CHAPTER V

THE ROLE OF CONTEXT
It is necessary to begin with a clear concept of 'context'. Because, as we proceed with our explanation, it might seem that the word is gratuitous, superfluous or only a substitute for something like say, what is meant by reference, or what is meant by the universe of discourse; or even what is meant by some technical terms like meaning, connotation-denotation, extension-intension, implication and entailment, and intended meaning.

Methodically speaking, it can be said that the context is the same as any of these above mentioned words; that the words reference and universe of discourse are the same as context, so that the substitution of any of these in stead
of the context will not distort the sense. True, that may be done. For instance, the reference to the 'morning star' is the same as the reference to the 'evening star'; the communication is perfect, because the intention of the speaker is conveyed without the loss of the intended meaning.

1. Context and Reference

All these aspects, the psychology of the speaker, the general rules of communication and the matter-of-fact spatio-temporal constancy, etc; are taken into account while deciding the reference (and its range). That all these aspects are not always present and equally prominent, that some other additional aspects may also be present, etc. are the considerations which shall be touched while deciding the 'context'. Of course, a possibility of giving a total context could be envisaged; though we may not always succeed, and hence the epithet 'total' is used only to distinguish possible from the 'matter-of-fact', to distinguish the 'context in particular'.

The instance cited by Frege of the morning star and the evening star is an instance of successful reference. Had there been some hitch in communication, had there been any discrepancy between the speaker's intended meaning and the hearer's interpreted meaning, in other words had there been some disturbance in the case, there would not have been
successful reference. Successful reference must fulfil some general conditions, at least of communication. Now, it is necessary to take note of the distinction which some authors would like to make between successful communication and successful reference. It is possible to argue that at times even though there may be successful reference, there may not result successful communication. Also, that whenever both, successful reference and successful communication (be it in the form of a single word or sentence) are simultaneous, then the communication and reference are contextually oriented.

Context and reference may be used interchangeably, but it is important to remember that the reference is used technically too. Range of reference is a general concept, reference is more particular. Again, reference is a relation between at least two parties; it may be recalled that the relation between subject and predicate, logical subject and predicate, individual description and predicate and the like nomenclature, is the relation of reference between say, subject and predicate. When this relationship can be made to extend between one and more, or more and more parties, then there is an extension of the range of reference. This range may comprise of different individuals, (entities, symbols etc.) depending on the subject-matter. The nature of the subject matter can at least give a vague idea, as to the extent of the range; also, whether the range may be extended to
incorporate certain parties.¹

The nature of the subject matter will only 'suggest' some glaring instances that would be member to this range. But it does not guarantee security from the attacks and challenges of the more sophisticated argument. In order to be more precise about the range of reference, it is desirable to have a criterion for including the members. (I have called it the principle of classification, and have analysed it at proper places). The criterion may be so obvious at times that it is not necessary even to take notice of it. For instance, in the sentence 'Man is rational', it is not necessary to worry about the principle of classification, and decide as to what should be allowed within the range of human being. Even when there is some problem regarding the range of reference in the sense that rationality may or may not apply to all men in fact; that it is applied, is de jure and not de facto.

But as far as the relation is considered only between manhood and rationality, there is no problem. Only when rationality is taken separately, does the problem of external relation arise. But as long as internal relation is concerned, 'Man... is rational' has a range of reference that is 'given'.²

¹ For the sake of brevity, I have chosen the word 'party' to cover 'subject-predicate' — and all such relational dichotomy.
² 'given' may be interpreted ontologically, linguistically — or in any other sense that suggests acceptability of the case.
But there are cases when the range of reference is not so easily decided; that is, we are not quite sure of its members. We may be able to include some parties under the range of reference, without however, being sure of the criterion; without being sure of the principle of classification. However, there may not be a problem with all members, but there may be a problem with some. It is called the problem of ambiguous reference. Many instances of ambiguous reference may be cited; but this is not related to the range of reference. Ambiguous reference occurs when more than one party are claimant to the description. For instance, when it is said that Mr. X has left the town yesterday, one may be baffled; for it is not stated 'which Mr. X'. There may be more than one Mr. X. Hence, the statement is not fully informative. It only states that someone has left the town yesterday, unless of course some further clarifications are offered. This is an instance of ambiguous reference.

But the problem of the range of reference is a bit different. What should allow us to include some party within the range? Here then, we will have to enter into some formal discussion, for it is necessary to determine the principle of classification first. And the principle becomes formal and rigorous as we approach the technical disciplines like logic and mathematics.

So, considering the question that we raised regarding the context and the reference, whether one could be used for the other, can now be answered quite satisfactorily. 'Context'
may be used for 'reference', but then it would diminish the rigour of the discussion, because context has a wider application; the principle of classification of context and the principle of classification of reference differ in their rigour and formality. Context is lax, reference is rigid. Thus, reference, range of reference and context may be arranged in a hierarchy in terms of their wider and wider extension.

Context may include reference and its range, provided they are well-formed. Unique reference such as 'the moon is the satellite' - where the reference to the moon is unique - may also be called a context.

But such a statement as this, that reference itself may be called context, requires explanation. I may be asked to differentiate between the context in which the entire discussion of calling the moon, a satellite, takes place, and the context in which I have called it a unique reference.

However, I have already chosen to make a distinction between context and total-context. So, when a statement is made like 'the moon is the satellite' it is made in an environment which is full of various objects, concepts and communications. The statement itself is made in a total context, with a definite reference which I said may be called context. Context and total context differ in kind itself, and not merely in degree.

Total context is multi-membered. It has various kinds.

---

3 Total context may be compared to the concept of infinity, especially in mathematics.
of objects, which may differ widely. So much so that some contradictions too may be resolved. For instance, the two contradictory statements like 'the earth is round' and 'the earth is not round' may be resolved from the point of view of developed scientific argument. (e.g. from the point of view of Einstein's celebrated theory of relativity - and its recent modifications).

But, from the point of view of the context, it cannot be done. Context is the concentration of the relatively selected field. An individual (a unit of a system) is an apt example of such a concentration. Even if the concentration spreads over a larger field, it still has some coherency or compactness which is lacking when we talk of total context.

Quine has pointed out that the words may be used in various contexts. He calls them 'Mass-words' like 'water', 'footwear', 'red'; he says that semantically, they have the property of referring cumulatively; it may be said that in semantic context, they have definite purpose. Grammatically (that is to say, in grammatical context) they resist pluralisation, nor do they take any articles (the, a, an).

2. Context and Universe of Discourse

4 E.C. Williams in 'Methods and Criterion of Reasoning', says that, "It follows that there is no limit to the precision with which a context may need to be determined; or, to put this in another way, what needs to be treated as one context in one context, may need to be treated as two or more contexts in other contexts". P. 55
Recent philosophy employs the phrase 'universe of discourse' in various fields; its home-discipline however, can be called the field of logic. Herein, the phrase is used for a definite, well-defined area of discussion. A universe of discourse in propositional logic and predicate logic, in modal logic and deontic logic etc. varies in detail. This is so, because the universe of discourse has a definite principle of classification which is sharper than any other field alluded to so far; like reference, range of reference, context and total context. They have their principle whose boundaries are not equally sharp, there being a degree of sharpness. Reference and range of reference have a sharp one, less sharp has the context, and the least sharp, the total context.

Thus, context and universe of discourse differ in exactitude. (Total context of course would incorporate both, since it is understood in the sense that it has the widest possible application). In the beginning of the chapter it was said that context is also understood in the sense of some such terminologies like causal relation, implication, entailment, etc. I have mentioned these, because the relation between two parties is often

---

5 R.C. Gilliam refers to the complete and incomplete context. Incomplete context may allow a place for something that is rejected in complete context. However, I insist on the concept of 'total context' to any other phrase used for a non-definite context, because total context suggests an overall relativity of the definite contexts without itself sounding deficient, like 'incomplete context'. *Ibid.* p. 37.
suggested by these. And the fields which incorporate the parties and their relation may be conceived as the context of discussion. However, ingenious analysis is offered by the philosophers to distinguish the three. I will contend that all these may be called as having a definite context, or even universe of discourse. It is sufficient to recognise that context has a wider application too — and total context, the widest.

It has been seen what the context is likely to be; it is likely to be the above mentioned terminologies. Yet, the suggested meaning of context is not exhausted by any of these. Although context is often talked of in any of these senses.

3. **Context — Its Formulation**

As yet, no positive method of forming the context is forthcoming. But the question 'what formulates a context' leaves enough scope for us to decide 'what is the context'.

In order to decide upon some such basic questions regarding context, the first requirement is to state the rules. The choice of rules will decide the principle of classification. And the choice of rules will be decided by the purpose. Thus, if the purpose is to obtain formal consistency, we shall choose the rules regarding formal logic. The principle of classification then, will be formal consistency. In this case,
the purpose and the principle coincide. Often they do. (Hence I would not insist on using the phrase 'principle of classification'; even 'purpose', 'function', and intention will serve the point sometimes).

The point of emphasis is this: the choice of the rules will help us to expect what 'context' should be. The analysis of the rules will help us to decide the nature of the principle involved.

The context which is analysed or formulated, either in order to choose the rules, or in order to analyse the rules, will expose a purpose, a design, a structure (or a logical structure) or, what I have called, a principle of classification.

However, a purpose may be latent, or it may be exposed. It remains latent when it is just expressed as to what should be the nature of the context. It is exposed when we try to analyse the context. But a purpose must be there; the principle must be there.

Now, while deciding the context, we have taken care to notice some of the affiliated concepts and terminologies that may be incorporated. We have also seen that the notion of total context may be used only to dissolve an issue and hence, it will not offer any satisfactory solution. Hence it is not even desirable to expect a definite answer to the questions.
that are raised regarding universals and particulars. Though of course, the notion of total context may be helpful in dissolving a knot - and that is all.

But what affects the discussion positively is the notion of context. Needless to elaborate on less (or) 'contexts' like range of reference, universe of discourse etc. because here, the purpose or the principle of classification is evident. Only when it is not evident do we care to enter into discussion. So, I shall concentrate on context and its role in

i. deciding the problem and

ii. solving or dissolving the problem.

1. In deciding the problem, it is necessary to examine the influence that the context has on words, and in turn, is affected by them.

It has been seen in the preceding chapters that some theories regarding the problem of universals and particulars were examined for their salient features. Although it is not necessary for the discussion to emphasise any 'ism'. These instances are taken note of, in order to understand the variations in contexts, and the variations in what is meant by universals and particulars. The fundamental concern of the discussion is to examine the role of the context. A universal in one context may not be the universal in other context.
4. Effect of Context on Words

This topic has been discussed in philosophy under different headings. The most evident ones are, connotation, denotation, intension, extension, names and their kinds, designation and even reference. It has received a detailed treatment under the problem of 'meaning'. But it has been done with different viewpoints for different missions in different fields. For example, the understanding of 'meaning' in fine arts and the understanding of 'meaning' in empirical sciences may be difficult to compare. At least in those instances it may be said that in fine arts, it carries the meaning 'impact' of the creation, while in empirical sciences, it is the procedure in the experiments.

But such shades in the meaning of the context itself, as mentioned before, presuppose many rules without showing any consciousness. And hence, whenever there is a shift in the emphasis of the context, it passes unnoticed. Now, if sufficient precaution is not taken over the rules of the contexts, one can easily be taken in by so-called 'problematic issues'.

Not that there are no genuine problematic issues; there are; and it is not easy to eliminate them on the grounds of definitional approaches. Max Black (In 'Problems of Analysis', Article 'Definition and Presupposition') has pointed out that
we are not entitled to admit what we did conceive while framing the definition. But even otherwise, it is difficult to wipe out what may be called natural classes, even by arguing like physicists. After all, it is not the definition or the minutest part of matter that decides the variety; so that any overlapping may be rectified by language or a theory of physical analysis.

There are some words which have upon them, a stamp of their field; not that they are the monopoly of that field. They may be used by the other fields too. I have emphasised that whenever the words are used in other fields, it is their metaphoric use.

So, if the primary meaning of the word is to be expected, then its home-discipline must be properly determined. It may form a problem in linguistics.

5. Linguistic and Non-linguistic Contexts

The natural contexts for any discussion are the linguistic and the non-linguistic. Any attempt to reduce them to only linguistic, will appear artificial.

Broadly speaking, the field of universals and particulars may be seen to be metaphysics - a non-linguistic context. The discussion need not be detained over the definition of metaphysics and its recent tendency to be called descriptive metaphysics, rather than prescriptive. If metaphysics forms the original
source of the words universal and particulars, then it is quite legitimate to pose the problems regarding them in metaphysics. Hence, the questions such as 'Do universals exist?', 'Do particulars exist?' are not only tolerated, but they are answered.

In different contexts, the meaning of the words varies slightly. Now, is this variation due to a linguistic element, or is it due to a non-linguistic element? If the latter, then perhaps the distinction between one universal and the other is valid. Types of universals can then be maintained. It will spell a metaphysical position; degrees of universality too, will spell a metaphysical position. Thus, both types and degrees will be non-linguistic suggestions. The only difference between the two will be their view on reality. Types of universals must suggest or imply pluralism; and degrees of universality must suggest monism. They must admit an ontological commitment. Quine's essay on ontological commitment has stated the point logically. It is quite obvious that quantification entitles you to an ontological commitment. 'Types' and 'degrees' suggest quantification, because 'types' definitely presuppose 'other types' and degree, 'any one type'. ONE is quantified. If it is questioned whether 'one' is quantified or not, then it requires an abstruse analysis of the meaning of ONE. This has

---

6 I distinguish between universal and universality. The latter has a wider range, the former however, may suggest only realistic tendencies.
been done by Indian philosophers of Sāṅkara's trend; and then, ONE is not quantified there. Since it is not quantified, there is no ontological commitment. Thus, 'ONE' is the sole universal. But, such an extreme position could be appreciated only from the point of total context, or infinity.

So, any account suggesting types and degrees is not an account which is purely linguistic.

In other words, the context, incorporates some non-linguistic elements. In turn then, the words used in that context too have non-linguistic meanings.

Linguistic contexts are so-called, not because they do not in fact correspond to existence, but because they are not expected to correspond to existence. If they do correspond to existence, or, if they do make a meaningful communication, or make a successful reference, then to that extent, the linguistic context has served an extra function. Since this is an extra function of language and not a necessary one, language cannot be devalued for not performing it. But if it does perform it, then it can be properly channelized towards a programme of establishing a relation between language and reality. Philosophers have constantly attempted it; due to such efforts, at least a disciplined field now seems to have been formed. A discipline in which language strata are seen
to perform this task of bridging language and reality, more and more efficiently.

I will have an occasion to take up this point again, where a case for metalinguistic context will be argued out, and a proposal whether language and metalanguage are related like particulars and universals, respectively – will be examined. The idea is rather queer; it has swung off the orbits of all the accepted meanings of universals and particulars. The latitude covered by the swing is so wide that the proposal may not even be noticed. But since it is the privilege of the metalanguage to sit in judgement upon the logical rigour of the linguistic statement, it may be given a brief thought.

Coming back to the linguistic and the non-linguistic contexts, it may be said that the theories are discussed with respect to these contexts; however, there is a difference in emphasis. Now, it has been said that the linguistic context need not exclude non-linguistic element; it often includes it, but does not emphasise it. But even if it does include, it remains linguistic context nevertheless. Non-linguistic element is contingent to its make-up, and not necessary.

But non-linguistic context must depend on linguistic element maximally. That there are other contexts, for example, gestural etc., does not rule out the contention that non-linguistic context must take help of language. Hence it may
be said that in non-linguistic context, the linguistic element
is necessary, not contingent.\(^7\)

Again, in non-linguistic context, linguistic element
plays only functional role, that of communicating. Hence, one
is not entitled to take into account its influence in discussing
the nature of universals and particulars in such contexts. I
have made this point because often, in order to do justice to
linguistic rules and rules of deep level analysis or logical
analysis or syntactical analysis (as is variably called by
recent philosophers like Tarski, and Chomski to give but the
evident instances), the non-linguistic element, which is the
spirit of the context at hand, is missed.

One does not violate the respectable rules of logic in
making the discussion context-dependent. This is so because,
in any significant explanation, a well-formed system of logic
is at work. It may be implicit. Yet, the explanation is not
illogical. The necessary consistency that an explanation
requires to be called logical, is present. Hence, whenever an
explanation is put forth as a theory, a system, an argument
or a proposition, so much thinking has already gone behind it.

I have examined briefly some of the prominent theories
that are discussed under the topic. It is interesting to note

\(^7\) Often, technical distinction is drawn between the contingent
and the necessary. That which can be logically controverted
is contingent, that which cannot, is necessary.
that maximum number of them fall under the non-linguistic classification, except nominalism (and neo-nominalism).

This is so because the non-linguistic contexts discuss the problem under the headings like realism and conceptualism. Under these headings again, other sub-headings can also be included. They are the theories like resemblance and recurrence in the realist line; theories like repetition and general names, may even be discussed under conceptualism. Realist theories have a definite meaning of existence; conceptualists, a qualified one. Due to such meanings and interpretation of the principle of classification, the contexts have non-linguistic loci.

There is another way of making the same point. It is called ontological commitment by Quine. But it is a narrower way of stating that a context is non-linguistic. A non-linguistic context may or may not be committed to ontological entities. It may however, extend its field to 'non-existents'. I will cite the examples of both existents and non-existents, which are committed to ontology. To say that 'There are universals' as do realists of Aristotelian, Platonic and even Husseillian type, is to commit to existence. (Needless to elaborate that existence is understood to mean existence in space and time). This is a non-linguistic context with an ontological commitment.
Now, in another instance 'Universals are relations', the context is obviously non-linguistic, and yet, there is no ontological commitment.

Relations do not exist in space and time as do chairs and tables. Relations may be of various types, depending on what they relate and how they relate. Also, sometimes they may function in spatio-temporal contexts and sometimes they may function in abstract context, as is the case here. There is no spatio-temporal context when we say, 'Universals are relations'. And yet it remains a non-linguistic context.

So, a non-linguistic context must have some metaphysical basis, either ontological or not.

A question can yet be raised in this connection. If 'there are' universals and particulars in some context (as is claimed by realists and conceptualists) then, is there a context in which there are no universals and particulars?

In other words, are such contexts available to us? Do we know of such contexts?

I will state one point here: I am not disputing over what has been called universals and particulars. That has been accepted on the grounds of their principles, respective to the theories.
So, the crucial question, as to what exactly may be called universals and particulars in this discussion may be answered only suggestively. The suggestion will be examined in the ensuing chapter. It is this: if the words are universals and particulars in the realists' sense of the word, then there can be a context in which they are not. Even if the context is extended to mean infinity, universals and particulars 'will have to be there'. Extending thus the boundaries of the context conceptually, does not dissolve the word existentially.

Thus, it may now be said that contexts are natural like some classes. But of course, the natural contexts that we can think of are, linguistic and non-linguistic. A non-linguistic context does not become linguistic by mere conceptual extension.

Or it will have to be contended that universals and particulars have only qualified status in the context that is not total context.

But as it has been said earlier for different reasons, one is not bound to justify anything more than what is due to the context. But what is due to the context? At least the linguistic element which is emphasised in the linguistic context and the non-linguistic element which is emphasised in the

---

8 I am aware that language may not be natural always. It may be constructed. But, to the extent that the tendency to communicate is natural, language too is natural.
non-linguistic context. And hence, if one argues successfully that the universals and particulars exist in non-linguistic contexts, one is perfectly at liberty to make an absolute assertion that they do. One need not even entertain the doubt that they may not face the logical or linguistic analysis.

"We are not bound to speak with greater precision than our context demands" says R.C. William (Cf. Methods and Criteria of Reasoning, P. 136).

6. **Universals and Particulars in Non-linguistic Context**

Universals and particulars are often called individuals in non-linguistic context. Of course, there are complexities that surround the word individual. Hence, whenever we use it, sufficient explanation of the word is necessary.

Any unit may be called an individual, be it a man, a chalkstick, a pool of water, or an idea. If an abstract word satisfies this expectation of being a unit, then that too may be called an individual, e.g. wisdom; of course, this is a rather far-fetched instance of abstract word passed as an individual. The point is elaborated by Goodman; he has argued but a case for the individuals in 'Structure of Appearance'.

**A Note on Individual**

An individual has been variously called as universal,
particular, abstract or concrete! Strawson, in his book 'Individuals' recognises them as both, abstract and concrete; he calls abstract individuals (such as the terms in logic) as non-particulars, and concrete things, shadows, and beings, as particulars.

There is the famous Quine-Goodman controversy over the concept of class. And often, individuals are called class, and concepts. However, they both reject classes, but for different reasons.

For Quine, class is an abstract entity and he hesitates to allot them a status of being the value of a variable. For Goodman, class is non-individual and hence it is not allotted any status, (after the nominalist vein).

However, Quine has shown the awareness of distinguishing the class from individual by maintaining that even if in some contexts the abstract entities may behave like concrete ones, they will show a tendency of designating an individual, rather than a class. In brief then, both Quine and Goodman uphold individuals.

Recent nominalism, would admit particulars as individuals; it would not admit non-particulars as individuals. A motor-car is a particular, but not the company which manufactures it. Hence, that which is particular alone may be called individual. In other words it is the meaning of the particular that would
decide the individuality of anything whatsoever.

But Goodman's analysis of individual depends on total context, and the total context is determined by the analysis that we accept. According to him, universals, particulars, abstract and concrete are all individuals. Of course, these must be predicables. Goodman contends that as long as we do not know the utility of a system, we cannot make its use adequately, no matter how easily it is available. Similarly, it is only after the determination of the method we wish to accept, that a context may be determined and individuals may be predicated.

Sometimes the subject of individual is discussed as a part-whole relationship. Both, part and whole may be accepted as individuals because they are both units.

Hobbe's contention though is interesting. According to him, every thing in reality (material world) is an individual. The invention of abstract entities (non-material world) is only pragmatic, so that the class of the concrete may be mentioned in a word. If at all there is a tendency to look for abstract individuals, it is due to nothing else than a linguistic pattern.

It is worth noting that in non-linguistic language, all discussion about universals and particulars, is the discussion
about individuals in Goodmanian sense. However, it may be qualified with existence; individuals which have no spatio-temporal existence, like pegasus, may not be called individual. But often they pass for individuals because they have a spatio-temporal context with an environment that is fictitious.

In linguistic context the word individual will involve a discussion on subject and predicate, logical subject and logical predicate, individual description and predicate description. But even then, it is always the individual (as a unit of a system) which is described as universal or particular.

7. **Logical Context**

Logical context plays a minor role in the discussion; especially in contemporary logic, wherein material mode of speech is neutralised as far as possible. It is not very enlightening to call the terms in logic, which may be constants, variables and symbols as universals and particulars. The relevant points have been mentioned under nominalism.

However, they will be treated in the ensuing chapters too. Granting that the terminology in logic is sophisticated, I will endeavour to bring out a common ground which underlies all talk of universals and particulars; or the ideas that suggest the same or similar meaning. I have talked of the principle of classification. The phrase 'logical structure' could have been
used too, but for some technical difficulties. Of course, whenever the phrase 'Principle of classification' is used by others, e.g. Aaron, it means differently. I have chosen it, since it best serves the purpose of a contextual analysis such as this. It suggests the criterion that would decide the word as universal or particular; the criterion, as it were, 'classifies' them on the basis of some principle. The discussion in the preceding chapters was regarding the analysis of such principles that were consciously or unconsciously assumed by the advocates of various theories.

8. The Role of Context

Often, a word in one context may mean different in other context. Does this mean that the word has no steady meaning? If context is capable of manipulating the meaning of a certain word, then such a word is problematic for being the constitution of 'one theory'.

In spite of the presence of such words in language, it has been possible to formulate respectable theories in all disciplines. This is not due to the presence of some 'constants' in language, but also due to some sort of 'constancy' in language.

What sort of constancy is this? Of 'structure' of the context as a whole, or is it the constancy of some of 'the parts'
of the context? Certainly context is made up of parts, which are called individuals in the non-linguistic context.

In the linguistic and the logical contexts, they may be called subject, predicate, terms, copulae, symbols, etc. Again, it is this point that is interesting; the point that universals and particulars are parts of the context (structure of the context), not the context itself. No context is universal and no context is particular. We need not think of total context and partial context, and argue that partial context is particular from the point of view of the total context which is universal. The context is not entertained at all because 'context' is no part; it is not an individual, nor a subject, predicate, symbol etc., which constitute the context itself. Now, even a partial context is not a part of the total context. In order to be a part of anything, the basic composition cannot be different from that of the whole. Now, there is no such condition that a partial context is necessarily a diminutive of the total context. It has been said that they may be drastically different. For instance, what basic composition can be common between the discipline of numbers and the disciplines of empirical sciences like geology? They are both different contexts. And yet, when we speak of total context we may take note of all possible contexts either implicitly and/or explicitly.
Thus, one can quite convincingly proceed by saying that context is no part, and hence not an individual, and hence, not a universal or a particular.

Thus, universals and particulars are not the contexts themselves but their composites or parts.

The reason for this deliberation is this: some theories are not very keen on making proper distinctions in terminology; as a result, they mistake the context for a part, and call it universal.

Some well-known instances are here: 'cowness' is universal, cows are particulars. An instance from Platonic thought is this; 'Utopia' is universal, and this world, (which is the poor replica of it) is particular. Aristotle's 'perfect horse' qualified with existence is universal. All other horses which resemble it more or less are particulars.

9. **Effect of Context on Words**

The above instances could be examined; 'cowness' certainly has its own context. The context is non-linguistic and non-spatiotemporal. It is not necessary to argue how the context is determined, nor is it pressing to answer the challenges of the critics who may argue that we already assume what is to be shown and proved. But on the basis of the discussion on context, we are not entitled to show that 'there are' universals and
particulars. The attempt is to understand the situation in which they are used and thereby, try to understand 'what it is, that is called universal and particular'. There may not be a clear-cut reply forthcoming. But the thesis is an attempt to examine such claims to 'one reply', in their own contexts. Thus, I do not begin with a scratch, but accept the obvious contexts, wherever possible. Otherwise the context has to be determined through analysis.

Hence, let me accept that 'cowness' has a context of its own. One who challenges the acceptance will have to clarify his position first; he will have to maintain that the word 'cowness' is totally new to him. Then of course, he could be answered by examining the roots of the language development.

Or, he must be skeptical about the meaning of cowness. Then he could be answered by pointing out a herd of animals and asking him to call them cows; also inform him further that any 'similar' animal may be called a cow. He will be able to do it. If further asked, 'what enabled him to call the animal 'cow' and not 'dog'?' In the absence of any other technical answer, the commonplace reply would be 'cowness'. Well, the context then is grasped, and that is all that is required to understand whether 'cowness' is universal or not.

This popular example has been chosen in order to suggest a method. So that the anticipated challenges in any
other contexts could be answered by

i. examining the genuiness of the question. That is to say whether the question is asked just for the sake of argument, as is the case in the above instance.

ii. discovering the metaphoric use of some words, which then lead to further complications. If a word is used metaphorically, it should be so recognised and remembered while entertaining a discussion on it.

In this connection I can think of the famous instance. It is Quinian fashion to maintain that quantificational logic need not presuppose any ontological commitment, after his essay, 'To be is to be the value of the variable'. It is enough if we are able to make successful reference. That is to say, 'some X' need not have spatio-temporal existence. The word 'some' suggests quantity but it need not suggest existence. This is the theme of the essay.

But I differ on the point that 'quantity' has a definite meaning. Its meaning is due to its spatio-temporal context. If at all it is used in other contexts, it is used metaphorically. In other words it may be said that the word 'quantity' has an extended meaning which is not limited to its original spatio-temporal context.

This assertion may be examined further.
It is often said 'He is not half as wise as his father'. But 'how much' less? There is no precise answer because wisdom is not concrete and hence cannot be measured in fact. Other examples are, 'Two is half of four', or 'hemisphere is half of sphere'. But can it be said in the same vein that 'good' is one-third of 'best' (because 'good', 'better' and 'best' is the ordered hierarchy of positive comparative and superlative degree)? The talk of 'quantifying' the 'abstract' even arbitrarily sounds rather harsh. This is because the word has a definite meaning, and when the word is twisted into different shapes than the original, there is all hesitancy in accepting it. 'Half' is used only metaphorically then. It is rhetoric way of suggesting a diminutive. It need not have an independent context of its own. With this implicit understanding in communication, the statements having 'some idea', 'half knowledge', 'few moments' are passed as a mode of speech. (Technically speaking it may be argued that they are not the logical subjects).

Thus, it is necessary to understand the meaning of the word which is due to its context.

10. Non-individual

'Gownness' is not an individual. It is not the 'part' of the context, but an outcome of analysis. It may be looked upon as a representative of abstract, non-linguistic context.
Since it is not individual, it may not be called a particular or a universal. This is because non-individuals are neutral words, which have either grammatical or logical function to perform. They do not interest us for philosophical analysis. And hence we say that the interest of philosophy can be in individuals in any determined context. To explain with an instance: a philosopher is not principally interested in 'a', 'the', 'an', 'is', (except in the contexts where they are used metaphorically). There is the respectable tradition of linguistic philosophers who minutely analysed 'a', 'an', 'the', 'this', 'is', 'no', etc. Russell and Wittgenstein are the famous names in analytic philosophy.

I will take the example of one such analysis, the analysis of 'is'.

Does it mean 'identity', 'assertion', 'tie', 'copula' or 'existence'? It is used to mean differently in different sentences (it is used metaphorically). Grammatically speaking (and this is its original context), it is a singular verb in present tense, and that is all. If this was not the case, and if it had some other context as its home-discipline, then why do we not say 'Individuals are symbols in logic'? This does not signify much. There is no meaningful communication. It is because, the meaning of 'is', which is due to its grammatical context is this: it is a singular verb in present tense, and is preceded by singular nouns. The rest of the meanings of
'is' are due to the contexts which are not its own and hence they affect its primary meaning or twist it beyond recognition. For instance, there is an elaborate discussion over the interpretation of 'is' as 'identity'.

Repeated use of such extended meanings often blur the original context. Thus, 'is' is not an individual since it does not form the part of the context (other than the grammatical) but gets its meaning due to the context. In order to be the part of the context the word must be the constituent of it.

If the context is merely linguistic (for example, merely grammatical), then its constituent parts will be its terms. They are nouns; that is to say, grammatically they are subject (that which is stated) and object (that about which something is stated). In grammatical contexts, parts of speech are its constituents.

Thus, it is observed that if at all a symbol in logic or language invites attention, it is because it is used as an individual, as a constituent of a context.

11. **The Role of Context and Principle of Classification**

The role of the context is to decide the principle of classification. Once it is decided, the rest of the process of deciding the universals and particulars is nothing but
applying the principle to the instances. In the non-linguistic contexts, they are individuals.

In the linguistic contexts too they are individuals, but may be called as terms or names. Here, the principle of classification will be linguistic rules and conventions, but not existence which is the principle of classification in non-linguistic contexts.

In logical contexts, the principle of classification will be rules of logic and axioms; it is neither existence nor rules of language.

An admixture of all these principles without proper analysis leads to complications, where the problem at hand becomes very much involved.

Nevertheless, there is an undercurrent of peculiarity in all explanations on universals and particulars.

These principles of classification, if rigorously analysed, will bring out interesting results.

And hence, the problem of universals and particulars is discussed even after the strong anti-metaphysical movement—perhaps with a renewed rigour and interest.

...