4b. The dependence of demonstration on univocal terms: formal fallacies due to equivocation

8 ARISTOTLE: Prior Analytics, BK I, CH 34 66b-c / Posterior Analytics, BK I, CH 11 [77a5-9] 105d-106a / Topics, BK VIII, CH 3 [158b8-17] 215b / Sophistical Refutations, CH 4 [165b24-166b21] 228b-229c; CH 24 [179b38-180a7] 247d-248a / Heavens, BK I, CH 11 [280b1-7] 371d-372a / Metaphysics, BK IV, CH 4 [1006a33-b12] 525c-d

9 ARISTOTLE: Rhetoric, BK II, CH 24 [1401a13-23] 650b

12 EPICTETUS: Discourses, BK I, CH 7 112b-113d

19 AQUINAS: Summa Theologica, PART I, Q 1, A 10, REP 1 9c-10c; Q 13, A 5, ANS 66b-67d

23 HOBBES: Leviathan, PART I, 57d-58a; PART III, 172a

35 LOCKE: Human Understanding, BK III, CH IX, SECT 15-16 288d-289c; CH X, SECT 22 297c-298a; CH XI, SECT 7-26 301a-306d passim

35 HUME: Human Understanding, SECT VIII, DIV 62-63 478b-d

36 STERNE: Tristram Shandy, 307b-308b

8 ARISTOTLE: *Prior Analytics*, BK I, CH 34 66b-c / *Posterior Analytics*, BK I, CH 11 [77^{a}5-9] 105d-106a / *Topics*, BK VIII, CH 3 [158^{b}8-17] 215b / *Sophistical Refutations*, CH 4 [165^{b}24-166^{b}21] 228b-229c; CH 24 [179^{b}38-180^{a}7] 247d-248a / *Heavens*, BK I, CH 11 [280^{b}1-7] 371d-372a / *Metaphysics*, BK IV, CH 4 [1006^{a}33-^{b}12] 525c-d

Prior Analytics, BK I, CH 34 66b-c

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48^{a} Men will frequently fall into fallacies through not setting out the terms of the premiss well, e. g. suppose *A* to be health, *B* disease, *C* man. It is true to say that *A* cannot belong to any *B* (for health belongs to no disease) and again that *B* belongs to every *C* (for every man is capable of disease). It would seem to follow that health cannot belong to any man. The reason for this is that the terms are not set out well in the statement, since if the things which are in the conditions are substituted, no syllogism can be made, e. g. if 'healthy' is substituted for 'health' and 'diseased' for 'disease'. For it is not true to say that being healthy cannot belong to one who is diseased. But unless this is assumed no conclusion results, save in respect of possibility: but such a conclusion is not impossible: for it is possible that health should belong to no man. Again the fallacy may occur in a similar way in the middle figure: 'it is not possible that health should belong to any disease, but it is possible that health should belong to every man, consequently it is not possible that disease should belong to any man'. In the third figure the fallacy results in reference to possibility. For health and disease, and knowledge and ignorance, and in general contraries, may possibly belong to the same thing, but cannot belong to one another. This is not in agreement with what was said before: for we stated[1] that when several things could belong to the same thing, they could belong to one another.

It is evident then that in all these cases the fallacy arises from the setting out of the terms: for if the things that are in the conditions are substituted, no fallacy arises. It is clear then that in such premisses what possesses the condition ought always to be substituted for the condition and taken as the term.

Posterior Analytics, BK I, CH 11 [77^{a}5-9] 105d-106a

So demonstration does not necessarily imply the being of Forms nor a One beside a Many, but it does necessarily imply the possibility of truly predicating one of many; since without this possibility we cannot save the universal, and if the universal goes, the middle term goes with it, and so

[1] 39^{a} 14-19.

demonstration becomes impossible. We conclude, then, that there must be a single identical term unequivocally predicable of a number of individuals.

Topics, BK VIII, CH 3 [158^{b}8-17] 215b

The hardest, however, of all definitions to treat in argument are those that employ terms about which, in the first place, it is uncertain whether they are used in one sense or several, and, further, whether they are used literally or metaphorically by the definer. For because of their obscurity, it is impossible to argue upon such terms; and because of the impossibility of saying whether this obscurity is due to their being used metaphorically, it is impossible to refute them.

In general, it is safe to suppose that, whenever any problem proves intractable, it either needs definition or else bears either several senses, or a metaphorical sense, or it is not far removed from the first principles;

Sophistical Refutations, CH 4 [165^{b}24-166^{b}21] 228b-229c

There are two styles of refutation: for some depend on the language used, while some are independent of language. Those ways of producing the false appearance of an argument which depend on language are six in number: they are ambiguity, amphiboly, combination, division of words, accent, form of expression. Of this we may assure ourselves both by induction, and by syllogistic proof based on this—and it may be on other assumptions as well—that this is the number of ways in which we might fail to mean the same thing by the same names or expressions. Arguments such as the following depend upon ambiguity. ‘Those learn who know: for it is those who know their letters who learn the letters dictated to them.’ For to ‘learn’ is ambiguous; it signifies both ‘to understand’ by the use of knowledge, and also ‘to acquire knowledge’. Again, ‘Evils are good: for what needs to be is good, and evils must needs be’. For ‘what needs to be’ has a double meaning: it means what is inevitable, as often is the case with evils, too (for evil of some kind is inevitable), while on the other hand we say of good things as well that they ‘need to be’. Moreover, ‘The same man is both seated and standing and he is both sick and in health: for it is he who stood up who is standing, and he who is **166**^{a} recovering who is in health: but it is the seated man who stood up, and the sick man who was recovering’. For ‘The sick man does so and so’, or ‘has so and so done to him’ is not single in meaning: sometimes it means ‘the man who is sick or is seated now’, sometimes ‘the man who was sick formerly’. Of course, the man who was recovering was the sick man, who really was sick at the time: but the man who is in health is not sick at the same time: he is ‘the sick man’ in the sense not that he is sick now, but that he was sick formerly. Examples such as the following depend upon amphiboly: ‘I wish that you the enemy may capture’. Also the thesis, ‘There must be knowledge of what

one knows': for it is possible by this phrase to mean that knowledge belongs to both the knower and the known. Also, 'There must be sight of what one sees: one sees the pillar: *ergo* the pillar has sight'. Also, 'What you profess to-be, that you profess-to-be: you profess a stone to-be: *ergo* you profess-to-be a stone'. Also, 'Speaking of the silent is possible': for 'speaking of the silent' also has a double meaning: it may mean that the speaker is silent or that the things of which he speaks are so. There are three varieties of these ambiguities and amphibolies: (1) When either the expression or the name has strictly more than one meaning, e.g. *ἀετός* and the 'dog'; (2) when by custom we use them so; (3) when words that have a simple sense taken alone have more than one meaning in combination; e.g. 'knowing letters'. For each word, both 'knowing' and 'letters', possibly has a single meaning: but both together have more than one—either that the letters themselves have knowledge or that someone else has it of them. Amphiboly and ambiguity, then, depend on these modes of speech. Upon the combination of words there depend instances such as the following: 'A man can walk while sitting, and can write while not writing'. For the meaning is not the same if one divides the words and if one combines them in saying that 'it is possible to walk-while-sitting' [and write while not writing]. The same applies to the latter phrase, too, if one combines the words 'to write-while-not-writing': for then it means that he has the power to write and not to write at once; whereas if one does not combine them, it means that when he is not writing he has the power to write. Also, 'He knows now if he has learnt his letters'. Moreover, there is the saying that 'One single thing if you can carry a crowd you can carry too'.

Upon division depend the propositions that 5 is 2 and 3, and even and odd, and that the greater is equal: for it is that amount and more besides. For the same phrase would not be thought always to have the same meaning when divided and when combined, e.g. 'I made thee a slave once a free man', and 'God-like Achilles left fifty a hundred men'.

An argument depending upon accent it is **166**[b] not easy to construct in unwritten discussion; in written discussions and in poetry it is easier. Thus (e.g.) some people emend Homer against those who criticize as unnatural his expression *τὸ μὲν οὖ καταπθεται ὄμβρῳ*.[2] For they solve the difficulty by a change of accent, pronouncing the *ου* with an acuter accent. Also, in the passage about Agamemnon's dream, they say that Zeus did not himself say 'We grant him the fulfilment of his prayer',[3] but that he bade the dream grant it. Instances such as these, then, turn upon the accentuation.

Others come about owing to the form of expression used, when what is really different is expressed in the same form, e.g. a masculine thing by a feminine termination, or a feminine thing by a masculine, or a neuter by

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[2] *Iliad,* XXIII. 328.
[3] *Ibid.*, XXI. 297.

either a masculine or a feminine; or, again, when a quality is expressed by a termination proper to quantity or vice versa, or what is active by a passive word, or a state by an active word, and so forth with the other divisions previously[4] laid down. For it is possible to use an expression to denote what does not belong to the class of actions at all as though it did so belong. Thus (e.g.) ‘flourishing’ is a word which in the form of its expression is like ‘cutting’ or ‘building’: yet the one denotes a certain quality—i.e. a certain condition—while the other denotes a certain action. In the same manner also in the other instances.
Refutations, then, that depend upon language are drawn from these common-place rules. Of fallacies, on the other hand, that are independent of language there are seven kinds: . . .

Sophistical Refutations, CH 24 [179^{b}38-180^{a}7] 247d-248a
Some people also use the principle of ambiguity to solve the aforesaid reasonings, e.g. the proof that ‘*X* is your father’, or ‘son’, or ‘slave’. Yet it is evident that if the appearance **180**^{a} of a proof depends upon a plurality of meanings, the term, or the expression in question, ought to bear a number of literal senses, whereas no one speaks of *A* as being ‘*B*’s child’ in the literal sense, if *B* is the child’s master, but the combination depends upon Accident. ‘Is *A* yours?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘And is *A* a child?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Then the child *A* is yours,’ because he happens to be both yours and a child; but he is not ‘your child’.

Heavens, BK I, CH 11 [280^{b}1-7] 371d-372a
280^{b} We must first distinguish the senses in which we use the words ‘ungenerated’ and ‘generated’, ‘destructible’ and ‘indestructible’. These have many meanings, and though it may make no difference to the argument, yet some confusion of mind must result from treating as uniform in its use a word which has several distinct applications. The character which is the ground of the predication will always remain obscure.

Metaphysics, BK IV, CH 4 [1006^{a}33-^{b}12] 525c-d
Again, if 'man' has one meaning, let this be 'two-footed animal'; by having one meaning I understand this:—if 'man' means *'X'*, then if *A* is a man *'X'* will be what 'being a man' means for him. (It makes no difference even if one were to say a word has several meanings, if only they are limited in number; for to **1006**^{b} each definition there might be assigned a different word. For instance, we might say that 'man' has not one meaning but several, one of which would have one definition, viz. 'two-footed animal', while there might be also several other definitions if only they were limited

[4] *Topics*, 1. 9.

in number; for a peculiar name might be assigned to each of the definitions. If, however, they were not limited but one were to say that the word has an infinite number of meanings, obviously reasoning would be impossible; for not to have one meaning is to have no meaning, and if words have no meaning our reasoning with one another, and indeed with ourselves, has been annihilated; for it is impossible to think of anything if we do not think of one thing; but if this *is* possible, one name might be assigned to this thing.)

9 ARISTOTLE: *Rhetoric*, BK II, CH 24 [1401ª13-23] 650b

(*b*) Another variety is based on the use of similar words for different things; e.g. the argument that the mouse must be a noble creature, since it gives its name to the most august of all religious rites—for such the Mysteries are. Or one may introduce, into a eulogy of the dog, the dog-star; or Pan, because Pindar said:

> *O thou blessed one!*
> *Thou whom they of Olympus call*
> *The hound of manifold shape*
> *That follows the Mother of Heaven:*[5]

or we may argue that, because there is much disgrace in there *not* being a dog about, there is honour in *being* a dog. Or that Hermes is readier than any other god to go shares, since we never say 'shares all round' except of him. Or that speech is a very excellent thing, since good men are not said to be worth money but to be worthy of esteem—the phrase 'worthy of esteem' also having the meaning of 'worth speech'.

12 EPICTETUS: *Discourses*, BK I, CH 7 112b-113d

Chapter 7. *Of the use of sophistical arguments, and hypothetical, and the like*

The handling of sophistical and hypothetical arguments, and of those which derive their conclusions from questioning, and in a word the handling of all such arguments, related to the duties of life, though the many do not know this truth. For in every matter we inquire how the wise and good man shall discover the proper path and the proper method of dealing with the matter. Let, then, people either say that the grave man will not descend into the contest of question and answer, or that, if he does descend into the contest, he will take no care about not conducting himself rashly or carelessly in questioning and answering. But if they do not allow either the one or the other of these things, they must admit that some inquiry ought to be made into those topics on which particularly questioning and

[5] Pindar, fr. 96, Bergk.

answering are employed. For what is the end proposed in reasoning? To establish true propositions, to remove the false, to withhold assent from those which are not plain. Is it enough then to have learned only this? “It is enough,” a man may reply. Is it, then, also enough for a man, who would not make a mistake in the use of coined money, to have heard this precept, that he should receive the genuine drachmæ and reject the spurious? “It is not enough.” What, then, ought to be added to this precept? What else than the faculty which proves and distinguishes the genuine and the spurious drachmæ? Consequently also in reasoning what has been said is not enough; but is it necessary that a man should acquire the faculty of examining and distinguishing the true and the false, and that which is not plain? “It is necessary.” Besides this, what is proposed in reasoning? “That you should accept what follows from that which you have properly granted.” Well, is it then enough in this case also to know this? It is not enough; but a man must learn how one thing is a consequence of other things, and when one thing follows from one thing, and when it follows from several collectively. Consider, then, if it be not necessary that this power should also be acquired by him who purposes to conduct himself skillfully in reasoning, the power of demonstrating himself the several things which he has proposed, and the power of understanding the demonstrations of others, and of not being deceived by sophists, as if they were demonstrating. Therefore there has arisen among us the practice and exercise of conclusive arguments and figures, and it has been shown to be necessary.

But in fact in some cases we have properly granted the premisses or assumptions, and there results from them something; and though it is not true, yet none the less it does result. What then ought I to do? Ought I to admit the falsehood? And how is that possible? Well, should I say that I did not properly grant that which we agreed upon? “But you are not allowed to do even this.” Shall I then say that the consequence does not arise through what has been conceded? “But neither is it allowed.” What then must be done in this case? Consider if it is not this: as to have borrowed is not enough to make a man still a debtor, but to this must be added the fact that he continues to owe the money and that the debt is not paid, so it is not enough to compel you to admit the inference that you have granted the premisses, but you must abide by what you have granted. Indeed, if the premisses continue to the end such as they were when they were granted, it is absolutely necessary for us to abide by what we have granted, and we must accept their consequences: but if the premisses do not remain such as they were when they were granted, it is absolutely necessary for us also to withdraw from what we granted, and from accepting what does not follow from the words in which our concessions were made. For the inference is now not our inference, nor does it result with our assent, since

we have withdrawn from the premisses which we granted. We ought then both to examine such kind of premisses, and such change and variation of them, by which in the course of questioning or answering, or in making the syllogistic conclusion, or in any other such way, the premisses undergo variations, and give occasion to the foolish to be confounded, if they do not see what conclusions are. For what reason ought we to examine? In order that we may not in this matter be employed in an improper manner nor in a confused way.

And the same in hypotheses and hypothetical arguments; for it is necessary sometimes to demand the granting of some hypothesis as a kind of passage to the argument which follows. Must we then allow every hypothesis that is proposed, or not allow every one? And if not every one, which should we allow? And if a man has allowed an hypothesis, must he in every case abide by allowing it? or must he sometimes withdraw from it, but admit the consequences and not admit contradictions? Yes; but suppose that a man says, "If you admit the hypothesis of a possibility, I will draw you to an impossibility." With such a person shall a man of sense refuse to enter into a contest, and avoid discussion and conversation with him? But what other man than the man of sense can use argumentation and is skillful in questioning and answering, and incapable of being cheated and deceived by false reasoning? And shall he enter into the contest, and yet not take care whether he shall engage in argument not rashly and not carelessly? And if he does not take care, how can he be such a man as we conceive him to be? But without some such exercise and preparation, can he maintain a continuous and consistent argument? Let them show this; and all these speculations become superfluous, and are absurd and inconsistent with our notion of a good and serious man.

Why are we still indolent and negligent and sluggish, and why do we seek pretences for not labouring and not being watchful in cultivating our reason? "If then I shall make a mistake in these matters may I not have killed my father?" Slave, where was there a father in this matter that you could kill him? What, then, have you done? The only fault that was possible here is the fault which you have committed. This is the very remark which I made to Rufus[6] when he blamed me for not having discovered the one thing omitted in a certain syllogism: "I suppose," I said, "that I have burnt the Capitol." "Slave," he replied, "was the thing omitted here the Capitol?" Or are these the only crimes, to burn the Capitol and to kill your father? But for a man to use the appearances presented to him rashly and foolishly and carelessly, and not to understand argument, nor demonstration, nor sophism, nor, in a word, to see in questioning and answering what is

[6] See i. 1; Plutarch *Lives*, Tiberius Gracchus.

consistent with that which we have granted or is not consistent; is there no error in this?

19 AQUINAS: *Summa Theologica*, PART I, Q 1, A 10, REP 1 9c-10c; Q 13, A 5, ANS 66b-67d

Summa Theologica, PART I, Q 1, A 10, REP 1 9c-10c

Article 10. *Whether in Holy Scripture a Word May Have Several Senses?*

We proceed thus to the Tenth Article: It seems that in Holy Writ a word cannot have several senses, historical or literal, allegorical, tropological or moral, and anagogical.

Objection 1. For many different senses in one text produce confusion and deception and destroy all force of argument. Hence no proof, but only fallacies, can be deduced from a multiplicity of propositions. But Holy Writ ought to be able to state the truth without any fallacy. Therefore there cannot be several senses to a word in Holy Writ.

Obj. 2. Further, Augustine says (*De util. cred.* iii)[7] that "the Old Testament has a fourfold division namely, according to history, etiology, analogy, and allegory." Now these four seem altogether different from the four divisions mentioned in the first objection. Therefore it does not seem fitting to explain the same word of Holy Writ according to the four different senses mentioned above.

Obj. 3. Further, besides these senses, there is the parabolical, which is not one of these four.

On the contrary, Gregory says (*Moral,* XX, I):[8] "Holy Writ by the manner of its speech transcends every science, because in one and the same sentence, while it describes a fact, it reveals a mystery."

I answer that, The author of Holy Writ is God, in whose power it is to signify His meaning not by words only (as man also can do), but also by things themselves. So, whereas in every other science things are signified by words, this science has the property that the things signified by the words have themselves also a meaning. Therefore that first meaning whereby words signify things belongs to the first sense, the historical or literal. That meaning whereby things signified by words have themselves also a meaning is called the spiritual sense, which is based on the literal, and presupposes it.

Now this spiritual sense has a threefold division. For as the Apostle says (Heb. 10. 1) the Old Law is a figure of the New Law, and Dionysius says[9] the New Law itself is a figure of future glory. Again, in the New Law, whatever our Head has done is a type of what we ought to do. Therefore, so far as

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[7] PL 42, 68.
[8] PL 76, 135.
[9] *De Eccl. Hier.,* V, 2 (PG 3, 501).

the things of the Old Law signify the things of the New Law, there is the allegorical sense. But so far as the things done in Christ, or so far as the things which signify Christ, are types of what we ought to do, there is the moral sense. But so far as they signify what relates to eternal glory, there is the anagogical sense.

Since the literal sense is that which the author intends, and since the author of Holy Writ is God, Who by one act comprehends all things by His intellect, it is not unfitting, as Augustine says[10] if, even according to the literal sense, one word in Holy Writ should have several senses.

Reply Obj. 1. The multiplicity of these senses does not produce equivocation or any other kind of multiplicity, seeing that these senses are not multiplied because one word signifies several things, but because the things signified by the words can be themselves types of other things. Thus in Holy Writ no confusion results, for all the senses are founded on one—the literal—from which alone can any argument be drawn, and not from those intended in allegory, as Augustine says (*Epist*. xciii).[11] Nevertheless, nothing of Holy Scripture perishes on account of this, since nothing necessary to faith is contained under the spiritual sense which is not elsewhere put forward by the Scripture in its literal sense.

Reply Obj. 2. These three—history, etiology, analogy—are grouped under the literal sense. For it is called history, as Augustine expounds[12] whenever anything is simply related; it is called etiology when its cause is assigned, as when Our Lord gave the reason why Moses allowed the putting away of wives—namely, on account of the hardness of men's hearts (Matt. 19. 8); it is called analogy whenever the truth of one text of Scripture is shown not to contradict the truth of another. Of these four, allegory alone stands for the three spiritual senses. Thus Hugh of S. Victor (*Sacram*. 1, 4)[13] includes the anagogical under the allegorical sense, laying down three senses only—the historical, the allegorical, and the tropological.

Reply Obj. 3. The parabolical sense is contained in the literal, for by words things are signified properly and figuratively. Nor is the figure itself, but that which is figured, the literal sense. When Scripture speaks of God's arm, the literal sense is not that God has such a member, but only what is signified by this member, namely, operative power. Hence it is plain that nothing false can ever underlie the literal sense of Holy Writ.

Summa Theologica, PART I, Q 13, A 5, ANS 66b-67d

Article 5. *Whether What Is Said of God and of Creatures Is Univocally Predicated of Them?*

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[10] *Confessions*, XII, 42 (PL 32, 844).
[11] Chap. 8 (PL 33, 334).
[12] *De Util. Cred.,* 3 (PL 42, 68).
[13] PL 176, 184; Cf. *De Scriptur. et Scriptor. Sacris.,* III (PL 175, II).

We proceed thus to the Fifth Article: It seems that what is said of God and creatures is said of them univocally.
Objection 1. For every equivocal term is reduced to the univocal, as many are reduced to one; for if the name dog be said equivocally of the barking dog, and of the dogfish, it must be said of some univocally — namely, of all barking dogs; otherwise we proceed to infinity. Now there are some univocal agents which agree with their effects in name and definition, as man generates man; and there are some agents which are equivocal, as the sun which causes heat, although the sun is hot only in an equivocal sense. Therefore it seems that the first agent to which all other agents are reduced is an univocal agent; and thus what is said of God and creatures is predicated univocally.
Obj. 2. Further, there is no likeness among equivocal things. Therefore as creatures have a certain likeness to God, according to the word of Genesis (1. 26), *Let us make man to our image and likeness,* it seems that something can be said of God and creatures univocally.
Obj. 3. Further, "measure is homogeneous" with the thing measured as is said in the *Metaphysics*.[14] But God is the first measure of all beings, as it says in the same place. Therefore God is homogeneous with creatures, and thus a word may be applied univocally to God and to creatures.
On the contrary, Whatever is predicated of various things under the same name but not in the same meaning is predicated equivocally. But no name belongs to God in the same meaning that it belongs to creatures; for instance, wisdom in creatures is a quality, but not in God. Now a different genus changes a nature, since the genus is part of the definition; and the same applies to other things. Therefore whatever is said of God and of creatures is predicated equivocally.
2. *Further*, God is more distant from creatures than any creatures are from each other. But the distance of some creatures makes any univocal predication of them impossible, as in the case of those things which are not in the same genus. Therefore much less can anything be predicated univocally of God and creatures. And so only equivocal predication can be applied to them.
I answer that, Univocal predication is impossible between God and creatures. The reason of this is that every effect which is not an adequate result of the power of the efficient cause receives the likeness of the agent not in its full degree, but in a measure that falls short, so that what is divided and multiplied in the effects resides in the agent simply, and in the same manner; as for example the sun by the exercise of its one power produces manifold and various forms in all inferior things. In the same way, as said in the preceding article, all perfections of things which exist in

[14] Aristotle, X, I (1053^{a}24).

creatures divided and multiplied pre-exist in God unitedly. Thus, when any term expressing perfection is applied to a creature, it signifies that perfection distinct in idea from other perfections; as, for instance, by this term wise applied to a man, we signify some perfection distinct from a man's essence, and distinct from his power and being, and from all similar things; whereas when we apply it to God, we do not mean to signify anything distinct from His essence, or power, or being. Thus also this term wise applied to man in some degree circumscribes and comprehends the thing signified; but this is not the case when it is applied to God, but it leaves the thing signified as incomprehended, and as exceeding the signification of the name. Hence it is evident that this term wise is not applied in the same aspect to God and to man. The same rule applies to other terms. Hence no name is predicated univocally of God and of creatures.

Neither, on the other hand, are names applied to God and creatures in a purely equivocal sense, as some have said.[15] Because if that were so, it follows that from creatures nothing could be known or demonstrated about God at all, for the reasoning would always fall into the fallacy of equivocation. Such a view is as much against philosophy which proves many things about God as it is against what the Apostle says: *The invisible things of God are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made* (Rom. 1. 20).

Therefore it must be said that these names are said of God and creatures according to analogy, that is, according to proportion. Now names are thus used in two ways: either according as many things are proportionate to one, as for example healthy is predicated of medicine and urine in so far as each has an order and proportion to the health of the animal, of which the latter is the sign and the former the cause, or according as one thing is proportionate to another; thus healthy is said of medicine and animal, since medicine is the cause of health in the animal. And in this way some things are said of God and creatures analogically, and not in a purely equivocal nor in a purely univocal sense. For we can name God only from creatures (A. 1). Thus whatever is said of God and creatures, is said according to the relation of a creature to God as its principle and cause, wherein all perfections of things pre-exist excellently.

Now this mode of community is a mean between pure equivocation and simple univocation. For in those things which are spoken of analogically neither is there one notion, as there is in univocal things, nor totally diverse notions as in equivocal things; but a term which is thus used in a multiple sense signifies different proportions to some one thing; thus healthy

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[15] Maimonides, *Guide*, I, 59 (FR 84); Averroes, *In Meta.,* XII, comm. 51 (VIII, 337B).

applied to urine signifies the sign of animal health, and applied to medicine signifies the cause of the same health.
Reply Obj. 1. Although in predication the equivocal must be reduced to the univocal, still in actions the non-univocal agent must precede the univocal agent. For the non-univocal agent is the universal cause of the whole species, as for instance the sun is the cause of the generation of all men. But the univocal agent is not the universal efficient cause of the whole species (otherwise it would be the cause of itself, since it is contained in the species), but is a particular cause of this individual which it places under the species by way of participation. Therefore the universal cause of the whole species is not an univocal agent, and the universal cause comes before the particular cause. But this universal agent while it is not univocal, nevertheless is not altogether equivocal, otherwise it could not produce its own likeness; but it can be called an analogical agent, just as in predications all univocal terms are reduced to one first non-univocal analogical term, which is being.
Reply Obj. 2. The likeness of the creature to God is imperfect, for it does not represent one and the same generic thing (Q. IV, A. 3).
Reply Obj. 3. God is not the measure proportioned to things measured; hence it is not necessary that God and creatures should be in the same genus.
The arguments adduced *in the contrary,* prove indeed that these names are not predicated univocally of God and creatures, yet they do not prove that they are predicated equivocally.

23 HOBBES: *Leviathan*, PART I, 57d-58a; PART III, 172a

Leviathan, PART I, 57d-58a
When a man, upon the hearing of any speech, hath those thoughts which the words of that speech, and their connexion, were ordained and constituted to signify, then he is said to understand it: *understanding* being nothing else but conception caused by speech. And therefore if speech be peculiar to man, as for ought I know it is, then is understanding peculiar to him also. And therefore of absurd and false affirmations, in case they be universal, there can be no understanding; though many think they understand then, when they do but repeat the words softly, or con them in their mind.
What kinds of speeches signify the appetites, aversions, and passions of man's mind, and of their use and abuse, I shall speak when I have spoken of the passions.
The names of such things as affect us, that is, which please and displease us, because all men be not alike affected with the same thing, nor the same man at all times, are in the common discourses of men of *inconstant*

signification. For seeing all names are imposed to signify our conceptions, and all our affections are but conceptions; when we conceive the same things differently, we can hardly avoid different naming of them. For though the nature of that we conceive be the same; yet the diversity of our reception of it, in respect of different constitutions of body and prejudices of opinion, gives everything a tincture of our different passions. And therefore in reasoning, a man must take heed of words; which besides the signification of what we imagine of their nature, have a signification also of the nature, disposition, and interest of the speaker; such as are the names of virtues and vices: for one man calleth *wisdom* what another calleth *fear;* and one *cruelty* what another *justice;* one *prodigality* what another *magnanimity;* and one *gravity* what another *stupidity,* etc. And therefore such names can never be true grounds of any ratiocination. No more can metaphors and tropes of speech: but these are less dangerous because they profess their inconstancy, which the other do not.

Leviathan, PART III, 172a

Which question cannot be resolved without a more particular consideration of the kingdom of God; from whence also, we are to judge of the authority of interpreting the Scripture. For, whosoever hath a lawful power over any writing, to make it law, hath the power also to approve or disapprove the interpretation of the same.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Of the Signification of Spirit, Angel, and Inspiration in the Books of Holy Scripture

Seeing the foundation of all true ratiocination is the constant signification of words; which, in the doctrine following, dependeth not (as in natural science) on the will of the writer, nor (as in common conversation) on vulgar use, but on the sense they carry in the Scripture; it is necessary, before I proceed any further, to determine, out of the Bible, the meaning of such words as by their ambiguity may render what I am to infer upon them obscure or disputable. I will begin with the words *body* and *spirit,* which in the language of the Schools are termed *substances, corporeal* and *incorporeal.*

35 LOCKE: *Human Understanding*, BK III, CH IX, SECT 15-16 288d-289c; CH X, SECT 22 297c-298a; CH XI, SECT 7-26 301a-306d passim

Human Understanding, BK III, CH IX, SECT 15-16 288d-289c

15. *With this imperfection, they may serve for civil, but not well for philosophical use*. It is true, as to civil and common conversation, the

general names of substances, regulated in their ordinary signification by some obvious qualities, (as by the shape and figure in things of known seminal propagation, and in other substances, for the most part by colour, joined with some other sensible qualities), do well enough to design the things men would be understood to speak of: and so they usually conceive well enough the substances meant by the word gold or apple, to distinguish the one from the other. But in *philosophical* inquiries and debates, where general truths are to be established, and consequences drawn from positions laid down, there the precise signification of the names of substances will be found not only not to be well established, but also very hard to be so. For example: he that shall make malleability, or a certain degree of fixedness, a part of his complex idea of gold, may make propositions concerning gold, and draw consequences from them, that will truly and clearly follow from gold, taken in such a signification: but yet such as another man can never be forced to admit, nor be convinced of their truth, who makes not malleableness, or the same degree of fixedness, part of that complex idea that the name gold, in his use of it, stands for.

16. *Instance, liquor.* This is a natural and almost unavoidable imperfection in almost all the names of substances, in all languages whatsoever, which men will easily find when, once passing from confused or loose notions, they come to more strict and close inquiries. For then they will be convinced how doubtful and obscure those words are in their signification, which in ordinary use appeared very clear and determined. I was once in a meeting of very learned and ingenious physicians, where by chance there arose a question, whether any liquor passed through the filaments of the nerves. The debate having been managed a good while, by variety of arguments on both sides, I (who had been used to suspect, that the greatest part of disputes were more about the signification of words than a real difference in the conception of things) desired, that, before they went any further on in this dispute, they would first examine and establish amongst them, what the word *liquor* signified. They at first were a little surprised at the proposal; and had they been persons less ingenious, they might perhaps have taken it for a very frivolous or extravagant one: since there was no one there that thought not himself to understand very perfectly what the word liquor stood for; which I think, too, none of the most perplexed names of substances. However, they were pleased to comply with my motion; and upon examination found that the signification of that word was not so settled or certain as they had all imagined; but that each of them made it a sign of a different complex idea. This made them perceive that the main of their dispute was about the signification of that term; and that they differed very little in their opinions concerning *some* fluid and subtle matter, passing through the conduits of the nerves; though

it was not so easy to agree whether it was to be called *liquor* or no, a thing, which, when considered, they thought it not worth the contending about.

Human Understanding, BK III, CH X, SECT 22 297c-298a

22. VI. *By proceeding upon the supposition that the words we use have a certain and evident signification which other men cannot but understand. Sixthly*, there remains yet another more general, though perhaps less observed, abuse of words; and that is, that men having by a long and familiar use annexed to them certain ideas, they are apt to imagine *so near and necessary a connexion between the names and the signification they use them in,* that they forwardly suppose one cannot but understand what their meaning is; and therefore one ought to acquiesce in the words delivered, as if it were past doubt that, in the use of those common received sounds, the speaker and hearer had necessarily the same precise ideas. Whence presuming, that when they have in discourse used any term, they have thereby, as it were, set before others the very thing they talked of. And so likewise taking the words of others as naturally standing for just what they themselves have been accustomed to apply them to, they never trouble themselves to explain their own, or understand clearly others' meaning. From whence commonly proceeds noise, and wrangling, without improvement or information; whilst men take words to be the constant regular marks of agreed notions, which in truth are no more but the voluntary and unsteady signs of their own ideas. And yet men think it strange, if in discourse, or (where it is often absolutely necessary) in dispute, one sometimes asks the meaning of their terms: though the arguings one may every day observe in conversation make it evident, that there are few names of complex ideas which any two men use for the same just precise collection. It is hard to name a word which will not be a clear instance of this. *Life* is a term, none more familiar. Any one almost would take it for an affront to be asked what he meant by it. And yet if it comes in question, whether a plant that lies ready formed in the seed have life; whether the embryo in an egg before incubation, or a man in a swoon without sense or motion, be alive or no; it is easy to perseive that a clear, distinct, settled idea does not always accompany the use of so known a word as that of life is. Some gross and confused conceptions men indeed ordinarily have, to which they apply the common words of their language; and such a loose use of their words serves them well enough in their ordinary discourses or affairs. But this is not sufficient for philosophical inquiries. Knowledge and reasoning require precise determinate ideas. And though men will not be so importunately dull as not to understand what others say, without demanding an explication of their terms; nor so troublesomely critical as to correct others in the use of the words they receive from them: yet, where truth and knowledge are concerned in the

case, I know not what fault it can be, to desire the explication of words whose sense seems dubious; or why a man should be ashamed to own his ignorance in what sense another man uses his words; since he has no other way of certainly knowing it but by being informed. This abuse of taking words upon trust has nowhere spread so far, nor with so ill effects, as amongst men of letters. The multiplication and obstinacy of disputes, which have so laid waste the intellectual world, is owing to nothing more than to this ill use of words. For though it be generally believed that there is great diversity of opinions in the volumes and variety of controversies the world is distracted with; yet the most I can find that the contending learned men of different parties do, in their arguings one with another, is, that they speak different languages. For I am apt to imagine, that when any of them, quitting terms, think upon things, and know what they think, they think all the same: though perhaps what they would have be different.

Human Understanding, BK III, CH XI, SECT 7-26 301a-306d passim

7. *Instance, bat and bird.* Whether a *bat* be a *bird* or no, is not a question, Whether a bat be another thing than indeed it is, or have other qualities than indeed it has; for that would be extremely absurd to doubt of. But the question is, (1) Either between those that acknowledged themselves to have but imperfect ideas of one or both of this sort of things, for which these names are supposed to stand. And then it is a real inquiry concerning the *nature* of a bird or a bat, to make their yet imperfect ideas of it more complete; by examining whether all the simple ideas to which, combined together, they both give the name bird, be all to be found in a bat: but this is a question only of inquirers (not disputers) who neither affirm nor deny, but examine: Or, (2) It is a question between disputants; whereof the one affirms, and the other denies that a bat is a bird. And then the question is barely about the signification of one or both these *words*; in that they not having both the same complex ideas to which they give these two names, one holds and the other denies, that these two names may be affirmed one of another. Were they agreed in the signification of these two names, it were impossible they should dispute about them. For they would presently and clearly see (were that adjusted between them), whether all the simple ideas of the more general name bird were found in the complex idea of a bat or no; and so there could be no doubt whether a bat were a bird or no. And here I desire it may be considered, and carefully examined, whether the greatest part of the disputes in the world are not merely verbal, and about the signification of words; and whether, if the terms they are made in were defined, and reduced in their signification (as they must be where they signify anything) to determined collections of the simple ideas they do or should stand for, those disputes would not end of themselves, and immediately vanish. I leave it then to be considered, what the learning of

disputation is, and how well they are employed for the advantage of themselves or others, whose business is only the vain ostentation of sounds; i.e. those who spend their lives in disputes and controversies. When I shall see any of those combatants strip all his terms of ambiguity and obscurity, (which every one may do in the words he uses himself), I shall think him a champion for knowledge, truth, and peace, and not the slave of vain-glory, ambition, or a party.

8. *Remedies.* To remedy the defects of speech before mentioned to some degree, and to prevent the inconveniences that follow from them, I imagine the observation of these following rules may be of use, till somebody better able shall judge it worth his while to think more maturely on this matter, and oblige the world with his thoughts on it.

First remedy: To use no word without an idea annexed to it. First, A man shall take care to use no word without a signification, no name without an idea for which he makes it stand. This rule will not seem altogether needless to any one who shall take the pains to recollect how often he has met with such words as *instinct, sympathy,* and *antipathy*, &c., in the discourse of others, so made use of as he might easily conclude that those that used them had no ideas in their minds to which they applied them, but spoke them only as sounds, which usually served instead of reasons on the like occasions. Not but that these words, and the like, have very proper significations in which they may be used; but there being no natural connexion between any words and any ideas, these, and any other, may be learned by rote, and pronounced or writ by men who have no ideas in their minds to which they have annexed them, and for which they make them stand; which is necessary they should, if men would speak intelligibly even to themselves alone.

9. *Second remedy: To have distinct, determinate ideas annexed to words, especially in mixed modes.* Secondly, It is not enough a man uses his words as signs of some ideas: those he annexes them to, if they be simple, must be clear and distinct; if complex, must be determinate,[16] i.e. the precise collection of simple ideas settled in the mind, with that sound annexed to it, as the sign of that precise determined collection, and no other. This is very necessary in names of modes, and especially moral words; which, having no settled objects in nature, from whence their ideas are taken, as from their original, are apt to be very confused. *Justice* is a word in every man's mouth, but most commonly with a very undertermined, loose signification; which will always be so, unless a man has in his mind a distinct comprehension of the component parts that complex idea consists of: and if it be decompounded, must be able to resolve it still on, till he at last comes to the simple ideas that make it up: and unless this be done, a

[16] See "Epistle to the Reader," p. 91.

man makes an ill use of the word, let it be justice, for example, or any other. I do not say, a man needs stand to recollect, and make this analysis at large, every time the word justice comes in his way: but this at least is necessary, that he have so examined the signification of that name, and settled the idea of all its parts in his mind, that he can do it when he pleases. If any one who makes his complex idea of justice to be, such a treatment of the person or goods of another as is according to law, hath not a clear and distinct idea what *law* is, which makes a part of his complex idea of justice, it is plain his idea of justice itself will be confused and imperfect. This exactness will, perhaps, be judged very troublesome; and therefore most men will think they may be excused from settling the complex ideas of mixed modes so precisely in their minds. But yet I must say, till this be done, it must not be wondered, that they have a great deal of obscurity and confusion in their own minds, and a great deal of wrangling in their discourse with others.[17]

10. *And distinct and conformable ideas in words that stand for substances.* In the names of substances, for a right use of them, something more is required than barely *determined ideas*. In these the names must also be *conformable to things as they exist*; but of this I shall have occasion to speak more at large by and by.[18] This exactness is absolutely necessary in inquiries after philosophical knowledge, and in controversies about truth. And though it would be well, too, if it extended itself to common conversation and the ordinary affairs of life; yet I think that is scarce to be expected. Vulgar notions suit vulgar discourses: and both, though confused enough, yet serve pretty well the market and the wake. Merchants and lovers, cooks and tailors, have words wherewithal to dispatch their ordinary affairs: and so, I think, might philosophers and disputants too, if they had a mind to understand, and to be clearly understood.

11. *Third remedy: To apply words to such ideas as common use has annexed them to.* Thirdly, it is not enough that men have ideas, determined ideas, for which they make these signs stand; but they must also take care to apply their words as near as may be to such ideas as common use has annexed them to. For words, especially of languages already framed, being no man's private possession, but the common measure of commerce and communication, it is not for any one at pleasure to change the stamp they are current in, nor alter the ideas they are affixed to; or at least, when there is a necessity to do so, he is bound to give notice of it. Men's intentions in speaking are, or at least should be, to be understood; which cannot be without frequent explanations, demands, and other the like incommodious interruptions, where men do not follow common use. Propriety of speech is

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[17] The famous discussion in the first and second Book of Plato's *Republic*, of the "mixed mode" named justice, is relevant in this connexion.

[18] Cf. § 24; also Bk. IV. chh. iii. §§ 11-17; iv. 11-17.

that which gives our thoughts entrance into other men's minds with the greatest ease and advantage: and therefore deserves some part of our care and study, especially in the names of moral words. The proper signification and use of terms is best to be learned from those who in their writings and discourses appear to have had the clearest notions, and applied to them their terms with the exactest choice and fitness. This way of using a man's words, according to the propriety of the language, though it have not always the good fortune to be understood; yet most commonly leaves the blame of it on him who is so unskilful in the language he speaks, as not to understand it when made use of as it ought to be.

12. *Fourth remedy: To declare the meaning in which we use them.* Fourthly, But, because common use has not so visibly annexed any signification to words, as to make men know always certainly what they precisely stand for: and because men, in the improvement of their knowledge, come to have ideas different from the vulgar and ordinary received ones, for which they must either make new words, (which men seldom venture to do, for fear of being though guilty of affectation or novelty), or else must use old ones in a new signification: therefore, after the observation of the foregoing rules, it is sometimes necessary, for the ascertaining the signification of words, to *declare their meaning*; where either common use has left it uncertain and loose, (as it has in most names of very complex ideas); or where the term, being very material in the discourse, and that upon which it chiefly turns, is liable to any doubtfulness or mistake.

13. *And that in three ways.* As the ideas men's words stand for are of different sorts, so the way of making known the ideas they stand for, when there is occasion, is also different. For though *defining* be thought the proper way to make known the proper signification of words; yet there are some words that will not be defined,[19] as there are others whose precise meaning cannot be made known but by definition: and perhaps a third, which partake somewhat of both the other, as we shall see in the names of simple ideas, modes, and substances.

14. I. *In simple ideas, either by synonymous terms, or by showing examples.* First, when a man makes use of the name of any simple idea, which he perceives is not understood, or is in danger to be mistaken, he is obliged, by the laws of ingenuity and the end of speech, to declare his meaning, and make known what idea he makes it stand for. This, as has been shown, cannot be done by definition: and therefore, when a synonymous word fails to do it, there is but one of these ways left. First, Sometimes the *naming* the subject wherein that simple idea is to be found, will make its name to be understood by those who are acquainted with that subject, and know it by that name. So to make a countryman understand what *feuillemorte*

[19] Cf. ch. iii. §§ 4-14.

colour signifies, it may suffice to tell him, it is the colour of withered leaves falling in autumn. Secondly, but the only sure way of making known the signification of the name of any simple idea, is *by presenting to his senses that subject which may produce it in his mind,* and make him actually have the idea that word stands for.

15. II. *In mixed modes, by definition.* Secondly, Mixed modes, especially those belonging to morality, being most of them such combinations of ideas as the mind puts together of its own choice, and whereof there are not always standing patterns to be found existing, the signification of their names cannot be made known, as those of simple ideas, by any showing: but, in recompense thereof, may be perfectly and exactly defined. For they being combinations of several ideas that the mind of man has arbitrarily put together, without reference to any archetypes, men may, if they please, exactly know the ideas that go to each composition, and so both use these words in a certain and undoubted signification, and perfectly declare, when there is occasion, what they stand for. This, if well considered, would lay great blame on those who make not their discourses about *moral* things very clear and distinct. For since the precise signification of the names of mixed modes, or, which is all one, the real essence of each species is to be known, they being not of nature's, but man's making, it is a great negligence and perverseness to discourse of moral things with uncertainty and obscurity; which is more pardonable in treating of natural substances, where doubtful terms are hardly to be avoided, for a quite contrary reason, as we shall see by and by.

16. *Morality capable of demonstration.* Upon this ground it is that I am bold to think that morality is capable of demonstration,[20] as well as mathematics: since the precise real essence of the things moral words stand for may be perfectly known, and so the congruity and incongruity of the things themselves be certainly discovered; in which consists perfect knowledge. Nor let any one object, that the names of substances are often to be made use of in morality, as well as those of modes, from which will arise obscurity. For, as to substances, when concerned in moral discourses, their divers natures are not so much inquired into as supposed: v.g. when we say that man is subject to law, we mean nothing by man but a corporeal rational creature: what the real essence or other qualities of that creature are in this case is no way considered. And, therefore, whether a child or changeling be a man, in a physical sense, may amongst the naturalists be as disputable as it will, it concerns not at all the moral man, as I may call him, which is this immovable, unchangeable idea, a corporeal rational being. For, were there a monkey, or any other creature, to be found that had the use of reason to such a degree, as to be able to understand general signs,

[20] Cf. Bk. IV. chh. Iii. §§ 18-20; iv. §§ 7-8; xii. § 8.

and to deduce consequences about general ideas, he would no doubt be subject to law, and in that sense be a *man*, how much soever he differed in shape from others of that name. The names of substances, if they be used in them as they should, can no more disturb moral than they do mathematical discourses; where, if the mathematician speaks of a cube or globe of gold, or of any other body, he has his clear, settled idea, which varies not, though it may by mistake be applied to a particular body to which it belongs not.

17. *Definitions can make moral discourses clear.* This I have here mentioned, by the by, to show of what consequence it is for men, in their names of mixed modes, and consequently in all their moral discourses, to define their words when there is occasion: since thereby moral knowledge may be brought to so great clearness and certainty. And it must be great want of ingenuousness (to say no worse of it) to refuse to do it: since a definition is the only way whereby the precise meaning of moral words can be known; and yet a way whereby their meaning may be known certainly, and without leaving any room for any contest about it. And therefore the negligence or perverseness of mankind cannot be excused, if their discourses in morality be not much more clear than those in natural philosophy: since they are about ideas in the mind, which are none of them false or disproportionate; they having no external beings for the archetypes which they are referred to and must correspond with. It is far easier for men to frame in their minds an idea, which shall be the standard to which they will give the name justice; with which pattern so made, all actions that agree shall pass under that denomination, than, having seen Aristides, to frame an idea that shall in all things be exactly like him; who is as he is, let men make what idea they please of him. For the one, they need but know the combination of ideas that are put together in their own minds; for the other, they must inquire into the whole nature, and abstruse hidden constitution, and various qualities of a thing existing without them.

18. *And is the only way in which the meaning of mixed modes can be made known.* Another reason that makes the defining of mixed modes so necessary, especially of moral words, is what I mentioned a little before, viz. that it is the only way whereby the signification of the most of them can be known with certainty. For the ideas they stand for, being for the most part such whose component parts nowhere exist together, but scattered and mingled with others, it is the mind alone that collects them, and gives them the union of one idea: and it is only by words enumerating the several simple ideas which the mind has united, that we can make known to others what their names stand for; the assistance of the senses in this case not helping us, by the proposal of sensible objects, to show the ideas which our names of this kind stand for, as it does often in the names of sensible simple ideas, and also to some degree in those of substances.

19. III. *In substances, both by showing and by defining.* Thirdly, for the explaining the signification of the names of substances, as they stand for the ideas we have of their distinct species, both the forementioned ways, viz. of showing and defining, are requisite, in many cases, to be made use of. For, there being ordinarily in each sort some leading qualities, to which we suppose the other ideas which make up our complex idea of that species annexed, we forwardly give the specific name to that thing wherein that characteristical mark is found, which we take to be the most distinguishing idea of that species. These leading or characteristical (as I may call them) ideas, in the sorts of animals and vegetables, are (as has been before remarked, ch. vi. § 29, and ch. ix. § 15) mostly figure; and in inanimate bodies, colour; and in some, both together. Now,

20. *Ideas of the leading qualities of substances are best got by showing.* These leading sensible qualities are those which make the chief ingredients of our specific ideas, and consequently the most observable and invariable part in the definitions of our specific names, as attributed to sorts of substances coming under our knowledge. For though the sound *man*, in its own nature, be as apt to signify a complex idea made up of animality and rationality, united in the same subject, as to signify any other combination; yet, used as a mark to stand for a sort of creatures we count of our own kind, perhaps the outward shape is as necessary to be taken into our complex idea, signified by the word man, as any other we find in it: and therefore, why Plato's *animal implume bipes latis unguibus* should not be a good definition of the name man, standing for that sort of creatures, will not be easy to show: for it is the shape, as the leading quality, that seems more to determine that species, than a faculty of reasoning, which appears not at first, and in some never. And if this be not allowed to be so, I do not know how they can be excused from murder who kill monstrous births, (as we call them), because of an unordinary shape, without knowing whether they have a rational soul or no; which can be no more discerned in a well-formed than ill-shaped infant, as soon as born. And who is it has informed us that a rational soul can inhabit no tenement, unless it has just such a sort of frontispiece; or can join itself to, and inform no sort of body, but one that is just of such an outward structure?

21. *And can hardly be made known otherwise.* Now these leading qualities are best made known by showing, and can hardly be made known otherwise. For the shape of a horse or cassowary will be but rudely and imperfectly imprinted on the mind by words; the sight of the animals doth it a thousand times better. And the idea of the particular colour of gold is not to be got by any description of it, but only by the frequent exercise of the eyes about it; as is evident in those who are used to this metal, who will frequently distinguish true from counterfeit, pure from adulterate, by the sight, where others (who have as good eyes, but yet by use have not got

the precise nice idea of that peculiar yellow) shall not perceive any difference. The like may be said of those other simple ideas, peculiar in their kind to any substance; for which precise ideas there are no peculiar names. The particular ringing sound there is in gold, distinct from the sound of other bodies, has no particular name annexed to it, no more than the particular yellow that belongs to that metal.

22. *The Ideas of the powers of substances are best known by definition.* But because many of the simple ideas that make up our specific ideas of substances are powers which lie not obvious to our senses in the things as they ordinarily appear; therefore, in the signification of our names of substances, some part of the signification will be better made known by enumerating those simple ideas, than by showing the substance itself. For, he that to the yellow shining colour of gold, got by sight, shall, from my enumerating them, have the ideas of great ductility, fusibility, fixedness, and solubility in *aqua regia*, will have a perfecter idea of gold than he can have by seeing a piece of gold, and thereby imprinting in his mind only its obvious qualities. But if the formal constitution of this shining, heavy, ductile thing, (from whence all these its properties flow), lay open to our senses, as the formal constitution or essence of a triangle does, the signification of the word gold might as easily be ascertained as that of triangle.

23. *A reflection on the knowledge of corporeal things possessed by spirits separate from bodies.* Hence we may take notice, how much the foundation of all our knowledge of corporeal things lies in our senses. For how spirits, separate from bodies, (whose knowledge and ideas of these things are certainly much more perfect than ours), know them, we have no notion, no idea at all. The whole extent of our knowledge or imagination reaches not beyond our own ideas limited to our ways of perception. Though yet it be not to be doubted that spirits of a higher rank than those immersed in flesh may have as clear ideas of the radical constitution of substances as we have of a triangle, and so perceive how all their properties and operations flow from thence: but the manner how they come by that knowledge exceeds our conceptions.

24. *Ideas of substances must also be conformable to things.* Fourthly, But, though definitions will serve to explain the names of substances as they stand for our ideas, yet they leave them not without great imperfection as they stand for things. For our names of substances being not put barely for our ideas, but being made use of ultimately to represent things, and so are put in their place, their signification must agree with the truth of things as well as with men's ideas. And therefore, in substances, we are not always to rest in the ordinary complex idea commonly received as the signification of that word, but must go a little further, and inquire into the nature and properties of the things themselves, and thereby perfect, as much as we

can, our ideas of their distinct species; or else learn them from such as are used to that sort of things, and are experienced in them. For, since it is intended their names should stand for such collections of simple ideas as do really exist in things themselves, as well as for the complex idea in other men's minds, which in their ordinary acceptation they stand for, therefore, to define their names right, natural history is to be inquired into, and their properties are, with care and examination, to be found out. For it is not enough, for the avoiding inconveniences in discourse and arguings about natural bodies and substantial things, to have learned, from the propriety of the language, the common, but confused, or very imperfect, idea to which each word is applied, and to keep them to that idea in our use of them; but we must, by acquainting ourselves with the history of that sort of things, rectify and settle our complex idea belonging to each specific name; and in discourse with others, (if we find them mistake us), we ought to tell what the complex idea is that we make such a name stand for. This is the more necessary to be done by all those who search after knowledge and philosophical verity, in that children, being taught words, whilst they have but imperfect notions of things, apply them at random, and without much thinking, and seldom frame determined ideas to be signified by them. Which custom (it being easy, and serving well enough for the ordinary affairs of life and conversation) they are apt to continue when they are men: and so begin at the wrong end, learning words first and perfectly, but make the notions to which they apply those words afterwards very overtly. By this means it comes to pass, that men speaking the language of their country, i.e. according to grammar rules of that language, do yet speak very improperly of things themselves; and, by their arguing one with another, make but small progress in the discoveries of useful truths, and the knowledge of things, as they are to be found in themselves, and not in our imaginations; and it matters not much for the improvement of our knowledge how they are called.

25. *Not easy to be made so*. It were therefore to be wished, That men versed in physical inquiries, and acquainted with the several sorts of natural bodies, would set down those simple ideas wherein they observe the individuals of each sort constantly to agree. This would remedy a great deal of that confusion which comes from several persons applying the same name to a collection of a smaller or greater number of sensible qualities, proportionably as they have been more or less acquainted with, or accurate in examining, the qualities of any sort of things which come under one denomination. But a dictionary of this sort, containing, as it were, a natural history, requires too many hands as well as too much time, cost, pains, and sagacity ever to be hoped for; and till that be done, we must content ourselves with such definitions of the names of substances as explain the sense men use them in. And it would be well, where there is

occasion, if they would afford us so much. This yet is not usually done; but men talk to one another, and dispute in words, whose meaning is not agreed between them, out of a mistake that the significations of common words are certainly established, and the precise ideas they stand for perfectly known; and that it is a shame to be ignorant of them. Both which suppositions are false; no names of complex ideas having so settled determined significations, that they are constantly used for the same precise ideas. Nor is it a shame for a man not to have a certain knowledge of anything, but by the necessary ways of attaining it; and so it is no discredit not to know what precise idea any sound stands for in another man's mind, without he declare it to me by some other way than barely using that sound, there being no other way, without such a declaration, certainly to know it. Indeed the necessity of communication by language brings men to an agreement in the signification of common words, within some tolerable latitude, that may serve for ordinary conversation: and so a man cannot be supposed wholly ignorant of the ideas which are annexed to words by common use, in a language familiar to him. But common use being but a very uncertain rule, which reduces itself at last to the ideas of particular men, proves often but a very variable standard. But though such a Dictionary as I have above mentioned will require too much time, cost, and pains to be hoped for in this age; yet methinks it is not unreasonable to propose, that words standing for things which are known and distinguished by their outward shapes should be expressed by little draughts and prints made of them. A vocabulary made after this fashion would perhaps with more ease, and in less time, teach the true signification of many terms, especially in languages of remote countries or ages, and settle truer ideas in men's minds of several things, whereof we read the names in ancient authors, than all the large and laborious comments of learned critics. Naturalists, that treat of plants and animals, have found the benefit of this way: and he that has had occasion to consult them will have reason to confess that he has a clearer idea of *apium* or *ibex*, from a little print of that herb or beast, than he could have from a long definition of the names of either of them. And so no doubt he would have of *strigil* and *sistrum*, if, instead of *currycomb* and *cymbal*, (which are the English names dictionaries render them by,) he could see stamped in the margin small pictures of these instruments, as they were in use amongst the ancients. *Toga, tunica, pallium,* are words easily translated by *gown, coat,* and *cloak;* but we have thereby no more true ideas of the fashion of those habits amongst the Romans, than we have of the faces of the tailors who made them. Such things as these, which the eye distinguishes by their shapes, would be best let into the mind by draughts made of them, and more determine the signification of such words, than any other words set for them, or made use of to define them. But this is only by the bye.

26. V. *Fifth remedy: To use the same word constantly in the same sense.* Fifthly, If men will not be at the pains to declare the meaning of their words, and definitions of their terms are not to be had, yet this is the least that can be expected, that, in all discourses wherein one man pretends to instruct or convince another, he should use the same word constantly in the same sense. If this were done, (which nobody can refuse without great disingenuity,) many of the books extant might be spared; many of the controversies in dispute would be at an end; several of those great volumes, swollen with ambiguous words, now used in one sense, and by and by in another, would shrink into a very narrow compass; and many of the philosophers, (to mention no other) as well as poets works, might be contained in a nutshell.

35 HUME: *Human Understanding*, SECT VIII, DIV 62-63 478b-d

62. It might reasonably be expected in questions which have been canvassed and disputed with great eagerness, since the first origin of science and philosophy, that the meaning of all the terms, at least, should have been agreed upon among the disputants; and our enquiries, in the course of two thousand years, been able to pass from words to the true and real subject of the controversy. For how easy may it seem to give exact definitions of the terms employed in reasoning, and make these definitions, not the mere sound of words, the object of future scrutiny and examination? But if we consider the matter more narrowly, we shall be apt to draw a quite opposite conclusion. From this circumstance alone, that a controversy has been long kept on foot, and remains still undecided, we may presume that there is some ambiguity in the expression, and that the disputants affix different ideas to the terms employed in the controversy. For as the faculties of the mind are supposed to be naturally alike in every individual; otherwise nothing could be more fruitless than to reason or dispute together; it were impossible, if men affix the same ideas to their terms, that they could so long form different opinions of the same subject; especially when they communicate their views, and each party turn themselves on all sides, in search of arguments which may give them the victory over their antagonists. It is true, if men attempt the discussion of questions which lie entirely beyond the reach of human capacity, such as those concerning the origin of worlds, or the economy of the intellectual system or region of spirits, they may long beat the air in their fruitless contests, and never arrive at any determinate conclusion. But if the question regard any subject of common life and experience, nothing, one would think, could preserve the dispute so long undecided but some ambiguous expressions, which keep the antagonists still at a distance, and hinder them from grappling with each other.

63. This has been the case in the long disputed question concerning liberty and necessity; and to so remarkable a degree that, if I be not much mistaken, we shall find, that all mankind, both learned and ignorant, have always been of the same opinion with regard to this subject, and that a few intelligible definitions would immediately have put an end to the whole controversy. I own that this dispute has been so much canvassed on all hands, and has led philosophers into such a labyrinth of obscure sophistry, that it is no wonder, if a sensible reader indulge his ease so far as to turn a deaf ear to the proposal of such a question, from which he can expect neither instruction or entertainment. But the state of the argument here proposed may, perhaps, serve to renew his attention; as it has more novelty, promises at least some decision of the controversy, and will not much disturb his ease by any intricate or obscure reasoning.
I hope, therefore, to make it appear that all men have ever agreed in the doctrine both of necessity and of liberty, according to any reasonable sense, which can be put on these terms; and that the whole controversy has hitherto turned merely upon words. We shall begin with examining the doctrine of necessity.

36 STERNE: *Tristram Shandy*, 307b-308b

Chapter 30

——“All is not gain that is got into the purse.”——So that not with standing my father had the happiness of reading the oldest books in the universe, and had moreover, in himself, the oddest way of thinking that ever man in it was blessed with, yet it had this drawback upon him after all—that it laid him open to some of the oddest and most whimsical distresses; of which this particular one, which he sunk under at present, is as strong an example as can be given.
No doubt, the breaking down of the bridge of a child’s nose, by the edge of a pair of forceps—however scientifically applied—would vex any man in the world, who was at so much pains in begetting a child, as my father was—yet it will not account for the extravagance of his affliction, nor will it justify the unchristian manner he abandoned and surrendered himself up to.
To explain this, I must leave him upon the bed for half an hour—and my uncle Toby in his old fringe chair sitting beside him.

Chapter 31

——I think it a very unreasonable demand—cried my great-grandfather, twisting up the paper, and throwing it upon the table.——By this account, madam, you have but two thousand pounds fortune, and not a shilling

more—and you insist upon having three hundred pounds a year jointure for it.——
——“Because,” replied my great-grandmother, “you have little or no nose, Sir.”——
Now before I venture to make use of the word Nose a second time—to avoid all confusion in what will be said upon it, in this interesting part of my story, it may not be amiss to explain my own meaning, and define, with all possible exactness and precision, what I would willingly be understood to mean by the term: being of opinion, that ’tis owing to the negligence and perverseness of writers in despising this precaution, and to nothing else—that all the polemical writings in divinity are not as clear and demonstrative as those upon a Will o’ the Wisp, or any other sound part of philosophy, and nature pursuit; in order to which, what have you to do, before you set out, unless you intend to go puzzling on to the day of judgment—but to give the world a good definition, and stand to it, of the main word you have most occasion for—changing it, Sir, as you would a guinea, into small coin?—which done— let the father of confusion puzzle you, if he can; or put a different idea either into your head, or your reader’s head, if he knows how.
In books of strict morality and close reasoning, such as this I am engaged in—the neglect is inexcusable; and Heaven is witness, how the world has revenged itself upon me for leaving so many openings to equivocal strictures—and for depending so much as I have done, all along, upon the cleanliness of my readers’ imaginations.
——Here are two senses, cried Eugenius, as we walked along, pointing with the fore finger of his right hand to the word Crevice, in the one hundred and seventy-eighth page of the first volume of this book of books;—here are two senses—quoth he—And here are two roads, replied I, turning short upon him—a dirty and a clean one—which shall we take?——The clean, by all means, replied Eugenius. Eugenius, said I, stepping before him, and laying my hand upon his breast—to define—is to distrust.—Thus I triumphed over Eugenius; but I triumphed over him as I always do, like a fool.——’Tis my comfort, however, I am not an obstinate one: therefore
I define a nose as follows—intreating only beforehand, and beseeching my readers, both male and female, of what age, complexion, and condition soever, for the love of God and their own souls, to guard against the temptations and suggestions of the devil, and suffer him by no art or wile to put any other ideas into their minds, than what I put into my definition—For by the word Nose, throughout all this long chapter of noses, and in every other part of my work, where the word Nose occurs—I declare, by that word I mean a nose, and nothing more, or less.

Chapter 32

——“Because,” quoth my great-grandmother, repeating the words again—“you have little or no nose, Sir.”——
’Sdeath! cried my great-grandfather, clapping his hand upon his nose,—’tis not so small as that comes to;—’tis a full inch longer than my father’s.——Now, my great-grandfather’s nose was for all the world like unto the noses of all the men, women, and children, whom Pantagruel found dwelling upon the island of Ennasin.——By the way, if you would know the strange way of getting a-kin amongst so flat-nosed a people—you must read the book;—find it out yourself, you never can.——