CHAPTER IV

NO 'ISH IN SATISFACTORY
We have seen in the preceding three chapters that the words universals and particulars have been used in many a different way. Different philosophers have forwarded their theories with different criteria of deciding the word as universal or particular.

We have endeavoured to show that there could be different principles of classifications under which universals and particulars can be discussed; in other words, there could be different approaches. Still further, we can say that there are different aspects of the problem. Of course, the more prominent aspect that has occupied a place in philosophy is the ontological and the linguistic one. Even logical aspect has shown some interesting resemblance with the ontological and
the linguistic, because of the similarity of the sense in which
the words are used in all the three fields. Some branches of logic
of course, use different terminology. Developed systems of
logic and mathematics use the words like sets, classes and
collections instead of the word universal; and symbols, variables,
constants and numbers for the word particular.

(1) The Word and the Sense

Now it is quite possible to demand a clarification over
the use of 'the word universal' and the 'sense universal'; 'the
word particular' and 'the sense particular'. Here, we shall
contend that the 'sense' is more important than the phraseology.
Often, the word depicts 'the sense' we wish to allot to the
word. Especially, in ordinary language, there are no problems
of disparity between the sense and the usage. But at times,
there is disparity. Especially when the words used are vague
or are not seasoned through linguistic convention. And then
the problem of sense and usage becomes important. In such a
situation then, it is necessary to emphasise the sense. And this
is obvious, because usage after all is flexible, and its function
is to convey sense, even if it means undergoing some metamorphosis.
And it should amount to defeating the entire purpose of language
if we sacrifice sense to the alter of usage.

We may ask 'what is the sense in which the words universal
and particulars are used? Do the words depict the sense properly?

To answer these and the similar questions, the theories of universals and particulars are attempted. However, we shall remember while investigating their answers in their 'isms', that all of them have an important aspect of the problem to expose. They are not wrong in what they admit, but in what they condemn. They are right in what they accept, but not in what they reject.

This cryptic assertion will find a re-statement towards the end of the chapter.

(II) The Classification

The three 'isms', realism, conceptivism and nominalism are the standard headings under which the theories of universals and particulars are often discussed.

Being a multi-sided problem because of its fundamental relation to philosophising, we cannot expect a sharp answer to the problem. A general answer is attempted by Aaron, in his book 'Theory of Universals'; he mentions the principle of classification but it remains for us to interpret it. If we interpret the principle in some definite 'ism', then it may be possible to have a definite answer to some questions that are constantly asked about universals and particulars. But it is not likely to appeal to the other 'isms'. However, it is
difficult to frame an answer that would be unanimously accepted. Truly speaking, the very nature of the question often limits the capacity of answers. In other words, the questions have their definite framework, or context.

According to their principles of classification some philosophers tried to theorise the discussion under a standard name. The three standard 'isms' are conceptualism, realism and nominalism: but it is quite possible that within one theory, there may be other minor theories too. For instance, resemblance, recurrence, similarity and repetition theories of universals are called realistic theories. These minor theories may vary in detail, but agree with the principle tenets of the standard theory. That is to say, one standard school can accommodate many a viewpoint that vary minutely. More or less similar viewpoints can be classified under one school. Under conceptualism too, many viewpoints of various authors could be accommodated. Similarly, under nominalism, we have different patterns that agree in many ways.

But is this grouping of theories only arbitrary? Certainly not, since they take into consideration more or less similar aspects. We would hesitate to classify the theory of nominalistic trend under the realistic heading. This hesitation cannot be explained away as rooted in psychology and arbitrary consideration.

Even if we take objects on the one hand and words on the
Other, as the subjects to be classified, we cannot say that the classification of objects into universals and particulars, and classification of words into universals and particulars is only arbitrary.

Of course, we have choice to classify them as we think proper. But then, we will have to take due measures so as not to appear absurd. Will it not sound absurd to classify a particular account of universals and particulars that stresses 'existence' under nominalistic group, just because 'universals and particulars are names' too?

The absurdity is due to the break in communication. We do not gather the relevant information when it is said that the 'existents are nothing but merely names'. The communicative value of a theory is an important aspect of any theory. Or it sounds absurd and uninformative, as we cited above.

Thus, one is not so free while classifying; the element of arbitrariness is superficial, that is, it is only with regards to some minor details. The moment one attempts to violate the basic principle of the theory, the classification becomes awkward and unnecessarily elaborate.

By considering the size one can decide to classify the object of a definite shape and size, say, triangular objects as universal and the other triangular object, say, of diminutive
size, as particular.

One can also decide to classify the word 'best' as universal and 'better' and 'good' as particulars.

But these two instances are different cases: it is quite a different thing to say that you can also classify 'triangular object' as 'shapeless object' just on a whim! This is just not done, because 'triangular objects' are not 'shapeless' objects. (The very concept of shape is interwoven in the word 'triangular', whose general definition is, 'space bounded by three straight lines').

Take the second instance of the word: here too, we cannot say that the word 'best' is a particular and 'better' universal: nor may we say that 'many' is particular, and 'two' universal. Of course, we take these instances in relation to each other, that is, 'best' as related to 'better' and 'many' as related to 'two'.

This idea was put forward, as the relation between the 'whole' and its 'parts'; between 'the class' and 'its members', between the 'genus' and its 'species'. It is evident from their discussions that the relation between universals and particulars within the particular framework does take into account the above mentioned 'dichotomy'; the idea of their being a 'heirarchy' is common to all dichotomy which explains the particulars in relation to the universals, and not as particulars in themselves,
and universals in themselves.

But we shall not contend only with a relative position of the universals and particulars. This is one aspect of the problem of universals and particulars; that there are relative expressions.

(But, are there universals without particulars, and are there particulars without universals? This is the crucial question to be dealt with in a separate chapter).

However, the point that we want to understand with maximum emphasis is this: there are reasons for our classification. And if we analyse the reasons behind our classification (omitting the arbitrary ones), then we may come across some important points that would enlighten us on the problem of universals and particulars.

(III) No 'ism' is Satisfactory

We shall consider the implication of each theory that we have just considered.

The general thesis of the conceptualist can be understood if we examine some of the outstanding instances of conceptualistic philosophy.

Conceptualistic philosophy has the following point to accept: the 'concepts' are real; even if they are not real in.
the sense of 'existents', they are real in the sense that 'they subsist'. We understand existence of an entity, as its being in space and time.

Subsistence of an entity means that it is not affected by its non-presence in space and time. Spatio-temporal aspect of their constitution is only contingent and not necessary. The concept hence, is said to subsist and not exist, though instances of concept may exist. Beauty has subsistence, beautiful objects have existence. But here, we have taken an instance which can never exist spatio-temporally.

Now, is this the case of some linguistic twist in defining 'beauty', or, is there anything else besides the linguistic aspect, is the issue at stake between nominalists and conceptualists.

For the nominalists in general, names alone can enter a significant discussion. That is if we can legitimately commit to anything, it is only language. According to them, universals and particulars too are nothing but names.

In conceptualism, spatio-temporal existence plays only a

1 We have used conceptualism in the traditional sense. However, there is a controversy which is not yet settled over the meaning of the word concept. C. W. K. Mundle, in his 'Critique of linguistic Philosophy' calls concept, 'a word'.
minor role. We have already seen that the conceptualists believe in the subsistence of entities. Hence, 'existence' of an entity plays only a minor role. If they do exist, they are welcome to be used as instances. Beautiful objects may exist as the instances of 'Beauty' which is a subsisting entity.

With the help of such a modified use of the word existence (which is called subsistence by the conceptualists) the conceptualists try to frame the theories of universals and particulars.

Their framework is sometimes called a conceptual framework. In a conceptual framework, the words are meaningful and significant, but they need not have an existing counterpart in space and time. Such words are also called abstract words but we must be careful when we call a word, an abstract word. There is a tendency to think that abstract words have no existing counterparts in space and time. But this may not be the case always. We may take an instance of 'cow' when we use 'cow' as a common noun. The word 'cow' has a definite counterpart, which is the object cow. And such a word as cow, which has a definite counterpart in space and time is the proper-noun.

2 That the word 'proper noun' has a different meaning in grammar, we are aware. But proper noun in philosophy should mean an individual. I maintain the distinction between the word and its referent; each word which has a concrete referent (either in actual or possible world) is a proper noun. Thus, I call a 'particular cow' a proper noun. That we may 'name' a cow conventionally is a different matter - and grammar would call this name, a proper noun. Only 'this', 'now' and 'here' are true indicators of a proper-noun.
The word 'cow' which does not have a counterpart in spatio-temporal existence, is also an entity according to conceptualist. This is because it has 'subsistence' even if no existence, and 'hence', having at least subsistence, it is meaningful and significant.

(a) **Abstract Entities**

Now, often such entities which do not have any counterparts in spatio-temporal existence, but yet subsist, that is to say, yet do become meaningful, are called abstract entities.

Locke, in spite of his claiming to give an empirical philosophy, gave a theory of abstract ideas. An empiricist then, will have to give up some of the principle features of empiricism, if he wants to hold the theory of abstract ideas. (Abstract idea and abstract entity have a slight difference). An abstract idea is more comprehensive, because it may also include other aspects which are not entities. For instance, pegasus; or even beauty may be called an abstract entity. But shall we call 'efficiency' an abstract entity? We do not have a well-formed idea of efficiency, as we have of pegasus. Pegasus is well-defined in its own universe of discourse. Nor do we have such holistic instances of efficiency, as we have of beauty. We can point out beautiful objects, but not efficient objects. Of course, we may only say that Mr. X
is efficient. And our reference is to Mr. X, not efficiency. We predicate efficiency of Mr. X, but, as regards the 'referent' of efficiency as such, we do not have any proper suggestion.

But, when we say that Miss 'X' is beautiful, we may follow the same analysis and say that 'Miss X' has a referent. But, here, even the predication beautiful has a reference, which is 'Miss X' (and the other objects which too may be called beautiful). Thus, the kind of backing that 'beauty' has, is found lacking in 'efficiency'.

In other words, efficiency is not as complete a word as beauty. Waismann calls such words 'essentially incomplete'.

Such 'essentially: incomplete' words, then do not have individuals as their referents.

And this is the important point to note: abstract entities have individuals as their referents, abstract ideas do not have individuals as referents, but only some internal constituent of that individual. And this internal constituent is not at all a subject of independent analysis. It has to be recognised only within the individual or to speak still generally, within the system.

Coming back to the point of empiricism, it cannot account for the existence of abstract entities. (and they do not recognise
subsistence). Locke had tried to give an account of abstract ideas inspite of calling mind 'Tabula Rasa'. 'Abstract Ideas' are 'there' to letter the mind. Berkeley has given historical criticism of Locke's abstract ideas. But even he failed to fulfil the empirical promise with which he began. He invented the Divine Mind to house such ideas, when he found that human mind could not stand the challenges of various doubts. Both, Locke and Berkeley, the so-called conceptualists, were legitimately criticized by Hume. Thus, Locke and Berkeley could not give a satisfactory account of abstract ideas. Obviously, they could not give a satisfactory account of abstract entities too.

We have dealt at some length with abstract ideas, because a discussion on abstract ideas is often combined with the theories of universals. And, the theory of universals then, becomes a special case of the theory of abstract ideas.

(b) Psychological Theories

1. These theories of Locke and Berkeley are also termed as psychological theories of universals. These theories too hold that one word can apply to many things due to the mediation of concepts only. Locke's explanation is psychological because he calls the abstract, general idea, the 'workmanship of mind', that is, workmanship of understanding. But then, he makes a digression from such an explanation. He says that this workmanship has its roots in the material world. Things in the
material world are similar and hence, the mind becomes imaginative so as to invent the abstract, general entity. Therefore, should we call him a consistent conceptualist? Of course, this question does not hinder our discussion since we are not taking into account the details of the historic development of the problem, nor are we interested in labelling an author under some 'ism'. Our concern, on the other hand, is to point out the non-domination of any 'ism' over the problem. It will be our concern here to show that the framing of the problem will be more decisive than looking for the answer beforehand. We do not suggest that the problems are not framed at all by these 'isms'. We just suggest that the framework of the problem should be studied at great length first, and then alone some answer should be attempted.

Though, Locke might be called a conceptualist for some aspects of his theory, and perhaps, even a realist from the other aspect. Berkeley criticised him on empirical grounds. He replaced Locke's abstract idea by an idea which "considered in itself is particular, but becomes general by being made to represent or stand for all other particular ideas of the same sort" (Cf. Principles of Human Knowledge - Introduction).

But Hume has criticized them both as inconsistent empiricist. Later on, Wittgenstein too said, "What similitude
and what representation? In the end, both, Locke's concepts and Berkeley's images are completely identifiable only by their use. 'In order to recognize symbol in the sign, we must consider significant use' (Tractatus 3.526).

Thus, the so-called conceptualist theories were called psychological theories and Locke and Berkeley serve apt instances. The theory propounded by Locke, is modified by Berkeley, criticized by Hume and rejected by Wittgenstein to make room for his use theory of meaning of the words. In this last connection then we will have to examine in brief the view that it is not possible for us to step out of the linguistic framework, neither in detail, nor in general. Especially in the problem of universals and particulars who have for their home-discipline, the ontology. And if there is any choice, it is only in deciding the ontological commitments, not in selecting a non-linguistic framework. We have no choice but to accept the conventional language.

Of course, language is not indispensable to all problems and their solutions. It may be replaced by symbols and numbers, as is done in some highly technical systems of logic, and in mathematics in general.

2. Traditional Theories - Realism - Conceptualism

Realism too, is a traditional theory with ample diversions. The principle of realism is existence. Things have spatio-temporal
existence. Universals and particulars too have existence. But the existence of universals is not on the same par as the existence of particulars. This point is not stated in such a fashion as this, but as much is meant by the realists. The realists (the instances could be cited, but not very essential here. Though some of Indian philosophers like Naiyāyikas and Vaiśeṣikas and some of the Western philosophers like Russell, a pluralist) are often classified under this school. Though it is not necessary to classify a particular philosopher under any of these schools.

Our principle interest is to concentrate our discussion on the principles (of classification) of these theories and the subsidiary theories which come to be classified under these. We have recognised the principle that underlies the conceptualist explanation of universals and particulars.

There was lack of sufficient clarity regarding the principle of classifying universals and particulars. Abstract entities which do not exist are called universals alright. For example, 'nobility' may be called a universal.

But, on the grounds of not having a spatio-temporal existence, should we also call 'pegasus' a universal? 'Pegasulessness' may be called a universal, but it is absurd to multiply fictitious entities.

So, the fictitious entities will pose problem for conceptualists.
Other kinds of abstract entities (our sole ground for calling them abstract is their non-existence) are also called general names or collective names, or classes, or even sets.

These 'groups' too, cannot have existence. Their members and their instances may exist. But the general name as such does not exist. For example, the general name 'man' does not have existence; nor does the class of finite members on a series. Hence, they are called universals.

But, the abstract entities, the abstract ideas, the general names, classes, groups etc. are not on the same par. They may be looked upon as having only one factor in common, and that is this; their names do not refer to anything concrete. So, non-reference of the name to the concrete individual has lead the conceptualists to call them universals.

But even this is not followed consistently, because a single pegasus will be called a particular, a single number two on an arithmetical series will be called a particular, a single object may be called an instance of beauty and hence particular. Now, the discrepancy is quite clear.

Pegasus, and a number, inspite of having no existence, are called particulars and not universals.

An instance of beauty, which has an existence, is also called a particular.
The class of men, whose members have existence, is called universal.

But nobility, which does not have members (for, we do not say that this 'piece' of nobility, as we say 'this man'. To put it technically, nobility cannot be quantified) is also called a universal.

What is then the principle? It seems to be the numerical entities. If there are more than one entities then their group-name should be called a universal, but if there is one entity, it should be called a particular.

But this naive explanation is not only defective but uninformative. It also multiplies the problems. For instance, should two entities (or a class of two entities) be sufficient ground for them to be called 'universals'? How many members in a class should there be in order to be called a universal? What about null-class?

Conceptualist may answer one question at a time, each time using a different principle of classification. For example, he may use 'number' as that which classifies some entities as 'universal characteristics', and a solitary thing, as a particular. It is interesting to note that conceptualism cannot consistently give a concrete example of universal.

(then it will be a universal particularised. Aristotle talked
of 'concrete universals'. But, such concrete universals cannot be distinguished from concrete particulars because both universals and particulars in this case are concrete and many). So, what is the principle? Now certainly not a substratum that subsists; not even number.

Such a theory then seeks an explanation which has inclination towards realism. Not that realism has any satisfactory programme in relation to the questions that are framed regarding the problem. But, the very formulation of the questions will be different. Instead of asking for instance, for the principle that distinguishes concrete universals from concrete particulars; the question is asked thus "Are universals existing entities?" Or, "Do universals exist?"

The questions are formulated in the language that has the realistic tone. The answers will have to be found in the same language.

Or they would not be satisfactory.

Tooley, in his book on 'Theories of Knowledge' has pointed out that some theories could be classified under realism. The theories are called resemblance, recurrence and similarity; they are also called 'repetition of qualities' theories. The realistic element in them is this: Some entities have some common aspects, and these common aspects may be qualities,
relations or their combinations.\footnote{3}

Resemblanists would take a more or less total view of the entity and then say whether they resemble or not. For instance, they would say that this house resembles that; in this case, no specification is made in terms of which resemblance is made. Similarity view is not different than this. Things are more or less similar. Recurrence theory too suggests the same idea; some qualities and relations recur in different entities.

4. Wittgenstein's instance of family resemblance is a famous theory. Things which resemble, are those that belong to the same family. For instance, the family of red things; here, the things resemble each other in virtue of their being red. But these red things may also belong to the family of being round. Thus, the family of red things and the family of round things now have a common family, the family of red-and-round things.\footnote{4}

\footnote{3} Subtle analysis along scientific lines has pointed out the futility of such differentiations, both, logical and physical. But they are not so easily dismissed in philosophical analysis, because of the totality of approach in philosophy, which is not so specialised due to the very nature of the subject.

\footnote{4} However, I have not come across Wittgenstein's comment on such a family which is a conglomeration of two families.
We may multiply family of families, as Russell had suggested 'class of classes' (we shall deal with this point at some length in chapter eight, under 'Types in logic').

Wittgenstein has also cited an example of 'games' which he calls a family. He says, "The common factor among all games is that they are games". This proposition should not be interpreted in the light of extreme nominalists. They too believe that the common character between all shades of red is that they are red. They do not admit any other ground for calling them by one name (red) except that they are called red.

Quite the other extreme is maintained by the realists. They reject the nominalist view that the universals and particulars are just words, and say that the common character is really common.

If the analogy of family is continued on realist grounds, then it could be said that the similarity between brothers is not merely that they are brothers, (by verbal explanations), but also that there are other grounds like their being the male siblings. This phrase 'male sibling' of course means the same thing as 'brothers', but yet it is necessary because it prevents the position from being merely verbal.

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5 Family is a loosely constituted word. Its constituents, who are the members of the family, do not form a coherent whole.

6 Russell had pointed out the paradoxes to which the definition of class leads.
Thus, more than one principle may be involved in classifying the words as universals and particulars. And hence, often there cannot be only one answer to some such questions as "What is a universal?" or "What is a particular?" However, we may succeed in detecting the principles or principle of classification, if the questions are formulated from the ontological, epistemological or logical viewpoints; but otherwise, especially if the question is framed from the point of view of structural-functional nature of the world, then the answer becomes difficult. This is because the entire subject now deals with the relationship between the language and the world.

In order to have a consistent reply, the principle of classification should not be lost sight of. And this is what is often done by realists and conceptuallists. It is because they have not analysed their grounds with the help of choosing examples widely. They have on the contrary, adopted a policy of convenience and simplicity in explanation. As a consequence, there is no subtlety of analysis, but only a popular talk.

Also, in order to expect a consistency in explanation, a consistent and coherent system of thought has to be presupposed. In this system of thought then, all the theories will have to be accommodated, so as not to come in conflict. To use a metaphorical expression, we may say that they should be lubricated
with proper nomenclature, so as not to create any undue resistance. In such a system, which may be called a context or a universe of discourse, the different theories will have their places. If these theories are linked with each other, then they will have to be made flexible, so that the nomenclature has no rigidity, when the theories are communicated. If at all a unanimous answer is to be expected, it is only in such an accommodative system as this.

The problem then will have to be worded from the point of view of the principle of classification, and not from the points of views of differentiating instances, nor on the basis of any concrete or abstract criterion.

All these criteria, we have seen in the first chapter, are often confused. The possibility of detecting the principle of classification can be envisaged only in the language-system which is not rigid. Yet, the lack of rigidity does not make the principle non-technical and less precise.

6. The problem of universals and particulars was discussed by nominalists through different ages. However, it is not easy to compare all the periods of its developments with its recent form. They have very little in common. And now if anything is common between the explanations that go for nominalism, it is only the label.
Yet, it is possible to bring them under the principle tenets as was shown by Sorel in his book 'Nominalistic Theory'.

a. Criticism of the notion of a class, in as much as a class differs from the individual whole composed of elements.

b. No postulation of an infinity of objects.

c. Reluctance to treat predicates as expressions which designate non-individuals.

d. Objections to the use of such entities as concepts, meanings, senses, and propositions in the theory of meaning.

e. Preference for a syntax where expressions are construed as non-repeatable inscriptions.

f. Efforts to reconstruct or reinterpret portions of mathematics in such fashion that reference to number or classes is replaced by reference to concrete objects, individual inscriptions, or wholes which are determined by their least parts.

g. Advocacy of parsimony with regard to the number of distinct category of entities to which a theory makes reference, even at the expense of greater complexity in the construction of definition and proofs.

h. A tendency to identify individuals, if possible, with phenomenal data or with observable microscopic things or events. Concrete things are preferred to abstract items, actual entities
to possible ones, occurrent qualities to dispositional ones, and observables to theoretical constructs."

Now, it could be possible to group some similar points and try to detect the principle. In general, it has to be a non-commitment to reality, and that is all. In particular, it might be more precise.

Going at least by the general principle, the well-founded notion that 'at least particulars have existence if not universals', is also ruled out. Because both are nominal and have no existence. Then, on what other grounds are they distinguished? Can nominalism evolve a criterion of distinguishing them?

The only alternative to answering such questions is this: the universals and the particulars have no other difference but that of their linguistic positions.

Recent thought in nominalism now takes note of the applicability aspect of the language too.

No doubt, this suggestion seems promising towards a satisfactory explanation. Nevertheless, it demands the study of the language and its logic.

In other words, a study of the context in which the problem arises should be made. Otherwise, taken in its bare
form, no standard 'Ism' seems satisfactory.

IV. Element of Relativity in All Explanation

i. We have seen that the so-called standard theories have been propounded from a certain viewpoint.

The realists had for their viewpoint, the existents; that is, the universals and particulars exist. The conceptualists point of view was that, all that may exist, can be thought of, and all that can be thought of, may exist or subsist. The nominalists had for their viewpoint, a general principle of names having a linguistic reality.

The theories were propounded from a particular platform, which is sometimes obvious, sometimes obscure.

In order to minimise the relativism of explanation, a context, wherein all possible viewpoints may be accommodated, may be formulated. Such a context, which is not a relative position, but an attempt at minimising relativism, may be called a total context. Let us hint that it is quite possible even for total context to be considered relative, from the point of view of a more comprehensive view.7

ii. The total-context is an arbitrary concept. It is so, because we formulate it on the basis of our choice, as to what should be admitted and what should not be admitted in this

7 We shall have an occasion to discuss the status of universals and particulars from the point of view of infinity in Chapter VIII
concept. And hence, even this less relative concept is not quite objective as we attempted it to be. But there is one solace: at least it will be vulnerable, now not from the view-point of a particular theory which itself goes to constitute the total-context. But it may be attacked from some other angles. The very fact that we cannot allot cent-percent objectivity to any explanation whatsoever, forms the first limiting factor. We have to accept it with its limitations.

And expecting cent-percent certainty or objectivity of explanation itself is a misleading proposition. At least in philosophy, it is foolish to make such a demand, because 'philosophising', cannot be quantified or symbolised, nor is 'philosophy' a technique. It is a process, an enterprise, an investigation. And precision, certainty, objectivity and the other words suggesting exactness, belong to the same family. Their home-discipline is quantification; and quantification may be of matter or concepts; for example, half-bread is a quantified notion; so is number two.

But, can we also say, 'half emotion'? Can we say "she is not half as beautiful as her mother?" Even if we say so, it is only rhetorics, and not a calculation or a measurement. Obviously, emotion and beauty cannot be quantified, because their home-disciplines are not specific.
To wind up the point, we will contend that the total context is subject to an element of arbitrariness in its formulation.

iii. We shall take a positive approach. Is it not possible to give the context, a meaning which is not challenged from the other grounds? In other words, is it not possible to make the concept of 'total-context' determined? If it is determined, then it becomes fortified with its definite parameter.

That is to say, is it not possible to make it non-arbitrary, precise and definite? It is possible. It is possible because we have recently adopted some ideas from the field of logic. Not that the ideas as such are new to philosophy; but only the nomenclature. We are interested in the idea of the universe of discourse; and it is differently named as context, the range of applicability, the field of reference and also as 'the possible world'. We can decide beforehand what will comprise our universe of discourse. And having decided the constituents (on the basis of some authentic grounds of observations, inferences and functions), we have decided the nature of our total-context.

Thus, our context could be anything; linguistic, mathematical, logical, psychological, semantical, syntactical or pragmatic. There could be many more, but we do not intend
to discuss the formation of each; that is not our subject. But we must take into account the fact that the above-mentioned (and not mentioned) contexts may overlap. But as long as we decide their areas on the basis of some set axioms and rules pertaining to that field, we manage to keep the distinction neat and tidy. The neater the distinction, less is the overlapping, and more precise is the context. And more precise the context, less vulnerable it is.

Now when a certain definite context is accepted, the account of universals and particulars given in that context can very well be grasped. The idea of universals and the idea of particulars thus will depend on the context in which they occur.

iv. Then, what is the difference between the previous position (of 'isms') and this latter one? The previous position too was from a particular viewpoint; it formed a particular context too. And so is the case with the latter position. But the difference is there. The latter position incorporates all possible viewpoints. It considers the weight and influence of so many other factors and theories. And hence we call it the total-context. For example, the problem of universals and particulars is discussed from a particular viewpoint in the resemblance theory of universals.

Now, comparing things for resemblance does not make a total-
context. It is not total-context because it does not take into account the view-points of some other theories which could be accommodated for the account they give of universals and particulars. Resemblance is only from an empirical point of view. What about conceptual resemblances? Of course, realism—a theory which also incorporates resemblance, would give a sounder and richer context than resemblance. Yet, not so rich, as to form a total context, for realism does not include the view-points of other 'isms'. These other 'isms' are not in polar opposition to realism; they do not belong to an altogether alien field, say fine-arts. And hence, it is quite legitimate to expect them to be accommodated in an explanation which has common subject-matter: the subject-matter in this case is to give an account of the universals and the particulars. Since realism misses some salient points of other such explanations, we say that realism too has not satisfied the standards of total-context to a sufficient degree.

Thus, realism too, does not form a total context.

On similar grounds, conceptualism and nominalism, too could be rejected for total-context.

v. Then what forms the total context?

Before we attempt a fuller discussion of the notion of context in the ensuing chapters, let us state in brief, the
conclusions arrived at by Aaron in his book 'Theory of Universals'. He says that none of the 'isms' so far put forth, are satisfactory. Aaron does nothing else than to analyse the idea behind 'Universal' and thus, postulate a principle of classification.

He also considers whether the problem, is the problem of using general words: well, not totally; but by general word, if we understand even the non-verbal element that goes to compose its meaning, then perhaps we may look upon the problem as the problem of using a general word in our system of thought. Thus in admitting the 'name' as verbal and non-verbal, both, the nominalistic and the realistic tendencies are included. Moreover, in relating it to our thought system, a conceptualistic element is present too. In brief then, it is not possible to answer the problem in just one sentence as was attempted by some thinkers. It has to be answered in more than one sentence, at least two. This is what Aaron does. He says that the problem of universals is the problem of using general names, and also the problem of grouping 'resemblances, similarities and identities in nature'.

In one sentence we may say that it is the problem of giving a principle of classification.