

ELENA MĂRĂSCU

MORPHOLOGY

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CHAPTER I

NOUNS

Nouns usually are defined as the „names of people places and things. But this kind of definition by meaning doesn't explain, for example, **worker** is a noun but **working, work** and **works** may be nouns or verbs.

A noun is a name word, representing directly to the mind an object, substance, or idea.

Nouns are classified as follows:

- (1) **Proper.**
- (2) **Common.**
 - (a) CLASS NAMES:
 - i. Individual.
 - ii. Collective.
 - (b) MATERIAL.
- (3) **Abstract.**
 - (a) ATTRIBUTE.
 - (b) VERBAL

A **proper noun** is a name applied to a particular object, whether person, place, or thing. The word *proper* is from a Latin word meaning *limited, belonging to one*

A common noun is a name possessed by any one of a class of persons, animals, or things.

Common, as here used, is from a Latin word which means general, possessed by all.

Besides considering persons, animals, and things separately, we may think of them in groups, and appropriate names to the groups.

Thus, men in groups may be called a *crowd*, a *committee*, or a *council*, or a *congress*, etc.

These are called **COLLECTIVE NOUNS**. They properly belong under common nouns, because each group is considered as a unit, and the name applied to it belongs to any group of its class.

The definition given for common nouns applies more strictly to class nouns. It may, however, be correctly used for another group of nouns detailed below; for they are common nouns in the sense that the names apply to *every particle of similar substance*, instead of to each individual or separate object.

They are called **MATERIAL NOUNS**. Such are *glass*, *iron*, *frost*, *rain*, *wheat*, *wine*, *tea*, *sugar*, etc.

They may be placed in groups as follows:

- (1) The metals: *iron*, *gold*, silver, etc.
- (2) Products spoken of in bulk: *tea*, *sugar*, *rice*, *wheat*, etc.
- (3) Geological bodies: *mud*, *sand*, *e*, *rock*, *stone*, etc.
- (4) Natural phenomena: *rain*, *dew*, *frost*, *mist*, etc.
- (5) Various manufactures: *cloth*, *h*, *soap*, *rubber*, *paint*, etc.

NOTE. There are some nouns, such as *sun*, *moon*, *earth*, which seem to be the names of particular individual objects, but which are not called proper names.

The reason is, that in proper names the intention is *to exclude* all other individuals of the same class, and fasten a special name to the object considered, as in calling a city London. If several bodies like the center of our solar system are known, they also are called *suns* by a natural extension of the term: so with the words *earth*, *world*, etc. They remain common class names.

Abstract nouns are names of qualities, conditions, or actions, considered abstractly, or apart from their natural connection.

When we speak of a *wise man*, we recognize in him an attribute or quality. If we wish to think simply of that quality without describing the person, we speak of the *wisdom* of the man. The quality is still there as much as before, but it is taken merely as a name. Again, we may say, "*Painting* is a fine art," "*Learning* is hard to acquire," "a man of *understanding*."

There are two main divisions of abstract nouns: -

(1) **ATTRIBUTE NOUNS**, expressing attributes or qualities.

(2) **VERBAL NOUNS**, expressing state, condition, or action.

The ATTRIBUTE ABSTRACT NOUNS are derived from adjectives and from common nouns. Thus, (1) *height* from *high*, *redness* from *red*, *stupidity* from *stupid*, etc.; (2) *childhood* from *child*, *mastery* from *master*, *kingship* from *king*, etc.

The VERBAL ABSTRACT NOUNS originate in verbs, as their name implies. They may be:

(1) Of the same form as the simple verb.

The verb, by altering its *function*, is used as a noun; as in the expression, "a long run".

(2) Derived from verbs by changing the ending or adding a suffix: motion from move, speech from speak, action from act.

(3) Derived from verbs by adding - *ing* to the simple verb. It must be remembered that these words are *free from any verbal function* They cannot govern a word, and they cannot express action, but are merely names of actions. They are only the husks of verbs, and are to be rigidly distinguished from gerunds.

Some abstract nouns were not derived from any other part of speech, but were framed directly for the expression of certain ideas or phenomena.

Such are *beauty*, *joy*, *hope*, *ease*, *energy*; *day*, *night*, *summer*, *winter*; *shadow*, *lightning*, *thunder*, etc.

The adjectives or verbs corresponding to these are either themselves derived from the nouns or are totally different words:

as *glad* - *joy*, *hopeful* - *hope*, etc.

Special uses of nouns

Proper nouns are used as common in either of two ways:

The origin of a thing is used for the thing itself: that is, the name of the inventor may be applied to the thing invented, as a *davy*, meaning the miner's lamp invented by Sir Humphry Davy; the *guillotine*, from the name of Dr. Guillotin, who was its inventor. Or the name of the country or city from which an article is derived is used for the article: as *china*, from China; *arras*, from a town in France; *port* (wine), from Porto, in Portugal; *levant* and *morocco* (leather).

Some of this class have become worn by use so that at present we can scarcely discover the derivation from the form of the word; for example, the word *port*, above. Others of similar character are *calico*, from Calicut; *damask*, from Damascus etc.

The name of a person or place noted for certain qualities is transferred to any person or place possessing those qualities; thus, Hercules and Samson were noted for their strength, and we call a very strong

man a *Hercules* or a *Samson* Sodom was famous for wickedness, and a similar place is called a Sodom of sin.

Material nouns may be used as class names.

Instead of considering the whole body of material of which certain uses are made, one can speak of particular uses or phases of the substance.

(1) *Of individual objects* made from metals or other substances capable of being wrought into various shapes. We know a number of objects made of iron. The material *iron* embraces the metal contained in them all; but we may say, "The cook made the *irons* hot" referring to flat - irons; or, "The sailor was put in *irons*" meaning chains of iron. So also we may speak of *a glass* to drink from or to look into; *a steel* to whet a knife on; *a rubber* for erasing marks; and so on.

(2) *Of classes or kinds* of the same substance. These are the same in material, but differ in strength, purity, etc. Hence it shortens speech to make the nouns plural, and say *teas, tobaccos, paints, oils, candies, clays, coals*.

(3) *By poetical use, of certain words necessarily singular in idea, which are made plural, or used as class nouns, as in the following:*

(4) *Of detached portions* of matter used as class names; as *stones, slates, papers, tins, clouds, mists*, etc.