

Chapter - 3

Does Language Require Revision?

Section I: Introductory

We have tried to show in the preceding chapter that philosophical problems are believed to be linguistic in character and on this issue all linguistic philosophers are in agreement. There has also been disagreement regarding the nature of language. This calls for a philosophical inquiry. It has been felt by many a thinker that natural language or ordinary language is not the proper object of philosophical scrutiny. One should rather leave natural language out and construct an ideal language instead. This is an extremely crucial disagreement which is responsible for a methodological bifurcation. Bergmann says, " All linguistic philosophers talk about the world by means of talking about a suitable language. This is the linguistic turn, the fundamental gambit as a method, on which ordinary and ideal language philosophers agree. Equally fundamentally, they disagree on what is in the sense a "language" and what makes it "suitable".¹

It is further claimed that philosophers of the twentieth century "are largely distinguished from one another, not by doctrinal differences in their conclusions, but by their different views of language, and the relevance of language to philosophy".² It serves to identify the philosophers of the present

¹Bergmann, G. : **Logic and Reality**, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1964, p. 177.

²Copper, D. E. : **Philosophy and the Nature of Language**, Longman, 1973, p. 5.

century as sharing a common conviction that language is somehow relevant to philosophy. This conviction springs from noticing that language frequently misleads us into a false ontology. We have seen, while considering Ryle's essay "*Systematically Misleading Expressions*" that the syntax of sentences in ordinary language may very well be misleading. Ryle shows that ordinary language and the sentences constructed in such a language are misleading in diverse ways. They mislead us by their superficial grammatical syntax into believing in super-empirical entities. Hence, the philosophers must be on their guard against ontological delusion and should withdraw their reliance on ordinary language. Russell and others, in consequence have proposed an artificial linguistic calculus which would provide for a syntax that would not be misleading in the above manner. If we take a realistic and positivistic view we can then ascertain how should one analyse the syntax of a sentence. The lack of precision from which ordinary language suffers has got to be removed, and it can be removed if a sentence in ordinary language is transformed into an artificial, but systematically non-misleading language. The proposed artificial language is called *ideal* since a sentence in that language does not mislead us into a false ontology. It is of course true that there are others who are rather sympathetic to ordinary language and are inclined to believing that a close examination of language in ordinary use would solve the problems of philosophy. Modern philosophers thus over the years have suggested alternative linguistic methods which bring them under two broad categories, namely, ideal language philosophers and ordinary language philosophers. The idea that philosophy should devote itself to the construction of an ideal language is called

ideal language philosophy; and the idea that it should focus on ordinary language is called ordinary language philosophy. Those who subscribe to ideal language philosophy are revisionists, because they propose a revision of language. On the contrary, those who adhere to ordinary language philosophy have felt no need to reform language.

The philosophers who belong to ideal language philosophy seem to believe in varying degrees that philosophy should be scientifically oriented. Philosophy ought to arrive at such results which, as those of the natural sciences, would be acknowledged universally. By way of doing this, they have, however, proposed a type of language which would be free from all types of ambiguity. They realised that philosophical analysis should primarily be concerned with the construction of new artificial language systems. The rules of this artificially constructed system are intended to be clearer, more complete, and more precise than the rules that govern our use of language in ordinary discourse. The constructed language system works just like a scientific system. But from this fact it does not follow that it is a super-science. Like science, it leaves nothing unclear. Just as science had to create its technical vocabulary and introduce concepts, such as, force, mass, atom. etc., that are more precise than those applied by common sense, so the ideal language philosophers agree also in holding that philosophy should develop its own vocabulary and set of concepts to resolve its own problems. The prominent philosophers belonging to this class are Russell, Frege, the early Wittgenstein, Bergmann and Carnap.

On the contrary, those who set themselves the task of analysing ordinary language hold that the proposed ideal or artificial language is of little help in resolving philosophical problems. It seems to them that philosophical problems can best be approached not by revising ordinary language; but by a careful analysis of ordinary language - a language that we all use in communicating with one another. Philosophers who prefer to attend to ordinary language include: the later Wittgenstein, Ryle, Austin, Strawson, Hampshire, Wisdom, Moore etc.. We shall first look at the proposal of ideal language.

It may be mentioned in passing that many philosophers express dissatisfaction at the proposed division of language into ideal and ordinary. They argue that the division of language is somewhat fictitious and unnecessary. It is not clear why should a controversy between the two groups of linguistic analysts persist at all. In the first place, an ideal language is by no means altogether different from ordinary language. Ideal language has its origin in ordinary language. It is an ideal form of ordinary language. Caton says, "It seems clear that numerous ubiquitous words and phrases occur in technical contexts in the same senses or used in the same ways in which they are used in everyday contexts. Also most of the kinds of utterances involving technical language appear to be already found in ordinary language."³ It might be the case that offering an alternative to ordinary language would be effective in some cases, whereas demonstrating a misuse of ordinary language would be effective in

³Caton, Charles E.(ed.): **Philosophy and Ordinary Language**, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1963, p. viii.

some others. The clue to this move lies in finding out the answer to the question, how can we find criteria for philosophical success that shall permit rational agreement? Richard Rorty also has said, "I hope to show that the controversy though not entirely fictitious, as often been described in thoroughly misleading ways."⁴

We may thus be permitted to remark that the relation between ordinary and ideal language is just like the relation of two sides of a coin. This means that the ordinary and ideal languages are two different employments of the same language. One could not learn or teach technical(ideal) language as a natural language like English, Bengali etc. Ideal language is supposed to be a part of some language. It is defined only by reference to some particular discipline. Nevertheless, ideal language is a part of ordinary language in the sense that words and phrases that occur in ideal language also occur in ordinary language. Many utterances that we can find in ordinary language may also be found in ideal language. Ideal language is of course more precise than ordinary language, but ordinary language is thought to be the background of ideal language. To quote Caton. "..... the classification what someone is saying usually is achieved by using devices which are already a part of ordinary language and which are taken over into and used in dealing with technical language. And second, that whatever a technical language a person may acquire..... has to be acquired against the background of ordinary language."⁵

⁴Rorty, Richard (ed.): **The Linguistic Turn**, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1967, p. 15.

⁵op. cit., p. vii.

Technical language, Caton observes is "always an adjunct of ordinary language."⁶ Bergmann makes an interesting comment with regard to the classification of language. He says, "To justify the strategy I must put my own card on the table, indicating where I stand on this controversy or near controversy between formalists and antiformalists. To my mind, then it is a grey against grey, not white against black."⁷ They are two species of the same genus.

Section II: Why does Language require revision?

So far as language is concerned, ideal language is not a kind of language altogether different from ordinary language. Rather it is preferable to say that it is an interpreted or revised language which has its origin in ordinary language. Everything found in ordinary language was found also in the ideal language. Ordinary language is in order as far as it satisfies the requirement of meaningfulness. But the crucial problem lies in the fact that although ordinary language is guided by the rules of grammar, it frequently fails to exhibit its true logical form. Let us consider briefly the difference between grammatical and logical forms of the following two sentences. For example, 'Men think' and 'Men exist' are two sentences of the same grammatical form. This grammatical form is supposed to display the same logical form of the sentences. But their syntactical analysis makes it clear that their logical form does not correspond to their grammatical form. For, the sentence 'Men think' means 'All human being

⁶Ibid.,p.vii.

⁷Bergmann, G.:"Two types of linguistic Philosophy" in **The Metaphysics of Logical Positivism**, Longman, Green And Co, New York, 1954,p.108.

think' and can be logically restated as: For all values of 'x' such that if x is a man then x is a thinking human being; i.e., in symbols: $(x) (Mx \supset Tx)$ or $M\bar{T} = 0$. But the sentence 'Men exist' means that 'there is at least one 'x' such that x is a man,' and it can be symbolised as $(\exists x) Mx$ or $M \neq 0$. The former is a qualified universal affirmative proposition; whereas the later is an unqualified existential proposition. Thus it seems clear that the similarity of grammatical structures does not entail their being of the same logical type. It shows one of the important shortcomings of ordinary language. Here *thinking being* is used as a grammatical predicate; but still *existence* cannot be treated as a logical predicate. It had been Kant's insight in the first **Critique** to have remarked that, "Being is evidently not a real predicate."⁸

Moreover, if existence were a predicate it would be impossible for us to reject the pseudo-implication of the ontological argument like :God is perfect, and being perfect entails being existent; and therefore God exists..Here the word *perfect* in the sentence 'God is perfect' designates the property of God, and the existence of God is entailed by the property of being perfect. Now, if for Kant, being existent is not a property, then it can not be entailed by the property like *perfection*. Ryle in his celebrated article '*Systematically Misleading Expressions*' comments that if the term *exists* is not a predicate in the sentence 'God exists', it is equally true that in the same statement *God*

⁸Kant, I.: **Critique of Pure Reason**, Max Muller's Translation, Mcmillan Company, 1927, p. 483

cannot be the subject of predication.⁹ This can be shown in the negative existential propositions like 'Satan does not exist'. For if there is no *Satan* then the statement 'Satan does not exist' cannot be about 'Satan' in the same way in which 'I am a man' is about me. Here the apparent subject term fails to signify the subject of attributes. Ryle says that the verb 'exists' in the sentence 'God exists' "is not signifying the character asserted, although grammatically it looks as if it does, the real predicate must be looked for elsewhere."¹⁰

It seems clear from the above that the grammarians of ordinary language fail to apprehend the flaw of ordinary language and, consequently, they treat certain grammatical forms of natural language in such a way that existence, as to treat it as a real predicate. But this flaw of ordinary language becomes evident if ordinary language is examined in a purely syntactical fashion. Thus it can reasonably be claimed that the language of logic is an important advancement in the direction of logically perfect language.

Similar confusion may appear in the case of ordinary language in justifying the notion of *class membership* and *class inclusion*. For example, 'Men are rational' and 'Men are numerous' are two sentences having the same grammatical form. Now, can we legitimately infer the same structure of facts from the structure of sentences asserting those facts? If so, then one can assume that having the same grammatical structure, sentences also have the

⁹Ryle, G. : "Systematically Misleading Expressions" in *The Linguistic Turn*, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 88.

same logical form. But the grammatical structure of a sentence does not necessarily correspond to the logical structure of the sentence. Two grammatically same sentences might have the same logical form only if the syntax of language happens to be logical. If the logical syntax of language is not considered in the above sentences, a well known fallacy, viz., the fallacy of composition and division would occur. But this fallacy becomes evident if the logical syntax of language is elicited from being hidden in the grammatical sentence. Once we expose the logical structure of the sentence under consideration, we find that the sentence 'Men are rational' means 'the set of all human beings is *included in* the set of all rational being'. This means that the set of all men is the *subset* (i.e., in symbol \subseteq) of the set of all rational beings. And by using notation of 'the set of all men as 'M' and 'the set of all rational beings' as 'R', we can symbolize the sentence 'All men are rational' set-theoretically like ' $M \subseteq R$ '. But the sentence 'Men are numerous' means 'the set of all men *belongs to* (i.e., in symbol ' \in ') the set of numerous class'. And again by using notation 'the set of all men' as 'M' and 'the set of all numerous class' as 'N'; we can symbolize the sentence 'Men are numerous' as ' $M \in N$ '. The first one is symbolized in respect to *class inclusion* and the remaining one is symbolized in respect to *class membership*. But the notion of class inclusion and the notion of *class membership* are altogether different concepts. Corresponding to these notions of *class membership* and *class inclusion*, the traditional logic makes a distinction between the collective (in the *class membership*) and distributive (in the *class inclusion*) application of the predicate to the subject. That is to say, in the case of *class-membership* the

predicate is applied to the subject collectively; and in the case of *class inclusion* the predicate is applied to the subject distributively. This again confirms that the language of logic is closer than ordinary language to logical perfection.

We have already mentioned that ordinary language is ambiguous mainly for the reason that the verb to be (i. e. , am , is, are, etc.) used in it is ambiguous in the sense that it functions differently in different sentences. But the ambiguity of the verb 'to be' becomes clear if the syntax of the ordinary language is logically interpreted. Let us examine the following three sentences:

(i) The morning star *is* the evening star.

(ii) Socrates *is* a philosopher.

(iii) Men *are* rational.

These three sentences have the same grammatical form. Now , they have the same logical form only if the verb 'to be' used in different sentences behaves uniformly. But logical analysis reveals that the verb 'to be' plays different roles in the three sentences. In the first sentence the verb 'is' is used in the sense of *identity* (in symbol '='); in the second sentence the verb 'is' is used in the sense of *class membership* (in symbol ' \in '); and in the last sentence the verb 'are' is used in the sense of *class inclusion* (in symbol ' \subseteq '). But the notion of 'identity', 'membership' and 'inclusion' are altogether different notions. Patrick

Supplies has made a clear distinction among these notions. He says, "It is intuitively obvious that identity, membership and inclusion are distinct and different notions.... since identity is symmetric while inclusion is not. And inclusion is not the same as membership , since inclusion is transitive while membership is not...identity is not the same as membership, since identity is both symmetric and transitive; while membership is neither."¹¹

Russell says it is true that the sentence 'Socrates is a man ' and 'Socrates is human ' is equivalent in some respect . But from this it does not follow that these two sentences are virtually same . Because here the verb 'is ' plays different roles in different sentences. In the former , the verb 'is ' is used in the sense of 'identity' and in the later case the verb ' is' is used to show the relationship between the subject and the predicate., He says, "It is a disgrace to the human race that it has chosen to employ the same word 'is' for these entirely different ideas - a disgrace which a symbolic logical language of course remedies."¹²

The above consideration makes it clear that the logical syntax of language is different from the syntax of ordinary language . The discovery of logical form is important since language may prove a useful tool in getting at the structure of reality or ontology . So ordinary language needs revision in a logical manner so that the structure of reality may be apprehended and the way

¹¹Supplies, Partrick : **Introduction to Logic**, Standford, California, 1957, p. 181.

¹²Russell, Bertrand : " Descriptions" in **Semantics and the Philosophy of Language**, University of Illinois, Urbana, 1952, p. 100.

of reconstruction of ordinary language ultimately requires us to have an ideal language . Let us pass on to the next section in order to explain the nature of ideal language.

Section III: The Nature of Ideal Language

The proponents of ideal language have been termed *revisionists*. The need for revision of ordinary language arises because the language of common use is thought unfit for doing the job which it is philosophically expected to perform. The expectation is that language should tell us about what there is, and must not deliver information regarding what is not . Unfortunately, as has been demonstrated by many thinkers, ordinary language does not live up to the expectation; and it oversteps the boundary of the empirical. Language is frequently couched in a syntax that is susceptible to an interpretation which deludes us into a metaphysical horizon. The possibility of misinterpretation remains there because the logical form of a sentence lies hidden behind its grammatical form. The logical form, when explored, proves decisively that what is apparently delivered by a sentence is to be given up in favour of what is delivered by its logical form. The central point is that ordinary language has a syntax which gives a misleading view regarding the nature of reality. The *real* (logical) syntax has to be elicited, and this task has been taken up by the constructionists or ideal language philosophers . Russell has expressed this

attitude when he says , "We ought not in our attempt at various thinking , to be content with ordinary language , with its ambiguous and abominable syntax . I remain convinced that obstinate addiction to ordinary language in our own private thought is one of the main obstructions to progress in philosophy. Many current theories would not bear translation into any exact language . I suspect that this is the reason for the unpopularity of such language."¹³

Section IV: Frege on the Ideal Language

Frege is in favour of revisionism. He compares ordinary language with an eye, and the ideal language with a microscope, and says that the relation between ordinary and ideal language is just like the relation between the eye and the microscope. Though he observes that ordinary language suffers from many serious shortcomings, yet he admits that it has a great value in functioning in various circumstances in innumerable ways . He says, "(the eye) because of the range of its applicability and because of the ease with which it can adopt itself the most varied circumstances, has a great superiority over the microscope."¹⁴ But he subsequently observes that ordinary language is still deceptive . The

¹³Russell, Bertrand: **Reply to Criticism** (P. A. Schilpp, ed.), Evanston, Northwestern University, 1944, p. 694.

¹⁴Frege, Gottlob: "Conceptual Notation", edited and translated by T. W. Bynum, Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 105.

deficiency of ordinary language has been made clear in connection with scientific endeavour . Ordinary language , Frege observes, is not authentic as it fails to reveal truth. Frege says , "....viewed as an optical instrument , (the eye) reveals many imperfections.... as soon as scientific purposes place strong requirements upon sharpness of resolution , the eyes prove to be inadequate. On the other hand , the microscope is perfectly suited for just such purposes."¹⁵

Frege's comparison of ordinary language with an eye is surprisingly novel. In justifying this comparison , he says that just like an eye, ordinary language , as a versatile instrument , performs many different functions . Some of these functions do engage in the pursuit of truth, while some others fail to do. But ideal language, without exception, is concerned with the pursuit of truth . According to Frege, ordinary language is defective in the following ways:

- (i) Ordinary language is thought to be defective as it provides or conveys tone or colour in addition to sense, and it is this that is a source of ambiguity. But a formal language, if it is perspicuous, should contain expressions which convey only their sense. Ordinary language, then, should be revised so that its ambiguity of tone or colour can be extirpated.
- (ii) Ordinary language , Frege observes, is imprecise , unwieldy and non- perspicuous : It is imprecise as it involves innumerable functions some of which fail to grasp the truth. Consequently,

¹⁵Tbid., p. 105

ordinary language fails to fulfill the requirement of 'one-to-one correspondence'. It is unwieldy and hence not of any use in mathematical and scientific proof. Finally, it is non-perspicuous as it does not display its logical form in the surface.

- (iii) Ordinary language is defective, because its surface grammar leads us to adopt a mistaken view of logical structure. Two sentences, we have shown, having the same surface grammar may not have the same logical structure. In his *Begriffsschrift*, Frege warns us of an illusion generated by the use of ordinary language. Comparing the two sentences 'The number 20 can be represented as the sum of four squares' and 'Every positive integer can be represented as the sum of the four squares', Frege remarks that it appears possible to consider 'being representable as the sum of four squares' as a function whose argument is 'the number 20' one time and 'every positive integer' the other time. But it would be an illusion if it be said that both the expressions 'the number 20' and 'every positive integer' denote objects. This sort of illusion encourages us to search for a mysterious object which is denoted by the expression 'every positive integer' and an investigation into its properties. Hence Andrew Rein comments: "In both cases, our thought is ensnared by the temptations of surface grammar."¹⁶

¹⁶Rein, Andrew: "Frege and Natural Language", *Journal of Philosophy*, 1985, Vol. 60, p. 516.

(iv) The fourth kind of defect of ordinary language is an extension of the third. But the difference between the third and the fourth is that while the third defect leads our thought into an empty barren region, the fourth defect creates knots in our thought. The fourth kind of defect of ordinary language is based on two false presuppositions. These are: (a) The capacity of ordinary language to form empty proper names and (b) the possession of vague predicates. The former engenders a violation of the principle of *Excluded Middle*, because it asserts ' $p \vee \sim p$ ', but empty proper names do not assert either of these. The latter engenders *Sorites of Paradoxes*, because in supplying vague predicates, sorites can not be solved. Frege believes that any language with any one of these defects could not be used in expressing a coherent theory.

Frege believes that one of the merits of ideal language is that it has the capacity to expose the illusions which ordinary language gives rise. Ideal language makes an attempt to eradicate all sorts of defects of ordinary language. He, therefore, claims that his formal language would be useful not only to scientists, but also to philosophers. He says, "It is the task of philosophy to break the power of the word over the human mind, uncovering the illusion which through the use of language often almost unavoidably arise concerning the relations of concepts, freeing thought from that which only the nature of linguistic means of expressions attached to it, then my 'conceptual notation' further developed for these purposes, can become a useful tool for

philosophy."¹⁷

Like Russell and Wittgenstein, Frege heavily depends on proper names and functional expressions or referential terms in constructing ideal language. He redefines proper names and functional expressions and tries to propose number theory in such a way as to permit the required transition from the purely logical axioms to the mathematical axioms. Like many other reconstructionists, Frege, however, exerts himself in isolating a small number of axioms, which, all without exception, bear logical truth. The nature of their truth is analytic; but not synthetic in Kantian sense. Like Russellian demonstrative pronouns and Wittgensteinian names, every axiom, Frege opines, as a well-formed expression had a reference with which we are directly acquainted. In this sense, his formal language is indeed perfect.

Section V: Carnap on the Ideal Language

Rudolf Carnap is an important proponent of ideal language philosophy. He thinks that ordinary (natural) language as highly unstructured and unsystematic conglomeration of verbal constructions requires syntactical revision. For him the grammar or syntax of ordinary language seems to be inadequate from a logical point of view - adequacy being defined by its

¹⁷op. cit., p. 106.

correspondence to logical syntax. He opines that philosophy should have been replaced by the logic of science, since the logic of science deals with the logical analysis of the concepts and sentences of the sciences. He says, "The logic of science takes the place of the inextricable tangle of problems which is known as philosophy."¹⁸ He characterises the logic of science as 'the logical syntax of the language of science.'¹⁹ Carnap's very intention of imposing logical syntax is to exclude pseudo-metaphysical sentences from philosophy. He therefore describes his philosophy as construction theory. He says, "It is the main thesis of construction theory that all concepts can... be derived from a few fundamental conceptsAn object (or concept) is said to be reducible to one or more other objects if all statements made about it can be transformed into statements about these other objects."²⁰

As a spokesman of logical empiricism Carnap tries to cure philosophy of the disease of metaphysical speculation. He goes on to say that metaphysical speculation is a disease of intellectual faculties and it can only be cured by therapeutic and preventive measures. He believes that although speculative metaphysics, such as, *The Absolute is perfect*, tells us about a spiritual real beyond sensory experience, literally it is devoid of cognitive meaning. Being devoid of cognitive meaning the so-called speculative metaphysical sentences

¹⁸Carnap, R. In the Introduction to *The Logical Syntax of Language*, London: Kegan Paul, 1937.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 279.

²⁰Carnap, R. *The Logical Syntax of the World*, 2nd edn. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967, pp. 5-6.

can neither be true nor be false. Speculative metaphysics is meaningless, since like mathematics it does not contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number; and like factual assertions it does not contain any experimental reasoning concerning matters of fact and existence. Consequently, a statement about speculative metaphysics is regarded as a pseudo-statement. Carnap opines that a metaphysical speculation comes into being not from a departure from the linguistic conventions, but from the absence of such conventions at just those places where they are most needed. He, however, classifies pseudo-statements into two types - of which one type of pseudo-statement is constituted by a meaningless word (e.g., The Absolute is perfect) and the other type of pseudo-statement consists of meaningful words but the words are put together with a senseless combination. The logical syntax determines what sort of combinations are admissible and what sort of combinations are inadmissible. Let us consider the following sequences of words:

1) "Caesar is and"

2) "Caesar is a prime number".

In (1) the words are put together in a senseless combination, since the rules of syntax do not allow to occupy the third position of the sequence by a conjunction, but they allow to occupy it either by a noun along with an article or by an adjective. If it is occupied by a noun along with an article, say, 'a general', then we can rephrase(1) as 'Caesar is a general'. The statement 'Caesar is a general' is formulated in accordance with the rules of syntax and

hence is treated as a genuine sentence. Now, let us look at the sequences of words in (2). It appears that the word sequence in (2) is syntactically correct and it possesses the same grammatical form as the statement 'Caesar is a general'. But unlike the statement "Caesar is a general", the statement (2) lacks meaning since 'prime number' can only be a predicate of number, but it can not be a predicate of 'Caesar'. The predicate 'prime number' can neither affirm nor deny anything of a person. So apparently although (2) looks like a statement but really it is not a statement as it fails to assert anything either true or false, and hence it is to be considered as a pseudo-statement. Carnap says, " The fact that natural languages allow the formation of meaningless sequence of words without violating the rules of grammar, indicates that grammatical syntax is, from a logical point of view, inadequate. If grammatical syntax corresponded exactly to logical syntax, pseudo-statements could not arise...It follows that if our thesis that the statements of metaphysics are pseudo-statements is justifiable, then metaphysics could not even be expressed in a logically constructed language. This is the great philosophical importance of the task, which at present occupies the logicians, of building a logical syntax.."21

Thus construction of logical syntax is the only way through which the so-called pseudo-statements of speculative metaphysics can be got rid of. The logical syntax, for Carnap, can be obtained as a supplement to grammatical syntax. So Carnap's first and foremost step towards the construction of an ideal

²¹Carnap, R. "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language", reappeared in **Logical Positivism**, edited by A. J. Ayer, The Free Press, New York, 1959, p. 68.

language is to develop a system of logical syntax as a supplement to grammatical syntax. In his celebrated book **The Logical Syntax of Language** Carnap draws an outline of an ideal language on the basis of logical syntax. In constructing such an ideal language, he was largely influenced by Hilbert's mathematical system. Keeping Hilbert's mathematical background in mind, he however, took a formal approach to the construction of an ideal language. In constructing an ideal language he gives importance on three aspects. First, he seeks to construct a type of ideal language which is completely free from metaphysical speculation. Secondly, he goes on to find out some formal basis for distinguishing pseudo-metaphysical statements from non-pseudo-metaphysical statements and then declares that an ideal language represents only sentences relating to empirical science and factual discourse. He finally observes that the principle of logical syntax provides us with good reasons for excluding metaphysical sentences from an ideal language. But apart from these requirements, he does not forget to remind us that antimetaphysical motivation is not the only motivation to develop the logical syntax of language. It also deals with a syntactical analysis of concepts in formal deductive logic. Carnap says, "The chief motivation for my development of the syntactical method, however, was the following. In our discussions in the **Vienna Circle** it had turned out that any attempt at formulating more precisely the philosophical problems in which we were interested ended up with the problems of the logical analysis of language. Since in our view the issue in philosophical problems concerned the language, not the world, these problems should be formulated, not in the object language, but in the metalanguage. Therefore ,it

seemed to me that the development of a suitable metalanguage would essentially contribute towards greater clarity in the formulation of philosophical problems and greater fruitfulness in their discussions."²²

Carnap holds that the logic of science is not bound by morals. Everyone is free to build up his own logic within the domain of this discipline. He puts it thus: "In logic there are no morals. Everyone is at liberty to build up his own logic, i.e., his own form of language as he wishes."²³ But one thing is important to notice that in constructing an ideal language the rules of logical syntax will not invite anything from outside of language. This is justified in saying that philosophical problems are concerned only with language but not with the world. Accordingly, philosophical problem should end up with the problems of logical /syntactical analysis of language. The ideal language which Carnap envisages is determined by two sorts of rules, viz., formation and transformation rules. Formation rules determine how symbols or words are combined together into sentences and transformation rules show how one sentence is derived from another sentence. So these two rules enable us to know how different words are meaningfully put together to form a sentence and how one sentence is obtained from another sentence without involving into a contradiction. The collaboration of these rules, Carnap says, exhausts syntax. He believes that philosophy is predominantly concerned with the logical relations and properties of linguistic expressions. So philosophy should not

²²Carnap, R. "Carnap's Intellectual Autobiography", **The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap**, P. A. Schlipp(ed.), Open Court, La Salle, 1963.

²³Carnap, R., **The Logical Syntax of Language**, op. cit., p. 52.

deal with any extra-linguistic world rather it should confine itself with language itself. Philosophical statements are no longer concerned with objects but with symbols. In order to show this, he distinguishes three kinds of sentences, namely, (1) object-sentences (e.g., "5 is a prime number"); (2) pseudo-object sentences (e.g., "'Five' is not a thing but a number") and (3) syntactical sentences (e.g., "'Five' is not a thing-word, but a number word"). The first type of sentences are related with extra-linguistic objects. They are called object language which are primarily concerned with a special science in which truth or falsity is determined by empirical investigation. Philosophy, however, has no concern with them. Sentences of the second kind are called quasi-syntactical sentences which apparently look like object sentences. Carnap goes on to say that pseudo-object sentences that occur frequently in philosophical discussions are not really parallel to object sentences even though they pretend to be so. They are only quasi-syntactical sentences in disguise. As Carnap observes, "The true situation is revealed by the translation of the sentences of the material mode of speech, which are really quasi-syntactical sentences into the correlated syntactical sentences and thus into the formal mode."²⁴

Carnap holds that a great number of philosophical problems are engendered not by the controversies about facts with which philosophy deals; but arise out of controversy in deciding what type of linguistic framework is

²⁴Ibid., p. 288.

best for descriptive investigation. Philosophers very often involve themselves into the confusions as and when they fail to apprehend that philosophical problems are linguistic in this sense. He, then, goes on to say that natural language in which philosophical investigations are carried on have two modes of speech, such as, material mode and formal mode. Material mode is related to assertions about actual things or events and formal mode is concerned with assertions about linguistic constructions, their properties and relations. For example, the sentence "Roses are things" is in the material mode of speech as it seems to ascribe a physical property to objects. On the contrary, the sentence "'Roses' has five letters" is assigned formal mode as it attributes a syntactical property to a linguistic construction. Accordingly, sentences in the material mode of speech do not even, perhaps cannot, ascribe non-linguistic properties to objects in the world. But they, of course, do ascribe syntactical property to a term that designates the objects that such sentences appear to be about. But the sentences which are obtained by attributing syntactical property instead of material property are not true object sentences like 'Five is a number', 'Lions are mammals' and 'Babylon was a big town' etc.. Unlike the sentence 'Babylon was a big town' they are not about the objects in the universe of discourse of the language but are about the logical syntax of linguistic construction. They are called pseudo-object sentences since although they are about the syntactical structure of linguistic constructions; but grammatically they are object sentences in disguise. For example, the sentence 'Five is not a thing but a number' appears to be about some object called 'five' and to be asserting that it is not a thing in reality. Now, this sentence can be syntactically attributed as "

'Five' is not a thing-word, but a number word". Philosophers have often been misled in asserting this sentence as a genuinely object sentence; but in reality it is not a genuine object sentence; it is a pseudo-object sentence. Carnap believes that sentences in natural language are predominantly concerned with material mode of speech, because by using such language the speakers are concerned with things rather than words. But this predominant use of the material mode leads speaker to employ pseudo-object sentences without realizing that there are not assertions about objects but just ascriptions of syntactical properties to words and expressions.

In **The logical Syntax of Language**, Carnap maintains further that the object questions which occur in the logic of science are only pseudo-object questions since they are formulated in a misleading way. As a matter of fact they seem to refer to objects while they actually refer to sentences. 'Identity is not a relation', e.g., is a pseudo-object sentence expressing substantive philosophical theses. Now, it can be translated within the framework of the theory of logical syntax, into syntactical sentence in the formal mode like as "The symbol of identity is not a descriptive symbol." This formulation, says Carnap, is inevitable since without this translation we are led easily to self-deception. Without taking the advantage of this translation we are sometimes led to investigate certain objects and facts, while we are in reality investigating their designations, words and sentences. Carnap says that sentences in the material mode of speech lead us to an inevitable slip into metaphysics. For example, to utter the sentence "It is a fact that the rose is red" means an

inevitable slip into metaphysics. For in uttering this sentence the speaker asserts a faith that there is a 'thing' called rose which had red colour. But if the sentence under consideration is translated into " 'The rose is red' is a sentence" then one should not suppose to know that the rose is red. Under this translation we can know that rose is a "thing-word" and red is a "colour-word" and the relation between "thing-word" and "colour-word" is only a syntactical designation. This is the only way, says Carnap, how all object-sentences in the material mode of speech can be translated into formal mode of speech, and it is in this way that all the incurable puzzles of metaphysics can be eradicated.

The above considerations make it clear that Carnap's theory of logical syntax of language of empirical science and factual discourse should contain a general scheme for translating pseudo-object sentences from a natural language into syntactical sentences of an ideal artificial language. The consequence of this scheme is so effective as it serves as the criterion to decide what sentences from a natural language make sense and what sentence do not. In **The Logical Syntax of Language**, Carnap goes on to remark that sentences which fail to give an indication to determine their translation are outside the realm of the language of science and therefore are incapable of discussion, no matter what depths or heights of feeling they stir. This means to say that any sentence in a natural language that is not a genuine-object sentence and that cannot be translated into a syntactical sentence has no cognitive meaning. He justifies this commitment in saying that genuine object sentences are related with matters of fact and syntactical sentences are those related to mathematical, logical and

other conceptual relations. So a genuine object sentence must either be about matters of fact or relations of ideas. Thus it is claimed that Carnap's antimetaphysical principle can be regarded as a looking back to Hume's empiricist principle that whatever can neither be confirmed in experience nor established as a necessary relation among ideas is nothing but *sophistry and illusion*.

Section VI : Bergmann on the Ideal Language

Gustav Bergmann is an ardent advocate of ideal language thesis. He says, "The ideal language, as I conceive it, is not a language actually to be spoken but a blue print or schema, complete only in the sense that *it must show, in principle, the structure and syntactical arrangement of all the major areas of our experiences*."²⁵ The Ideal language is needed mainly for the reason that ordinary language *is* not sign-language. Any language, other than a sign language, would be unperspicuous, vague and ambiguous. An ideal language being a sign-language is neither vague, nor ambiguous; but strictly logical. It has rules of syntax which precludes non-sense. Bergmann claims that a language in order to be an ideal language would have to satisfy at least three conditions; such as:

²⁵Bergman, G. : "Two Criteria for an ideal Language" included in **The Linguistic Turn**, op.cit.,p. 134.

- (i) it has to be a complete schema;
- (ii) it has to be formally or logically constructed; and
- (iii) it must allow for the resolution of all philosophical puzzles.²⁶

In his **Philosophy of Language**, Bergmann outlines the nature of an ideal language. There he says that a language is ideal if it satisfies the following requirements, namely that,

- (i) every descriptive proposition of philosophy can in principle be transcribed into it;
- (ii) that no unconstructed philosophical proposition can do it; and
- (iii) that all philosophical propositions can be reconstructed as statements about syntax and interpretation.

All of the requirements of an ideal language under consideration lead us to assume, as Bergmann observes, that a constructed ideal language is attained through a total specification of all items and features of the language in question.

Bergmann says that the so-called natural languages such as 'English', 'French', etc. are complete in the sense that everything can be expressed in terms of these languages. But the ideal language as proposed by the analysts is

²⁶Bergmann, G. :**The Metaphysics of Logical Positivism**, New York and London, Longman, Green, 1954, p.8.

not complete in this regard. Like the natural languages an ideal language is not a language actually in use, but merely the blue -print or schema of natural languages. It is complete in the sense that it shows , in principle , the structure and syntactical arrangement of all areas of our experience. To illustrate what this means by designating such schema, we simply have to stipulate that a sufficient number of predicates denoted by a catalogue of names is to be included among its undefined terms . That is why, Bergmann aptly remarks: "In an obvious sense, the ideal language is thus a fiction."²⁷

Section VII : Russell on the Ideal Language

Bertrand Russell has been an important campaigner for ideal language philosophy. In his **Principia Mathematica** he provides a skeleton of the ideal language. For him ordinary language is expected to be renovated in respect of logical and syntactical rules. Russell says , "Ordinary language is not sufficiently logical ...we must first construct an artificial language before we can investigate our problem."²⁸ For Russell an ideal language is a kind of language that can be analysed into the simplest form of statement, and it will consist of a predicate and one or more designated terms as indicated by the predicate. In

²⁷Ibid., p. 8.

²⁸Russell, Bertrand :**Our Knowledge of the External World**, (London:Allen an Unwin, Chicago, III. and London :Open Court, 1914), p. 115.

Wittgenstein's sense this type of statement is called elementary proposition in the sense that it cannot be further anatomised into less elementary propositions. Ideal language, Russell urges, is a kind of language which is constituted by the truth - functions of these atomic (elementary) propositions. So the vocabulary of ideal language is composed of atomic propositions with which we are directly acquainted. In such a language logical or syntactical rules are supplemented by semantical rules which ultimately help us to eliminate the so-called problems of metaphysics. In this system the structure of atomic propositions is identical with the structure of facts. In other words, it can be said that an ideal language is ideal, since it can mirror the basic structure of facts. The reason, however, is not difficult to understand. In his **Philosophical Analysis**, Urmson says that an ideal language can do the job because there are as much words in an atomic proposition as there are elements in the corresponding fact; and each word in such a proposition stands directly for some determinable component or in a logically proper name that is by definition unintelligible in the absence of entities they denote.²⁹

In constructing an ideal language, Russell, however, stresses the formal or structural aspect of language; i. e., the logical syntax of language. The logical syntax of a language is required to show the *logical form* of propositions. The logical form, is discovered through a careful analysis and reconstruction of various kinds of propositions of ordinary language from which non-referential

²⁹Urmson, J. O. : **Philosophical Analysis**, Oxford University Press, London, Oxford, New York, 1967, pp. 86-87.

expressions are to be eliminated . Interpretating the Russellian idea of 'logical form' Clark comments, "In the wide sense, logical form is the structure of proposition clarified with respect to both syntax and vocabulary. It is classified when its structure is exhibited as isomorphic with the basic structure of the facts it asserts . Essential for such classification is the elimination of incomplete symbol and the exhibition of the true constituents of the propositions . These constituents - those remaining in the properly constructed proposition denote ontologically basic entities and are all names of objects known by acquaintance."³⁰

In a logically perfect language, the logical form of the basic proposition is displayed. A proposition is claimed as basic if it is atomic. The set of atomic propositions constitute the bed-rock of the whole linguistic structure. Atomic propositions assert atomic facts. Atomic facts have a special status in the hierarchy of facts. Consequently, propositions which mirror them (facts) will have a special significance , because their constituent words directly designate or denote the ontologically basic elements which go to make up the facts . Thus an atomic fact is constituted by certain elements or terms which make up the simple object. To know the basic elements of atomic propositions and so of atomic facts, a careful analysis of language is an imperative. And this requirement may only be fulfilled by the ideal systematization of language.

The sole foundation of the reconstructionist's formulation of ideal

³⁰Clark , Robert J. : **Bertrand Russell's Philosophy of Language**, Martinus Nijhaft - The Hague, Photomechanical Reprint, 1972, p. 40.

language is based on the ultimate constituents, called particulars, out of which the so called facts are constructed. Particulars, however, as Russell says, are something logical; i. e., the question whether *this* or *that* is a particular is a question to be decided in terms of logical definition. To understand the logical definition of particular, it is, however, necessary to know beforehand that 'This a particular' or 'That a particular'. Russell, in the introduction of *Tractatus* says, "If an atomic fact is analysed as fully as possible (theoretical, not practical possibility is meant) the constituents finally reached may be called 'simples' or 'objects'. It is not contended....that we can actually isolate the simple or have empirical knowledge of it. It is a logical necessity demanded by the theory like an electron."³¹ It is important to observe that Russell has agreed with Wittgenstein that a particular is a logical necessity. Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* holds that an object denoted by a name, cannot be proved theoretically; but it can be proved logically. In the sense of logical necessity, a particular possesses two characteristics - such that it is not simply postulated and that it is a qua-logical simple.

The view that a particular is not simply postulated is based on a metaphysical presupposition. Like Wittgenstein, Russell maintains that a logically perfect language presupposes particulars since in the absence of particulars our words would not be meaningful. Elsewhere in his introduction to the *Tractatus*, Russell says that in symbolism logic is dealing with two

³¹Wittgenstein, Ludwig: *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (translated by C. K. Ogden), London; Kegan Paul, 1922, p. 12.

problems. It tries to have a meaningful explication of the symbol it uses; and it requires a unique reference of symbols or combination of symbols. Russell remarks, "A logically perfect language ...has symbols which always have a definite and unique meaning."³² In determining the definite and unique meaning of a symbol, the theory of reference plays a vital role in Russellian ideal language. Since the basic words of ideal language must have a definite and unique meaning, it follows *ipsosfacto* that there must be absolutely simple entities functioning as the meaning of the words. According to the referential theory of meaning, if there were no entities at all corresponding to these basic words, nothing for them to refer to, they would have no meaning. And, again if these entities were not simple entities, they would not provide definite and unique meanings. Thus the term of an atomic fact must be simple, since if they are not simple, the fact is, by definition, not atomic. But there must have to be some atomic facts, because there must be something for the basic propositions of language to assert. This must be made up of particulars (together with various types of relations), because there must be simple entities to serve as the meaning (reference) of the basic words. And this brings us to the second point that a particular is a *qua*-logical simple in the sense that it needs to be identified with entities whose empirical accessibility affords them an epistemically privileged status. A particular is an entity of which we are directly and immediately aware. Russell says, "A name can only be applied to a particular with which the speaker is acquainted, because you cannot make

³²Russell, Bertrand: In *Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Translated by D. F. McGuinness, New York: Humanities Press, 1961, p. x.

anything you are not acquainted with."³³

By the phrase *knowledge by acquaintance* which is different from the phrase *knowledge by descriptions*, Russell means something that is obtained "without any intermediary process of inference or knowledge of truths."³⁴ We are acquainted with an object when we have a direct cognitive relation to the object; i.e., when we are directly aware of the object itself. Since it is a kind of knowledge which does not depend upon any inference, it is indubitably true, and hence can never be erroneous. Russell says, "If I am acquainted with a thing which exists, my acquaintance gives me the knowledge that it exists."³⁵ Thus he regards acquaintance as a kind of knowing. It provides in itself a complete evidence that the object of acquaintance exists and hence incapable of being mistaken of.

The upshot of the above explanation is that in constructing an ideal form of language, Russell envisages only those words which name objects and with which we are directly acquainted. To make ideal language more specific, more unique, Russell, then, goes on to distinguish 'logically proper' name from 'ordinary proper' name. Ordinary proper names, says Russell, do not function as logically proper names. Ordinary proper names, though they look like names, are not really names at all, but disguised descriptions. For example, the name,

³³Russell, **Bertrand** : **Problems of Philosophy**, New York: Oxford University Press, 1959, London, 1912, p. 46.

³⁴Ibid., p. 45.

³⁵Ibid., p. 45.

'Socrates' is treated as an ordinary proper name as it designates an entity with which we are not directly acquainted. When we use the word 'Socrates' we are really using a description - such as 'the master of Plato' or 'the philosopher who drank the hemlock' etc.. Logical proper names, on the other hand, can not be described or anatomised. They can only be defined ostensively. In Wittgensteinian sense a logical proper name can be shown but cannot be said. When we use a symbol ostensibly to denote an object we use it as a logically proper name. In this strict sense Russell includes demonstrative pronouns as logically proper names, for he observes that only demonstrative pronouns can be used to refer to an object in a faithful manner so that it would be impossible to replace them with a description . He says , "The only words one does use as names in the logical sense are words like 'this ' and ' that ' . One can use this as a name to stand for a particular with which one is acquainted at the moment . We say 'This is white ' . If you agree that 'this is white ' meaning the 'this ' that you see, you are using 'this ' as a proper name. But if you try to apprehend the proposition that I am expressing when I say 'This is white ' , you cannot do it. If you mean this piece of chalk as a physical object , then you are not using a proper name. It is only when you see 'this' quite strictly , to stand for an actual object of sense, that is a really proper name ."³⁶ Thus with the discovery of demonstratives as the only logically proper names, Russell's search for the words in the basic propositions is completed. In an ideal language all words which function as names can be used only in the actual presence of the object

³⁶Russell, **Bertrand** : **My Philosophical Development**, London:George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.,1959, p.201.

being named. And only these words are thought to be the vocabulary of a logically perfect language.

Thus the reconstructionist programme of Russellian ideal language is an effort to secure minimum vocabulary which would provide the basic terms for a logically perfect language. The vocabulary of ideal language are indispensable types of symbols which remain after the eradication of superfluous words. The vocabulary of ideal language are defined in terms of the words which function only referentially. This vocabulary is called the basic stuff of the world - the ultimate premises of language denoting some basic reality. Thus in a logically perfect language the terms 'logical form', 'the ideal language', 'reconstructionism', and 'the principle of acquaintance' become so assimilated in to one another as to be virtually inseparable. Moreover, it can now be seen clearly that the search for logical form has important ontological significance. For the minimum vocabulary is taken to be that set of symbols which denote entities that are ontologically basic.

Russell expects that in such a language "there will always be a certain fundamental identity of structure between a fact and the symbol for it..."³⁷ What he meant by a fundamental identity of structure is made clear in the following passage which we quote from his **Philosophy of Logical Atomism**. There he says, "In a logically perfect language there will be one word and no more for every simple object, and everything that is not simple will be expressed

³⁷Russell, Bertrand: **Philosophy of Logical Atomism**, VIII, p. 197.

by a combination of words ...of course, from the words for the simple things that enter in one word for each simple component. A language of that sort is completely analytic , and will show at a glance the logical structure of the facts asserted or denied."³⁸

The ideal language that has been conceived of by Stebbing is almost similar to that of Russell. She says, "If one could find a sentence, expressing a proposition which was so used that such symbols in the sentence demonstratively indicated a constituent of the fact referred to by the sentence and if further , the syntactical form of the fact , then we could say that such sentence pictured the fact such a sentence may be called the ' pictorial sentence ' . And if all sentences were such, they would make an ideal language ."³⁹ By the phrase *demonstratively indicate* Stebbing means, like Russell, something which functions as a logically proper name . But if this view is taken to be good enough then we have to say that ideal language would be composed solely of proper names and demonstrative pronouns. Prof. Black justifies Russell's ideal language in this direction; but his own notion of ideal language is unlike that of Russell and Stebbing . He holds that ideal language is a kind of language in which grammatical form would be faithful to logical form, a language which would not mislead into paradox and false metaphysical inferences. Thus Black 's approach towards ideal language does not agree with

³⁸Ibid., p. 198.

³⁹Charlesworth, Max.:**Philosophy and Linguistic Analysis**(Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1959), p.69.

that of Russell , since Russell never thought that such a language should be created in actual fact . He says, " I never intended to urge seriously that such a language should be created except in certain fields and for certain problems."⁴⁰ It is rather intended as a kind of useful fiction or blue-print (the term is also used by Bergmann) to warn us that our ordinary language is defective. Consequently, we cannot therefore reason from the facts about ordinary language to the facts about reality.

Section VIII Wittgenstein on the Ideal Language

Ludwig Wittgenstein was an important proponent of ideal language philosophy. In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein was predominantly concerned with the construction of a logically perfect language, which would lay bare its logical form. An ideal language is so tailored as to reveal unambiguously the logical form of the facts to which it refers or denotes or pictures. Since a perfect language, he says, is based upon or structured in terms of atomic propositions, the fundamental philosophical problem is to describe the structure of atomic propositions. Such an ideal language is truth-functional and contains only meaningful propositions . So ordinary language should be purged of its shortcomings and brought into conformity with the logically perfect language.

⁴⁰Russell, Bertrand: *Reply to Criticism*, op. cit., p. 693.

Only in so far as ordinary language conforms to the ideal, does it achieve its purpose of expressing meaningful propositions. So ordinary language stands to be revised. Like Russell, Wittgenstein says that ordinary language has to be revised in respect of logical and syntactical rules. In the *Tractatus*, he intends to know the basic structure of the world with the help of the logical analysis of language. He says, "In order to avoid such errors we must make use of a sign-language that excludes them by not using the same sign for different symbols and by not using in a superficially familiar way signs that have different modes of signification : that is to say, a sign-language that is governed by logical grammar- by logical syntax."⁴¹

The early Wittgenstein suggested that the proper way of exhibiting the structure of our world is to construct an ideal language picturing the world as we talk about it. He believes that the structure of such a language is, in some sense, a structural picture of the world. Such a language is logical since it is governed by the rules of logical syntax and is supposed to be a perfect language inasmuch as it mirrors of the original structure of reality. Wittgenstein says, "Ordinary language, if it is not flatly self-contradictory, is at least vague, ambiguous, and misleading and generally fails to permit clear and accurate expression of what we want to say."⁴² So the function of philosophy is to remove misunderstandings which are the products of linguistic confusions. The fundamental idea which permeates the *Tractatus* is that language worth its

⁴¹Wittgenstein, Ludwig: *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, op. cit., p. 29.

⁴²Bergmann, G. : "Two Criteria for an ideal Language", op. cit., p. 132.

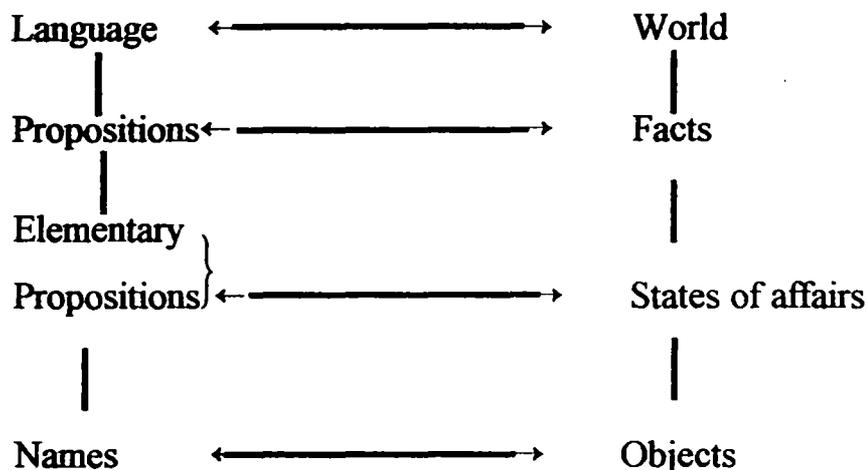
name is a picture of reality.

So by inaugurating the possibility of an ideal language in the **Tractatus**, Wittgenstein presents a sweeping and radical theoretical system of language and reality . He vehemently opposes the common sense ways of thinking. Our ordinary language is vague, inexact , ambiguous and misleading and generally fails to have clear and accurate expression of what we speak about , and hence he needed a logically perfect language which would exhibit the true structure of reality . He says, ordinary language (i. e. ,language that we all use everyday) though adequate for practical purposes, obscures vision and hides the skeletal form (T. 4. 002). So it is the proper job for philosophy to remove the confusions by a careful study of language.

The importance of the **Tractatus** is that it composes together ideas and attitudes which were in the intellectual atmosphere in the **Vienna Circle** and elsewhere. As Schlick has remarked that we now find ourselves at an altogether decisive turning point in philosophy, and that we are objectively justified in considering that an end has come to the fruitless conflict of systems. The paths, Schlick holds, have their origin in logic. He seemed to have thought that it was Leibnitz who imprecisely saw their beginning. After Leibnitz, Bertrand Russell and Gottlob Frege have opened up important stretches in the subsequent decade. But Ludwig Wittgenstien (in his **Tractatus Logico - Philosophicus**, 1922) , Schlick opines, was the first to have pushed forward to the decisive turning point .

Wittgenstein went on to say that the aim of philosophy is the logical classification of thought. There are many utterances and questions in philosophical works which are not false but non-sensical in the sense that they arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language, and the philosophers' job would not be to answer these pseudo-questions but to establish that they are non-sensical. The programme of ideal language philosophy proposed in the **Tractatus** was to discover the exact location of the boundary, dividing sense from non-sense. The task which Kant set himself in **Critique of Pure Reason**, was to demarcate the limits of thought, by giving a critical analysis of the scope and office of Pure Reason. Wittgenstein performed a parallel task by setting himself in the **Tractatus** in locating the limits of language. He has given an analytic of language, and argued that "All philosophy is the critique of language" (4.003). For him the inner logic of language needs to be exposed.

One of the important aspects of Wittgenstein's ideal language is that a proposition represents a fact by displaying an identity of structure. This idea may be represented in the following arrangement:



The above arrangement is a useful preliminary sketch. Wittgenstein says that language and world have the same structure. Language is made up of propositions. Propositions must be either true or false. Propositions are compounds made up of elementary propositions which in turn are combinations of names. Names are the ultimate constituents of language. Correspondingly, the world consists in the totality of facts and facts are compounded out of states of affairs which are in turn compounded out of facts. Now, if it is presupposed that language and world have possessed the same structure, then it is logically claimed that each level of structure in language shown above matches a level of structure in the world. The objects which are supposed to be the ultimate constituents of the world are denoted by the ultimate constituents of language; the names. Names are ultimate constituents of language in the sense that they cannot be anatomised. Every name denotes an object, the ultimate constituent of the world; and hence the meaning of a name is the meaning of an object what the name denotes. Names are combined to form elementary propositions which correspond to states of affairs. And again elementary propositions combine to

form propositions which correspond to facts and finally propositions combine to form language which correspond to world.

It seems clear from the above that the correspondence between elementary propositions and states of affairs is constituted by the fact that the names out of which elementary propositions are built denote the objects out of which their correspondent states of affairs are built. The arrangement of the names in elementary propositions logically mirrors the arrangement of the objects in states of affairs. It is in virtue of this picturing or mirroring relation that the propositions compounded out of elementary propositions have sense. This is the celebrated picture theory of meaning which lies in the heart of the *Tractatus* purporting to show how meaning attached to what we say when we use language correctly.

Thus in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein asserts that the propositions of an ideal language is to be a picture or model of reality. If a proposition asserts a certain fact then there must be something in common between the structure of the proposition and the structure of the fact. The logical structure of language is to be viewed in terms of truth-functional relations of compound (molecular) propositions to elementary ones which consists of authentic names which are free from all ambiguities. Elementary propositions are in direct contact with reality and are mutually as well as logically independent of each other. That is why they are called basic propositions. They are uniquely applicable and have no description. They are concatenation of names, and names stand for things of the world. It follows logically that elementary propositions describe the

world.

The ideal language programme in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* presupposes a theory of language, a theory of logic and a theory of meaning. These are inter-connected. They may be taken to be different versions of the same philosophical enterprise. The three theories exhibit what can be said, what can be knownⁿ and what can exist. The limits of language are the limits of reality. Then the theory of language, which on the ultimate analysis displays the ideal language, opens with a conception of logic framed in the image of pure mathematics. Propositions of ideal language have been separated from any contingent relations to men and their purposes. It has been believed that logic is autonomous and absolutely separated from psychology and sociology. This might have been a legacy of Frege and subsequently carried out by Husserl, viz., logic is not a branch of psychology. We should not put psychology in the wrong place. The images of Frege and Husserl's attack on psychologism may be discovered in early Wittgenstein's view of ideal language.

In constructing an ideal language on the background of logical principles, Wittgenstein admits essentialism. He says that language has an essence - a logic, an abstract design that necessarily lurks behind the untidy surface of actual discourse. So the ideal language of *Tractatus* takes language as a symbol. This linguistic symbol has an essential property of referring to the world. It reaches up to reality. He believ^{ves} that the connection between language and reality is made by means of elementary propositions. Elementary propositions, we have already said, are composed of names. Names are

authentic and they cannot be arbitrarily conjoined. The concatenation is detected by rules of logical syntax. This is the logical form which, at the same time, is also the logical form of atomic facts. The rules of logical syntax of language are not arbitrarily designed. These rules are determined by the rules of combination of objects into facts. It is these rules which give us the hidden logic of language.

The above description of the *Tractatus* landscape makes it clear that the ideal language of Wittgenstein takes on a realistic approach. It takes language as a phenomenon which on analysis reveals a depth grammar. The grammar strictly followed makes sentences that can picture reality. The world must be a matching world - existing antecedently only to be captured by language. Such a conception of ideal language may lead one to essentialism a Platonic tendency of craving for generality disclosing a contempt for particulars, not to speak of the non-verbal situations in which language is employed.

Before we close this section, let us make a comparison between Russell's concept of the ideal language and that of Wittgenstein. In constructing an ideal language both Russell and Wittgenstein have secured a minimum vocabulary of language. Like Russell, Wittgenstein envisages the ultimate constituent of language which he calls names. Russell argues that the relation between language and world depends upon the fact that the simplest elements of each are directly linked. Wittgenstein likewise says that the basic task in philosophy is wholly conceptual one of identifying the logical conditions which obtain between language and world. But in Russell's theory the

mechanism is somewhat different. The link between language and the world, for Russell as well as Wittgenstein, is the relation of denotation. But for Russell the *atoms* of language are the demonstrative pronouns, namely 'this', 'that', etc.; and the atoms of the world are sense-data. The link is forged by the use we make of the demonstrative pronouns to refer directly to sense-data. So in Russell's view language is connected with the world because at the most basic level we *name* the items of sensory information which constitute immediate experimental contact with the world by demonstrative. It is interesting to observe that in his **Note Book** Wittgenstein shows that he began by thinking much along the same line as Russell. Nevertheless, unlike Russell he decided to restrict attention to the logical basis of the issues, and therefore did not investigate their psychological aspects as Russell had done. It is this which gives the **Tractatus** its highly abstract character.

Section IX : A review of the Ideal Language Construction Programme

We are now in a position to review of the programme of constructing an ideal language. This may be done in the light of actual cases of linguistic deception. We propose to analyse here one of the instances examined by Russell. Propositions may contain pseudo-names, and Russell's analysis is an attempt to find out a process for eliminating pseudo-names. Such pseudo-names

are to be construed, in Russell's opinion, as descriptions and must not be taken to stand for an entity. This is revealed as we translate or reduce such sentences to the ideal language proposed by Russell.

Was Scott the author of Waverley? King George IV wished to know. Here 'Scott' and 'the author of Waverley' are thought to be identical in the sense that they stand for the same entity. The name 'Scott' and the description 'the author of Waverley' would seem to be interchangeable since they refer to the same entity. Now, from the sentence -

(i) 'George IV wished to know whether Scott was the author of Waverley.'

- if we substitute 'Scott' for 'the author of Waverley', the resulting sentence would be:

(ii) George IV wished to know whether Scott was Scott.

But the result of the substituted sentence is by no means the same as the original sentence, since although it is true that George IV wished to know whether Scott was the author of Waverley, he cannot want to know what is trivially true, i.e., that Scott is Scott. The original sentence is informative, 'a fact in literary history', whereas the substitutional sentence is a 'trivial truism'. So Russell says that a proposition containing a description is not identical with what that proposition becomes when a name is substituted.

In ordinary language definite description^s thus function like proper names.

But the logical status of a proper name is altogether different from that of a definite description. An analysis and transcription of an ordinary definite description into a logically perfect language would, as Russell suggests, show that a name and a definite description, if properly understood, are not equivalent, and while a name refers to an entity, a description does not. It will be made clear in what follows.

If the definite description 'the author of Waverley' functions as a name, it can be replaced by some name, such as either 'Scott' or some other. If it were replaced by the name 'Scott', the proposition 'Scott was the author of Waverley' would become trivial identity like 'Scott is Scott' (in symbol $a = a$). But if it were replaced by the name other than 'Scott' such as 'b', the resulting proposition 'Scott is b' would be false. But the original proposition was neither trivial nor false; but a simple informative.

Moreover if the definite description 'the author of Waverley' were a name, it would apply to Scott merely by virtue of the fact that he (Scott) was called 'the author of Waverley'. But the phrase is as used in the proposition 'Scott is the author of Waverley', 'Scott' is not designated by 'the author of Waverley'.

Finally, a name is a simple symbol; whereas a description, since it contains parts that are themselves symbols, is complex. It follows from this that the meaning of a description is determinate. For if the meaning of its parts are given, its meaning is given. But the meaning of a name is indeterminate,

because it means only what it is arbitrarily designated to name.

The above clarification makes it clear that definite descriptions, although they look like names, do not perform the same job a logically proper name does. In order to distinguish name from descriptions, Russell says, "A *name*, which is a simple symbol, directly designating an individual which is its meaning, and having this meaning in its own right, independently of the meanings of all other words."⁴³ Thus a name has its autonomy and immediacy. But definite descriptions lack this autonomy and immediacy. They acquire meaning in a complex and dependent fashion which is brought out when we reflect on the general form of the context in which they occur. There obtains two such contexts - one asserts or denies the existence of the so-and-so; and the other describes or denies some property to the so-and -so. With the collaboration of these two contexts, we can restate definite description into a new proposition which is supposed to be logically equivalent to the original proposition. In this process we can avoid a group of symbols which are called definite descriptions. Here we can take the initial proposition like this:

(3) The queen of England exists

Now this proposition can be restated as the following proposition:

(4) There is one and only one individual that reigns over England and is a female

And if we take the initial proposition as -

(5) The author of Waverley was Scotch

- we can restate it as:

(6) There is one and only one individual both wrote Waverley and was Scotch.

⁴³Russell, B.: "Descriptions" In *Classics in Analytic Philosophy*, edited by R. R. Ammerman, Tata McGraw- Hill Publishing Co. Ltd., Bombay-New Delhi, 1965, p.20

The propositions (4) and (6) under consideration are to be true or false by virtue of the fact that the propositions (3) and (5), from which (4) and (6) are derived, are true or false. But if we observe them carefully, one thing would be clear that the definite descriptions of (3) and (5) seem to disappear once (3) and (5) were analysed into (4) and (6). It is also important to note that there is no temptation in (4) and (6) to mistake them as a group of symbols that stand for a name. This can easily apply to solve our puzzle. With the help of this new information, proposition (1) is properly rendered as :

(7) George IV wished to know whether one and only one individual both wrote Waverley and was identical with Scott.

Proposition (7) means, exactly one individual wrote Waverley and that individual is identical with Scott. Keeping this view in mind, the proposition (1) can be paraphrased into a set of statements which imply and implied by the original proposition. These are:

- (1) At least one person wrote Waverley.
- (2) At most one person wrote Waverley.
- (3) Whoever wrote waverley was Scotch.

Symbolically, the above propositions can be expressed as under:

- (I) $(\exists x) Wx$
- (II) $(x)(y) [(Wx \cdot Wy) \supset x = y]$
- (III) $(\exists x) [Wx \cdot (y)(Wy \supset x = y)]$

It is important to note that the conjunction of (I) and (II) is equivalent to (III). That is to say that the conjunction of 'at least one' and 'at most one' means 'exactly one'. The *proof* of this assertion *ipsosfacto* proves proposition (7); i.e., it proves that the person who wrote Waverley is identical with Scotch. Let us establish first with help of a logical deduction that the conjunction of 'at least one' and 'at most one' leads to 'exactly one'.

| | | |
|--|---|-------------|
| | 1. $(\exists x) Wx$ | |
| | 2. $(x) (y) [(Wx \bullet Wy) \supset x = y] \therefore (\exists x) [Wx \bullet (y) (Wy \supset x = y)]$ | |
| | 3. Wx | |
| | 4. $(y) [(Wx \bullet Wy) \supset x = y]$ | 2. UI |
| | 5. $(Wx \bullet Wy) \supset x = y$ | 4. UI |
| | 6. Wy | |
| | 7. $Wx \bullet Wy$ | 3,6 Conj. |
| | 8. $x = y$ | 5,7 M. P. |
| | 9. $Wy \supset x = y$ | 6-8 C. P. |
| | 10. $(y) (Wy \supset x = y)$ | 9. U. G. |
| | 11. $Wx \bullet (y) (Wy \supset x = y)$ | 3, 10 Conj. |
| | 12. $(\exists x) [Wx \bullet (y) (Wy \supset x = y)]$ | 11, EG |
| | 13. $(\exists x) [Wx \bullet (y) (Wy \supset x = y)]$ | 3-12, EI |

Q. E. D.

The logical derivation above makes it sufficiently clear that the conjunction of 'at least one' and 'at most one' gives us the expression 'exactly one'. And with this proposition (i.e. exactly one), proposition (III) simply adds that the person was Scotch. Thus the symbolic expression of the whole proposition would emerge as follows :

$$(\exists x) [Wx \bullet (y) (Wy \supset x = y) \bullet x = C]$$

But if the name 'Scott' is replaced in place of 'the author of Waverley', we have the proposition "Scott was Scotch" and the resulting sentence can rightly be symbolised as : Sc.

What we have observed in the foregoing discussion is that proposition (7) preserves the unique reference of (1); not in terms of definite descriptions; but in terms of existence and non-existence of some indefinite entity which has some property (wrote Waverley). But there seems to be no implication that we are dealing here with two separate entities ('the author of Waverley and Scott') that have the same meaning in referring to the same thing. Thus, there is, then, no possibility in (7) of substituting one verbal entity (Scott) for another (the author of Waverley). Hence no puzzle of definite descriptions recurs.

On the basis of above discussion it can be said that the theory of definite descriptions is a method of analysis that aims at correcting a logical defect in the structure of ordinary grammar. It is a defect that is potentially misleading with respect to the structure of reality. Thus Russell concludes by saying that

whenever the grammatical subject of a proposition can be supposed not to exist without rendering the proposition meaningless, it is plain that the grammatical subject is not a proper name ; i. e., directly representing some object. In a logically perfect language no descriptive phrase will appear. In such a language descriptive phrases will be contextually replaced by symbols for quantifiers, argument, property variables and logical constants.

Section -X: Remarks

It appears that there are reasons for the claims made in favour of ideal language. It has been amply demonstrated that our ordinary language is ontologically deceptive. But such a deception can only be detected once we have a non-linguistic glimpse of the ontological realm. This would not as such create any difficulty except for the fact that philosophers do intend to take recourse to language to reach upto reality. Such a procedure would appear circular if it is granted that language can be identified as *ideal* only as a prior acquaintance with the structure of reality.

It seems that the ideal language philosophers would prefer to give a ruling in view of their ontological position. One may be reasonably suspicious about such ruling because there is no reason why somebody should have the kind of ontology he has . Is it not possible, in the first place, to commit to an alternative ontological scheme which may lead one to adopt alternative ideal language ? In the second place , one may express his ruling regarding the

structure of reality on the basis of his prior commitment to certain structure of language. As a matter of fact it is something which remains ever undecided if reality or language be our point of departure. Should the ruling proceed from the commitment to linguistic structure, or the commitment to the structure of reality? The question seems to remain undecided .

Moreover , the ideal language philosophers do not only propose an ideal language, they also suggest that sentences in ordinary language must be translatable into ideal language in order to prove themselves meaningful. P.F. Strawson has argued to show that the idea of translatability is an illusion. The sentences in ordinary language has been shown by him to display certain meanings and nuances which resist translation into the rigid framework of ideal language.

There is no denying the fact that ordinary language misleads us if we take a superficial view of it. But is it really misleading to the ordinary man who uses it? The statement 'Unpunctuality is reprehensible' appears misleading to a philosopher who has his own sense of grammar and a training in Platonism. The ordinary man, however, makes use of such sentence and makes it quite meaningfully without getting himself lapsed into quasi-Platonism. If this be the case, then the need for revising ordinary language is not quite genuine and the proposal for the construction of ideal language is uncalled for.

Of course one would not deny that philosophers have been misled by certain types of sentences in ordinary language. Philosophers especially

construct theories of meaning and rules of syntax as well as theories of predication; and this is why they ultimately come to grief when they deal with ordinary language. As a consequence they have to find ways for extricating themselves from the guagmire of false ontology and they could not do this except by revising ordinary language or constructing an ideal language. It is a special difficulty which requires special solution, and that is why constructionism may find support within the bounds of philosophy.