

Chapter - 2

***Are all Problems of Philosophy
Linguistic in Character ?***

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Section 1: Introductory

The first half of twentieth century has witnessed the scene that philosophers far and wide began considering the problems of philosophy as essentially linguistic. It is not that the problems of philosophy turned out to be different. But the fact is that the traditional problems received a new meaning and dimension for the philosophers. Twentieth century philosophy, more than any other period, has become deeply and sharply conscious of the connection between philosophical problems on the one hand and language on the other. As Putnam says, "If philosophers have become very interested in language in the past fifty years it is not because they have become disinterested in the Great Questions of philosophy, but precisely because they *are* still interested in the Great Questions and because they have come to believe that language holds the key to resolve (or in some way satisfactorily dispose of) the Great Questions."¹

This attitude has signalled a revolution in philosophy. It gave traditional philosophical problems a linguistic turn and indicated a new orientation in philosophical exercise asking philosophers to take recourse to linguistic analysis in their attempt to solve philosophical problems.

¹Putnam, Hilary, **Mind, Language and Reality**, Philosophical Papers, Vol.2, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1975, p.1.

The term *linguistic philosophy* has been defined by Richard Rorty as representing the view that "philosophical problems may be solved (or dissolved) either by reforming language or by understanding more about the language we presently use."²

Rorty's definition presents an altogether novel conception of philosophy. The conception develops in the background of the idea that philosophical problems arose from misinterpretation of language or, to be precise, from misapprehension of the real structure of language. Such misapprehension might present us with a false picture of reality. So language must first of all be corrected and ordered if all philosophical misgivings regarding the structure of reality is to be dispelled - language being a picture of reality and there being structural affinity ^{between them} some kind of isomorphism between language and reality _{obtains.}

Section 2: How does language matter to philosophy?

The idea that philosophy has to do with language mainly comes from the logical positivist's contention that philosophical statements are devoid of cognitive significance. Yet they have come to have a place in philosophical literature because they have been misinterpreted, their syntax misunderstood and

²Rorty, Richard(ed.): **The Linguistic Turns**; The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London; 1967, p. 3.

taken to represent extra-empirical things. The task of philosophy should be to acquire a clear vision through the real syntax of language which would serve the negative purpose of eliminating such statements from the body of philosophy.

Evidentially, if philosophical problems arise from language ~~then language~~, then language must be the first thing to be considered by a philosopher. The basic idea is that language is believed to be relevant for our understanding of ontology. Philosophy is believed to be an enquiry into what there is, into the province of our knowledge. It has been *maintained* that even as *ideas* in the 17th century were supposed to mediate between the subject and the object of knowledge, similarly sentences are supposed to do the same job in the present century. An investigation into knowledge of objects required for the seventeenth century philosophers a scrutiny of *ideas*. In the present century we notice a shift from *ideas* to *sentences*, the conviction remaining the same that our knowledge of reality is invariably mediated through *ideas* or *sentences*. The relevance of language to philosophy has been described by Hacking in the following way: "*It (language) matters for the reason that ideas mattered in seventeenth-century philosophy, because ideas then, and sentences now, serve as the interface between the knowing subject and what is known. The sentence matters even more if we begin to dispense with the fiction of a knowing subject, and regard discourse as autonomous. Language matters to philosophy because of what*

knowledge has become."³

Hacking, of course, is of the opinion that philosophy cannot ignore the importance of language for that would stand in the way of explaining our knowledge of the world. He refers to the endorsement of *ideas* by the philosophers of the seventeenth century. *Ideas*, they held, "serve as the interface between the knowing subject and what is known."⁴ Sentences play the same role. They also serve as interface between the subject and the object. Hacking goes to the extent of holding that language may even be construed as autonomous in the sense that it would simply constitute human knowledge. Knowledge is not something that follows language. Language *is* knowledge. Hacking tells us-"The sentence matters even more if we begin to dispense with the fiction of a knowing subject, and regard discourse as autonomous. Language matters to philosophy because of what knowledge has become ...no longer even the interface between the knower and the known, but as that which constitutes human knowledge."⁵

This is one way of emphasising the importance of language for a philosopher who is concerned with the problem of knowledge. For him, Hacking thinks, linguistic investigation can take the place of epistemological investigation, just as for the seventeenth century philosophers an enquiry into

³Hacking, Ian: **Why does Language Matter to Philosophy?** Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1975, p.187.

⁴Ibid., p.187.

⁵Ibid., p. 187.

the nature and properties of ideas could amount to a study of the nature and limit of human knowledge. Knowledge for these philosophers is essentially ideational. For the philosophers who took a linguistic turn, knowledge is essentially linguistic.

There may be difference of opinion regarding Hacking's contention. One may of course believe in non-linguistic knowledge which is often illustrated by the knowledge of the child. Nevertheless, the knowledge which we acquire must be amenable to linguistic expression. This is something that has been contemplated by P. F. Strawson as when he said that any particular we know must be an object of linguistic reference.

That philosophical problems are wholly linguistic is a thesis which, as we have already taken into account, came to be upheld by the logical positivists who traced the origin of such problems in linguistic confusion. We may refer to the ways in which this thesis has been demonstrated, i.e., shown how exactly language contributes in creating philosophical confusion.

G. E. Moor, one of the central figures in the analytic movement, attributes the problems of philosophy to the use of incorrect language. The correction he proposes is simply to stick to the ordinary language. The language in ordinary use is correct because, he believes, it does not offend against the structure of ordinary ontology. Thus when the philosopher says time is unreal he apparently does not believe that he had his breakfast before his lunch, and the philosopher's view frequently offends our ordinary experience. For example, when Russell

says that while looking at the desk we see a part of our own brain, he goes against the deliverance of our ordinary experience. Moore attributes the whole trouble to incorrect language. It is incorrect to put my experience in the linguistic form in which Russell prefers to put it. So language by and large, is the source of philosophical disagreement, of course, when it is not used *correctly*.

Bertrand Russell, another leading figure of the analytic movement also holds that philosophical problems spring from linguistic confusions. In order to unearth the main source of the problem which will help us with the key to the solution, he proposes to distinguish between the *grammatical form* and the *logical form* of language. He holds that many philosophical problems are due to the confusion between grammatical form and logical form. He observes that most of the statements are couched in the grammatical subject - predicate form. We are habituated to think that this grammatical subject - predicate form is the logical form, and may be taken to represent the form of reality. That is to say, the grammatical form *the so - and -so* has the appearance of proper names which are supposed to function logically in the same way as logical expressions do; and so always imply the existence of their referents. But as a matter of fact there are subject expressions which are not genuine proper names and consequently which should not be taken to denote any object in reality. For Russell, as Hacking puts it, "Wrong notions about language, or defects in our language, betray us into bad philosophy. A better and more analytic language is needed to encode the truth, but true philosophy is not the servant of grammar

or theory of meaning. On the contrary, far from being autonomous and perhaps even constituting the substances of ontology... Russell always thought that grammar answers to the world and to what there is in it."⁶

Philosophers concern with language receives a new dimension with the publication of *Tractatus* by Wittgenstein. His announcement: "The limits of my language are the limits of my world"⁷ is a clear testimony of his conviction regarding the ontological relevance of language. This remark of Wittgenstein requires that we must not acknowledge nothing in our ontology which we cannot express in language. It is suggested that there should be nothing indescribable in our ontology. If there is really anything which we cannot speak of, then "we must pass over in silence."⁸ The concept of reality that is not expressible in language is an impossibility for Wittgenstein.

In this context we may interestingly refer back to an earlier suggestion. There was nothing for the seventeenth century empiricists that could not be caught in the net of one's ideas and impressions. The limit of reality was described by the limit of ideas. Wittgenstein in upholding the double thesis of description and silence voices something similar. Nothing should be included in our ontology which defies linguistic expression - an idea which may be phenomenologically correct.

⁶Ibid., pp. 172-73.

⁷Wittgenstein, Ludwig: *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, translated by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness, New York; Humanities Press, 1961, p.115.

⁸Ibid., p. 151.

The seventeenth century philosopher was convinced that the ideas represent reality, and that there is nothing in our ontology which is not present in the world of our ideas. The celebrated picture theory of Wittgenstein echoes the same thought, but is more explicit about the correspondence between language and reality. As a pioneer advocate of this school, Ryle says that the task of philosophy is "the detection of the sources in linguistic idioms of recurrent misconstruction and absurd theories."⁹ In this famous article, *Systematically Misleading Expressions*, Ryle brilliantly puts the case by saying that philosophical problems are linguistic, since philosophical problems can only be solved with the paraphrasing of language. As a student of Wittgenstein, John Wisdom was inspired by a similar insight. He holds that philosophical statements are *linguistic innovations*. He says, whatever be the nature of philosophical statements, it may be the account of the world either in terms of facts, things or events. And further Wisdom continues: "A philosophical answer is really a verbal recommendation in response to a request which is really a request with regard to a sentence which lacks a conventional use whether there occur situations which could conventionally be described by it."¹⁰

The view that philosophical statements are linguistic has also been confirmed by A. J. Ayer. He has held that 'philosophy provides definitions'.¹¹

⁹Passmore, J. A.: *A Hundred Years of Philosophy* (London Duckworth, 1957), p. 440

¹⁰Wisdom, John, "Philosophical Perplexity" in *The Linguistic Turn*, edited by Richard Rorty; The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London; 1967, p. 101

¹¹Ayer, A. J.: *Language, Truth and Logic*, London, 1936, p. 55.

M. Schlick makes the same remark. He says, "The history of philosophy might have taken a very different course if the minds of the great thinkers had been more deeply impressed by the remarkable fact that there is such a thing as language."¹² The phrase *Linguistic turn* justifies the relevance of language to philosophy in suggesting a clear relation between language and reality than any other branch of human knowledge.

Section 3: A Theory of the world and of language

Language as a phenomenon of human life is no more interesting than other human habits. Man is defined by Aristotle as a rational animal. He (man) thinks. Human thinking, for the behaviourists, is implicit speech. Thought has an essential linguistic character. It has the same semantical properties as sentences of overt language.

Language thus is an essential dimension of human existence. But it is not for this reason that language is sometimes taken to be a subject for philosophical consideration. Language is relevant to philosophy as it points to things extra-linguistic. It enables us to know what there is.

We shall examine first of all the possibility of there being a relation

¹²Schlick, M. *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, 1926-1936.(Vienna, 1938), p.153.(The quotation is from a lecture delivered in the University of London in 1932).

between language and reality. We have mentioned in the introduction that the possibility of such^a relation presupposes a prior conception of reality which is a kind of linguistic decision on our part. If the term *reality* stands for metaphysical reality it is quite possible that our language does not reach upto that. Consequently, it may necessarily be said that language will be related to reality if the term *reality* stands for everything that composes the empirical world. This is a relation which is comprehensible by our thought and expressible in our language. In other words, if we take a decision about the nature of reality such that reality means nothing more than the totality of empirical entities, than language must have a relation to reality.

This is what is suggested by the picture theory of Wittgenstein. Language is a picture of reality. Mohanty may be right in saying that language is a picture of reality if reality is co-extensive with the world consisting of facts (not of things and person^s). A fact is definable only with reference to sentences. A fact is what makes a sentence true. If there is a relation of correspondence, accordance or picturing between language and reality then it is, as Mohanty observes, an analytic correspondence in the way^{as} the thesis looks upon reality as consisting in facts. Mohanty continues further that: "Certainly if you look up on the world to consist not in facts but in events, things and person^s, you cannot contend that language pictures them, it can at best describe them."¹³

It may be^a matter of decision if we are to describe the world of ours as a

¹³ Mohanty, J. N.: "Language and Reality" included in **Language and Reality**, edited by J.L. Mehta, Bhu, 1964, p.2

totality of facts, yet it will be still true to say that the world is the totality of facts. It is a description of the world that does not contradict the thesis that there are things or entities in the world, for facts are nothing but such things in specific combination. If I want to describe the world I must describe this specific world of ours, and not any one of infinite possible worlds. Consequently, it is worth Wittgenstein's while to say that the world which we intend to describe has got to be this very world which is a totality of things in specific combination - a totality of facts.

The point about decision may here be reiterated. But the decision is necessitated by the logic of description itself. If we want to describe the world and not just refer to it, nor just want to experience it, then the decision becomes momentous in the context.

Let us now grant that there is a relation subsisting between language and reality. The relation is such that it renders possible to picture reality by and through languages. Such picturing would be possible only if there obtains a structural affinity between a sentence or set of sentences and reality. The elements of the sentence, which are numerically similar to those of reality, must be combined in the same way in which the elements of reality are combined. This is how language reveals reality.

Does language reach upto the metaphysical world? If by metaphysical reality we understand the ineffable then, of course, language cannot surely reach upto that. As a matter of fact when philosophers speak of the philosophical

relevance of language they do not consider the metaphysical or non-empirical reality. So there is a limit to the use of language. If language transcends the limit of the empirical it must be at fault, or it is a failure at both the logical and epistemological levels.

Yet philosophers have frequently made assertions about non-empirical entities. Such assertions assume a grammatical form which is identical with the grammatical form of assertions about empirical entities. Consequently, they have been interpreted in the same way and found to have identical ontological implication. Such interpretations have been delusive.

A.J. Ayer in his **Language, Truth and Logic** has drawn our attention to the fact that it is nothing but misinterpretation of sentences which is responsible for all the metaphysical excess^{es} of nineteenth century philosophy. The influence of early Wittgenstein can hardly be overlooked here. Philosophical problems for Wittgenstein consist in metaphysical excess^{es}. He held that the study of language would dissolve all philosophical problems. Ayer's essay on *"Elimination of Metaphysics"* discloses the fact that how linguistic confusion generates metaphysical delusions. A grammatical therapy alone can prevent us from endorsing metaphysical entities.

Gilbert Ryle's celebrated essay *"Systematically Misleading Expressions"* also serves as an eye-opener to how language misleads one to be committed to a false ontology. The conception of philosophy that emerges from Wittgenstein's concern with language could be apparently negative. He

wanted to exorcise philosophy of the metaphysical ghost. But there have been others who identify philosophical issues with problems about language and thus take a positive view of philosophy.

It has been held by many philosophers of the present century that philosophy should be concerned simply with language. It has assumed the characteristic of the movement in augmenting a reformative concern not directly concerned with morals, rather with the language of morals, not with science, but with the language of science; and so on. Philosophy of language becomes the centre of philosophical attention.

Miss Alice Ambrose has been a leading thinker of this linguistic movement. She is of the opinion that philosophical statements are not factual statements about physical objects or about perception or about ^{the} mind. When a philosopher says that physical objects are a bundle of properties or the perception of physical objects is an inference from sense experience: he does not intend to make a statement about fact. As such as Bergmann, Ambrose says that the statements of the sort are not definite products of empirical investigation. They cannot be disposed of either by an experiment or by a demonstration. Ambrose further continues that "philosophical theory has its source in linguistic facts rather than facts about the world, and despite appearances it gives us information only about language."¹⁴ The theory of causation, for example, does not tell us about causation as a feature of our world

¹⁴Ambrose, Alice, "Linguistic Approaches to Philosophical Problem" in The Linguistic Turn, edited by Richard Rorty, 1967, p. 147.

; it tells us something about the word *cause* which is linguistic.

We have already mentioned Moore's leadership of the movement. Malcolm in his article *Moore and ordinary Language* has examined a number of philosophical statements such as "Time is Unreal", "No one ever perceives a material thing", "All that one ever sees when he looks at a thing is part of his own brain", etc.¹⁵ Moore tries to up turn these philosophical statements by saying that these statements actually go against common sense. Malcolm interprets Moore as saying that "these statement go against ordinary language."¹⁶ Philosophical statements are not products of empirical investigation like the statements of ^{the} moral sciences. Moreover, it is not the case that a philosopher has the privilege of taking a close look at things - closer than what ordinary people can take. Philosophical statements are nothing but disguised linguistic statements. Although, philosophers, like ordinary laymen are not disputing the existence ^{of} chairs and tables in the room, but looking at these chairs and tables, philosophers, unlike ordinary laymen are not actually seeing chairs and tables, but sense-data with which they are directly acquainted. But this form of locution that we are directly acquainted ^{with} sense-data ^{is} obviously ^a linguistic affair. Bergmann says that whenever a philosopher declares that time is unreal, he does not come to deny the temporal precedence and succession. He does not want to turn a blind eye to the fact that his father was born much before himself. But what he actually wants to say is that there

¹⁵Malcom, Norman, "Moore and Ordinary Language", Ibid., pp. 111-112.

¹⁶Ibid., P. 113.

always remains a specific way in which the fact is to be described. Malcolm observes that there is no disparity between a philosopher and a layman regarding the fact that there is a chair at present in front of them. But the disparity between them is that, 'how linguistically the fact is to be described' ¹⁷ Malcolm says:

In a normal sort of circumstances in which a person would ordinarily say that he sees the postman, Russell would not disagree with him about any question of empirical fact; yet Russell would still say that what he really saw was not about the postman, but part of his own brain. It appears then that they disagree, not about what *language* shall be used to describe those facts. Russell is saying that it is more correct way of saying that you see a part of your brain, then to say that you see the postman. ¹⁸

Ambrose's theory should remind one of Russell. Like him, Ambrose opines that when a philosopher proposes a philosophical theory, or even if he tries to reject one, he does this on the basis of some linguistic informations. That is to say, philosophical statements are nothing but a sort of linguistic recommendation. A. J. Ayer in his **Language, Truth and Logic** and Prof. R. Carnap in his **Logical Syntax of Language** stressed on the view that philosophical statements were linguistic in character. Carnap maintained that all philosophical questions are questions of language. He says, "The philosophical questions of what there is are questions of how we may most

¹⁷Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 114.

conveniently fashion our "linguistic framework", and not, as in the case of the Wombat or Unicorn, questions about extra-linguistic reality." ¹⁹

Section 4: A critical assessment of Miss Ambrose's 'proposal theory of philosophy'

To defend her thesis that philosophical problems are linguistic recommendation, Ambrose suggests a number of *linguistic approaches* to philosophical problems which may be called the *Proposal Theory of Philosophy*. The plea for these theories lies in the fact that philosophical statements, as they appear to be, answer to questions, but are proposals to alter language in a concealed manner. They propose a modification of language and it is needed for the edification of philosophy. In this regard, Ambrose has made different approaches to show that philosophical statements are not empirical in the usual sense, they are linguistic. Chisholm in his article *Proposal Theory of Philosophy* undertakes a critical investigation of Ambrose's approach and tries to re-establish the view that philosophical statements may in some cases seem to be factual.

¹⁹Carnap, Rudlof, "Empiricism", "Internationale de Philosophie", Vol. IV, 1950, pp. 20-40.

Philosophical statements, Ambrose holds, are not factual in the sense that they do not state facts about physical objects. Philosophical statements, so to speak, unlike, scientific statements are not based on empirical evidence. For philosophers have no laboratory or experimental evidence with the help of which they can verify the truth or correctness of this type of statements. Anything that verifies a philosophical statement is different from a fact.

R. M. Chisholm expresses serious concern about the proposal offered by Ambrose. He observes that the claim that philosophical statements are not factual as they are not corroborated by scientific evidence is baseless. We find that there are plenty of instances in which philosophers appeal to empirical evidence. In ethics, for example, we find the agreement or disagreement among people regarding ^{the meaning} of ethical terms. In epistemology, we may occasionally discuss a number of statements, such as, light takes time to travel; that straight sticks often appear bent while dipped into water; that things look yellow to people who have been suffering from jaundice, etc. There are matter of facts borrowed from everyday experience.

Secondly, Ambrose argues that different philosophers come to opposite conclusions not always because different facts are available to them. An idealist and a realist present conflicting conclusions although they are acquainted with the same facts of experience. Further, it is not true that philosophical conflicts can be settled by appeal to another fact. In simple terms factual informations do not matter in settling philosophical disputes.

Ambrose seems to have maintained that philosophical disputes cannot be settled by an appeal to experience of facts. Facts are state of affairs and are experienced by us. Consequently her contention may be restated in the following way - disputes among philosophers cannot be settled by the experience they have of facts. In other words, philosophical statements are not factual because they are not verifiable by observation of experience.

If this contention is granted then Ambrose would be interpreted as connecting *factuality* with *verifiability*. But this contention is not tenable. In fact, the contention that factuality derives from verifiability involves circularity. It can be demonstrated in the following way -

- (i) To say that a statement is factual is to say that it is based on experience.
- (ii) To say that a statement is based on experience is to say that it is verifiable.
- (iii) To say that a statement is verifiable is to say that it is verifiable by observational evidence.
- (iv) But what we observe is a fact;
- (v) Therefore, to say that a statement is factual is to say that it refers to a fact, and thus involves circularity.

Even if we admit that philosophical statements are unverifiable in the

above sense; does it follow that they are not factual? Can we say that all unverifiable statements are not factual? Certainly we cannot. Because there is no formal contradiction in saying that an unverifiable statement is factual. This is so, because instead of a single unified criterion of verifiability; philosophers have intended to use different criteria to verify a given statement. For example, a psychological term, such as , *intelligent* with regard to a particular man may be examined by different psychologists in different senses. If they had a common criterion of intelligence, they would have easily solved their dispute, and eventually come to a unanimous decision by examining the man. But if they disagree about the common criterion of an intelligent man, their dispute remains unsettled. Similar situation prevails in every other areas of inquiry. The term *good*, for example, in ethics may be defined by different philosophers in different senses. A statement may be meaningful in one sense; it may be meaningless in another sense . For example, the statement, ' The present king of France is bald' is meaningful, but false, says Russell. It is false, for him since it fails to refer to a fact. But those who believe in *use theory* would like to consider this statement as meaningless , because it lacks use, since at present government of France is not a monarchical. Strawson and the later Wittgenstein adopt ^{the} use theory of language. Meinong, on the other hand, holds that the sentence under consideration is meaningful, since for him although it fails to refer to an existing entity; it refers to a subsistent entity or logical being. Thus in the case of the above statement, Strawson ,Russell and Meinong have deployed different criteria to verify the statement. So it is , by no means, reasonable to assert that an unverifiable statement is non-factual. It is quite

possible to say that even if some statements are unverifiable that does not entail that they are not factual. Chisholm says, "If philosophers find themselves in disagreement over Miss Ambrose's contention that unverifiable statements are not factual, their dispute will, in all probability, lead to a similar impasse: I have said that it may have been just this sort of dispute which lead Miss Ambrose to say that philosophical disputes "cannot" even theoretically be settled by recourse to any sort of matter of fact. But there are, of course, many non-philosophical disputes which are of this sort;.. And there are many philosophical disputes which are *not* of this sort...."²⁰ Thus the principle of verification cannot be accepted as the mark of factuality. Consequently, it remains undecided that philosophical statements are not factual as they are not verifiable.

Finally, Ambrose holds that philosophical statements are not factual, because they imply the logical impossibility of what is factually possible. It may be the case that something which is empirically impossible may be logically possible. Descartes gives the example of a ciliagon or a thousand-sided figure, which is empirically impossible but logically possible. But it can never be the case that something which is logically impossible may be empirically possible. A factual statement cannot be logically impossible. Moore examined a number of philosophical statements which go against common sense. When a philosopher, for example, Russell says that there are no material things, he

²⁰Chisholm, Roderick M. 'Comments on the "Proposal Theory of Philosophy" 'Ibid.,pp. 158-59.

intends to ignore the factual content of this statement in a certain sense; which is in some respect a factual statement of a different order. When Moore says that 'this is my right hand' and 'this is my left hand' and hence 'there are at least two material things'. But a typical philosophical explanation ignores Moore's interpretation by saying that this is not actually the correct way of saying. When we look at a material thing, says Russell, what we actually see is not a material thing; but part of our own brains. Thus it appears that although Moore's statement is factually true in some sense, philosophers find a way of explanation to ignore the logical impossibility of this statement.

Ambrose observes that necessary propositions are not directly related to language. "Material bodies are extended" is the example of a necessary proposition. In knowing the necessity^{of the} proposition, one has to know a verbal fact; i.e., the fact that 'unextended material bodies' has no descriptive use. But she reminds us that this is not the case that actually happens in synthetic or contingent propositions, since contingent propositions have descriptive use. But once again it can be said that to give a description of contingent propositions, one requires an understanding of verbal information which makes the description complete. To know the proposition 'There are no white crows', one has to understand that the phrase 'white crow' has no application. Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus* says that necessary propositions such as the proposition of tautology (in symbol 'p ∨ -p') and the propositions of self-contradiction (in symbol 'p ∙ -p') say nothing, because they have no descriptive use. But to understand these propositions one has to have a clear conception of language.

So whatever the proposition actually may be, whether it is necessary or synthetic, informative or uninformative, it does convey a verbal information of language. The all important distinction between them is that necessary propositions have no descriptive use - a use which contingent propositions may have. When we say, for example, that 'There are tigers in *India*', we mean that it describes the fact that the word *tiger* has an application (a descriptive use) and some of the things it applies to live in such a place being designated by the word *India*. Ambrose's main contention is that to know the verbal fact is to know the truth value and that is why she opines that necessary proposition is a verbal information.

The viability of Ambrose's approach is based on two significant phrases - such as *descriptive use* and *an application*. But she does not give an elaborate clarification of what she actually means by using these terms. Chisholm remarks that unless and until these terms were clarified properly and adequately, it would hardly be justified to conclude that necessary propositions convey merely verbal information.

Section 5 : Remarks

Thus by repudiating the proposal theory of language, Chisholm intends to re-establish the view that philosophical statements might have been factual.

But if the principle is admitted then the all important question: philosophical statements are all verbal recommendation does not stand. However, both of these views, we think, have some logical insight. But neither of them is enough in rejecting the other. The reason lies in a certain ambiguity. Both Ambrose and Chisholm have tried to defend their respective positions without finding out the border-line cases in between philosophical statements and statements which are not philosophical. To solve this issue and henceforth to come to a decisive solution, they need to share a common principle and then proceed to offer a solution. But instead of sharing a common principle, they prefer to use some stock examples to encounter the other. Consequently, their attempts fail to solve the original problem. To investigate the question, it is, however, necessary to focus on the criterion by which we ~~would~~ distinguish between philosophical and non-philosophical statements, ^{and} likewise questions of language from questions which would not normally be described as questions of language. But this sort of identification is a debatable issue.

A basic assumption behind all this is that Ambrose says that philosophical problems are exclusively either linguistic or factual. She seems to have ignored a third alternative that philosophical question may be in some senses both linguistic and factual or may neither be linguistic nor be factual. She seems to drive a sharp wedge between language and facts; philosophical statements, in her opinion, is either linguistic or factual. For Ambrose they are linguistic and hence they are not factual. But the point is, can there be any philosophical statement which does in no way related to fact? It seems to have

been assumed by Ambrose that a factual statement must be a straightforward record of fact. But this may not be the only sense in which the word *factual* is used in respect to sentences when Moore displayed his two hands and announced that there were two hands or two material bodies, then the statement he made was plainly a factual one. But when Russell said on looking at a material body that he saw part of his own brain, did he really make a non-factual statement since it was not a record of fact? One may be tempted to say that Russell's statement is rather philosophical. But this is definitely a statement that has not only been occasioned by a material object, but also is about an experience of a material object. It would, then, be proper to say that even the statement of Russell, however philosophical it may appear to be, refer to his experience of a material object, or fact.

Of course, there is a difference between a statement that records a fact, and one that relates to a fact, so much so that we cannot equate the one with the other. For instance, we cannot place the two statements - 'I see a hand' and 'I see a part of my own brain' in the same category. Nevertheless, there is no reason to call the one meaningful and the other meaningless, or the one true and the other false.

The only difference between the two statements is that one is an explanation of the other. If the explanation is granted then perhaps we recommend a specific linguistic fashion of stating facts. Since the explanatory statements are called philosophical, philosophical statements are supposed to be linguistic; they have a typical linguistic garb.

But it would be rather misleading if we said that philosophical statements on that account were linguistic statements. Moore, e.g., held that certain statements are couched in *correct language*, while certain others are not. But how to decide which one is formulated in correct language? Moore would say that Russell's statement that 'when a person sees a table he sees a part of his own brain' is formulated in incorrect language. But Moore cannot prove it without extra-linguistic considerations.

The only way in which Ambrose could establish a part of her thesis ^{by saying} is that philosophical statements are not factual statements in a straightforward way, since much of what philosophers say cannot be proved by referring to facts. But it hardly proves the other part, viz., philosophical statements are all linguistic.

In the light of the above discussion we may conclude that a philosophical statement is meaningful and its meaning can be proved by philosophical deliberation. This is how we verify philosophical arguments. This kind of statements is factual in the sense that it can be spelt out in terms of our cognition of natural things. The statement is rather explanatory; but it contains an explanation which does not obtain in the ordinary way of speaking. Hence philosophical statements are factual in a certain sense. This is true without falsifying the fact that such statements are linguistic recommendations or ways of *speaking*. It will, therefore, be rather perplexing if the nature of philosophical statements are said to be linguistic and not factual. That will mean that the way in which language has been supposed to be exclusively relevant to philosophy is mistaken. Language is important and relevant to philosophy, but

there is no need of reject^{ing} the proposition that philosophical statements are in a certain sense factual. The relevance of language to philosophy need not be proved by divorcing philosophy from the realm of fact. Urmson aptly puts: "It is best in the end, not to say that philosophical questions are verbal or factual for both are misleading; they are philosophical statements."²¹

²¹Urmson, J. O. : **Philosophical Analysis**; Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1956, p. 176