logically indistinguishable from each other. This, however, by itself does not entail the falsity of (3) and (4), which, unlike (1) and (2), make far weaker claims about the relation of *s*-sentences and *i*-sentences. So, to examine (3) and (4).

To repeat, (3) is a hypothesis to the effect that a *s*-sentence is always to be understood in reference to an *i*-sentence (though it may not be the case that the former is logically indistinguishable from the latter).

The chief exponent of this view is F.H.Bradley. Similarity, according to Bradley, is not the same as identity, in other words, s-sentences cannot be reduced to the class of i-sentences. Nonetheless, similarity, for him, is only a "secondary relation"[12]; it is "to be based always on, partial identity,"[13]; which, obviously, means that no s-sentence, i.e. sentence reporting similarity, can be understood without reference to an i-sentence, i.e. one reporting identity. Similarity, Bradley says,

> is based always on partial sameness; and without this partial sameness, ... there is no experience of resemblance (similarity), and without this to speak of resemblance (similarity) is meaningless.[14]

Similarity (or a s-sentence), according to Bradley, presupposes identity (or an i-sentence). The former derives from the latter.

Earlier we mentioned examples of s-sentences which,

12 Ibid, p.534.
13 Collected Essays, Oxford University Press, London (1969), p.288.
14 Appearance and Reality, Oxford (1897), p.533.

although they are not logically equivalent to i-sentences, are, nonetheless, partly analysable in terms of the latter. However, the tenability or otherwise of the Bradleyan view would depend obviously on the existence or otherwise of a particular kind of s-sentences in our language. These sentences have, in fact, nothing whatever to do with i-sentences. They are understandable perfectly and completely without reference to i-sentences, in other words, the logical components of no such sentence in any case will include any i-sentences.

(1.6a) The first obvious examples of such s-sentences are of course those like

(i) The brothers resemble one another,

(ii) Games resemble one another,

and so on, which exemplify what is called 'family resemblance'. These sentences are isolated from ordinary s-sentences precisely on the ground that the similarity reported by them cannot be traced to any particular point of identity, alternately, they

do not contain any i-sentences among their analysans.

(1.6b) Secondly, following William James[15], who happens to uphold a position explicitly opposite to Bradley's, we may perhaps locate some more s-sentences of this kind. These are sentences designating simple resemblance characterising sensible qualities which form a series, e.g. colours in a colour scale, sounds in a musical scale, etc. These qualities, according to William James, may have resemblance without identity. To state the matter in James' own language :

> So here any theory which would base likeness on identity ... must fail. It is supposed perhaps, by most people, that two resembling things owe their resemblance to their absolute identity in respect of some attribute or attributes, ... This ... breaks down when we come to simple impressions.[16]

As against this, Bradley, however, maintains that the identity of the qualities in the series spoken

15 Vide The Principles of Psychology, Vol.X, Dover Publications, New York, Chap.XIII.
16 Ibid, p.532.

of by James, even though it may be undetected, is no doubt there; for otherwise there would be nothing to explain the unity of the series. To quote Bradley :

> ... a particular kind of resemblance, degrees of which make the unity of a series, seems to me to imply resemblance in and through a particular point. But, if so, with that we have a resemblance based on identity.[17]

However, in our opinion, this argument of Bradley's, seems to possess little force against William James'. In the first place, there is, as it appears to us, an element of what might be called begging the question.

The issue is whether or not resemblance is necessarily based on identity. So, whatever might be said by one to count as an argument in this context must not be such as would already construe resemblance in terms of identity, or, conversely, identity in terms of resemblance. But what Bradley does is exactly the otherwise of it : he defines similarity or resemblance in terms of identity. For plainly the notion of resemblance, as he pictures it, is a relation which is

17 Collected Essays, Oxford University Press, London (1969), p.289. (Italics ours).

unintelligible without reference to a 'particular point' of resemblance, in other words, identity.

But why are things belonging to a series, supposed by Bradley, to resemble in a 'particular point' or be identical? The answer : Well, otherwise, their unity, according to him, would remain unaccounted for. But this, as is not difficult to see, is tied to the position that the unity of a series or class is necessarily grounded on identity. But what guarantees this position? It does not have the validity of an axiom. Nor, again, is it indispensable. For, someone may well claim that the unity is based on similarity as such, or that the unity is ultimate, and so on.

(1.6c) There also are more s-sentences which may be said to be independent of i-sentences which may be said to be independent of i-sentences. These are those which happen to be incompatible with i-sentences. As a specimen we may mention the sentence, 'It looks like Smith'. It is taken from Jon Wheatley's examples of similarity-locating sentences.[18]

18 Vide "Like", Proceedings of the Aristotlean Society, 1961-62, pp.108-110.

The sentence 'It looks like Smith', in a certain context, one may say, is identity-independent, i.e. its understanding is not dependant on its referring to any i-sentences. It is rather not compatible at all with the latter. Let us illustrate this, following Wheatley.

Imagine someone, say A, who has a poor vision. Suppose that he sees a man on the road and he is not sure that it is Smith, so that he cannot say 'It is Smith'. To 'hedge a bet' he, therefore, says non-committally 'It is like Smith'. This excludes i-sentence 'It is Smith' in the sense that in certain idiomatic exchanges it becomes incompatible with 'It is Smith'. As for example, someone else, say B, who knows for certain that it is Smith will answer A by saying "Don't be silly, it is Smith".[19] Similarly, there are occasions when we use the s-sentence 'He looks like Smith' to mean 'He reminds me of Smith'. Here also the s-sentence excludes i-sentence 'He is Smith', because it is incompatible with the latter. When one is in a position to say 'He is Smith', it becomes indeed silly to say 'He looks like Smith'. For, the "logic of

19 Ibid, p.108.

'remind' is such that we violate it in saying that Smith reminds us of Smith".[20]

1.7. Thus (3), that is, the position that s-sentences are never understandable without reference to i-sentences, is rejected by us. Let us, finally, turn to examine the opposite of it, i.e. (4) which, as we know, says that i-sentences are always to be understood in terms of s-sentences.

The classical exposition of this view is found in William James' The Principles of Psychology (1980), Volume I[21], Identity, for William James, is not more basic than similarity; so that the universal dependence of s-sentences on i-sentences for their understandability, according to him, is a wrong hypothesis. The truth about the relation of similarity to identity, in other words, of s-sentences

20 Ibid, p.109.
21 Vide Dover Publications, New York, pp.530-549.

to i-sentences, is just the reverse. " ... qualitative identity", says William James, "is ... nothing but the extreme degree of likeness."[22]

"So ... any theory which would base likeness on identity, and not rather identity on likeness", James maintains, "must fail."[23] "... likeness überhaupt", he concludes, "must not be conceived as a special complication of identity, but rather that identity must be conceived as a special degree of likeness ..."[24] Formulated in the terminology of 's-sentences' and 'i-sentences' this position of James' would plainly amount to that i-sentences are always to be treated as derivative of s-sentences, alternately, that the former are completely reducible to the latter as a sub-class of it.

But this position need not concern us too seriously. It seems, in fact, to be as a much untenable

22 Ibid, p.532.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid, p.533.

as its opposite, i.e. (3). It is vitiated by a good number of difficulties though we need not elaborate all of them. It would perhaps be enough to mention only one which, we think, is quite fundamental. And also simple.

In (1.5) above, we mentioned a certain example of the s-sentence and compared it with i-sentences which might be said to be incorporated by it. We have found that the s-sentence has a job of its own in addition to that performed by its constituent i-sentences. In other words, the s-sentence has a larger logical or informative content than the i-sentences. Now, it is precisely in such cases, among others, that James' hypothesis will totally fail. For, obviously, to reduce the i-sentences to the s-sentences, in other words, to read s-sentences in any i-sentence, would amount to reading in the latter much more than it contains. Which means to understand an i-sentence in terms of a s-sentence would really be one way of misunderstanding it.

2. Now, to sum up our investigation so far of the relation of similarity to identity viz. that of s-sentences to i-sentences.

Similarity is a relation with peculiarities of its own. To understand it fully one is to approach it finally for itself. It is not reducible to any mode of identity, and, in that sense, it may be called ultimate also.[25]

Conversely, similarity is not also such that it may be said to assimilate in its range the different modes of identity as its variants.

Nor, again, is similarity so related to identity that the two are utterly distinct or that they completely exclude each other. They do, as a matter of fact, refer to and involve each other. And in that there is perhaps nothing unnatural; nor anything which might be inconsistent with the position as embodied in (3). For, identity and similarity happen to constitute the respective bases of the two principles which govern our knowledge of the world of things

25 However, by calling it ultimate, it should be remembered, we are not echoing a nominalist who denies causal explanation to similarity. Whether or not similarity has a cause is a very different issue. We remain non-committal as regards it.

and which also refer to and involve each other. These principles, to use the expressions of Stuart Hampshire's,[26] are : 'the principle of individuation' and 'the principle of classification'. By the former we differentiate things from one another, and by the latter we order them in classes.[26(a)]

26 Vide Thought and Action, Chatto & Windus, London (1965).

26(a) One incidental observation to avoid misunderstanding. Our analysis above of similarity and identity vis-a-vis each other has been conducted via analysis of s-sentences and i-sentences. It involves no metaphysical (factual) motive to find out the 'basic facts'. As such, there has been no occasion for us to bring in the notion of what is called 'new level', or 'directional', or 'philosophical' analysis, or to get into any consideration of the distinction of this type of analysis from what is known as 'same level' analysis. The matter, we are afraid, might have been out of place and, that way, might have the effect only of obscuring our central issues.

Chapter 3

GENERAL WORDS

We are prone to distinguish in language two classes of words. One, having for its typical examples, such words as 'man', 'yellow', 'Indian', 'healthy', and the like, are called general words; while the other exemplified by expressions like 'Aristotle', 'India', 'this University', etc. are called singular words. The preliminary basis for isolating these two kinds of words from each other is, of course, an apparent difference in their semantic functioning. A singular word is said to apply to only <u>one</u> thing or individual. Contrarily, a general word is said to apply in the same sense to <u>many</u> things or individuals. This alleged peculiarity of the semantic behaviour of general words becomes however readily the source of a notorious problem, which is : How is it that the same word can apply in the same sense to things which are numerically distinct and diverse qualitatively? The official practice in answering this question is to invoke

the notion of similarity. That is, saying that a general word applies to many things because those things are similar. Whether or not this similarity hypothesis is at all called for, or is in fact inescapable, is indeed a major concern of ours to explore and examine. And we shall take up the matter in the next chapter. What, however, as a logical preliminary, is to occupy us here is something more basic. It is the consideration of whether there really are in our language general words, a class of words which cannot be assimilated to words called singular. For obviously, one cannot talk of a problem about general words or of the similarity hypothesis as a possible solution of it, unless already, there are good reasons for admitting general words in our language.

Our business now is, therefore, to see whether or not a case can be made out for the alleged existence and identity of general words; which, plainly enough, amounts to finding out a criterion or a set of criteria by which general words may be

marked off from singular words. Is there any such criterion or set of criteria?

What about the alleged disparity of semantic functioning which we have referred to above? Can't it count as the needed criterion? - one may ask. Prima facie, there appear to be points in favour of the claim. But the trouble is there are philosophers - we have specially in mind Johnson and Austin - who seem to think otherwise. They would reject the claim on grounds to some such effect as, e.g., the semantic functioning of any kind whatever is not an essential point at all about general words (Johnson)[1], or that it is odd to suppose that general words have semantic

1 Vide Logic, Part I, Dover Publications, New York (1964), p.97.
The general name has usually been differentiated by reference to number, and roughly defined as a name predicable of more than one object. In fact, however, there are general names such as 'integer between 3 and 4' or 'snake in Ireland' that are predicable of no object, while 'integer between 3 and 5' and 'pole-star' are general names predicable of only one object.

behaviour in the same way as singular words do (Austin).[2] These challenges will have to be examined by us, before we can finally decide on the efficacy of the semantic criterion, i.e. whether it can truly distinguish general words from singular words. And for this purpose we shall no doubt be required to find out the exact nature of the relation of general words to things. Before we undertake this work it would be worthwhile to explore the possibility of finding supplementary criteria elsewhere.

It is plain that the possible criteria, whatever they may precisely be, must consist in certain properties which would characterise only general words and not those which are singular. But a small initial question is wherein, exactly, in a general word,

2 Vide Philosophical Papers, Oxford University Press (1970), p.61.
"But this view that general names 'have denotation' in the same way that proper names do, is quite as odd as the view that proper names 'have connotation' in the same way that general names do ..."

should we look for them? For a general word, qua word, shows more than one face for us to view.

(a) Like all words which are written or uttered, general words, when written or uttered, become, for that reason, occurrences in the physical world.[3] As written words, they belong to the class of physical objects which are visible, e.g. 'the rainbow', 'that bird on the tree', etc.; while as uttered words they belong to the class of objects which are audible, e.g. 'that thud on the floor', 'the roar of a lion', 'a whisper', etc. But this physical side of the general words is only incidental to them, in the sense that they do not bear on their logical character as words, that is to say, do not determine their meaning. And so there is no point in scanning it for the criteria we are searching for. Nobody, as a matter of fact, has done so.

3 cf. An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth, Chap.I, Penguin Books, Allen & Unwin, 1940.

(b) In the same way, we may also ignore two more aspects of general words. Insofar as they are words, general words, like words in general, may assume two roles in language. In the terminology of Karl Buhler,[4] they are respectively (i) role as *symptom*, and (ii) role as *signal*.

The former consists in the fact that, like other words, a general word may indicate to some extent what occurs in the mind of the person who utters it; while the latter may be said to stand for the effect it may produce on the person who hears it.

These two aspects of a general word, like its physical aspect, are also incidental. They may contribute at best to its psychological meaning. But they have nothing to do with the logical meaning of it. For, the mental states of persons uttering the same general word may well vary according to circum-

4 *Vide* Alf Ross, *Directive and Norms*, p.20.
The author refers to Karl Buhler's *Sprachtheorie* (1934), p.28.

stances. And so may its effects on those who happen to hear it.

So it seems pointless to go in for a search of what is to distinguish general words from singular words either in their roles as physical occurrences or in their roles as symptoms or signals. This implies that we have to fall back on other aspects of general words. One such aspect is already known to us. It is their semantic aspect, i.e. their relation to the objects they refer to. We shall no doubt make an exploration of it. But right now we shall occupy ourselves with two more facets which are *prima facie* distinguishable in a general word.

(i) One consists in the fact that, as parts of our discourse, the use of general words is governed by rules of grammar;

(ii) while the other in the fact that it is governed by the laws of logic.

The former constitutes the *grammatical* dimension of a general word and the latter the *logical* dimension of it.

The basic importance of these two dimensions for general words (as also words in general) is indeed undeniable. For it is because of these - semantic dimension apart - that the general words (also words in general) can assume sense for themselves by being used in sentences and give sense to the sentences in which they are used.

2. Johnson, for whom general words are not semantically distinguishable from singular words, suggests a cluster of grammatical concepts to distinguish them. They are called "applicatives or selectives" by him.

"... a general name is distinguished as that to which any applicative can be significantly prefixed."[5]

As per Johnson's list, the applicatives include (a) definite article 'the', (b) the indefinite articles 'a' and 'an', (c) demonstrative particles like 'this, 'that', (d) such words as 'all', 'some','every',

5 Vide Logic Part I, Dover Publication, New York (1921),p.97.

'any', etc. In addition to the applicatives he also speaks of (e) the use in the plural number, and (f)the numerical prefixes as distinctive of general words.

> And a further and connected characteristic of the general name is that it can always be used in the plural, or, in fact, with any numerical prefix;[6]

Johnson's formulation of the grammatical criteria of general words seems quite comprehensive, in the sense that subsequent logicians - e.g. Quine[7], Keynes[8], Stebbing[9] among others - who have employed them do not add anything new to Johnson's list. On the contrary, they have usually been satisfied with even less than what the list contains.

About the grammatical criteria one thing seems definite. They do not in all cases distinguish general words from singular words. Their application

6 Vide Ibid, p.98.
7 Vide Word and Object, New York (1960),pp.90-100.
8 Vide Formal Logic, London, p.12.
9 Vide Modern Introduction to Logic, New York, Herper & Row Publ.(1961), p.54.

is confined to nouns and pronouns. As a matter of fact, one may well feel that in drawing up the criteria the logicians concerned have had in their minds as model perhaps the distinction of proper names and common nouns (in some cases, perhaps also singular nouns and plural nouns[10]) which, generally speaking, are the grammatical counterparts of singular and general words respectively. Anyway, the range of general words is wider than nouns and pronouns. For, it covers, nouns and pronouns apart, adjectives (red, sweet, generous, etc.), words designating relations (under, above, aside, etc.), verbs (run, sing, write, etc.), and so on.

The restricted efficacy of the grammatical criteria above, i.e. their incapacity to identify all

10 Compare Quine saying, "... the dichotomy between singular terms and general terms, inconveniently similar in nomanclature to the grammatical one between singular and plural, is less superficial." Word and Object, New York (1960), p.90.

general words, may well count as a mark of inadequacy of the criteria themselves. However, this inadequacy, in the present context, does not seem to matter much. The criteria may be taken to have accomplished enough, if they just succeed in distinguishing only some words as general. For, in that case, there will be that possible problem about general words to which similarity hypothesis is alleged to be a possible solution.

We may now proceed to examine the working of the criteria listed above within their limited field.

(2.1) To begin with the criterion which says that general words can be used in the plural but singular words cannot be so used.

For Quine in particular, this criterion seems to assume a privileged position. And there is reason for that. For, a notable peculiarity of criterion is that it shows a kind of parallelism with the semantic criterion and, that way, tends to provide a grammatical justification for the latter;

because as per semantic criterion, as we know, a general word is supposed to designate more than one object, while a singular word only one.
Usual examples of general words and singular words would both support this criterion. Take general words, e.g. 'book', 'bag', 'bachelor', etc. They all admit plural endings : we do say 'books', 'bags', 'bachelors', and so on. Contrarily, singular words, e.g. pronouns like 'I', 'he', etc. or proper names like 'Ravindranath', 'Jawharlal', etc. are not normally used in the plural - we do not say 'Ravindranaths', 'Jawharlals'.

However, the criterion does not function as smoothly as one might expect. Firstly,we have difficulties over words like 'furniture', 'sheep', 'news', etc. Somantically, they are general words; yet they are not amenable to being made plural - we are debarred by rule from saying 'furnitures', 'sheeps', 'newses', and the like. We have difficulties also over those words called 'mass terms' by Quine. For example, 'water', 'wine', 'gold', etc. Though general semantically they too are impervious to being made plural by the addition of the particle '-s'.

Again, there arise some complications from the fact that, on occasions, certain ordinary general words tend to function in our language as 'mass terms'. For instance, the word 'apple' in Quine's example 'Put some apple in the salad',[11]

Finally, proper names which are singular words per excellence, may assume plural endings. Following Otto Jesperson[12] we may mention at least four cases where it so happens. (i) When a number of individuals have been arbitrarily designated by the same proper name, as for example, 'There are ten Williams in this village', 'I have not visited any of the Romes in America', etc. (ii) When we want to designate "people or things like the individual denoted by the name", for instance, 'We can't have many Ganthis in a century'. (iii) When proper names

11 Ibid, p.91. (Italics mine)
12 Vide Philosophy of Grammar, George Allen & Unwin, London (1924), p.69.

designate members of the same family, e.g. 'All the Nehrus are not great', 'It happened during the days of the Henrys', etc. (iv) When, "by metonomy", a proper name may stand for a work of the individual denoted by the name", e.g. 'I don't have all the Ravindranaths in my library'.

(2.b) Let us now switch over to the consideration of all the other grammatical concepts ('applicatives' in Johnson's language) which are said to distinguish general words. As listed above, they include (a) definite article ('the'), (b) indefinite articles ('a', 'an'), (c) demonstrative particles ('this', 'that'), (d) words like 'all', 'some', etc. They are all of them called 'articles' by Johnson, obviously, in an extended sense of the term; and we too may well use this name while referring to them below. For Johnson, the articles (which are co-extensive with his applicatives) are the all-important mark of general words.

He says :

> ... we may point out that universal characteristic of the general name is its connection with the article[13] - the use of the grammatical term 'article' being extended to include this, that, some, every, any, etc.[14]

and further,

> The consideration that to the general name any applicative can be prefixed, distinguishes it from the singular name, whether descriptive or proper.[15]

The article-criterion of general words and the plural-ending-criterion discussed above, are not to be construed as mutually exclusive. That is, it is not such that the general words which are distinguishable by one are not distinguishable by the other. They do, in fact, apply jointly. And mostly this is what is the case. Take, for instance, the general word 'book' which is amenable to plural ending. It may go equally well also with any of the articles in our list. One can say '*a* book' '*the* book', '*this* book', '*some* books', and so on.

13 Italics ours.
14 *Vide* Logic Part I, Dover Publications, New York, p.97.
15 *Vide Ibid*, p.99.

On occasions, again, the article-criterion may supplement in varying degrees the plural-ending-criterion, in the sense that it goes to cover up cases where the latter does not operate. Words like 'furniture', 'sheep', 'news', etc., on the one hand, and mass terms like 'water', 'wine', 'gold', etc. on the other - will illustrate the point. As already stated, none of these words take plural endings. Nonetheless, we can well say '_some_ furniture', '_this_ furniture', '_the_ furniture', and so on. In the same w way, we can also say '_some_ water', '_some_ wine', '_some_ gold', and so on.

To examine the workability of the article-criteria.

Quine[16] makes a distinction between definite and indefinite singular words, and among the instances of the latter he would sometimes include such phrases as '_a_ man', '_an_ ant', and the like. This, naturally, may raise a doubt as to whether the articles can

16 _Vide Word and Object_, New York (1960), p.112.

rightly be said to go with general words alone.

One way to avoid this small difficulty is to assume a position like this.[17] Well, phrases like 'a man', 'an ant', like 'one book', 'something', 'everything', etc., are not paradigm cases of singular words; they are singular only in a secondary sense, i.e. a sense which derives from the singularity which goes with what we call definite singular words, e.g. 'Caesar', (when I am speaking of a particular individual). Definite singular words are the true specimens of singular words : the singularity which goes with them is singularity in the primary sense.

Certain singular descriptive names, for example, 'the Prime Minister of India' also tend to occasion doubt, insofar as they are prefixed by 'the', But here, again, as pointed out by Johnson, the singula-

17 cf. Strawson, "Singular Terms and Predication", Philosophical Logic, ed. Strawson, Oxford University Press, p.69.

rity of the descriptive names is derivative, i.e. "secured through its reference to a proper name."[18]

But how far do the articles or applicatives demarcate general words from paradigm cases of singular words, i.e. definite singular words, proper names, etc.?

The articles are used with general words, which is true; and it is further true that they are not normally used before proper names or definite singular words (e.g. we do not generally say 'a Jawharlal Nehru' or 'the Jawharlal Nehru', or the like). To that extent they may be said to do their job. But numerous exceptions, which one discovers in language, tend to limit this success. To mention a few. (a) There are cases of proper names and definite singular words which take the article 'the' before them, e.g. 'The Ganges', 'The Green Park', 'The earth', and so on. (b) Likewise, we have instances of proper names and

18 Vide Logic Part I, Dover Publications, New York, p.30.

singular words with 'a', 'an', 'some', etc. used before them. We say, 'Calcutta is not a New York', 'He speaks like a Socrates', 'Some Mr. Khan is here', etc.

To wind up our survey of the grammatical criteria.

(a) The criteria, jointly, do not cover the entire range of words which are general on semantic consideration; they cover a cross-section of it.

(b) Within the limit of the cross-section, again, no single grammatical criterion will hold good universally,

(c) Nonetheless, a general word which is not distinguishable by one particular criterion may be distinguished by another; and that way, the grammatical criteria may be said to be mutually supplementary.

(d) What, however, is most important to note is this. The grammatical criteria, insofar as they hold of a part of the range of words which are general on semantic criterion, show a degree of

correspondence to the latter. This correspondence is unlikely to be a mere co-incidence. And in that sense, it provides a kind of justification for the semantic criterion.

3. Let us now consider another way of distinguishing general words from singular words which is sought to be correlated with their distinction based on semantic grounds. This distinction also is based on what may be called a grammatical criterion; since it involves consideration of the grammatical positions or roles of the two kinds of words in the sentences in which they are used. It is Quine, again, who is the principal exponent of this criterion. The criterion is : While a general word is capable of playing the role of a predicate in a sentence, a singular word is not capable of playing such a role. In Quine's language :

> It is by grammatical role that general and singular terms are properly to be distinguished...[19]

19 Vide Word and Object, New York (1960), p.96.

> The general term (unlike the singular term) is what is predicated, or occupies what grammarians call predicative position ...[20]

Interestingly enough, this grammatical criterion of Quine's shows two sides which, strictly speaking, are not grammatical. In a sense, they tend to contribute, at the logical level, a kind of deeper dimension to the contrast of general and singular words already marked out by the criterion. One of the two sides is that the general word, because of its predicative position in a sentence, can be true or false of the object to which the singular word refers, while we cannot say the converse of it, i.e. that the singular word is true or false of that to which the

20 Ibid. The portion in parenthesis is ours.

Geach and also Frege seem to maintain fundamentally the same positions as Quine. Frege says, "A proper name can never be in a predicative expression ... ("On Concept and Object", translation from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege, ed. Geach and Black, p.30); while Geach says, "The name of an object can ... be used as logical subject of an assertion about an object ... It cannot ... be a logical predicate."

general word refers. The second side, on the other hand, is that while the position of subject occupied by the singular word is also position accessible to quantifiers, the predicative position of the general word is not so.

Anyway, this new grammatical criterion, it is not difficult to see, has a special advantage over the earlier one. The earlier criterion, which involves the concepts of articles or "applicatives" or that of plural ending, we have seen, could be useful at best to identify those general words which fall within the range of nouns and pronouns; it does not apply to general words outside this limited range, i.e. to verbs, adjectives, substantives. But the new criterion can do justice to these, insofar as verbs, adjectives and substantives can well occupy the required predicative position in sentences, e.g. "She *sings*", "She is a *singer*", "She is *tall*", etc. As a matter of fact, the criterion tends to cover adjectives, verbs and substantives so well that Quine is inclined

even to view them "merely as variant forms"[21] of general words.

Thus in executing the common business of distinguishing general words from singular ones the new grammatical criterion is in a position to do something important which the earlier one could not. That way it is complementary to the latter. Nonetheless, there is a point on which the two criteria appear in a way to conflict with each other, that is, yield opposite results. The point in question is what has been referred to above as "mass terms", e.g. 'gold', 'sugar', 'water', etc. The mass terms, as we have seen earlier, do not admit of plural endings; nor do they take articles like 'a', 'an', 'the' as prefixes. In that sense, by the first criterion, more precisely, a part of it, they become branded as singular words. However, the new criterion tends to put them in the class of general words; because they can well occupy predicative positions in sentences

21 Ibid.

e.g. "The content of the glass is water", "Whatever glitters is not gold", etc.

The way to resolve this conflict, as suggested by Quine, is to recognise a kind of "ambivalence" as regards mass terms. That is, to admit that mass terms, predicatively used in a sentence, are to be treated as general, though they are to count as singular words when they happen to figure in subject-positions in sentences. But in what does a mass term in subject-position differ from itself in predicative position, so that it might be justified to call it a general word in the latter case and a singular word in the former? Does it assume different functions in the two positions? Quine's answer would be that a mass term in the subject position of a sentence refers to its objects "cumulatively";[22] on the other hand, used in the predicative position it makes a "divided reference"[23] to its objects, that is, refers to "each

22 Ibid, p.91.
23 Ibid, p.94.

portion of the stuff in question, excluding only the parts too small to count."[24] Thus take the word 'water' in its subject and predicative positions in the two sentences "Water is liquid" and "The liquid in the glass is water." In the former role, i.e. in the role of a singular word, it refers to whole of the stuff called water; in the other role, that is, in the role of a general word, it refers to each part of the stuff, the liquid in the glass.

The criterion of subject-position can by and large mark off general words. But at times it fails. And Quine himself is not unaware of that. Common nouns on semantic considerations are paradigm cases of general words, yet there are sentences in which they can occupy subject-positions which are supposed to be accessible only to singular words. Examples : 'A king had two queens', 'Some men were present', and so on.

But can we avoid such difficulties by recourse to

24 Ibid, p.98.

an amended version of Quine's criterion proposed by some philosophers? These philosophers include, among others, Nicholas Wolterstorff who follows Geach, (perhaps also Frege) in the matter. The amended version which proposes to read Quine's "subject" and "predicate" as 'logical subject' and 'logical predicate' respectively is this.

> Only singular terms can function as the logical subjects or sentences; general terms cannot.[25]

Can we, by treating the word 'king' in our example above as a logical subject, make it classifiable as an instance of singular word? What, however, is more basic is whether the word 'a king' above can at all function as a logical subject. Quine[26] is inclined to answer in the negative. His ground is that a logical subject is required to be the name of one definite thing or individual, while there is no

25 Vide On Universals : An Essay in Ontology, The University of Chicago Press, (1970), p.56.

26 Vide Word and Object, New York (1960), p.113.

one thing named by the word 'a king'. Wolterstorff,[27] on the other hand, maintains otherwise. He admits that 'a king' does not refer to one definite individual in the sense in which the name 'King Ashoka' does; however, it may be viewed as standing for the single thing, the class of kings, and, that way, as logical subject in Quine's sense.

But this position of Wolterstorff's does not have any particular appeal for us. For the single thing for which the name 'king Ashoka' stands is obviously not of the same kind as the supposed single thing called class of all things. The latter is not intelligible in the way the former is.

As a matter of fact, the amendment of Quine's criterion by substituting the concepts of 'logical subject' and 'logical predicate' for those of 'grammatical subject' and 'grammatical predicate', does not mark any improvement on it. For, in the

27 Vide On Universals : An Essay in Ontology, The University of Chicago Press (1970), p.49.

first place, it is not true that general words alone can function as logical predicates, as mentioned by Wolterstorff himself; contrary to the stipulation of the amended criterion, singular words, e.g. 'is identical with Venus'[28] also can figure as logical predidates.

Besides, in the definition of the singular word in terms of the logical subject there is, if we may say so, an amount of what is called begging the question. For the concept of singular word itself is invoked to define the notion of logical subject.

II

Thus, together, the grammatical criteria discussed above tend in a way to cover by and large the entire range of words which are classed, on semantic consideration, as general words. In this sense, the grammatical criteria may well be said

28 Vide Ibid.

to provide for a kind of external rationale for the semantic criterion. What, however, is going to be considered by us now is how far, if at all, the semantic criterion can be justified on its own strength. That is to say, we shall discuss whether it has any internal rationale, in other words, reasons within itself for accepting it.

As per semantic criterion, a general word differs from a singular word in that, unlike the latter which is correlated with only one object, it can be correlated with more than one. A convenient way to conduct our search for a possible justification of it within itself is to note at the very beginning the alleged difficulties of it, the major ones at least.

(a) On semantic criterion the general word is differentiated in terms of the concept of applying to more than one thing, in other words, by reference to number. Some logicians, Johnson[29] being one, find

29 Vide Logic, Part I, Dover Publications, New York.

a difficulty in it. For it is alleged that there is "nothing in the meaning of a general name which could determine the number of objects to which it is applicable."[30]

(i) Take expressions such as 'integer between 3 and 4', 'snake in Ireland', 'King of France', and the like. They are general names, though they would apply to no object whatever.

(ii) On the other hand, consider expressions like 'integer between 3 and 5', 'pole-star', 'natural satelite of the earth', &c etc., which also are general names, though they relate to only one object. And there is nothing in the expressions themselves which would explain the diversity of the two sets of expressions in respect of their semantic functioning.

(b) (i) Contrarily, a singular word, as for example, the proper name 'Caesar', may apply to more than one object, e.g. Julius Caesar, Octavius Caesar, or the

30 Vide Ibid, p.97.

dog called by that name; though, on semantic criterion, it is to apply to only one object.

(ii) In the same way, 'Pegasus' (Quine's example), a singular word, which, on semantic criterion, is to apply to one thing, does not, in fact, apply to any thing.

In the light of these difficulties it seems possible now for us to understand what one is to do if one is to find the required justification of the semantic criterion. The supposed semantic relation of general and singular words to their respective objects has so far been described in terms of such phrases as 'apply to', 'correlated with', and the like, which are deliberately vague. The thing for us to do now would be to see whether the semantic relation is amenable to interpretation in any precise terms which, plausible in itself, would, at the same time, solve all or at least some of the alleged difficulties above.

4. We may begin with J.S.Mill's interpretation.

According to Mill, a general word is applicable in the same sense to an indefinite number of things; while a singular word is applicable in the same sense to only one thing. To quote Mill :

> A general name is ... a name which is capable of being truly affirmed, in the same sense, of each of an indefinite number of things. An individual or singular name is a name which is only capable of being truly affirmed, in the same sense, of one thing.[31]

And the reason why it is so, is, according to Mill : (A general word) "expresses certain qualities, and, when we predicate it of those persons we assert that they all possess those qualities"; but a singular word is not conferred upon its object to indicate any qualities.[32]

Mill's position makes a claim to offer a kind of solution of the difficulty stated in (b) (i). That is, it purports to provide an explanation of why a singular name which happens to apply to many objects,

31 Vide A System of Logic, Longman's Green & Co, London (1965), p.17.
32 Vide Ibid.

does not have to be identified with a general name just on that ground. For, as quoted above, a singular word, unlike a general word, does not apply to the many objects in the same sense. The concept of 'does not apply in the same sense', however, tends to mean, for Mill, 'does not apply in any sense at all'.[33] Mill's position may be formulated alternately thus : While application of a general word is sense-based that of a singular word is not sense-based.

There is a certain inner discrepancy in Mill's interpretation which is not far to see. He speaks of a singular word as a word which does not apply to many objects in the same sense.

Continuing, he describes singular word also as a word which does not apply to its objects in any sense at all. But how are the two descriptions, namely, 'does not apply in the same sense' and 'does not apply in any sense' to be understood in

33 cf. Ibid.

reference to each other? For Mill, they seem to have the same meaning. But this is absurd. If a word doesn't apply in any sense then it just doesn't apply in any sense. To say that it does not apply in the same sense (or in some particular sense) would outrage speech. The idea of not being applicable in any sense excludes the idea of being applicable in the same sense or in a different sense or in any particular sense. To put the matter in another way, saying that a singular word applies to its objects in different senses is to presuppose that it has some senses, not that it does not have any sense.

Thus the two positions of Mill's, viz.,

(a) that a singular word does not apply to its objects in the same sense,

and(b) that a singular word does not apply to its objects in any sense whatever,

do, in fact, stand for very different positions which convey very different meanings.

But neither of the positions is without difficulties.

(b), that is, that a singular word does not apply in any sense, is not quite tenable. It seems necessary to grant that a singular word can assume some sense for itself. For, otherwise, what, in our eyes, tends to become unaccountable is the fact that in certain cases instances of the same grammatical sentence with the same singular word may assume very different senses. To mention a few examples.

(i) I have a headache (said by me),
I have a headache (said by my cousin),
I have a headache (said by my neighbour).

(ii) This is Elizabeth (a name of a girl),
This is Elizabeth (a name of a ship),
This is Elizabeth (a name of a queen).

(a), that is, that a singular word does not apply to its objects in the same sense, tends, on the other hand, to do away with its distinction from general words, and that way, it may be said to defeat its own purpose. For, as pointed out by Wolterstorff,

a general word, when it is an ambiguous (or paronymous) word, does have different senses and so, naturally, one can well say of it also that it is not applicalbe to its objects in the same sense. Thus, take the word 'healthy' which is a general word, though it may be applied to its objects in different senses. Such sentences as follows will illustrate this point, e.g.

(i) Her complexion is healthy,

The man is healthy,

This is a healthy food,

Walking is a healthy habit exercise; etc.

or (ii)This is a pen (writting equipment),

This is a pen (enclosure for cattles).

5. Thus Mill's interpretation is not relevant at all to the entire range of difficulties that arise from the semantic criterion; while it fails in respect of the small area (i.e. (b)(i)) it is specially designed to cover. So, we may turn to the consideration of a second interpretation

which would appear far more comprehensive in its scope and which would seem to have a far greater degree of plausibility. This interpretation is Quine's.

The distinctive feature of Quine's interpretation is his crucial use of two things which are :

(i) the concept of purporting to be true of as opposed to being actually true of,

and (ii) the distinction, he makes, between the concept of ambiguity and that of generality.

To be explicit, the alleged semantic relation of a general word to an indefinite number of things and that of a singular word to just one thing are understood by Quine respectively to mean :

(i) that a general word purports to be true of an indefinite number of things;

and (ii) that a singular word purports to be true of only one thing.

The meaning of the expression 'being true of' in Quine's formulation is not as clear as one might desire. It is apt to be construed in different ways.

To mention a few examples. By saying 'w is true of o' one may simply mean that w is the name of o either in the ordinary sense or in some special senses. Or one may also choose to mean by it that the assertion 'o is w' would be a true assertion. Similarly, following Wolterstorff,[34] one may further mean that 'w supposites[35] for o'. And so on.

Anyway, the concept of 'being true of' will not detain us. We need not go into the details of its explication; since what is crucial in Quine's

34 cf. On Universals : An Essay in Ontology, The University of Chacago Press, pp.53-55.

35 Supposition is a medeavel concept. Its elucidation, as quoted by Wolterstorff from William of Ockham, is as follows :

> "'Supposition' means taking the position, as it were, of something else. Thus, if a term stands in a proposition instead of something, in such a way (a) that we use the term for the thing, and (b) that the term (or its nominative case, if it occurs in an oblique case) is true of the thing (or of a demonstrative pronoun which points to the thing), then we say the term has suppositio for the thing.",
> Vide Ibid, pp.53-54.

interpretation is (i) above, i.e. the expression 'purport'. It is mainly this which, (combined with (ii)), enables him to get over the difficulties of the usual semantic criterion listed above. To explain this.

Take the general words 'integer between 3 and 4', 'King of France', 'snake in Ireland', etc. in (a)(i) above. Take also the singular words like 'Pegasus' in (b)(ii). The generality of the former set of words and the singularity of the latter, we have seen, are supposed to be impaired in the eyes of some logicians, because, in actuality, none of those words refer to anything at all, so that, as required, no word in the former set can be said to refer to more than one thing, just as no word in the latter set can be said to refer to any single thing. But this so-called difficulty causes little disturbance for Quine. The concept 'purport' tends to provide him with a way to get over it. That is, he argues that the words like 'integer between 3 and 4', 'King of France', 'snake in Ireland' are

general by semantic criterion itself, because they purport to be true of more than one thing, no matter that in actuality they are not true of anything at all. In the same way, 'Pegasus' also would count as a singular word according to Quine on semantic consideration, for although it is not true of anything, it purports to be so of one single thing.

In the same way, Quine would justify the generality of expressions like 'pole-star', 'natural satelite of the earth' in (a)(ii) above. He would say that, even though each of such words is, as a matter of fact, true of just one thing, yet it purports to be true of more than one thing.

But how is Quine to handle the difficulty in (b)(i), i.e. that a singular word, e.g. the proper name 'Caesar' or 'John', is true of more than one thing?

Here also, Quine might take recourse to the notion of 'purport'. That is, he might argue that though the singular name 'John' ir 'Caesar' is

used in practice to stand for more than one individual, yet each purports to refer to only one individual, and that way, it is a singular word. However, in actuality, Quine relies more on a supplementary course. To solve the difficulty he makes a distinction between the notion of generality and that of ambiguity which are apt to be confused. "... generality", Quine says, "is not to be confused with ambiguity."[36]

To explain the point. Take 'pen', a word which is ambiguous. It refers to more than one thing, a 'writing equipment'; also an 'enclosure for cattles'. In this, it simulates a general word, e.g. 'orange', which refers to more than one object. Yet a word with ambiguity and general word are very different. An ambiguous word refers to its more than one object by virtue of the fact that it has more than one sense; that way, it may be said to function as more than one word, notwithstanding that it is the same verbal shape or the same verbal noise. But

36 Vide Methods of Logic, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, p.203.

contrarily, a word's generality is to consist in its capacity to refer to more than one thing in the same sense, in other words, qua the same word.

In the light of this distinction between general word and ambiguous word, the difficulty alleged to arise from singular words like 'Caesar', 'John', etc. seems to dissolve easily. For 'John', while it means our neighbour's son, has one sense; but it assumes another when it refers to, say, 'the old grocer'. Similarly, 'Caesar', meaning the Roman General, has a sense different from 'Caesar' which refers to our dog. The singular word 'Jones' is ambiguous in that it might be used in different contexts to name any of various persons, but it is still a singular word in that it purports in any particular context to name one and only one person.[37]

Thus the peculiarity of a proper name to designate more than one thing, according to Quine,

37 Ibid.

is to be understood after the model of an ambiguous word; it is no ground for denying the singularity of a proper name or for its assimilation into the class of general words.

Quine's major remedy for the alleged difficulties of the semantic criterion is his concept of 'purport'. The way it has been found so far to work is not unsatisfactory. However, there arise certain basic questions. For example, what is it that is there in a general word or elsewhere because of which it purports to stand for more than one thing? In the same way, what is there in a singular word itself or elsewhere because of which it tends to be true of just one object and not more? Such questions are not easy to answer. And this, very rightly, should make one a bit doubtful about the ultimate efficacy of the concept of purport, its capacity to do its job, i.e. to reconcile the alleged difficulties of the semantic criterion.

Quine himself also is not perhaps unaware of this weakness of his particular conceptual tool;

and that is perhaps the reason why he is inclined to give more credence to the grammatical criteria discussed above. He says :

> Such talk of purport is only a picturesque way of alluding to distinctive grammatical roles that singular and general terms play in sentences. It is by grammatical role that general and singular terms are properly to be distinguished.38

III

To wind up.

The common semantic ground for distinguishing general words does not, on ultimate analysis, appear as strong as one would desire. On the other hand, neither is it as weak as some are inclined to make it look. As a matter of fact, semantic consideration, combined with the grammatical peculiarities of their role in language, tend to mark off general words quite clearly as a class by itself, i.e. a sub-class of words which cannot be subsumed in any other co-ordinate sub-class.

38 Vide Word and Object, New York(1960), p.95.

Chapter 4

SIMILARITY AND LANGUAGE

The criteria considered in the preceding chapter are not without limitations. Nonetheless, together they seem enough to provide a ground for a claim to the effect that the words called general do form a distinct class of words. The part played by this class of words in language is doubtless too crucial. And also elaborate. And to be in a position to see this one need not go very far.

It is debatable whether all our thoughts are propositional or relational; it is debatable further whether all our thoughts are embodied in language, or whether all thoughts so embodied are propositional or relational. However, there is one thing which is undeniable. It is that some (or most) of our thoughts are conducted in language and that they have propositional or relational character. This means language mostly, (or at least partly) is our vehicle of propositional thinking. And in this capacity, as is quite plain, language all through

has to incorporate general words. General words are, in fact, the part and parcel of every language which purports to convey propositional thinking. Without them the latter is simply impossible. For whatever sentences are to count as the media of propositional thoughts are bound to involve general words as their necessary parts. Without them our propositional thinking or sentences could never have done what it is to do, namely, to organise the world that is thought of or spoken about.

This fact of crucial involvement of general words in the particular language which comprises propositional sentences, i.e. sentences stating propositional thoughts, makes it obvious that the two exist in our discourse each for the other. So that, in a generalised sense, problems about general words are to count as problems about language (i.e. the relevant part thereof). Stated alternately, whatever goes to illumine the character and functioning of the former goes thereby also to illumine the nature and functioning of the

latter. That way, concern about general words is not an isolated concern restricted merely to general words themselves; inevitably, it tends to assume a wider bearing, bearing on the language of which they happen to figure as elements.

I

The identity of general words is apprehended intuitively, if one may say so. Our search for their criteria, semantic, grammatical or otherwise in the previous chapter was a search for an explicit rationale for this apprehension. However, once the identity of the general words is taken for established, i.e. once we recognise that they stand for a distinct class of words we confront a new problem. This problem is far more serious than that of criteria. Accordingly, it has also engaged philosophers on a far wider scale. This problem relates to the use of general words in our discourse.

In a sense, which is predominantly psychological, the problem may be construed as a demand for an account or description of the process of acquiring the ability to use general words or the ability to understand them when they occur in language. This sense of the question has no doubt a significance of its own. No one would deny that. The psychological investigation which it purports to trigger off is indeed worth it. Nonetheless, it is not this particular sense of the problem which has gone to make it a subject of pervasive and intensive concern for philosophers.

Philosophers worrying about the use of general words have other senses of the problem in mind. We may distinguish three such senses.

(i) In the first sense, which may be called logical, the problem is one of finding a rationale or logical ground for the application of one and the same general word to objects which are in many ways diverse.

(ii) In the second sense, on the other hand, the problem, strictly speaking, is epistemological. It becomes one of finding that by knowing which we come to know that certain particular things are to be covered by a certain general word, while certain other particular things are not.

(iii) In the third sense, the problem becomes an inquiry into the nature and identity of something which may possibly exist in some possible sense in the diverse objects or elsewhere to provide an objective basis for the use of one and the same general word of them. This xxx sense may be called metaphysical.

The three senses of the problem are closely interlinked. They have a basic unity which is too obvious. Nonetheless, they are different. No philosopher would deny it, although, in practice, few would bother to take any serious note of it. And why should they? For, to most philosophers the problem, in whichever of the three senses it

is taken, appears in all cases answerable immediately, if not also finally, in terms of one and the same concept, namely that of similarity. That is, by some such hypothesis, as for example, "Because the objects designated by a particular general word are similar", "By knowing that they are similar", "There is a kind of relation called similarity in which the objects stand to one another". And the like.

In this way, the notion of similarity is invoked in philosophy to do the job of explaining our use of general words and, therewith, of throwing light on the language in which they occur. And as would be corroborated by history, this explanatory role of similarity happens, in fact, to present a very wide area of philosophical agreement. It provides a meeting point even for the nominalists and the realists. Both subscribe to the position that the similarity hypothesis is indispensable for the role assigned to it. What separates them sharply is mainly their irreconcilable stands on the question

of whether or not similarity is to count as ultimate. Realists hold that similarity of things is not ultimate and, therefore, itself calls for an explanation. Hence their 'universals' from which similarity is supposed to derive. For nominalists, on the other hand, similarity of things is an ultimate fact about them; so that, for the nominalists, questions of the kind why things are similar are all inadmissible together with the notion of universal which is brought in to answer it.

II

Thus the official position as regards the role of similarity vis-a-vis the use of general words is that the former explains the latter. That is, similarity of certain objects is the universal ground for the application of a general word to

each of them. And to this, as we have mentioned, philosophers, however they may differ otherwise, widely agree. Anyway, the position does not possess any inherent immunity, that is, its repudiation, in no sense, can be said to be self-contradictory. In principle the position, then, is open to denial. And incidentally, in practice also it has been denied in recent years. Philosophers of such eminence is Austin. The denial is mainly grounded on showing that <u>there are instances of things which are referred to by the same general word but are, nevertheless, dissimilar or not similar in any ordinary sense</u>.

Anyway, the denial calls for serious examination.

In his philosophical writings all through Austin, as is known to us, is averse to admitting universals.[1]

1 See for example, <u>vide</u> "Are There A Priori Concepts?", "The Meaning of a Word", <u>Philosophical Papers</u>, Oxford University Press, London, 1970.
Also <u>Sense and Sensibilia</u>, Oxford University Press, London (1965).

That way, he proves a consistent ally of the nominalists and the confirmed enemy of the realists. But he goes a step forward and upholds a position which makes him a common enemy of both the realists and nominalists.[2] In Austin's own language :

> ... it is not the least true that all the things which I 'call by the same (general) name' are in general 'similar', in any ordinary sense of that much abused word.[3]

For Austin, similarity apart, there are other good reasons besides for calling different things by the same name.

2 On his own assessment, however, Austin would make a claim to be an ally of the nominalists notwithstanding this position of his. For the position, he feels, by weakening the case of universals at a more basic level, would only strengthen the central purpose of nominalism, namely, denial of universals.

3 Vide "The Meaning of a Word", Philosophical Papers, Oxford University Press, London, 1970, p.69.

> ... we often 'call different things by the same name', and for perfectly 'good reasons', when the things are not even in any ordinary sense 'similar' ....[4]

But what, really, might these 'good reasons' be? Austin does not have any positive answer on this point. Finding these good reasons, according to him, is a job which should belong to a no man's land lying between philosophy, on the one hand, and philology, on the other. As such, he leaves the business to the corporate obligation of philosophers and philologists. As Austin puts it :

> ... it is a matter of urgency that a doctrine should be developed about the various kinds of good reasons for which we 'call different things by the same name'. This is an absorbing question, but habitually neglected, so far as I know, by philologists as well as by philosophers. Lying in the no man's land between them, it falls between two schools, to develop such a doctrine fully would be very complicated and perhaps tedious : but also very useful in many ways. It demands the study of actual language, not ideal ones.[5]

4 Ibid, p.70.
5 Ibid.

Anyway, let us concentrate on Austin's position that 'similarity' is not the universal ground for our calling different things by the same general word. The position is sought to be justified by him almost entirely on inductive ground. That is, what he does is to cite instances where we do apply - and are perfectly right in so doing - the same name to things, although those things are alleged by Austin to be dissimilar or not similar in any ordinary sense.

These instances are listed systematically in the third part of his famous article "The Meaning of a Word". But the instances, we are afraid, do not do their job, i.e. establish the position of Austin. They are, if one may say so, not in fact relevant to the position at all. Austin, in our eyes, seems to have been misled by them.

(1) In the first place, all through Austin would appear committed, without any explicit justification, to a preconceived sense of similarity. The particular sense of similarity, it is to be noted, does not have anything in itself to account for its credibility. On

the other hand, it is not also universally accepted. The nominalists would all of them reject it unconditionally, while not all realists are inclined to accept it.

(2) But, to our mind, the reason which is far more important and interesting is a cluster of confusions of different varieties which seem to underlie Austin's thinking. These confusions are between :

(2a) generality of a word and its 'paronymity',

(2b) generality of a word and its metaphorical functioning;

(2c) the notion of a word having the same sense and that of two words having similar sense;

(2d) mere use of a general word in different verbal contexts and its use in the same sense to designate objects;

(2e) mere verbal shape or a verbal noise of a word with the word itself which is verbal shape or verbal noise plus some sense.

III

Let us undertake a survey of Austin's instances to illustrate our points.

Examples of (2a), (2c), (2d) are to be found together in the particular instance in which Austin refers to the use of words like 'healthy'. We do, in our language, use the word of varied objects in saying, e.g. 'healthy body', 'healthy complexion', 'healthy exercise', 'healthy food', and so on; but, according to Austin, such things as 'body', 'complexion', 'food', 'exercise' cannot be said to be similar in any sense which would not be misleading.

The instance happens to figure first in Austin's list. However, its connection with the thesis which it is to corroborate does not appear at all obvious to us. It is, as we have already said, perhaps not relevant at all. To see this one is to go into the functioning of the word 'healthy'.

Is 'healthy' a general word? It undoubtedly is, on proviso, it fulfils the minimal requirement of a

general word, i.e. if it is used, in the same sense, to designate all the varied cases of the quality of having health. For example, as in the case when I say, 'My cousin is healthy', 'This is a healthy dog', and so on to mean in each case the same thing as that the subject in question has no illness.

But does it hold good of the word 'healthy' in the few examples of its use quoted by Austin? In other words, can it be said that the word, whether it is used as an adjective of 'body' or of 'complexion' or of 'food' or of 'exercise', has all through the same sense? Someone may well deny this. He may be inclined to say that the word 'healthy' in each case above has a distinct meaning; it is to count as an example of an ambiguous word; and, the ambiguity of a word and the generality of it, as Quine[6] points out, is

6 "But generality is not to be confused with ambiguity", Methods of Logic, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London (1962), p.203.

never to stand for the same thing. As an ambiguous word, the word 'healthy' in its four different uses above, it would be said, is, in fact, to be taken as four different words having in common only, say, the same 'verbal shape', or 'verbal noise'.[7] On this interpretation, then, Austin's instance under consideration would turn out to be a harmless example of different words applying to different things, and not an example of what alone is relevant, namely, that of a same word designating things which are not similar.

Austin is not of course unaware of this. He does envisage that the word 'healthy' might be construed by some as an ambiguous word and that such construal would tend to make the instance under examination irrelevant. Accordingly, he hurries to add that "the word ('healthy') is not just being used equivocally."[8]

7 The expressions are Russell's. See An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth, (Penguin Book), pp.21-22.
8 Vide "The Meaning of a Word", Philosophical Papers, Oxford University Press, London(1970), p.71.

Nonetheless, it is not a word for him without some peculiarity. Following Aristotle, he maintains that "it (the word 'healthy') is being used 'paronymously'."[9] And by this he means merely that the word in all its uses above has a "primary nuclear sense".[10] This nuclear sense, according to Austin, is "the sense in which 'healthy' is used of a healthy body."[11] This is called nuclear because it is, in Austin's words, "'contained as a part' in the other two senses which may be set out as 'productive of healthy bodies' and 'resulting from a healthy body'."[12]

But can we, even by accepting with questioning Austin's interpretation of the word 'healthy', namely, that it is a paronymous (and not ambiguous) word, restore the supposed relevance of his instance? That is, can the paronymity of 'healthy' be considered enough to reensure that the word 'healthy', in its various uses above, x has been used in the same sense

9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid,
12 Ibid.

and, therefore, might count as the same word all through? The alleged paronymity, as far as we understand, can make at best a claim to show that the senses in which the word 'healthy' has been used to qualify 'body', 'food', 'exercise', etc. resemble in a most important way. But what may that go to imply? Perhaps, merely that 'healthy' in its one use and 'healthy' in its another use are just similar words, notwithstanding that they have the same verbal shape or produce the same verbal noise. Similarity, however basic, is never the same as what we call sameness. Two words, say, for example, 'petulant' and 'irritable' have similar senses and, that way, they may well be called similar words. But do they ever count as the same word because of that?

Thus the word 'healthy', in the different contexts of its use above, can be said to assume only similar senses; it doesn't have the same sense and cannot, therefore, count as the same word, though this, precisely, is what is needed for its relevance. The word 'healthy', as we understand, is, in fact, only a case of different words being embodied in a common

verbal shape or noise.

Similar analysis, we suppose, would hold good to expose the irrelevance of three more confirmatory 'instances' in Austin's list, i.e. instances where, on his claim, the same general word goes to apply to things which are not, according to him, similar in any ordinary sense. Here also, as we shall see, a particular general word, which can at most be said to have similar senses in the different contexts of its use, has been mistakenly supposed to stand for different employments of the same word, because of its having the same verbal shape all through. The instances, we are mentioning, are respectively those under (2), (4) and (6) in Austin's list.

To state those instances ad seriatum.

(2) pertains to the use of such words as 'fascist', 'cynicism', etc. On elaboration, it is as follows :

> Take a word like 'fascist' ; this originally connotes, say, a great many characteristics at once : say x, y and z. Now we will use 'fascist' subsequently of things which possess only one of these striking characteristics. So that things called 'fascist' in these senses, which we may call 'incomplete' senses, need not be similar at all to each other.[13]

13 Ibid, p.72.

(4) concerns the use of what is called 'analogous' terms by Aristotle. As Austin puts it :

> When A : B :: X : Y then A and X are often called by the same name, e.g. the foot of a mountain and the foot of a list. Here there is a good reason for calling the things both 'feet' but are we to say they are 'similar'? Not in any ordinary sense.[14]

(6) concerns words like 'youth' or 'love'. Austin says :

> Another case which often provides puzzles, is that of words like 'youth' and 'love' : which sometimes mean the object loved, or the thing which is youthful, sometimes the passion 'Love' or the quality(?) 'youth'.[15]

(6), i.e. the cases of words like 'love' and 'youth', we suppose, can be disposed of easily. Their confirmatory relevance can be denied by us exactly in the way in which we have denied it to the word 'healthy' above; for those words are likened to 'healthy' by Austin himself, presumably, to mean that, like the latter, they are also paronymous words. That is, here also we can say that neither 'love' nor 'youth'

14 Ibid, pp.71-72. (Italics ours)
15 Ibid, p.73.

is an example of one and the same word being used of different things which alone is relevant; in each case what we have is only similar words in a common verbal shape designating different objects. 'Love', meaning the passion love, designates one thing; 'love', meaning the object loved, is another (though similar) word designating another thing. These are two words for two things, not the same word.

So to examine the remaining two instances.

Take (2).

The word 'fascist' originally connotes having the characteristics of x, y, z. But what is it that we do 'subsequently' in doing as alleged by Austin? We may put it this way. Someone calls a person A a 'fascist' to mean that A possesses the characteristic of x; someone else calls A or another person B a 'fascist' to mean that he possesses the characteristic of y; and so on. Thus the word 'fascist', in one use of it, means 'having the characteristic of x', in another use of it, 'having the characteristic of y', and so on. But what does all these amount to?

Plainly, that the verbal shape or noise 'fascist' assumes different senses in different uses of it, or that in using this word we are, in fact, using different words (in the same verbal shape or noise) to mean different dissimilar things (i.e. 'the characteristic of having x', 'the characteristic of having y') : it is not an instance which is germane to Austin's position, i.e. instance of a same word being used of things which are not similar.

We may now turn to (4). How exactly do 'foot' in the phrase 'the foot of a mountain' and 'foot' in 'the foot of a list' stand vis-a-vis each other? Do they have the same sense, so that they may count as two occurrences of the same word? Aristotle, as quoted by Austin, has a special name for them; he calls them 'analogous' words. And in so doing, the idea that they are occurrences of the same word seems to have been clearly denied. The description implies that 'foot' in one context and 'foot' in the other context have only similar senses and, therefore, they are to count as similar words.

Someone, who has in mind such phrases, e.g. "a nightqueen", "the queen of birds", "queen of hills", etc. might, on the other hand, offer to understand the phrases 'foot of a list', 'foot of mountain', etc. after them. That is, he might suggest that the word 'foot' in the examples being considered is an extension along different lines by way of metapho[r] of the literal sense of the word 'foot' as in e.g. 'He walked on feet', 'He injured his feet', just as the word 'queen' in the above cases is a metaphorical extension along different lines of the word 'queen' in its literal sense as in e.g. 'Queen Victoria'. But does it make any difference? Well, on this interpretation, the relation between different uses of the word 'foot' would correspond to (a) that between some particular verbal shape or noise in its literal sense and the same verbal shape or noise in it a metaphorical sense, or (b) to that between two metaphorical senses of the same verbal shape or noise. But in either case 'foot' would count only as similar words in a common verbal shape or noise and not as different occurrences

of the same word; since the identity of a word is constituted not by its verbal shape or noise but by the sense in which it is employed.

Our alleged irrelevance of (4) is perhaps justified on another count also. Things to which the word 'foot', in its various uses, purports to refer to, do, in fact, resemble reasonable in a definite way; it is not the case that they are not, as supposed by Austin, similar in any ordinary sense. Austin anticipates this point; but the way he meets it appears, on our analysis, to be totally unsatisfactory.

Referring to A and Y in instance (4) as quoted above, Austin formulates the point thus :

> We may say that the relations in which they stand to B and Y respectively are similar relations.[16]

and, thereon, proceeds to clear it up by saying :

> Well and good : but A and X are not the relations in which they stand : and anyone simply told that, in calling A and X both 'feet' I was calling attention to a 'similarity' in them, would probably be misled.[17]

16 Ibid, p.72.
17 Ibid.

This seems to be a dangerous line of argument. It would tend to make similarity of any two things indescribable. True, A is not the same as its relation to B; nor is X the same as its relation to Y. This is not denied. But that is certainly not a ground for saying that A and X are not similar. The point is that if X's relation to Y and A's relation to B happen to be similar, then, that will provide a ground for saying in a definite sense that A and X are similar. Similarity in respect of their relations is indeed a ground for two things being called similar. For, otherwise, how can we ordinarily describe any alleged similarity of two things? One cannot say that we can do it in terms of the similar (or same) qualities of the things; because the argument, if taken for valid, would apply against this hypothesis alike. For, as just as a thing is not the same as its relation to another, it is not also the same as any particular quality of it.

Whether relations or qualities are to be everything which a thing stands for is a traditional

metaphorical issue, which need not at all concern us here. Nonetheless, what cannot perhaps be ignored is that they are unavoidable in ordinary description of things. So to admit that any two things, say, A and X, stand in similar relations, say, B and Y, is to admit that A and X are themselves similar on account of R^1 and R^2. But the sense of similarity which underlies Austin's thinking seems to miss this point.

Similarity is by no means a single concept. Nor is the word 'similar' so. This is perhaps clear enough from what we have already said about it in our earlier chapters. The use of the word 'similar' in language is, in fact, obscured often by misuses or abuses of it. And insofar as he describes it explicitly as a "much abused word"[18], Austin is not unaware of it. Yet, a bit unaccountably, the word 'similar' itself does not seem to concern him much, when he concerns himself with it. He does little towards the explication of the word's meaning; while the particular sense of it, which he has in mind, is far from too explicit. He speaks repeatedly of

18 Ibid, p.96.

'similar in ordinary sense'. But what exactly does it mean for him? What is it for two things, A and B, to be similar in the ordinary sense? Perhaps only that A and B possess a common quality, say, 'red', 'sweet' and such like. But this, as we learn from Wittgenstein, is a mistake. And the mistake is made by Austin; it is precisely on account of it that he is, in our opinion, led to misconstrue the correct import of his confirmatory instance under (3), which, as he puts it, is as follows :

> Another case is where I call B by the same name as A, because it resembles A, C by the same name because it resembles B, D... and so on. But ultimately A and, say, D do not resemble each other in any recognisable sense at all.[19]

But what is it that may be said to follow from this? As we understand, only that A and D do not have any quality in common. But is that enough to confirm the supposition that they do not resemble in any recognisable sense whatever and, therefore, are called by the same name independently of their resem-

19 Ibid, p.72.

blance? Can we not say that A, B, C, D, and (therefore A and D), resemble each other in some of the senses in which "games" or "member of a family" are said by Wittgenstein[20] to resemble each other? That is, "similarities overlapping and criss-crossing", "overall similarities", "similarities of detail"[21] and the like. This seems definitely possible. If A and D are not found to be similar in the particular "recognizable sense" of Austin, then what follows is just that they are not similar in that particular sense only. But this certainly is not the only sense of similarity. There are other recognisable senses besides. And A and D may, as in fact they are, similar in some such particular sense.

Thus the sense of similarity which is called 'ordinary sense' of it by Austin and to which Austin is wedded is indeed a bit too narrow. Things which have a common quality, e.g. colour, taste, etc., do

20 cf. Philosophical Investigations, Tr.G.E.M. Anscombe, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1968, p.31.
21 Ibid, p.32.

certainly resemble. Nobody would deny this. But similarity is not always a matter of possessing such a common quality. As already mentioned, things may well become similar in other ways and for other reasons besides. Austin fails to see the truth of this, and for that, as we saw above, he is led to misread the instance (3) and, in consequence, to misjudge its relevance for his position. It is this same drawback which, once again, obscures for Austin the correct import of the case he cites under (7). The case in point is that of; "... a cricket bat and cricket ball and a cricket umpire."[22] The epithet 'cricket' is applied to bat, ball and umpire in the same sense though, in Austin's eyes, they are not similar.

But can we really afford to see through the eyes of Austin and interpret the matter exactly as he does? Is it truly the case that one cannot speak of any sense whatever in which the things designated by 'cricket bat', 'cricket umpire', and 'cricket ball' may be said to be similar? Let us consider,

22 Vide "The Meaning of a Word", Philosophical Papers, Oxford University Press, London, p.73.

Take, first, the word 'cricket' which, no doubt, is a general name referring to every instance of the kind of games that are called 'cricket', e.g. the game that is now being played between India and Pakistan, the game that was played between England and West Indies last year, and so on and so forth. Such instances do resemble one another in many respects, so that the application of the same general name 'cricket' to them in the same sense would unhesitatingly be said to be grounded on their similarity.

To take, now, the phrases 'cricket ball', 'cricket bat', 'cricket umpire' separately. It is plain that each is a general name, because 'cricket ball' applies in the same sense to every instance of the class of things which are called 'cricket ball'; likewise, the phrase 'cricket umpire' is applied in the same sense to designate every member of that class of human beings who function as umpires in a cricket-game; and so on. Cricket balls resemble one another; and so do cricket umpires or cricket

bats, etc. So the names 'cricket ball', 'cricket bat', and 'cricket umpire', etc. do not present any special difficulty. General naming in all such cases is based on the resemblance of named things or individuals.

But Austin's case, as quoted above, is different. It pertains to the use of 'cricket' in the same sense as a common word for a (cricket) ball, a (cricket) bat, an (cricket) umpire, etc. Cricket, here, is not exactly a word to designate the instances of the game which have obvious resemblance to one another. Rather, it is a word which designates a ball, a bat, an umpire, and so on. These obviously are not similar in the way the instances of the game called 'cricket' or the instances of things called 'cricket ball' are so. In fact, they are not similar at all in the way in which objects coming under any other ordinary class name, e.g. apples, Kangaroos, tea cups, &c. etc. are. But is that a reason to an say that they are not similar in any sense whatever? Take one who, sharply unlike a nominalist, already

commits himself to the view that similarity is derivative in some sense. Is it really not possible for him to speak of an alternative sense in which 'a cricket ball', 'a cricket bat', and 'a cricket umpire' may be said to be similar?

One possibility which would tend to suggest itself immediately to us is this. It may be said : Well, the ball, the bat and the umpire - even though they may not share a common simple quality - may nevertheless be said to be similar in the sense that they are all used in, or are parts of the common game called 'cricket'. Austin is no doubt aware of such a suggestion. However, he turns it down because he seems to feel that it would amount to a sin against logic of definition. That is, he seems to fear, if we rightly understand his mind, that it would give rise to the logical vice which is commonly called circularity by us. He argues :

> ... it is no good to say that cricket simply means 'used in cricket'; forms we cannot explain what we mean by 'cricket' except by explaining the special parts played in cricketing by the bat, ball, &c.[23]

23 Ibid.

But the fear of circularity, as far as we understand, is not perhaps well-founded. It is likely to be dispelled, if we go just slightly deeper, first, into the notion of circularity itself and, secondly, with that, also into the exact nature of the relation which holds between cricket, on the one hand, cricket-ball, cricket-bat, cricket-umpire, etc. on the other.

Take two terms A and B. When, exactly, may their definitions be said to become circular and may, on that ground, become vitiated? A circularity, which is vicious, will no doubt occur if I define A and B straightway by mutual reference, i.e. by saying, 'A is B', while saying simultaneously also 'B is A'. Likewise, the definitions would again be circular and vicious, if the relation between A and B happens to be symmetrical, and, thereon, I define both just in terms of that relation. E.g. I define A as the brother of B, and B as the brother of A.

But the definition of 'cricket' and that of 'cricket ball', 'cricket bat', etc. need not be

treated as exact parallel of this. First, it is to be noted that, one does not define 'cricket' by saying that cricket is cricket-balls; nor does one define 'cricket-ball' by saying that it is cricket. Again, someone may well say " 'cricket' is the sum total of 'cricket ball', 'cricket bat', 'cricket umpire', etc."; but, then would he conversely say that 'cricket ball', 'cricket bat', 'cricket umpire', etc. are the sum total of 'cricket'? No. The fact of the matter is that the relation between 'cricket' on the one side, and 'cricket ball', 'cricket bat', etc., on the other, is not an instance of any symmetrical relation, rather the opposite of it. It is, in fact, a particular instance of a particular type of symmetrical relation, namely, that which holds between a thing and its parts. That is, while we say, 'cricket bat', 'cricket ball', etc., are parts of, (or are used in), cricket, we do not say, in the same manner, also that cricket is a part of, (or is used in), 'cricket ball', 'cricket bat', etc.

What remains now to be examined by us is the

case under (5) in Austin's list. The case relates to that of what has been called by W Johnson[24] a 'determinable' (e.g. colour, shape, etc.) and 'determinates' (e.g. red, blue, green, etc., or round, square, traingular, etc.).

Consider, for example, 'red', 'blue', 'green', etc. They all have the common general name 'colour'; although they do not appear to have any quality in common (as, say, things called 'books' have) and, in that sense, cannot be said to be similar to one another.

> ... is there any (secondary) adjective which analysis would reveal as characterising all these different (primary) adjectives?[25]

asks Johnson and, thereon, proceeds to give the following answer:

> In my view there is no such (secondary) adjective; in fact, the several colours are put into the same group and given the same name colour, not on the ground of any partial agreement ...[26]

24 Vide Logic, Part I, Dover Publication, New York, Chap. XI.
25 Ibid, p.176.
26 Ibid.

Note also the following immediately proceeding this :

> What is most prominently notable about red, green and yellow is that they are different, and even, as we may say, opponent to one another ...[27]

Thus, on the kind of analysis which is Johnson's, the different hues, 'red', 'blue', 'green', 'yellow', etc., covered by the general word 'colour' are not similar. So, naturally, to Austin, it happens to come in handy as an instance in which a general word is used independently of 'similarity' being the reason for that; and the instance, in turn, becomes a ground - inductive of course, as we have said - for his general position that 'similarity' is not the universal reason for using general words of things or individuals.

But what, then, might be our reason for using the common name 'colour' for the various hues? Austin does not deny that there is such a reason; although he makes no claim to know it. Nor, again, does he undertake to discover it himself : the

27 Ibid, p.175-176.

entire matter, as we already know, is left by him to the care of his philosopher-philologist. Johnson, however, does otherwise. He faces the problem and suggests a solution, which is :

> ... the special kind of difference which distinguishes one colour from another ...[28]

The fact which is to support the hypothesis is, according to Johnson, that no such difference can be said to exist between a colour and a <u>determinate</u> coming under another determinable, as for example, 'triangular', 'round', 'square', under shape. In Johnson's own words :

> ... the ground for grouping determinates under one and the same determinable is <u>not any partial agreement</u> between them that could be revealed by analysis, but the <u>unique and peculiar kind of difference</u> that subsists between the several determinates under the same determinable, and which does not subsist between one of them and an adjective under some other determinable.[29]

How, then, to interpret this analysis of Johnson's? What, exactly, can it be said to indicate? Does it really do away with all possible similarity of the

28 <u>Ibid</u>, p.176 (Italics ours).
29 <u>Ibid</u>. (Italics ours).

different determinates of colour? Cannot 'red', 'blue', 'green', etc. be said to be similar in any sense whatever, so that their example might count as a basis for Austin's position that similarity is not the universal reason for same-naming?

Let us look into the matter.

One thing seems certain, if the analysis is right. It is that the determinates of colour do not have any common positive characteristic in the way such things as, say, red roses are said to have. But is that enough for saying unconditionally that colours are not similar?

Well, for some it may well be so. We mean those who presuppose that similarity of objects must, in all cases, derive from their possession of some common characteristics, and, therewith, presuppose further that such characteristics must be positive also. But, as we have mentioned before, this is only a narrow view of similarity to which all philosophers need not subscribe. So such philosophers, it would seem, are under no obligation to deny similarity to

colours : they may not feel debarred from talking about the similarity of colours in some alternative sense, if there be any such sense however.

First, take those who are prepared to commit themselves to the first presupposition above, while denying the second or remaining non-committal about it. That is, those who, while saying that similarity is always derivative of common characteristics, would not limit the range of such characteristics by saying further that they are positive. There is indeed a sense in which such philosophers, we feel, can well say that colours are similar. This sense does not exclude the idea of a common characteristic possessed by colours. And to discover it we need not go at all far. It lies, if we may say so, in Johnson's analysis itself, although unfortunately, it is hidden from the author's eyes. And that, we suppose, is because of the narrow view of similarity which underlies the analysis and perhaps also because of the notion of difference which happens to figure in a key position in the analysis.

The sense of similarity we are referring to is quite simple. Using Johnson's own terminology, we may formulate it thus. Determinates of colour are similar in that each differs from others in a way in which it cannot differ from determinates of any other determinable.

But this, one may say, is defining the similarity of colours in terms of their difference, which is the opposite of similarity. Isn't it so? Yes, it is. But what really is the harm in that? When is similarity the opposite of difference, so that, then, we are prohibited from defining one in terms of the other? Take A and B. If they are similar, say, in s, then, obviously, they cannot differ in s; and we cannot say that their similarity (in s) lies in their difference (in s). This is precisely where similarity and difference becomes each other's opposite, and we cannot talk of one in terms of the other; that is, where similarity and difference are referred to same aspect of things called similar or different.

But all this does not seem to have anything to do with talking about similarity in terms of difference (or ~~thm~~ about difference in terms of similarity). And this is what we are doing in saying that the similarity of colours consists in their unique difference from one another. There is, in principle, nothing wrong in it perhaps. We do, on occasions, understand similarity in terms of difference and vice versa. Take examples. X, which is brown, differs from Z which is red; so does, say, Y which is yellow. Would it be wrong here to say that the differences of X and Y from Z are similar (i.e. in respect of colour)? Likewise, suppose, X resembles~~X~~ Z in being red, while Y resembles Z in being circular; both then resemble Z; and can't we say that in this case X and Y resemble Z in different ways (i.e. X in respect of colour and Y in respect of shape)?

Anyway, notwithstanding all this, one may, we fear, continue to experience difficulty. It is all over the use of the word 'difference'. The word

occurring in the definition of the similarity of colours (or of other things) might present for him a sense of contradiction too acute to overcome. For him, then, we may find a way out which is possible. It consists in re-formulating the definition by dropping the word 'difference' in favour of the word 'relation', which is a neutral word, and is wide enough in meaning, to incorporate the notion of difference (along with that of 'similarity'). That is, we may say : the determinates of colours are similar in that they are related to one another in a unique way, a way in which they are not related to the determinates of any other determinable.

Now, take the others, namely those who would not accept either of the two presuppositions stated above. That is to say, they maintain that objects, to be similar, need not, in all cases, have to possess any common characteristic (positive or negative) at all. The two philosophers we have specially in mind here are G.E.Moore and R.W.Church.

The former mentions a definite sense in which colours may be said to resemble. And so does the latter.

The sense of resemblance, we attribute to Church is called the 'analogical sense of resemblance'. It does not, presuppose any common property. And Church's position as regards colours is that they may well be said to resemble in this sense. To quote him :

> The reason why red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple are called by the same name, "colour", is that they resemble each other (more or less) in the primary analogical sense ...

The Moorean sense of resemblance, on the other hand, is called by him "immediate" or "internal resemblance". It is distinguished from the kind of resemblance which consists in the possession of common properties. And colours, according to Moore, are said to be similar in this

30 Vide An Analysis of Resemblance, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, p.116.

sense. In his own words :

> ... if we distinguish carefully between patches of colour themselves, and the various properties which they have such as size, shape, brightness, etc., we might, I think, say that every patch of colour has to every other a relation, called likeness, which nothing else in the universe has to them, and that this isarelation which does not consist in the possession of any common property.31

IV

To wind up.

What is it that is to count as the reason for our use of a single general word to designate different things? This is the problem. Granted that there is sense of it, it would naturally call for an answer. The official answer is : because the things, their

31 Vide Some Main Problems of Philosophy, Collier Books Edition, New York (1962), p.365. (Third italics being ours).

differences notwithstanding, are similar in some sense (the ordinary sense of similarity being one such sense). The answer has appeared quite acceptable to us. Nothing, in fact, seems to come in the way. Neither any empirical fact, nor anything in the concept of similarity or that of general words.

Valuable by itself, the answer becomes more so on another count. It tends to give us a better understanding of the most important part of our language, namely that which involves general words.

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