A NOTE ON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SYNCATEGOREMATA

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A favorite technique of Quine [1] for distinguishing the categorematic from the syncategorematic use of adjectives is to resolve linguistic compounds denoted by 'is (are) a _ _ _ so and so' into ones denoted by 'is (are) _ _ _ and is a so and so' (e.g., 'is a square so and so' into 'is square and is a so and so'). It is instructive to note that the grammatical susceptibility to this kind of resolution on the part of adjectival expressions can be extended in such a way as to establish a syntactical "heirarchy" of the adjectival syncategoremata of a given language (in this case English).

We previously used the expression "grammatical susceptibility" with good reason. For, while Quine would object to resolving the expression 1) 'big butterfly' into 2) 'is a butterfly and is big' [2], such a resolution is not grammatically discordant; whereas, the resolution of 3) 'each butterfly' into 4) 'is a butterfly and is each' is unquestionably illicit grammar. In this respect, we should like to state: A) There are adjectives which sometimes function syncategorematically and yet are frequently found to be a part of those terms which admit of resolution 2; B) there are adjectives which function syncategorematically but are never a part of terms admitting of resolution 2; and finally, C) adjectives of set A will be called "Secondary" and those of set B, "Primary".

Thus, the adjective 'poor' in 5) 'poor sport' is used syncategorematically, since 5 cannot be resolved into 6) 'is a sport and is poor'. But the same adjective in 7) 'poor nation' functions quite differently, since 7 can be grammatically resolved into 8) 'is a nation and is poor.' On the other hand, although 'mere' in say 9) 'mere child' functions syncategorematically, there seem to be no examples of its use analogous to 7, i.e., no examples of a categorematic employment. Hence, 'mere' would be regarded as a primary syncategoreme while 'poor' would be assigned to the class of secondary syncategoremata.

Consideration of such indefinite singular terms as 10) 'Any poem' and 11) 'Every poem' alike reveals the absurdity of the translation into 12) 'is a poem and is any (every)'. Consequently, 'Any' and 'Every' seem to have the same status of primary syncategoremata. And there seem to be no