CHAPTER II

VAGUENESS OF WORDS AND VARIETY OF USAGE - WITH

SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UNIVERSALS AND PARTICULARS
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PARTICULARS

Part one - The Method

1. The Limitations

Any discussion on a philosophical topic must take into account the limitations that are inherent in a word. Waismann has called it, 'the essential incompleteness of the word'. He distinguishes this from the 'vagueness', with an analytic efficiency. In fact, anyone who shows keenness on understanding the usage of the words, shows the interest in linguistic analysis - knowingly or unknowingly.

Our concern in this essay would be to 'understand' the words universals and particulars, not only in the technical sense in which the word 'usage' is used; and hence I use the
word 'context' instead. Usage, thus, will form one of the many currents which incorporate these words. The other currents form a rather odd combinations from various other non-linguistic fields. Thus, the words have the contexts which are both, totally linguistic and non-linguistic (that is, language plays the role of communication only in the contexts that we call non-linguistic).

Thus, variation in contexts gives rise to variations in the shades of meanings.

However, some generality of approach would be had by dividing the words in some general groups. Of course, my attempt in such a grouping will be only initial and not final. And hence, it will not affect inversely the urge to envisage 'one' and 'common grounds' of communication. Not that arbitrariness thus accepted would affect 'common understanding' that goes a long way with the words universals and particulars. The hunch throughout the discussion is this. Despite the differing shades in their meanings, there is a unanimity. Let us attempt to convert this into a conviction.

II. Some examples from different disciplines

Some of the scientific laws, some of the laws from mathematics and other empirical disciplines are often looked upon as having a universal recognition. Karl Popper has also
discussed their formulations as "law-statements". But these considerations are constituted, not of one-word which we may precisely point out as, 'the universal' or 'the particular'. As a matter of fact, it is the idea behind their formulation which is universal; at least in these cases.

Sometimes the words too may be used with varied degrees of precision; for instance, the precision in using the word 'ownness', 'manner', etc., is quite understandable, and we accept them without hesitation. We may remark that mostly, the so-called 'natural-classes' or 'natural-kinds' have this advantage. They do not create confusions in communicating and hence, they have almost negligible degree of the problem of the border-line cases.

On the other hand, it is also accepted, that, we outright call 'this pen', 'Mr. X', 'Monday', etc. as particulars.

But there are cases when it is difficult to name a word, as universal or particular, so ready and emphatically as the above examples. Our main concern then would be to deal with such instances.

III. The General Approach

Now, it might perhaps seem rather unconventional to

1 Cf. 'Logic' by Mill.
proceed with the topic, without first making explicit what we mean by universals and particulars. That is, the presuppositions must be stated, since the words are used in contexts that are different. But, it is not therefore necessary to limit the scope of our study, by limiting our presuppositions and by restricting our words to some definitions. It would unnecessarily make us prejudiced in favour of one position and biased against the other. The concepts would themselves reveal their nature in the course of discussion.

The words universals and particulars represent some thought behind them. pure linguistic analysis will not exhaust their meaning; mere logical testing for their applicability too will not suffice. That will only point out a certain range where the words could be used without difficulty. Of course, such an adequacy on the part of logic and analysis is not a drawback for the discipline; nor does it forward a case for the ontology of the words. If the words are thought to have an ontological status, then myriads of ancient questions glare in the face, and the entire issue does not remain neat any longer. It gets entangled with other buoyant issues of existence, space-time, abstract entities, general and class-words, proper nouns, subject-predicate etc.

(a) A semantical approach does seem to be promising, since it
would have the necessary formalities of logic without unnecessary rigour. The words herc-ia, have application in some universe of discourse, without any tall, ontic claims. Not that semantics is always defined thus; nevertheless, the technical definitions of semantics do not contradict our popular understanding.

There are border-line cases at all levels; ontological, logical, epistemological and semantical. Not that these lines of approach exhaust all the possibilities of approaches, but it could be expected that they cover the important ones. Needless to repeat that there could be overlapping. But it is important to note that such an overlapping is sometimes the ground for giving rise to border-line cases. This is one of the two aspects of border-line cases. But it could be taken up only after the less complex approach is tried up. There is enough to clarify even within an approach.

(b) In ontological approach, the words universals and particulars have not offered much difficulty. It is because the concept of universal and the concept of particular depend for their universality and particularity on the substance-quality criteria. It is of course a traditional expression; even the expressions like general-singular terms are often used in subject-predicate language.

universals in all fields, and particulars in all fields
are expectedly distinguished. But, are universals of one field different from those of the other? Or are they working by some inherent principle? What constitutes their uniformity? What constitutes their uniqueness? (Universal as an idea, is quite different from universal, as an instance).

It is due to lack of discrimination between these two senses of the word 'universal', that at times philosophers are inclined to talk of 'types of universals'. It would be less misleading to call them 'types of instances of universals'.

An evident example of the 'types of instances of universals' could be this: We may take 'existence' as the criterion. Now, criterion may have instances, and the instances of 'existence' are both, concrete and abstract. The concept of existence is related positively to concrete entities and negatively to abstract entities. That is to say that the concrete universals exist, but the abstract universals do not. The very concept of existence involves spatio-temporal aspects in an entity. To state that the concrete universals exist would be trivially true; and so will be the statement, abstract universals do not. Thus, it is quite clear that even abstract universal may be treated as an instance of existence like concrete universal.

Immediately below the genus, idea of universal (in this case, the existence) should be placed, the instances of this idea of universal, which, in our example, are the concrete and abstract
universal. On this pattern, entire universe (or any special universe of discourse) could be explained in terms of the instances of universals.

It is not necessary for the idea of universal 'to have an existence'. For, if it had, it would at once be an instance of universal, which, in virtue of having existence, would definitely be concrete.

The 'idea of universal' can more sophisticatedly be called 'the principle of classification'. I am aware of the similar names that are often used to suggest the idea of the general criterion of the process of analysis. By 'principle of classification', however, I understand, 'the idea of the general criterion', or even to put briefly, 'the general criterion'; still neatly, 'the criterion of distinguishing the universals from the particulars'.

Now, whether this criterion (hence onwards, referred to as the principle of classification) is already 'given', or 'assumed', or evolved, is no doubt, a crucial question. It shall be dealt with at an appropriate context. However, we shall contend at least this: the principle of classification is a tauto, which is justified on the grounds other than those which justify the types of universals. The formation and explanation of the principle is a just expectation, but right now, our focus of attention is to make clear, the distinction between the idea of
universal and an instance of universal.

These instances of the principle of classification, which we have called the abstract and the concrete 'entities', can each, have many members in their own respective classes. For instance, the concrete, numerically distinct entities like men, and the abstract entities like centaurs, (in a mythical context, may be), or even the arithmetical numbers such as one, two... on a finite series, or even \( n + 1 \), \( n + 2 \ldots n + x \) on an infinite series. (A general word 'Individual' is often used for any such unit whatsoever; abstract, or concrete).

Within a class, then, there may be many members.

But all the members, so far as they do not fall immediately below the principle of classification, they are not instances of the principle, but instances of instances of the principle. And in order to stop the unnecessary multiplication of the criteria, both within a class and outside the class, we would take all the members to be the instances of the principle of classification.

We leave out, for the sake of brevity and neatness, the two instances which we have called 'abstract' and 'concrete' entities.

The plan may be represented thus:
IV. Universal and the Principle of Classification

There is no unanimity over the issue as to what is understood by universal. Sometimes, the words which pass as universals, are the instances of the principle, rather than the principle of classification. The principle of classification is partly revealed by the word; or, that word would not be an instance of the principle. (It will be at least an individual which, if not universal, may be regarded as a particular. But this line of argument will be taken up later). In order to be an instance of a universal, it should at least share some points with the principle of classification.

The principle of classification and the instance of the principle may be similar in degrees. They could, however, be
distinguished at any juncture. This is because the principle of classification is richer in content than the instance of the principle. An instance of the principle may not share all the aspects of the principle of classification. The principle of classification cannot be represented by its instance totally. An instance may attain maximum proximity with the principle of classification. This proximity can be attained by representing the aspects of the principle maximally.

Moreover, an instance may represent the aspects of the other principle(s) of classification too; and hence sometimes, a single instance may have to be called as an instance of universal, (an instance of the principle of classification may be so called) for more than one reason of coming under one principle of classification. But, all of them may not be equally evident. They may be discerned only through minute analysis. However, even when more than one principle combine, we may quite safely classify the instance under the most evident and the most emphatic one. But, such a complex situation arises only rarely. Generally, the picture is quite clear. That is to say, it is easy to decide the principle of classification without deliberations. For example, the instance of the principle 'carneous' would be 'man'. (This should be understood as 'the man', the class. 'A man', would be member of the class; strictly speaking, it is the instance of 'the man' but, we have accepted
that for the sake of simplicity, we may call it an instance of 'manness').

So, when the word 'man' is mentioned, we do not hesitate to call it an instance of 'the principle', 'Manhood or manness'. It is often called universal, as said earlier. This could be understandable but then queerly enough, at times the instance, that is 'the man' itself, is called universal too - but perhaps in relation to some definite man. Socrates, who is then called a particular. That is to say, man is universal, Socrates is particular.

But this will complicate the issue still further. 'Socrates', if conceived to be the member of 'the man', then it may be called an instance of 'manness'. But, if it is taken as the member of no-class, (on the grounds that it is proper name and hence unique; in other words, it has unique reference), then it carries no credentials in virtue of which it may be called an instance of the principle of classification.

So, either it is an instance and hence not the principle, or it is not an instance of any principle of classification. And hence, a proper name.

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3 According to Naisbitt (in language strata) 'open-texture' and 'multiplicity of criteria' have made reference, a difficult problem.
But then, should it be called the 'principle' itself?

But that is meaningless, because we have agreed that it has no instances like the principle. Hence, it may be a particular.

But there are difficulties in talking about particulars without their having relation to universals. The very formation of the words then, will require a re-shuffling. At present, we accept them as they are normally presented. We will then inquire whether we can remain faithful to the convention throughout.

Still further, Socrates and a man differ in degree, not in kind. That is, one is precise, the other, general: One has unique reference, the other too has, but in lesser degree. But 'manhood' and 'man' differ in kinds. Manhood, the principle, and 'man', the instance, cannot be put on the same par. Hence, the relation between manhood and man is a different one, than the relation between Socrates and a man. 'Manhood' does not exist in space and time, 'a man' does. Again, 'the man' as a class-name does not, nor does 'man' as an abstract name. But, even 'man' as an abstract entity can have the potentiality of occupying a spatio-temporal status and become Socrates. But 'manhood' can never exist thus. Manhood, being thus the principle of classifying instances as human beings (whether concrete or abstract) has grounds other than mere instances for its constitution.
Manhood (The principle)

Instances

The men
(e.g., 'The men occupied the last seats)

Man (e.g., Man!
Thy name is vanity)*

Concrete members with specific reference

Concrete members with no specific reference.

* With apology to Shakespeare's famous quotation, "Frailty!
Thy name is woman!"

Thus, instances themselves are not the principle. They share some aspects of it. Obviously, since the instances may be more than one, they may emphasize different aspects.

Now, the instance of the principle, which has maximum proximity to the principle, are the abstract instances. They satisfy the requirements which constitute the principle: neither of them incorporate, within their fold, the spatio-temporal considerations. Both are capable of having concrete instances. For example, manhood can have a concrete man as an instance. An abstract instance, (often recognized as abstract universal) for example, beauty, can have beautiful objects as instances (often recognized as particulars).

But yet, beauty cannot have as an instance, another
abstract instance; whereas manhood, which is the principle of classification can have both, an abstract concept of man (collective name) as well as a concrete collection of men (collective name)4.

V. Universal as an instance of the Principle of Classification

We have seen that the principle of classification could have instances. The instances could be both, abstract and concrete. They are also recognised as abstract and concrete universals. Thus, we have then selected a criterion, that of 'existence'. Now, so general a criterion as this one, cannot be fruitfully distinguished from the principle of classification itself.

It is quite possible that if we restrict our inquiry within a specific parameter, (say, logical, linguistic, mathematical, etc., then we decide the universe of discourse, the range of reference, or context, whatever we chose to call it in view of our field), then we may formulate a specific principle.

The question could yet be raised. What distinguishes the principle, from the criterion of instances, wherein the former is quite specific, and not general, like that of 'existence' of

4 This line of argument is expressed diversely, especially in relation to the concept of class collection, general word, etc. The traditional dispute over the idea 'all' and 'some' is revived in novel forms. This will be alluded to at length later on.
individuals? It is this; criterion of instances could be interpreted by appealing to the principle of classification. Principle of classification cannot be interpreted similarly.

**A Note on the Principle and the Criterion**

I shall quote a passage from 'Indian Logic' by Dr. Barlingay. (p. 87).

"The jāti, in the beginning, should be an extentional concept and that सामान्यa should be the connotation or principle of division, is in keeping with the point of view of Indian Logic. That is why Indian Logicians thought that the principle of division is not an ontological entity just as a thing is. Thus, the thought arose that सामान्यa or jāti has no satta or existence. But, jāti or सामान्यa underwent a change in later logic, and it became synonymous with universal. Originally, it was described as that which we find in several individuals. Now it was regarded as having in some sense, a permanent existence."

So much so, for the distinction between the criterion and the principle. One important distinction could be mentioned. The principle of classification has no ontological status; 'Manhood' does not exist in ordinary sense of the word, nor does it 'subsist' in any idealistic sense, nor it has a form in the Platonic sense. It is just a rule, that is innovated and
formulated; regarding its formulation there could be various explanations. But that is altogether a different issue.

On the other hand, criterion (of instances) must have an ontological status by way of existing or subsisting. Beauty, for instance, as an instance of the principle (and of course the criterion, in this case, they being indistinguishable, due to the generality of the principle), is often called 'abstract Universal'.

Existence (and non-existence) can form one of the constituents of the principle. (It may not always be possible to name this principle precisely). In the example of Beauty, it forms the criterion of distinguishing concrete from abstract.

This elaborate analysis has been carried out to bring home the issue that the words universals and particulars are used freely without making these very intricate distinctions. They may hinder the purpose of communication, if made; but at least an analytically enlightened philosopher can be refrained from forming questions in bad language. For universals are often used as the principle, the criterion, or even as the instances of the principle of classification, based on certain criterion.

VI. Analysis of the Particular

Various meanings of the particular are suggested by different philosophers. Those could be mentioned in the course
of discussion. The interest at present is to elaborate those approaches which accommodate the analysis of the problem as we have carried on so far. We shall now analyse the idea of the particular on the basis of the principle of classification.

We can outright spare it from calling a particular. Even when the principle may become specialised in some fields, yet, the very contingency, of its having a definite status, rules out such a suggestion. Its status in a field as a particular principle, say, the principles in logic, in mathematics, the social sciences, etc. It may as well have done without being specialised thus, in these (and such) disciplines, and yet, it would have remained the principle though now a very general one, so far as the units in the world of matter and thought are accepted as having an orderly occurrence, we will have this general principle.

Instances which are classified as existing or not-existing then, should be considered for their particularity. Sometimes, the criterion itself is called a particular, especially if it is concrete. For instance, 'man' is called a particular in relation to manhood, which may then be treated as the principle of classification. 'Man', is not an existent;

5 At a further point in the thesis, I shall have an occasion to elaborate this point, under 'Infinity' in chapter VIII.
nevertheless, it is possible to give concrete instances of man; now, if these concrete instances are called particulars, then, we are tended to look for a corresponding abstract entity. But there need not be corresponding entities for each abstract or concrete entity. Some of them may be just abstract, others, just concrete. There is no dichotomy that suggests parallel instances. And hence, under the principle 'manhood', we may have an abstract instance which is 'man' - this concept has an existential import. We may not be able to imagine 'man' but we can definitely imagine its instances. In other words, the class 'man' has concrete members, men.

The question is, what do we call a particular? The criterion? The class (i.e. the instance of the principle)? Or the members of the class?

It has been now seen by our analysis that the word is vague, it may not be ambiguous. Its vagueness consists in its being used to mean so many different senses. This point has been elaborately discussed by eminent philosophers like Wittgenstein and Frege.

VII. Contextual differences

In the first chapter, I tried to point out the different contexts in which the words universals and particulars were used.
Therein, I also gave a general classification of the discussion as ontological, epistemological, logical and semantical. Some of the theories did 'fix in' appropriately with some heading. Some others overlapped. For instance, most of the Indian theories on universals and particulars could easily be said to have an ontological context. Though again, there were some amongst them which could also be called epistemological. Most of the Western thinkers were not totally ontologically oriented, though we have the glaring instance of Plato. Generally they were the analysts, and with the advent of new wave philosophy, they came to be called linguistic philosophers. We have enough evidence to cite from history of philosophy, that there has been variation in the treatment of the problem.

But, we should take the problem to be vague, rather than ambiguous. The differences in contexts, at large, are responsible for its vagueness. To be precise still, we ask whether this vagueness is due to our linguistic practices; or, is it due to the 'referents' to which they refer? That universals and particulars are sometimes used as subject, predicate, (grammatical and logical) names, descriptions, etc., is the practice which is backed by different rules. But all these terms can be explained away as designations which are suitable to apply to a referent.

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6 For historical information on the subject, cf. "Universals" by Hilary Putnam (McGill-Queen's).
But we shall not pause to analyse the different rules which

govern the relation between the words and the referents. (I

have deliberately avoided the word 'object' due to its specific

suggestion of an entity in spatio-temporal context. Universals

and particulars, we have already seen, have peculiar abstract

referents too).

Nevertheless, it is necessary to give some thought to the

relation, as is seen by some thinkers, between universals and

their corresponding particulars?

If 'there are universals', that is to say, if we answer

affirmatively the question 'Are there Universals'? then, we have

in mind, some cases in which universals are used to refer to

natural classes (Mill in 'Logic' calls it natural kinds. Indian

thinkers called them Jati like man and woman, cow and stone,

and even their minute sub-classes; to mention for instance, the

'redness', the 'ouness'; philosophers have always disputed these

latter instances as 'existents', and on the same par as the

former ones. This reminds us of the fundamental problem of substance

and attributes. But, our discussion is not affected by such

controversies, since we have already said that there may be

varied referents for which the word universal is used and varied

other referents for which the word particular is used. In brief,

7 Cf. B. Russell's essay on 'The Relation between Universals

and Particulars' in Logic and Language.'
there may be types of universals and types of particulars.

Particulars are used to refer to the members of these natural class. The relation between universals and particulars then is the relation between the genus and the species, between the class and its members, or even between the whole and the part. (The examples have been given in chapter I).

But this naive approach has the initial doubt of 'there being natural classes' with their definite boundaries.

If we are tempted to admit some of them, we have decided the context. In a particular context, so far as consistent thinking goes, there is no reason to answer the question 'Are there universals' negatively.

A negative answer will force us to change the context. It will demand further analysis in which the natural classes will have to be dissolved, in order to make room for the negative reply. And this will be done at the cost of disturbing a holistic approach, which has its advantages in some cases.

At this juncture, it is spontaneously asked whether the words have a meaning of 'their own'; that is, free from the contextual colours.

This question requires the discussion which would spread over the entire thesis. Let me hint at an answer by suggesting
that the complex of meaning and word is so constituted that no context can exhaust every detail of the complex with its shades. There is always some aspect of the word which survives linguistic analysis. This point will drag us into some kind of metaphysics too. Right now I shall contend that the vagueness of universals and particulars also owes to this aspect of the problem. Of course, myriad of challenges from the opponents will have to be envisaged before we can spell such a position. That I shall take up in the next chapter. Yet, it is possible for us to proceed without answering the challenges, on the grounds that the analysis that can be carried out, has its limitations. Some problematic instances await their classification. And it is on the sole merit of these problematic instances, rather than any singular position, that we would be able to treat them efficiently.

Part Two - The Application

VIII. Instances of Vagueness

(a) Do the words have systematic ambiguity?

The words universals and particulars can be said to have a systematic ambiguity if they change their meaning according to the contexts.

At least, if the words mean more or less the same, inspite of the difference in context, then the word may be called vague.
Walismann's essay on 'Language Strata' is informative. He says that the ambiguity of words may be due to

i. different meanings

ii. antithetical sense of primal words, and

iii. different contexts.

He distinguishes, what he calls, the types of these ambiguities from both, vagueness and open-texture.

I contend that the words universals and particulars may be better called vague; they are not ambiguous because their different contexts do not make them radically different in meaning. One instance of radical change due to context is the word 'live'. 'That's a live wire'. Compare this context with 'genes is a live complex' and with 'I want to live'. The word 'live' is ambiguous.

Universals and particulars have no such ambiguity; nor is there any equivocation: For instance, 'This dish is hot'. The words 'dish', and 'hot' are not sufficiently informing; 'the dish' may mean the vessel, or the food-variety; 'hot' may mean, carrying heat, or it may mean the taste pungent.

There is however, an evident advantage of such words

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3 Cf. 'Logic and Language' pp 11.

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as universals and particulars over the others. At least their grammatical and linguistic designations are the same throughout in any context (of course, no question of grammar and language arises in purely symbolic contexts). The problem lies in interpretation. So far as they go, universals and particulars in almost all contexts are mere designations—just having the symbolic function, of occupying that designation. So, as designations, the words universals and particulars, are alike; they may be (grammatical or logical) subject, predicate or relation. This is true of any context that makes use of the language.

But there is the difference of interpretation. In other words, the 'referents' are different.

(b) Does a word have the same 'referent' in different contexts?

Still simply, we may put the question, 'Does the word ever have the same meaning in different contexts?'

Let me take the instance of identifying a cow. Having been asked to point out the animal called cow, amongst several other animals, we can do so without any hesitancy. (We shall ignore the hypothetical objections of the kind, such as a stranger who has never seen a cow, but only has a conceptual knowledge of it, through description). How is it possible to
recognise the animal as cow? We may at once answer that, the present cow 'resembles' so closely the past one.

Are, there is a naïve case of comparing two (or any number of) things for their common qualities. These qualities which are not clearly sorted out, but which are thought to 'adhere' to each other, to form a complex. Such a complex, where unsorted qualities mingle at random, is called a universal. Some of the realists would explain the concept universal in this context, as a relation of similarity and resemblance. They will also call these relations themselves as universals.

Since universal seems to 'exist' (in some distorted or 'stretched out' sense of the word 'exist') as a complex of qualities, this analogy is also applied to the 'relation' simply because it has one point in common with the so-called universal, which is its capacity to be applied to more than one things.

But relations hold between at least two terms. Terms related are in relation. Now, all the three factors, terms in relation and the relation itself, cannot be on the same par, simply because relation has no existential import. It has epistemological, logical or semantic or syntactic import. It is due to these imports which even the terms in relation might have (and this, though a sheer accident), that even relation comes to be regarded as a universal. Relation can have no concrete referent.
To say that relation is universal, is metaphoric.

Therefore, carrying the example further, we can say that the word concrete universal will come to be questioned. Does the 'cowness' which is suggested by the complex of qualities, exist? To say that even if it does not exist spatio-temporally, at least it subsists, (even if in Berkeley's thought or Plato's utopia) is a makeshift. The possible alternative is to call it an abstract universal (very popular in conceptualists theory).

Yet another far-fetched alternative could be suggested; it is the nominalist view; that they have nothing in common, but the name cow. But this view does not suit the example, which is fundamentally an ontological one. (Now, whether nominalists are ontologically neutral or not, is the issue to be seen in the next chapter).

But we can once again recall our analysis of the words universals and particulars, and decide whether 'cowness' is a universal. We will say yes, but it is only an abstract instance of the principle of classification; it is an instance of no other principle; though it itself has instances. We have seen this in detail (Cf. sections IV and V of this chapter).

In this example, the principle is of existence, or 'to be', various modes of forming the same principle does not change
the idea behind it. It is a standard unto itself - self-identical (to use the idealist's language). \[3\]

The principle (in this example, also the criterion) distinguishes cow, from cowness at one level, and an individual cow from the cow in general (that is, the class and its members) at other level. The former level is the level of abstract instance. The latter is the level of the concrete level (though not totally so, since we do not always admit the existence of a general name or a class-name. In this example, it is possible to admit).

But this point requires clarification. The principle, the criterion and the instances may coincide incidentally. But they can also be distinguished; the distinction, if made, will give a mature perspective of the problem.

Now, animality, cowness, cow and an individual cow are

1. all different words; animality is not an instance of any principle of classification;
2. cowness is an instance (abstract) of animality

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3) All monists of Sankara's and Hegel's vein have thought 'Identity' to be the Universal par excellence. Perhaps the reason could be found in the idea of minimum distinctions. Identity is the index of 'no distinctions'.
iii. A cow (a general word) is still another instance of animality with concrete import.

iv. And a cow is an instance of—well all three; animality, cowness and cow.

A cow is an individual, whether it is also a particular or not will depend at large on our further understanding of the word individual.10

But at least it is not a universal by the standard of our analysis. Though of course, animality, the principle of classification, cowness, the abstract instance of the principle, and cow the concrete instance, are at least not particulars; hence, it is necessary now to inquire into the factors which enable anyone to call some as universals. This cannot be a sheer accident, that there is no hesitancy in accepting some of them as universals. While it is difficult to accept an instance of singular cow as a universal.

Now, the model that we have developed so far for our problem seems legitimate, because it answers satisfactorily, all the necessary details, if required. It stands minute analysis. Hence, our contention that animality, cowness and cow, may all be called universals, may be rejected, only on some non-analytic grounds.

10 Cf. Goodman's 'Structure of Appearance' for his views on individual.
Or we accept them as universals. And then, the discussion will lead us to the variety of usage of the words universals and particulars.

IX. Variety of Usage

The variety of usage of the word is due to

(i) lack of sufficient analysis which leads to a concession of allowing more or less words with similar meanings, to come under the same word,

(ii) or, it is due to some inherent factor in their meanings;

(1) Lack of sufficient analysis

There are some border-line cases which create problems in analysis. Such problems need not neglect analysis as a method at understanding some philosophical problems. But we can be aware of its limitations.

The second alternative will argue for all cases - evident as well as border-line; and perhaps, there could be no border-line cases. The 'meaning' will incorporate within its range, all relevant aspects of the words, so as to make them most mature. How such concepts will have no room for problematic instances. Hence we better leave them at that, and get somewhat deeper where there are problematic cases.
a. Where shall we classify the word 'moon'? 'The present king of France'? The son of barren woman? The Purusa and Prakriti of Jñānāna? 11

We just have the singular instance of moon, which does not fall under anything like 'mooness', and then call 'moon' an instance of it; it is still absurd to entertain the hypothesis that there might be some 'mooness' in the universe, which we do not perceive. Such an addition of hypothetical instances will only complicate the issue. It will only distort our concept of moon. It is not necessary, nor desirable to twist the meanings of words in order to suit our analysis. Hypothetical entities would only multiply the assumptions made, in order to establish a relation between the word and the object. The assumption that we all make implicitly is this; that the word 'suggests' an object. Now, if we add hypothetical instances, we will be multiplying our assumptions. And a test of good method is to have minimum assumptions with maximum deduction.

But the moon cannot be called a universal, because it does not fall under any principle of classification. It is

11 Prof. Archie Bamm (J••A•) refused to entertain the hypothetical entities. He argued that the problem should be restricted only to empirical cases. But then, he should also abandon the abstract cases like goodness, beauty, humanity etc. (From my discussion with him at world conference, Delhi - 1976, in Philosophy.)
only an instance. But can there be an instance of no principle? Can we call it an 'instance' then? Perhaps proper names too have such a strange position as this.

However, we may safely say that, these are at least 'individuals'; and an individual may be anything; universal, particular or neither.

Thus, the moon does become a problematic case. There is a difficulty in calling it universal, for it has no principle; nor is it its instance; and, because it cannot be properly called an instance, it cannot properly be called a particular.

Hence, if it is non-universal and non-particular, it is at least an individual.

(ii) Some inherent factor in their meaning

Now, if we have to decide the issue on the basis of the constitutive 'meaning' - then we can call it a universal, or a particular.

(ai) We will decide the meaning of the word moon. Since the word has meaning only in our universe of discourse, it does not make any sense to 'create' another moon and then call them both 'particulars'. The moon is singular - the instance unto itself. Singular words are called universals. Traditional logic of propositions in Aristotle's, treats singular propositions too
as universal ones. (We shall have more to say as regards such a position, when we choose our example from the field of logic). So, the moon may be called a universal, on the basis of 'unity'. (distributive unity of a thing, is the phrase used by Stout)\textsuperscript{12}.

It is not very convincing to call the moon, a particular, because then, anything which has a numerical existence may be called a particular. It does not explain as to why one moon is unique - as to why proper noun is unique. So, the uniqueness of moon is ignored. Only its 'existence' forms the ground of entitling it as particular. That is to say, that the fact that the very word moon has a constitutive meaning, comes to be totally ignored; only numerical identity comes to be emphasised, if we call it a particular. Of course, there is a readiness to accept 'moon' as a particular, just because of its uniqueness.

A Note: What can be the relation between the constitutive meaning and the principle of classification?

The constitutive meaning has the capacity of functioning as the principle, provided it has instances. Or it remains functionless, and hence, inaccessible to even abstraction. For, how else do we abstract, but on the basis of some instances? Thus, 'moon' which is the constitutive meaning of the individual (this time, a physical body, whose meaning is formed in the

\textsuperscript{12} Cf 'Nature of Universals and Propositions' British Academy Lectures, selected by P.W. Findlay (Oxford Uni. Press).
total context of its position in the universe. And we have the constitutive meaning of the moon. A principle of classification must have specific instances, as for example, animality has specific instances as the class of cows, and the abstract cowness. Animality is the constitutive meaning formed by the consideration of the total context. But because it can be understood through specific instances, it may also function as the principle. Whereas moon, which is also the constitutive meaning, has no specific instances through which its constitutive meaning may be understood.

Hence, the word 'moon' by the second line of argument, on the basis of constitutive meaning, will have first to decide its criterion, whether it is unity, or whether it is numerically distinct existence. Now, this lack of decision or even oscillation can be accorded to vagueness of the word - essentially incomplete words - or even open textural words. The vagueness is not ambiguity; we do not confuse moon with anything. The word moon, is not vague either. We have, for our perception, the clearly defined boundaries. The word moon is neither essentially incomplete - like the definition of gold. There are no more qualities or aspects expected to be added to the concept 'moon'. Hence, it is not an open texture concept.

So, even by this line of argument, that of considering the constitutive meaning, we cannot decide whether the word is
universal or particular, unless we fix the criterion properly. Hence the word 'moon' has posed some difficulty; it is a problematic case. Of course, as we have already said it has been called either universal or particular. And different explanations are forwarded.

The questions such as, 'Is there anything like moonness?' do universals exist in their own right?' will be considered in the third chapter.

(o) We may take another problematic case of a different nature. The problems will arise sometimes due to lack of sufficient analysis, and sometimes due to some inherent factor in their constitutive meaning, and sometimes due to both these factors.

Where shall we put the word beauty? Shall we call it a universal or a particular?

It is a question of taking into account as to how it is the case, that we come to know beauty. We may say that we do so, through instances which are beautiful.

But even our analysis faces problems. For, on the basis of principle of classification, where shall we place beauty? Shall we call it a principle, or an instance (abstract)? Here, the principle and instance coincide. And hence the problem,
whether beauty should be called a universal or a particular. However, the latter consideration is very awkward in usage, hence we may drop it: the word particular cannot be applied with same conviction to all abstract instances. However, it could be applied to some, e.g. numbers. But the reasons for this are different. This consideration will draw our attention to the entire controversy between the universals and particulars. For this, we will be called upon to explain our concepts. And this means that we will have to argue on the basis of a single criterion, without shifting grounds, so as to avoid unnecessary confusion. Let us see if we can argue on the basis of a single criterion.

We followed our analysis, and arrived at some (conventionally) odd result; that beauty may be both universal and particular. In order to sound acceptable, we said, let beauty be universal; a suggestion which will be accepted without hesitancy.

But we have shifted grounds; from analysis to acceptability.

Beauty is often called an abstract universal, and instances which we accept as beautiful are called particulars.

(bi) Is there 'participation' of beauty 'into' beautiful objects?
Here, we have used metaphoric language. Metaphors have their place in philosophy, for they suggest significant answers to some problems. They should not be carried to an extremity—which is often done, and hence the undue condemnation of metaphors.

So, what could be the relation between beauty and the beautiful?

Now we can at least rule out the doubt whether a collection of things or a class, should be called universal; it may be so called, since it is instance, of some principle. Yet the question is often raised as to whether there is anything over and above these instances of collection and class. That is, whether there is beauty apart from the beautiful. This becomes an epistemological and an ontological issue. Epistemologically, we could allow no principle of classification—it is then, only a postulation. But epistemologically, we could, since there is no difficulty in postulating it. But as argued earlier, even if the principle has no ontological status, it still remains the most mature concept, in which, even the instances which have ontological status are incorporated.

We, however, understand that this is no argument to applaud a theory. It is not necessary for the principle either to incorporate other factors or to exclude them. It is not a fault in philosophy to forward a principle which does not explain
the later developments. Intra-systematic unity of a principle may or may not confirm to extra-systematic unity. Therefore, a principle which is formulated at a stage, may not have an ontological status and yet, allow instances which have ontological status.

Therefore, the question whether there is anything over and above the instances would be to ask the same as whether the principle of classification has also the ontological status.

Thus it would also amount to asking whether beauty has an ontological status, since beautiful objects have. To have an ontological status, is to give a view on reality. In this respect, it is quite sensible to conceive that beauty may have an ontological status. But it is non-sensical to suppose that a centaur has an ontological status. To say that beauty has an ontological status would be in the sense that beautiful instances have it. But the word centaur and the word beauty differ, because the former has a fictitious context, and the latter, real. Instances of beauty are available to human experience. Instances of centaur, even if there are, are not. Beauty is an abstraction, centaur is a hypothesis.

The only common aspect between them is, that even beauty as such, is not an entity, which has spatio-temporal existence. (centaur, of course, may have the same authentic relation to its
mythical context, just as cow has real relation to its spatio-temporal context). It has no existence, nor subsistence in any idealistic sense of the word. Its instances may have existence or subsistence.

The very words universals and particulars make us 'look' for entities. We are baffled when instead of beauty, we come across beautiful instances only. And hence, such an abstraction which has concrete instances also, becomes problematic.

Such words cannot be called 'universals' on the above ground, because there is no entity called beauty.

They cannot be called even particulars on the similar grounds because beauty forms an abstract instance of beauty - that is to say, beauty may also be looked at as a principle of classification. And it is not at all enlightening to say that a principle is a particular. Moreover, the principle is only functional, it has no ontological status; it is not an entity.

Thus, if we are inclined to 'look for entities' when we use the words universals and particulars, some words may pose serious problems, just as the word beauty.

Even though it may be called a universal by many a thinker of conceptualist line of thought, they will have to face the challenges of their opponents.
(c) Let us consider one more aspect of the problem.

The relation between the 'thing' and the 'word' is the semantical issue. Our problem will have to take a note of things which are called universals and particulars, and the words which are called universals and particulars. If we stress this latter formulation of words which are called universals and particulars, then our approach will be totally linguistic. Thinkers along the line, who look upon semantical approach as not only an approach which considers the relation between actual things and words, but between the things which we 'say' that there are, and the words. (Quine has discussed his ontological commitment in his famous essay 'From a logical point of view'). If so, then reality still remains, an untranslated phenomenon. However, accepting the unavoidable limitations, we have proceeded thus:

(1) The principal of classification, which has the constitutive meaning, is a conceptual discovery. We examine the instances and in all perspective, decide the principle. So, even if we describe the process of treatment, from the principle downward, we know its formation alright: It is not so rigid as described vertically; but it is multidirectionally affected.

Therefore, the instances that it has, will also be multi-coloured; words, things, and relations may be labelled as universals and particulars.
(ii) Yet, we can definitely say at least this: the principle, which is the word and not the thing; it is unique, because it has the constitutive meaning that is peculiar. It has a wider range of applicability. The instances, abstract or concrete, have a comparatively lesser range.

Thus, even the universality of universals differs, if we consider their applicability.

(iii) Precision is also a factor, which differentiates one universal from the other. The principle of classification is less precise, the instances, more precise. That is, the wider the range of applicability, less precise is the word; in other words, it is 'more universal'. On the other hand, more precise the word, narrower is the range of applicability; in other words it is 'less universal'.

(iv) Particulars will have to be the members under the abstract or concrete instances.

We have seen in chapter one, that often, universals and particulars are understood as relative to each other: We cited the entire Sāṃśaya system to vindicate this point.

(d) In the field of logic, the entire issue will require a consideration from Aristotelian to modern logic. This is because, the words universals and particulars have been used there with
a lot of technical variations. One point is evident. The underlying principle therein will have to be understood. Is it one? Or, are there many? - and hence, 'types in logic'?
(We shall consider this in chapter eight).

Hence, the words universal and particular leave enough vagueness. It is difficult to decide their precise usage. So, our question what is universal and what is particular has remained unanswered - for we want the question to be qualified with some added clause as to what is universal - metaphysically, epistemologically, semantically, logically - and we may multiply the epithets. The point however is this: we cannot answer the question specifically. Specify the question, and the answer is specified. A general question will get a vague answer.

And the vagueness suggests the variety of usage.

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