

A TYPOLOGY OF WHAT THERE IS

INTRODUCTION

1. One way of understanding the world is to establish what it is made of.

2. The establishing of what the world is made of is partly a matter of fact and partly a matter of analysis (or classification, or setting of boundaries, or definition).

3. This paper does not deal substantially with any matter of fact. The main thrust is in the direction of analysis by classification; and it includes an array of definitions of the proposed classes.

4. The matter of fact involved in establishing what the world is made of may be formulated, with regard to any questionable component of the world, thus: Is it in fact a component of the world? For example, if one has defined a hippogriff as a winged horse, the pertinent question of fact would be whether one can find such an animal in the ordinary world of space and time.

5. If, however, instead of defining a *hippogriff* and asking the pertinent question of fact about a hippogriff, one defines the *hippogriff nature* as the attribute or essence of being a winged horse, one can relevantly either (a) ask, as a question of fact, whether that attribute or essence is exemplified anywhere in the ordinary world of space and time, or (b) realize that, as an attribute or essence, the attribute or essence of being a hippogriff is a component of the class of attributes or essences merely by virtue of being a namable attribute or essence. One can also do both, i. e., in the first place, ask about exemplification and, in the second place, notice or realize that the attribute or essence is by its own character a member of the class of attributes or essences.

6. Thus, I am assuming, or postulating, for the purpose of this paper, that every namable attribute or essence is, merely by virtue of its being specifiable, a component of the class of attributes or essences. This is not to say that every component of

the class of attributes or essences is exemplified in the ordinary world of space and time. Indeed, of all attributes or essences, one can say that some are actually exemplified in the ordinary world of space and time, others have the potentiality of becoming so exemplified, and still others—like the attribute or essence of being a square circle—do not have even the potentiality of becoming so exemplified.

7. At this stage of my project, some philosophical readers may object that my proposed classification is not so innocent of factual presupposition as I have pretended it to be. For, they will argue, I have proposed to include attributes or essences in the list of components of the world, whereas such inclusion is actually a matter of controversy, the nominalists rejecting and the ontological realists accepting such inclusion.

8. My reply to that accusation is: By including attributes or essences in the list of components of the world, I am not asserting what the ontological character is of these attributes or essences. I am not saying that they are "real" in the sense in which nominalists and ontological realists disagree over whether "universals" are real. I am only contending that if we even *talk* about attributes or essences (and say that they are real or that they are unreal), they are *ipso facto* "talked-about entities" for my purposes.

9. What I propose to do, thus, is to exhibit, by proposing classifications, the broadest components of the world (in the most liberal sense of "components") and to show, by the same procedure, how these components are themselves composed of smaller and smaller components, until the individual things, persons, events, attributes, etc., of everyday experience or reflective recognition are identified, and classified.

10. The process of classifying the major and minor components of the world is comparable, as regards the cosmos, to Linnaeus' project, *vis-a-vis* the world of plants. It is also analogous to the mapmaker's art, in that it shows the location and boundaries of things and some of their interrelations.

11. Whereas the test of a statement of fact is its accuracy, and the test of a scientific theory is the simplicity and comprehensiveness with which it describes the states of affairs purportedly

covered by it, the test of a classification is whether it "carves reality at the joints"—whether each class into which it divides things is a natural and basic, rather than a superficial, grouping. Thus, a classification of Asians into those who live in the Indian subcontinent and surrounding areas, those who live in Siberia, etc., would be better—for the purpose of setting out to understand Asian cultures—than a classification of Asians into those whose family names begin with the letters *A* to *F*, those whose family names begin with *G* to *M*, etc., because the former breakdown comes closer to carving reality at the joints, i. e., each class in the former breakdown is a more natural and basic grouping (for the purpose of understanding Asian cultures) than is each class in the latter breakdown. (The sense in which the words "natural" and "basic" are used here can be specified.)

12. A given group of components of the world may sometimes be usefully broken down in more than one way. Thus Asians may also—in addition to being classifiable according to the regional breakdown—be usefully classified, for some purposes, into those who are self-employed, those who work for others for pay, and those whose livelihood is derived in some other way; into those who are of voting age and those who are not; into those who live in urban areas and those who live in rural areas; etc. i. e., reality may be carved at the joints in more than one way. (For some purposes, indeed, a classification into those whose family names begin with a letter from *A* to *F*, from *G* to *M*, etc., might be appropriate.)

13. The present paper presents a breakdown of the components of the world into two classes; it also presents a breakdown of each of the two classes into subclasses; and in some cases it presents further breakdowns into sub-subclasses.

14. The most general kinds of things in the world are : entities and attributes.

(This breakdown into entities and attributes is intended as a way of avoiding the disputed issue over whether there are, first, qualityless substances and, secondly, qualities which the qualityless substances "take on," or "assume," or "participate in," i. e., for example, the issue over whether a hard, brown chair consists of a chair-without-hardness-or-brownness-or-other-qualities, with

the addition thereto of hardness and brownness. What I here call "entities" are *not* qualityless; an atom, which is an example of an entity, *does* have attributes. My division is a division into first, the entities which there are in the world—entities, that is, which have attributes but are viewed in the perspective of being entities, without emphasis on their attributes—and, secondly, the attributes which are there in the world, whether or not they characterise specific, timebound entities.)

I. ENTITIES

15. Entities are things which are not attributes of other things.

16. Examples of entities are: birds, atoms, sentences, couples, tomorrow, this room, ideals.

17. As suggested in paragraphs 11 and 12, entities may be broken down into kinds, or classes, by various cross-sectionings, just as a circle may be bisected by various diameters.

18. Six cross-sectionings or bisections of the class of entities are to be described below. Only the sixth of these will itself be broken down into subclasses and sub-subclasses. The first five breakdowns—or modes of classifying entities—will merely be touched on, and the further breakdown thereof will be left to the reader's creative imagination.

A. First Breakdown

19. Entities are of two kinds: actual and nonactual.

The Actual

20. An actual entity is one which can be apprehended, at least in theory.

21. Examples of actual entities are: Julius Caesar, as a living being, in 55 B. C.; Julius Caesar, as an historical figure, today; space and time; the Rock of Gibraltar; solutions of certain mathematical problems.

The Nonactual

22. A nonactual entity is one which cannot be apprehended, even in theory.

23. Examples of nonactual entities are : Julius Caesar, as a living being, today; the Trojans with their ongoing civilization, today; tomorrow's breakfast; a breakfast which will never be prepared; a negative mathematical product of positive integers. (This is not to say that "Julius Caesar, as a living being today," as a concept, cannot be apprehended, but only that Julius Caesar, as a living being, today, cannot be seen or heard.)

B. Second Breakdown

24. Entities are of two kinds : absolute and relative.

The Absolute

25. An absolute entity is one whose essence does not involve a counterpart.

26. Examples of absolute entities are : men, stones, atoms.

The relative

27. A relative entity is one whose essence involves a counterpart.

28. Examples of relative entities are : husbands, rivals, remainders, products.

C. Third Breakdown

29. Entities are of two kinds : phenomena and noumena.

Phenomena

30. A phenomenon is an entity which is apprehended primarily by means of the senses.

31. Examples of phenomena are : people; rain, gold.

Noumena

32. A noumenon is an entity which is apprehended primarily by means of the intellect.

33. Examples of noumena are : nations, time, meanings.

D. Fourth Breakdown

34. Entities are of two kinds : numerable and nonnumerable.

The Numerable

35. A numerable entity is one which can meaningfully have a number prefixed to the word designating it, in the singular or the plural.

36. Examples of numerable entities are : stones, men, atoms.

The Nonnumerable

37. A nonnumerable entity is one which cannot meaningfully have a number prefixed to the word designating it, in the singular or the plural.

38. Examples of nonnumerable entities are : stone, water, wood, rain, consciousness. (We do not speak of three waters, although the word "waters" is sometimes used, metaphorically; or of three rains, except in a special sense, namely, in the sense of three temporal actualizations of rain. When we speak of three stones, we are using the plural of "a stone," not the plural of "stone.")

E. Fifth Breakdown

39. Entities are of two kinds : natural and mysterious.

The Natural

40. A natural entity is one whose forms, and laws of behaviour, are discernible through scientific investigations.

41. Examples of natural entities are : men, planets, truths.

The Mysterious

42. A mysterious entity is one whose forms, and laws of behaviour, are beyond the scope of scientific investigation.

43. Examples of mysterious entities are : God, the Logos, Tao. (Here, as in the case of attributes or essences, I am not intending to presuppose—by mentioning God—that God "exists", in the sense in which some say that God exists, and others say that God does not exist. I am only intending to say something about the nature of God, just as I could say that a winged horse is winged, without committing myself to saying that a winged horse is to be found in the ordinary domain of space and time. In other words, in citing God as a certain kind of

entity in *this* breakdown, I am not saying that, in relation to *another* breakdown, God is an actual entity rather than a non-actual entity.)

F. Sixth Breakdown

44. Entities are of two kinds : the changing and the abiding.

Changing Entities

45. A changing entity is one which acquires or loses qualities.

46. Examples of changing entities are : men, trees, wood, planets, atoms.

47. Changing entities are of three kinds : time, physical entities, and vital entities.

48. *Time*—Time, which itself “changes” in the sense that time “elapses”, is the medium of change of other entities which change.

49. Of time, there are no “examples” in the usual sense, since time is not a class of things; but parts of time, or periods of time, could be cited as “examples” in a certain sense. Thus, one speaks of “early times”, of “different times”, of “changing times”, etc., as if time were a numerable entity; but it is, basically, nonnumerable.

50. There are no “kinds” of time, in the usual sense, as there are kinds of members of those entities which constitute classes, for time is not a class. In an unusual sense, however, one can speak of such “kinds” of time as : objective time, experienced duration, etc. But these are rather aspects of time than kinds of time.

51. Although, as has been said, there are, strictly speaking, no “examples” of “kinds” of times, there are parts of the totality of time. Such parts may be called “periods.”

52. The totality of time may be divided into periods in various ways (i. e., according to various breakdowns). Two of these breakdowns will be mentioned.

53. First Breakdown. Time (i. e., the totality of time) may be divided, from the human standpoint, into the prehistoric period and the historic period.

54. Second Breakdown. Time may be divided, from the standpoint of any "point" in time (a point in time is what is between any given period and the succeeding period), into the past and the future.

55. The past, from the standpoint of any point in time, is what preceded that point.

56. The future, from the standpoint of any point in time, is what is to come after that point.

57. The term "the present" refers to that portion of time which is "covered" by the moving point which divides the past from the future, for a more or less extended period in the life of the person who uses the term "the present."

58. *The Physical* — A physical entity is one the functioning or scope of which can be recorded or measured by a spatial instrument of observation (such as a camera, a Geiger counter, a tape recorder, a pressure gauge, etc.).

59. Examples of physical entities are : space, atoms, mountains, people's bodies.

60. Physical entities are of two kinds : space and matter.

61. Space. Space is the medium of motion.

62. Of space, as of time, there are no "examples" in the usual sense, since space is not a class of things; but parts of space, or locations in space ("places"), could be cited as examples in a certain sense. Moreover, one speaks, for example, of "the wide open spaces", or "the spaces between the lines on this page", as if space were a numerable entity; but it is, basically, nonnumerable. In other words, "space" means the whole of space, or (sometimes) a part of it, rather than a collection of it or a collection of kinds of it.

63. There are no "kinds" of space, in the usual sense, as there are kinds of members of those entities which are classes, for space is not a class. In an unusual sense, however, one can speak of such "kinds" of space as : absolute space, relative space, etc. But these are descriptions of space, from the viewpoint of different theories, rather than kinds of space.

64. As, when speaking of time, one can refer to (a) the present and (b) the past and the future, so when speaking of space, one can refer to (a) here and (b) there.

65. Matter. Matter is what moves.

66. "Matter" is another name for some or all material thing. For purposes of naming examples, the term "material things" is more suitable than "matter".

67. Examples of material things are : (a) atoms, rocks, wood, flesh, rivers, water, air.

68. Material things are of two kinds : (a) those which are "purely material" and (b) those which are the bodies, or living parts of the bodies, of living entities.

69. Examples of purely material things are: atoms, molecules pencils as pencils, pencils as things composed of molecules (or atoms, or subatomic entities), galaxies as galaxies, galaxies as things composed of molecules (or atoms, or subatomic entities).

70. Examples of material things which are the bodies, or living parts of the bodies, of living entities are: my body, your body, my left index finger, the cells that comprise the brain of the President of India, the trunk of a tree, the total material aspect of a tree.

71. *The Vital*.—A vital entity is the living aspect of a living being.

72. Examples of vital entities are: I (the person to whom such expressions as "my body" and "the pain which I feel in my finger" apply); you (i.e., you "behind the eyes" when I look at you); Jacqueline Onassis, apart from what you see when you look at her; a bee, apart from its material aspect; the living aspect of an amoeba; the living aspect of a tree.

(For vital attributes, such as life, personality, selfhood, intelligence, mind, spirit, and divinity, see *post*, paragraph 100).

Abiding Entities

73. An abiding entity is one which does not acquire or lose qualities.

74. Examples of abiding entities are: the class of numbers which are smaller than 37; any specified class, in so far as the specification of it as a class is not changed; the fact that the American Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776; the nature of the Declaration of Independence.

75. Abiding entities are of three kinds: concepts (as distinguished from conceptions), or "natures"; classes; and propositions.

76. A concept, or a "nature," is an unchanging description.

77. Examples of concepts, or "natures," are: the concept or nature of unity (any unchanging description or definition of unity), the concept or nature of morality (any unchanging description, not of the content of morality, but of the meaning of morality); the concept or nature of wood. It should be noted in this connection (a) that unity and morality are attributes, not entities, but the concepts of unity and morality are entities; and (b) while the concept or nature of wood does not change, our conception of it may change.

78. A class is a group of things (a group of entities or of attributes).

79. Examples of classes are: pairs, trios, null classes, solo classes. It should be noted that the number 3 is an attribute, not an entity (it is an attribute of a trio); but a trio is an entity.

80. A proposition is that which can be expressed by a declarative sentence.

81. Examples of propositions are: It is hot in Bombay today (i.e., the proposition expressed by the sentence "It is hot in Bombay today"); if A is larger than B , then B is smaller than A ; Julius Caesar was born in 1975; I shall not wholly die.

82. Propositions may be broken down in various ways: into those which are true and those which are false; into facts, which are particular, and truths, which are general; into those which are logical and those which are empirical; etc.

II. ATTRIBUTES

83. An attribute is something that characterises one or more things.

84. Examples of attributes are woodenness, color, the color red, equality, divinity.

85. As is true of entities, attributes also may be broken down into kinds, or classes, in various ways.

A. First Breakdown

86. Attributes are of two kinds: those which are actual and those which are nonactual.

87. Examples of actual attributes are: the attribute of being Julius Caesar, as a living being, in 55 B. C.; the spatiality of space; the hardness of the Rock of Gibraltar.

88. Examples of nonactual attributes are: the attribute of being Julius Caesar, as a living being, today; the attribute of being negative and positive in the same sense at the same time; the spatiality of the nonspatial.

B. Second Breakdown

89. Attributes are of two kinds: phenomenal and noumenal.

90. Examples of phenomenal attributes are: raininess, woodenness, hardness, sameness of length.

91. Examples of noumenal attributes are: temporality, meaning, sovereignty

C. Third Breakdown

92. Attributes are of two kinds: numerable and nonnumerable.

93. Examples of numerable attributes are: colors, sounds, virtues.

94. Examples of nonnumerable attributes are: color, sound, virtue.

D. Fourth Breakdown

95. Attributes are of two kinds: natural and mysterious.

96. Examples of natural attributes are: color, virtue, truth.

97. Examples of mysterious attributes are: divinity, primordality, infinity.

E. Fifth Breakdown

98. Attributes are of two kinds: temporal and atemporal.

99. Examples of temporal attributes are: permanence, priority, pastness.

100. Examples of atemporal attributes are: materiality; color, sound, size, and motion (all of which are physical attributes); experience, mind, intelligence, thinking, the thinking of a particular person, virtue, interest, personality, selfhood, spirit, and divinity (all of which are vital attributes); and mathematical equality, the attribute of being seven in number, implication, and truth (all of which are logical attributes).

F. Sixth Breakdown

101. Attributes are of two kinds: absolute and relative.

102. Examples of absolute attributes (also called "qualities") are: temporality, virtue, color.

103. Examples of relative attributes (also called "relations") are: equality, difference, similarity, identity, causality, priority, superiority.

Qualities

104. Qualities are of two kinds: substantive and non-substantive.

105. *Substantive Qualities*—Examples of substantive qualities are: (a) woodness, or being made of wood, as in "X is wooden" or "X is made of wood"; (b) being a body of water, as in "The Ganges River is—or has the attribute of being—a body of water."

106. *Nonsubstantive Qualities*—Examples of nonsubstantive qualities are: being large, or largeness; being good, or goodness; being red, or redness; being seven in number.

107. The most convenient way of classifying nonsubstantive qualities is to divide them (as in paragraph 100) into those

which are physical, those which are vital, and those which are logical.

Relations

108. Relations are of two kinds : relations of similarity and relations of difference.

109. Examples of relations of similarity are : equality, resemblance, identity, reflexivity, symmetry.

110. Examples of relations of difference are : causality, instrumentality (the attribute of being a means to an end), distinction, opposition, divergence, transitivity, being greater than, being later than.

III. EXERCISES

111. It should be possible to locate, in an appropriate genus or species of the above classifications, each of the things of everyday experience and each of the things found or postulated by scientific investigation.

In what class, for example, is music? It is a vital attribute.

In what class is negation? It is a logical attribute.

In what class are mornings? They are parts of time.

What are waves? They are physical attributes.

112. As exercises, you—reader—may wish to locate some or all of the following : poems, extrasensory perception, sex, force, events, meanings, science, law, enzymes, fish, plasma, griffins.

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