In the course of this century philosophical analysis has increasingly turned from the material to the formal mode. In both their metaphilosophical pronouncements and their first-hand philosophical practice analytical philosophers have been increasingly moving away from talking in terms of the description, dissection, or analysis of extra-linguistic ideas, concepts, or meanings, and more and more tending to talk in terms of uses of words, the "grammar" of our language, or the rules governing our use of linguistic expressions. It has not escaped the notice of friend and foe alike that, as this latter style becomes firmly entrenched, the enterprise of analytical philosophy comes to bear a striking similarity to such traditional linguistic disciplines as lexicography and grammar. This observation has evoked a variety of reactions. Critics of this form of analytic philosophy have taken these similarities to be a reflection of the triviality or lack of philosophical significance of such researches, while the practitioners of this style have often striven to distinguish their work from "mere lexicography" or "school grammar." On the other hand, some philosophers of late, particularly those heavily influenced by the linguistic work of Zelig Harris and Noam Chomsky, have hailed contemporary structural linguistics as a savior which will lead analytical philosophy out of the wilderness into the promised land of scientific precision and certitude.

The question as to just what connections, and lacks thereof, there are between philosophical analysis and linguistics is a tangled one, partly because of the great diversity of what goes on under the name of philosophical analysis and partly because of the fact that linguistics is in a stage of rapid development. In this paper I propose to make a contribution to the problem by taking an example of philosophical analysis that might seem to be quite similar to what contemporary linguists do, and trying to determine how deep the similarity goes and what differences if any are being masked.

The type of philosophical analysis under consideration will be sufficiently indicated by the example, but, as for linguistics, I should say that I am restricting my attention to what would be called "structural linguistics" in this country today (not that this indicates any precise boundaries).

* To be presented in a symposium on "The Relevance of Linguistics to Philosophy" at the fifty-ninth annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division, December 29, 1962.
Let us get under way by considering the following passage from Gilbert Ryle’s The Concept of Mind.1

There is another class of episodic words which, for our purposes, merit special attention, namely the class of episodic words which I have elsewhere labelled ‘achievement words’.

The verbs with which we ordinarily express these gettings and keepings are active verbs, such as ‘win’, ‘unearth’, ‘find’, ‘cure’, ‘convince’, ‘prove’, ‘cheat’, ‘unlock’, ‘safeguard’ and ‘conceal’; and this grammatical fact has tended to make people, with the exception of Aristotle, oblivious to the differences of logical behaviour between verbs of this class and other verbs of activity or process. The differences, for example, between kicking and scoring, treating and healing, hunting and finding, clutching and holding fast, listening and hearing, looking and seeing, travelling and arriving, have been construed, if they have been noticed at all, as differences between co-ordinate species of activity or process, when in fact the differences are of quite another kind.

One big difference between the logical force of a task verb and that of a corresponding achievement verb is that in applying an achievement verb we are asserting that some state of affairs obtains over and above that which consists in the performance, if any, of the subservient task activity.

They are not acts, exertions, operations or performances, but, with reservations for purely lucky achievements, the fact that certain acts, operations, exertions or performances have had certain results.

This is why we can significantly say that someone has aimed in vain or successfully, but not that he has hit the target in vain or successfully; that he has treated his patient assiduously or unassiduously, but not that he has cured him assiduously or unassiduously; that he scanned the hedgerow slowly or rapidly, systematically or haphazardly, but not that he saw the nest slowly or rapidly, systematically or haphazardly. Adverbs proper to task verbs are not generally proper to achievement verbs; in particular, heed adverbs like ‘carefully’, ‘attentively’, ‘studiously’, ‘vigilantly’, ‘conscientiously’, and ‘pertinaciously’ cannot be used to qualify such cognitive verbs as ‘discover’, ‘prove’, ‘solve’, ‘detect’, or ‘see’, any more than they can qualify such verbs as ‘arrive’, ‘repair’, ‘buy’ or ‘conquer’.

... They do not stand for perplexingly undetectable actions or reactions, any more than ‘win’ stands for a perplexingly undetectable bit of running, or ‘unlock’ for an unreported bit of key-turning. The reason why I cannot catch myself seeing or deducing is that these verbs are of the wrong type to complete the phrase ‘catch myself’.

The distinction between task verbs and achievement verbs or ‘try’ verbs and ‘got it’ verbs frees us from another theoretical nuisance. It has long been realised that verbs like ‘know’, ‘discover’, ‘solve’, ‘prove’, ‘perceive’, ‘see’ and ‘observe’ (at least in certain standard uses of ‘observe’) are in an important way incapable of being qualified by adverbs like ‘erroneously’ and ‘incorrectly’. Automatically construing these and kindred verbs as standing for special kinds of operations or experiences, some epistemologists have felt themselves obliged to postulate that people possess certain special inquiry procedures in following which they are subject to no risk of error.

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Clearly, Ryle is trying to make a philosophical point by pointing out certain features of the use of certain words. He thinks that once we see that words like 'see', 'prove', and 'know' function in the way he sums up by calling them "achievement verbs" we will no longer feel a necessity to postulate mysterious and undetectable activities of seeing, proving, and knowing. And, of course, he thinks of this in turn as one step in getting away from traditional mind-body dualism. What I want to do is to compare the linguistic points that Ryle is making for this purpose with analogous points that a structural linguist does, or might, make. In the course of this comparison I would like to make a start toward answering the following questions: (1) What important differences, if any, are there between what Ryle says here about 'see', 'know', etc., and what a linguist might say about them? (2) What similarities and differences are there between the data to which Ryle and the linguist appeal? In the course of attempting to answer these questions I shall consider some ways in which the concepts and/or methods of structural linguistics might be of help to the philosopher.

I

Let us begin with 2. In supporting his conclusion that 'see', 'prove', etc., are achievement verbs and therefore do not denote any sort of activity or process Ryle appeals to two sorts of facts, or supposed facts. First there are facts about what is entailed by an application of a given word ("in applying an achievement verb we are asserting that some state of affairs obtains over and above that which consists in the performance, if any, of the sub-servient task activity"). This could equivalently be put in terms of the conditions for correct application of the term; Ryle could have said instead that an achievement verb can only be applied correctly if some state of affairs obtains over and above.... Second, there are facts about what can and cannot be said; sometimes qualifications like 'significantly', 'intelligibly', 'and make sense' are added ("we can significantly say that someone has aimed in vain or successfully, but not that he has hit the target in vain or successfully; . . . that he scanned the hedgerow slowly or rapidly, systematically or haphazardly, but not that he saw the nest slowly or rapidly, systematically or haphazardly"). Now if we ask whether data of these sorts play an important role in

2 This distinction of achievement verbs from other classes has been carried out much more elaborately by F. N. Sibley, "Seeking, Scrutinizing, and Seeing," Mind, 64, and by Z. Vendler, "Verbs and Times," Philosophical Review, 66. However, since Ryle's discussion is better known and since it contains within a small compass all the sorts of moves I wish to consider, I have chosen to concentrate on it.
the work of structural linguists, we shall first have to decide (a) what stand we are going to take on the vexed question of whether the grammatical structure of a language can be determined without raising such semantic questions as what linguistic units have meaning and whether two linguistic units have the same or different meaning, and (b) whether we are going to consider semantics to be part of structural linguistics. As for (b), I am simply going to rule semantics out of consideration without more ado, on the grounds that it is insufficiently developed at present to give much point to asking about its possible contributions to philosophy. As for (a), I am going to side with those (like Harris and Chomsky) who maintain that the grammatical structure of a language can be specified without first having settled any semantic questions. I choose this position largely because of the fact that on the other view there is an obvious coincidence between the sorts of facts appealed to by the two groups, whereas on the Harris-Chomsky view the relationship is more complicated and more in need of careful discussion. (Of course a necessary condition of my proceeding in this way is that I think there is some chance that this position is correct.)

Without even attempting to go into the difficult question of the boundary between grammar and semantics, it is clear that statements about entailments and about the conditions under which a word is correctly applied to something belong to semantics if anything does, and so would not be appealed to in grammatical investigations by the linguists we are considering. What they will use as a basis are facts about what is and is not said in the language (the constitution of the "corpus") and facts about whether one utterance is or is not the same as another utterance. Now it looks as if facts of the first sort are the same as the first sort of facts appealed to by Ryle. But things are not so simple. There are many reasons for a given combination of words (or morphemes) not being uttered. Of course neither Ryle nor, e.g., Harris would be interested in determining just which combinations have as a matter of fact been uttered; they are both interested in what can be said. But there are various reasons why a given combination cannot or would not be uttered (especially if we restrict our attention to what can or would be uttered on a given occasion, and it is always on a given occasion that a given test is carried out). It may be because it is radically defective grammatically (horse the when already), because it doesn't make sense (He saw the nest systematically), because it is self-contradictory (I live north of the north pole), because it is so obviously absurd (President Kennedy was born yesterday), because it is obscene, rude,
or unseemly. It is incumbent on one who bases important conclusions on considerations as to what can and cannot be said to specify just what sort of possibility and impossibility he has in mind. Clearly both Ryle and the structural linguist would want to filter out the last two groups, on the grounds that here the impossibility is not based on something in the language. But as for the others, the situation is not so clear, partly because of the difficulty of drawing the line between grammar and semantics. It is obvious that if a grammarian is testing his tentative grammatical rules by determining whether all and only combinations that can be uttered in the language would be constructed in accordance with those rules, it must be the ability to occur without ungrammaticalness that is in question. And it is equally obvious that a philosopher like Ryle is constantly appealing to what can or cannot be said significantly. But before we can be sure that two different types of possibility of occurrence are involved here, we shall have to get clear as to what grammaticality is and what significance is, and I would suppose that a definitive answer to these questions awaits the development of an adequate metatheory of grammar and semantics, which in turn awaits further developments in grammar and semantics themselves. Chomsky says that 'Colorless green ideas sleep furiously', though nonsensical, is grammatical, while 'Furiously sleep ideas green colorless' is ungrammatical as well. But it may be that a more subtle grammar would show the former to be grammatically defective, e.g., by setting up formally defined classes of 'abstract' nouns (like 'idea') and 'concrete' verbs (like 'sleep') and introducing syntactical rules that restrict their combination. And if achievement verbs can be set up as a grammatical form-class (see below), then 'He saw the nest systematically' would be exhibited as ungrammatical as well as nonsignificant. It might even be suggested that all supposed nonsignificant but grammatical sentences could be shown to be special types of ungrammatical sentences, though this seems to me to be too extreme. In any event, as long as we are working with the terms 'grammatical' and 'significant' in a completely undigested state, it will be impossible to show that Ryle and Chomsky are appealing to different sorts of linguistic possibility and impossibility. But it does seem plausible to suppose that they are not quite the same.

But even if linguists and philosophers do not appeal to exactly the same data, it might be that philosophers can learn something from the way linguists deal with analogous data. Various phi-

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3 In Syntactic Structures (s'Gravenhage: Mouton and Co., 1957), pp. 15–16.
Philosophers have expressed considerable dissatisfaction with statements made by philosophers like Ryle about what can and cannot be said. The more serious objections have to do with the absence of any empirical evidence for such claims and the difficulty of distinguishing between different kinds of impossibility, such as those mentioned in the last paragraph. The embattled philosopher might well expect to get some guidance on these matters from the structural linguist, who considers himself to be an empirical scientist. One would expect that linguists would have worked out some reliable empirical tests for the possibility or impossibility of occurrence of some combination of elements in a given language. But such expectations would be frustrated. Many linguists work with a quite naive conception of a "corpus," which presumably contains, e.g., any samples of speech one might happen to pick up with a tape recorder or other recording device, human or non-human. This would presumably include all sorts of slips, misuses, drunken ravings, etc. A man who is setting out to give a complete description of the language may ignore these problems in practice if the "corpus" is sufficiently large, for if he can find a set of elements and a set of rules for their combination which is not too unwieldy and which fits almost all the utterances in the corpus, he can dismiss the residue as misuses (though it will still be desirable to have some sort of independent test of the hypothesis that they are misuses). But a philosopher is not concerned to give a complete description of a language; he wants to concentrate on certain terms that are crucial for certain philosophical problems. Hence he does not have the above kind of device for washing out misuses, and it is important for him to be quite accurate on each individual claim as to what can and can't be said. And on this point he can expect no help from contemporary linguistics.

II

I now turn to a consideration of the character of Ryle's thesis, vis-à-vis analogous theses a structural linguist might conceivably put forward, though in order to get at the important points it will be useful to raise further questions about the character of his data. It is not surprising that one cannot get at the nature of the theory and the nature of the data in complete independence of each other. Let us state Ryle's thesis as follows: certain verbs, such as 'find', 'score', 'see', 'know', and 'prove', fall into a class, which we may term "achievement verbs," that is distinguished from other classes of verbs by such facts as that none of its members admit the present continuous tense (One cannot say 'I am knowing that the Giants won the pennant') and that none of them can
be used with certain adverbs, 'successfully', 'unsuccessfully', 'assiduously', etc. So stated, the thesis seems quite similar to attempts by linguists to separate out a certain class of elements of morpheme size or larger, in terms of their distribution relative to other elements. In fact, in A. A. Hill's *Introduction to Linguistic Structures*, we have a quite analogous class demarcated, termed by him "habitual verbs" on the grounds that the so-called habitual present tense (I swim often) is the only one they have, the present continuous tense not being available. In his rather sketchy treatment this is the only criterion he considers.

Just how close to linguists is Ryle in what he is doing here? (In terms of the sort of linguistics we are considering, this is equivalent to asking, "Is the distinction between achievement verbs and task verbs a grammatical distinction?"

He himself is given to drawing, or attempting to draw, a sharp distinction between what he and other philosophers do by way of bringing out category distinctions and features of the use of words and what linguists do. In his essay, "Categories," he says: "category-propositions are semantic propositions. This does not imply that they are of the same types as the propositions of philologists, grammarians or lexicographers. There are not English category-propositions as opposed to German ones, or Occidental as opposed to Oriental." And in his essay, "Ordinary Language," he tries to get at this difference by maintaining that those who philosophize in this style are dealing not with words but with uses that one or another word may happen to have:

Hume's question was not about the word 'cause'; it was about the use of 'cause'. It was just as much about the use of 'Ursache', though 'cause' is not the same word as 'Ursache'. Hume's question was not a question about a bit of the English language in any way in which it was not a question about a bit of the German language. The job done with the English word 'cause' is not an English job, or a continental job.

Ryle then goes on to claim that the term 'usage' is the appropriate term for marking the fact that a certain word in a certain language has the particular use that 'cause' and 'Ursache' share. In these terms he argues that philosophers are properly concerned with use, not with usage (174–177); i.e., with bringing out the features of a certain job one can do with one word or another, not with claims to the effect that a certain word in a certain language is in fact employed to do this job.

I am quite sure that Ryle cannot dissociate himself from gram-

6 *Philosophical Review*, 62: 171.
marians, lexicographers, etc., in just this way. If we take these passages at their face value, he seems to be saying that, contrary to appearances, in *The Concept of Mind* he is not setting out to tell us anything about the English words ‘see’, ‘know’, ‘prove’, etc. Of course, the sentence ‘Hume’s question was not about the word ‘cause’; it was about the use of ‘cause’’ admits of more than one interpretation. It might simply mean that Hume was not concerned with the phonetic or phonemic constitution of the word ‘cause’ or with its past history, but with the way(s) in which it is now employed. But if that is all that is meant, it would obviously afford no basis at all for distinguishing what Hume and Ryle are doing from what grammarians and lexicographers do. If what Ryle says is to provide such a differentiation, we shall have to interpret him as maintaining that what he is concerned with is, e.g., a way of using verbs to denote not “acts, exertions, operations or performances, but . . . the fact that certain acts, operations, exertions or performances have had certain results” and that he makes reference to particular English words like ‘win’, ‘find’, ‘cure’, ‘see’, ‘prove’, etc., only as one device, among many others he might have used instead, to direct our attention to that sort of use. Once our attention is so directed, these words are of no more interest, just as once we have arrived at our destination we no longer need concern ourselves with the particular signpost which, as it happened, guided us there. This would have the further implication that it would make no essential difference to Ryle’s enterprise if he were quite mistaken in what he says, or appears to be saying, about ‘know’, ‘see’, etc.—if, e.g., contrary to what he says, or appears to be saying, one could say significantly “I assiduously know that the Giants won the pennant” or “At this moment I am knowing that the Giants won the pennant.” Of course being in error on such points might result in Ryle’s failing to get our attention directed to the use in which he is interested, but if it didn’t then the error would make no difference. But if we look closely at what Ryle is trying to do, we see that this account of his enterprise simply does not fit. Ryle is trying to direct our attention to this sort of use of words, in order to relieve certain philosophical discomforts or “conceptual cramps” into which he thinks people have gotten in reflecting on knowledge and perception (in the course of their employment of the words ‘know’ and ‘see’ or equivalent terms in other languages). But this means that Ryle has to be correct in what he says about the English words ‘know’ and ‘see’ if his remarks about this way of using words is to have any relevance to those problems. (Words in other languages come in only qua being equivalent to ‘know’
and 'see', so these latter constitute the keystone. More on this in a moment. If 'I am now knowing that... ' makes perfectly good sense, then whether or not the achievement way of using verbs exists as an abstract possibility or as exemplified by other verbs, pointing this out can have no bearing on the problem of what it is to know something, nor can it have any efficacy in clearing up puzzles and dilemmas into which we fall in thinking about knowledge.

To be sure, there is a point in what Ryle is saying in the passages just quoted, and it deserves to be extricated from the confusions in which it is embedded. Hume's discussion of causation and Ryle's discussion of knowledge are not relevant only to English-speaking philosophers, and this means that in some sense they are not concerned exclusively with the English words 'cause' and 'know'. But this is far from showing that they are not essentially concerned to say something about the way in which these particular words are used, or that it is not essential that what they say be true of these particular words. The point is that these discussions have relevance beyond the English-speaking community to the extent that there are words and/or larger units in other languages which have the sorts of uses the English words 'know' and 'cause' have and which figure, or might figure, in a like way in the generation of philosophical puzzles and paradoxes. But Ryle has to get straight as to how the English word 'know' is used, or he will not have any results, an analogue of which might be specified for various other languages. So, far from this wider relevance showing that Ryle does not have to concern himself with facts as to how 'know' is in fact employed, it is rather the case that accuracy with respect to the use of 'know' is an indispensable basis for that wider relevance. Ryle must at the very least be right about 'know'. If there are analogous points to be made for other languages, so much the better.

This means that at this point there is a distinction between what Ryle is doing and what a linguist might be doing. If a linguist is describing English, then the nonexistence of parallels in all other languages, or even any other language, to a certain form-class he demarcates or a certain syntactical construction he analyzes does nothing to detract from the value or significance of his results. (I am not saying that linguists cannot or do not have an interest in 'linguistic universals.' I am saying merely that linguists can and do set out to specify the structure of a given language; and it is this aspect of linguistics on which I am concentrating at the moment.) But if it turned out that although what Ryle says about 'win', 'eure', 'see', etc., were correct, there were no achieve-
ment verbs in any other languages, then he and we would feel that his results had much less philosophical significance than had been claimed for them, or perhaps even no philosophical significance at all. This difference can be brought out by the fact that when *The Concept of Mind* is translated, as by Professor Rossi-Landi into Italian, the English words Ryle is examining are themselves replaced by Italian equivalents; and if this had been impossible then it would not have been worth while carrying out the translations. But if Hill's book on the structure of English were translated into Italian, the English words whose behavior he is describing would be left in English. This shows that it is true to say that Hill is specifically concerned with the English word 'see' in a way in which Ryle is not. But, as already indicated, this has to do with the import the thesis about 'see' is taken to have and the uses to which it is put, rather than the character of the thesis itself or the sorts of considerations that are relevant in testing it.

III

Nevertheless there are some important differences between the character of Ryle's thesis about 'see', etc., and the sort of thesis that would be put forward by the somewhat idealized linguist we are using as a foil. These can be brought out by considering the way in which structural linguistics aspires to be "formal." As used here, 'formal' restricts criteria for the presence of a kind of element and for the permissibility of combinations to publicly observable characteristics of speech sounds and their patterning. Thus in specifying a class of elements or in specifying rules for their combination in a formal manner one cannot take into account meaning, what is referred to, or what would be said if a certain sequence were uttered. Ryle's account of achievement verbs fails to be "formal" in two ways. First, instead of proceeding formally by specifying the other elements (themselves formally defined) with which a given word can or cannot be conjoined in certain configurations, Ryle makes his points in terms of our ability or inability to say something or to answer a given question in a certain way, where 'say something' and 'answer a question' are not formal concepts in the required sense. Thus he says "we can significantly say that someone has aimed in vain or successfully, but not that he has hit the target in vain or successfully," instead of putting it formally in terms of the possibility of occurrence of the sequence 'he has hit the target successfully'. And he says "The questions 'What are you doing?' and 'What was he undergoing?' cannot

7 Of course there are serious questions into which I cannot go, as to the relation between such criteria and the elements and combinations so specified.
be answered by ‘seeing’, ‘concluding’, or ‘checkmating’,’ instead of saying something formal about what units can follow the sequence ‘what are you doing?’. Even where he encloses adverbs and verbs in quotes, what he says is that the adverbs ‘cannot be used to qualify such cognitive verbs as . . .’, and ‘qualify’ is hardly a formal term. Of course it may be that all Ryle’s points could be translated into the formal mode, or, less strongly, that points could be made in the formal mode which in some sense correspond to them. But even if this is possible, it would not be a simple matter. In trying to convert Ryle’s second point, e.g., into the formal mode, we would run into the difficulty that whether or not a given sequence, e.g., ‘Concluding . . .’, could occur after another, e.g., ‘What are you doing?’ would certainly depend on whether the first was uttered by way of asking a question and if so whether the second was uttered as an answer to that question. And it does not readily appear how these conditions could be stated in formal terms.

Ryle also falls short of being purely formal by virtue of the fact that it is of considerable importance to him that the class in question be named in one way or another. Or rather it is not the name that is so important (one might find a term just as apt for Ryle’s purposes as ‘achievement’); it is the characterization that lies behind the name (these verbs denote not special performances but the outcomes of otherwise denoted performances). If Ryle is going to apply his account of achievement to traditional philosophical problems about perception and knowledge, he must get to this sort of characterization. But it is clear that this goes beyond formal matters. Even though a linguist might label a class he has specified by purely formal criteria as ‘mass nouns’, ‘habitual verbs’, or ‘quality adjectives’, he has no right to draw on any of the implications or connotations of these labels, so long as he is being purely formal.

These considerations indicate important differences between Rylean philosophical analysis and the analysis of a language undertaken by a structural linguist, and the existence of these differences will certainly prevent any straightforward assimilation of the two enterprises or any simple transfer of methods from the one to the other. But it by no means follows that the procedures and results of structural linguistics are of no value to the analytical philosopher. Even though the analysis of language in purely formal terms does not itself give the philosopher the results he needs for his purposes, it might well separate out classes that the philosopher would find it profitable to examine in his own way. That is, the class distinctions the linguist discovers by formal pro-
cedures might parallel important conceptual distinctions, and the presentation of such formal results might provide the philosopher with hints for such distinctions. Thus the distinction of classes of adjectives that Hill has carried out, or at least begun, in terms of the formal criterion of obligatory order ⁸ might reflect conceptual distinctions between sorts of properties that would be philosophically important. We have something of this sort actually worked out in J. O. Urmson's essay, "Parenthetical Verbs," ⁹ where first the class of verbs is demarcated in terms of such formal considerations as flexibility of position in a sentence, and then the distinctive features of the concepts expressed by such verbs are explored. In this way structural linguistics might be of real importance to philosophy. And, of course, if and when semantics is developed and integrated into structural linguistics along with grammar, the differences between the two sorts of inquiry in methods and status of conclusions, though not in ultimate aim, may well be reduced to the vanishing point.

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ST. THOMAS ON "UNIVERSALS" *

IN many handbooks of the history of philosophy one finds as a summary of the "problem of universals" that the "correct" answer is found in the three-fold statement:

 Universals are ante rem in the mind of God;
 Universals are in re in that the essence represented in the mind is in each particular;
 Universals are post rem in the (human) intellect.

As far as St. Thomas is concerned, I shall show that the first two are not true and that the third can be accepted only with qualifications.

In order to answer the question: What is the status of universals? we must first consider the nature of the act of knowing and the function of the intellect. Knowing is a relation between the knower and the known, in which the known is in some manner in the knower. But anything is received according to the nature or mode of the recipient and not according to its own nature. Thus the physical object or some aspect with which the sense is conversant is received as a "sensible species" in the sense organ (and


* To be presented in a symposium on "Universals in Medieval Philosophy" at the fifty-ninth annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division, December 28, 1962.