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.