THE CONCEPTUAL FIELD:
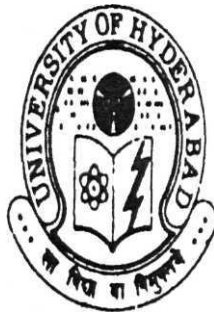# A CRITIQUE OF INDETERMINACY THEORIES OF MEANING

A thesis Submitted to the University of Hyderabad **for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Humanities**

By

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2002

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled *The Conceptual Field: A Critique of Indeterminacy Theories of Meaning* submitted by **Mr.Muhammedaly P.P for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the Department of Philosophy, School of Humanities, University of Hyderabad is a result of the** *bonafied* **research work he has carried out under my supervision. This work or a part of it has not been submitted to any other University or Institution for any degree or diploma. I recommend that the thesis be sent to the examiners for evaluation.**

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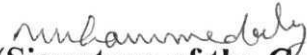University of Hyderabad
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DECLARATION

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This is to certify that I, **Muhammedaly P.P** have carried out the research embodied in the present thesis entitled *The Conceptual Field: A Critique of Indeterminacy Theories of Meaning* for the full period prescribed under **Ph.D. ordinances of the University.**

I declare to the best of my knowledge that no part of this thesis was earlier submitted for the award of research degree of any University.

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*This thesis is dedicated to
my Mother Smt Mariam*

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This **thesis** is an inquiry into the nature of Conceptual Field and about the reasons why **the** foundations of transcendentalism have not been shaken by the **anti-transcendentalist** views of the later Wittgenstein, Quine and Derrida. The first chapter of it defines the Conceptual Field of transcendentalism and its relation with philosophical semantics with reference to Plato, Kant and the early Wittgenstein.

The second chapter of the thesis is about the later Wittgenstein and his criticism of the ideal sense. There we **will** deal with his conception that it is our obsession with ideal picture of reality **that** takes our thoughts away from the concrete uses of words. This chapter will be focused upon the themes such as Wittgenstein's rejection of **ostensive** definition, his notion of language-game, rule following, use theory of meaning, **mentalism,** his rejection of philosophical theory as a bewitchment of language and replacing it by a therapeutic conception of it. ·

What comes next is the chapter on Quine. What is explained here is his empirical **approach to** inclining, his ontological relativity and his concept of translation. And we see here how his pragmatic approach to meaning based on empiricism is a rejection of transcendentalism.

The fourth chapter is on Derrida. Here we discuss his notion of *differance* which provides the rationale of his criticism of presence of being, which transcendentalism makes the starting point of its argument for an a priori being that provides the ground of any being. This chapter takes into consideration his notion of **grammatology,** writing, and *pharmakon* in the context of his rejection of presence in general and that of transcendentalism as a consequence.

The last chapter of the thesis offers a defence of transcendentalism underlying the **idea** of Conceptual Field. This defence starts from an examination of Plato's **dialogue** *Theaetetus* to see **how** Plato **himself** offers a solution to the

scepticism of it in *Republic,* and how Kant and the early **Wittgenstein** formulate this solution in their own ways later on. After seeing how a transcendental notion of being is required as a justification of our **engagement** with the world this chapter examines where the later Wittgenstein, Quine and Derrida fail in their attempt to reject the same.

CHAPTER I
The Conceptual **Field** and the Question of Meaning

The philosophical concepts are an **attempt** to redefine or rethink the ordinary world to conform it to the standards of objectivity one way or other. But they are postulated not merely for the sake of the concrete objectivity of ordinary kind but in search of an objectivity of the transcendental nature. In the broad sense, for philosophy this objectivity is the basis not only of a philosophical understanding of knowledge and the world, but also of knowledge and discourse of any kind, which includes religion, ethics, science, art, literature, etc. Though the transcendental objectivity that philosophy seeks encompasses even what seems to be the most trifling matters of existence and life, but in its transcendental nature it finds a realm for itself over and above what it considers to be the world of appearance.

Here this question arises: When objectivity becomes transcendental, what does it really mean? Does not it lose its objective status then and become a supernal fancy that does not have anything *to* do with earthy existence and day-to-day affairs of life? I can verify the fact that there is a chair in my room through different means which we generally make use of in our dealings if there at all arises a doubt as to this fact. But, if I say that this particular table *is* because its being is determined by a transcendental world of verities, naturally the question that, then, stares at me is: How I am to prove this position of mine? Those who question transcendental objectivity draw their inspiration from the objectivity we resort to, knowingly or unknowingly, in our ordinary talk about the world, and they base their position on the questions of the above kind. Those who take the help of language to question the transcendental realm of concepts, which we may call by the name Conceptual Field, ask us to look at the language of our ordinary discourse and find whether its meanings can support the claims of transcendental philosophy. It is here that the question of meaning becomes an important question of philosophical inquiry.

Let us take the examples of Plato and kant to see how the *world of appearance* takes philosophers beyond itself, when they define the reality of it. It may be remembered here that Plato and Kant are not philosophers of the same nature. While Plato formulates a world of concepts independent of the Subject, Kant's world of concepts find its place in the Subject. In this study we are not concerned with this difference much, though as it is it is a part of it, but with the general spirit of conceptual inquiry which they undertake. And when we consider the question of meaning in the context of philosophy in this chapter, we will take into consideration the early Wittgenstein, who rejects philosophical propositions calling them nonsensical on the basis of his theory of meaning.

Plato and the world of Ideas

Plato understands the ordinary world as the world of appearance. According to him, there is some other world, which is more real than this one. He calls this more real world the world of ideas or forms. Compared to the world of ideas the ordinary world is a dim adumbration of it. He says that the significance of human existence is fulfilled only when the soul of man travels from the world of appearance, which is that of changing and shifting phenomena, to the world of ideas, which is eternal, real, and without change.

What is the rationale behind the postulation of the world of ideas? To answer this question let us take a look at his well known dialogue *Republic* and see how he proves the possibility of such a world that stands in close relation with the concrete world of everyday life.

Plato relates the world of ideas with the absolute understanding of the nature of a phenomenon. He takes the example of pleasure to show how an attempt to understand its true nature necessarily takes us away from the ordinary comprehension of it. For him, pleasure is something positive and it must be defined positively. But, he says, most of the pleasures in life arc defined in terms of the

absence of pain. And conversely, pain is defined as absence of pleasure. To capture the positive nature of pleasure in its absoluteness, he argues, we have to transcend the ordinary world, which is that of pleasures mingled with pain invariably, and this process, as testified by his dialogue, is not an easy task.

To show that our experience of pleasure is invariably related to an illusion of it, he makes a distinction between pleasure, pain, and the middle stage between them and he bases this distinction on the logic of our ordinary understanding. He finds here that ordinary understanding of pleasure involves contradictions and its logic is in need of correction. Let us see how he shows it. We define pain as absence of pleasure and pleasure as absence of pain based on the simple fact that if we are in pain we are deprived of pleasure then. So it necessitates in the transition between these two, a plane, which is neutral with regard to both of them. He calls this neutral plane quietude, which is supposed to be neither pleasure nor pain. Socrates, the protagonist in the* dialogue, asks: How quietude can be neutral at all? If it is a passage between pain and pleasure, he says, it cannot be neutral for it is where one of them ceases to be and the other begins and therefore both are present in it at the same time. An object in which both pain and pleasure reside at the same time cannot be said to be neutral with regard to them. But by definition quietude is independent of pain and pleasure, that is, it is neutral. Now it turns out to be that quietude is both neutral and non-neutral at the same time. A similar contradiction is the feature of the definition of the related phenomena such as pleasure and pain if we confine ourselves to ordinary understanding of them in our definition of them. If pleasure is the cessation of pain, what this cessation results in is either something neutral or something which is both pleasure and pain or a state which defies a definite characterisation.

For Plato, these three categories as understood in ordinary terms juggle with human understanding. Quietude, whose nature is unknown to us, in juxtaposition with pain is called pleasure and in juxtaposition with pleasure pain. A reflection on this phenomenon, Socrates says in the dialogue, will show us the necessity for taking

the pleasure from this ironical situation to an intelligible world and only there we will be able to see it *of and in itself.* He says further that cases of the like will convince us that the world of true being cannot be the same as the ordinary one. And he takes the world of ordinary experience as contradictory in nature and that of intelligibility as true being. For him, it is the world of ideas that represents the world of true being.

The world of ideas cannot be the result of whims and fancies of our imagination. Its existence has to be proved on the basis of objective thinking. Socrates in the dialogue depends on different examples to show that there is such a world. We have in the ordinary world objects like tables, chairs, trees, etc. He says that what gives an object its identity is its essential nature. Let us see what he means by it with the help of the example of tables which he offers in the dialogue. We know that there are different particular tables out there. They are of different shapes, colours, and made of different materials. But they are all called tables owing to the common form they share among themselves. Socrates calls this common form the idea of table, and he says that this is the most real aspect of a table or tables. A carpenter fixes his eyes on this idea when he makes a table. The carpenter depends on the idea of table to make one out of the ordinary wood, as the case may be, and the one thus made is subject to change and destruction, but the idea of it which is the most real can never be destroyed. Like the table, all other objects in the world also have got (heir own ideas, which are (he most real aspect of their existence and are beyond destruction. An idea of chair is common to all chairs there and that of tree to all trees in the world. Similarly ideas of other objects are shared by them and they define their essential nature. According to Socrates, the ordinary world only resembles the world of ideas as the dim reflection of it.

The objects, which have a common form, can have only one idea common to it. For example, the tables cannot have two ideas common to them. If there happened to be two ideas of table, then we would have to be in search of the idea common to these two and this would be the most real table, and it shows, according

to Socrates, that there can be only one idea in the intelligible world to correspond to all the tables of ordinary world. And the author of the intelligible world of ideas, where the entities will number less than those of the ordinary world, is God.

In the context of the division between the intelligible and the ordinary worlds Socrates in the *Republic* examines the status of poetry and art. He finds that they arc three removes from the truth that lies in the intelligible world. A craftsman depends on the ideas of the intelligible world while making crafts. A craftsman imitates the world of ideas in his work. But a painter, on the other hand, imitates the objects of the ordinary world. It is a fact that when an artist paints or draws a table we do not say that he makes a table but imitates an ordinary table, which for its reality in turn depends on the idea of it. Another feature of an artist's work is that he docs not engage himself with the intelligible aspect of objects but with their appearances. For example, a table may look bigger or smaller according as it is viewed from different distances. It may again differ from itself as it is viewed from the side or the front or some other way. But it has got its own reality beyond the differences it suffers in appearance and this reality, Socrates states, cannot be captured by the brush of the painter. So he concludes that a painter lives on the contradictions of the world and a poet does not differ from him in this respect.

A poet, according to Socrates, without understanding the reality of the experiences of a hero characterizes him in his poem. It shows that he approaches the characters and incidents he describes in his poem with the irrational part of his soul and not with the rational part of it. As in the case of the painter the poet ends up in the characterisation of appearances of appearance and therefore poetic creations lack genuine or true reality. Socrates calls poems and arts mimetic. And what the works of a poet and an artist nurture is not the rational part of the soul of the people but the irrational part of it. This leads Plato to the rejection of them in his ideal state. However, he happily admits the poems that praise Gods and good men to his ideal state.

Plato wants the human soul to open its eye to the world of ideas, where he sees that it will behold the reality of existence and being. The soul can do it only with the part of it that loves wisdom. He divides the soul into three parts: 1) the rational part; 2) the high spirited purl; 3) the appetitive part. This division is not a random one, but based on the matters of life and experience. And it is effected through the pure conceptualisation of our everyday existence. Let us see how in his dialogue Socrates demarcates these parts with their absolute boundaries.

The appetitive part of the soul contains desires and the most conspicuous of them are hunger and thirst. After stating this Socrates wants to show that the functions of this part cannot be performed by the other two parts, they being the principle of high spirit and the wisdom. We cannot be hungry or thirsty with the part of the soul through which we get angry nor with the part with which we become wise. And it is the work of the appetitive part, which is the part for desires. Before we proceed to know how Socrates shows the division of labour of the different parts of the soul, we may see the logic behind the endeavour. In the words of Socrates:

"It is obvious that the same thing will never do or suffer opposites in the same respect in relation to the same thing and at the same time. So that if ever we find these contradictions in the functions of the mind we shall know that it was not the same thing functioning but a plurarity."[1]

He applies this, which he sees as a fact about the order of the world, to the desire called thirst. Thirst has to be taken in isolation to know what it is. Thirst as it is, is a desire for drink. It should not be understood as a desire for good or hot drink. Good, hot, etc. arc qualified of drink and they, being predicates, have their own existence. If we go after these predicates when we define thirst, we will lose a proper characterization of thirst in itself and also its object as such. Depending on the situations the drink, for which thirst is n desire, can be qualified differently, but thirst taken in and of itself is always a desire for drink. Another important point

8

Socrates makes here is that what propels thirst cannot be that which controls it as propulsion and deterrence are opposite forces. That is, when someone is thirsty for drink if he is controlled from it at the same time, then there arc two parts of the soul at work there as the same thing cannot contain in it two forces which contradict each other at the same time. An example will help us here. Suppose a man is ill and asked by the physician not to take drink for sometime, but as he is thirsty now he wants to drink and he controls his desire to do so because of the physician's prescription. Socrates recognises that it is the appetitive part of the soul that propels one to fulfil one's desires and the part of it that controls this propulsion must be different from it and he calls it by the name reason or the love of wisdom. About reason and appetitive part Socrates in the dialogue speaks in the following way:

"Not unreasonably, said I, shall we claim (hat they are two and different from one another, naming that in the soul whereby it reckons and reasons the rational, and that with which it loves, hungers, thirsts, and feels the flutter and titillation of other desires, the irrational and appetitive-companion of various repletions and pleasures."[2]

Now the endeavour of Socrates is to show that the principle of high spirit that is responsible for our getting angry is different from the appetitive part and also the rational part. Socrates asks us to imagine a person, who is in the wrong. The man in question realises that he has wronged somebody and here there could be a chance of his being angry with the person whom he has wronged, but he thinks that it is not becoming to him to be so. When he carries this conviction in him he is hungry and thirsty also. Socrates says that an analysis of the situation at hand will convince us that it is the control of the high spirit by the rational part that avoids his chance of getting angry with the other and it is obvious, according to him, that desires such as hunger and thirst have nothing to do with controlling the anger by the rational part. To make his point clear Socrates asks us to consider the man, who has been wronged, and in this case it may be that he is hungry and thirsty and at the same time angry at his being wronged. And to execute his anger if at all he takes help it

will be from the rational part as hunger and thirst cannot execute it. Only if we can conceptualise the classification which Socrates **effects** through his argument, we can locate the different parts of the soul with their well defined boundaries.

After explaining how the principle of high spirit is different from the appetitive part Socrates now goes on to show that it should not be identified with the rational part also. A look at the small **children,** who are toddlers, he thinks will help us prove his point. A small child, who is not rational in the ordinary sense in its behaviour is seen getting angry at times. Another example he takes to prove his point is that of animals, who are not seen controlling their anger by means of reason. Moreover, he says, it is obvious that anger and thought are two different phenomena and must therefore belong to two different parts of the soul.

The three parts of the **soul** have three kinds of function which are natural to them. The work of the appetitive part is to desire and that of the principle of high spirit is to create anger, and the work entrusted with the rational part is that of the search for wisdom which consists in the knowledge of the real nature of existence. Socrates says in the dialogue that the reality of the existence cannot be found in the ordinary world and to discover it the soul has to open its eye to the world of ideas compared to which the former is a dim adumbration of it. Socrates explains in *Republic* the soul's beholding reality by using two striking analogies. Let us sec how he does it.

The Divided Line and The Life in a Cave

Before we take into account these analogies, we may see what Plato means by knowledge, opinion, and **ignorance.** Knowledge, for him, pertains to what absolutely is, opinion to what is and what is not at the same time, ignorance to what absolutely is not. Socrates in the dialogue says that **he** who knows *knows something* and "that which entirely *is* is entirely knowable, and that which in *no way is* is in every way **unknowable".** And if there is anything that lies between knowledge and ignorance

thus understood it will be called opinion. And aren't there things each of which is *is and is not* at the same time?

"This much premised, **let** him tell me, I will say, **let** him answer me, that good fellow who docs not think there is a beautiful in itself or an idea of beauty in itself always remaining the same and unchanged, but who does believe in many beautiful things- the lover of spectacles, I mean, who cannot endure to hear anybody say that the beautiful is one and the just one, and so of other things- and this will be our question. My good fellow, is there any one of these many fair and honorable things that **will** not sometimes appear **ugly** and base? And of the just things, that will not seem unjust? And of the pious things, that will not see impious?"[3]

The great is small according to a different standard, and the light similarly becomes heavy, and what is just in the world of appearance sometimes seems unjust, and one object is many at the same time in the ordinary world. Socrates calls this world the world of *is and is not* at the same time. And the positive being of this world can be found only in the intelligible world, which is the world where beauty is always beautiful, that is, it is beauty in itself and it is there justice is justice in itself, greatness greatness in itself and so on. Against this broad distinction between knowledge, which is about the world of what entirely is, and opinion, which is about the world of what is and what is not at the same time, Socrates describes what the soul, while making its journey from opinion to knowledge, beholds at different regions of being, with the **help** of two analogies. Let us first take the analogy of divided line to see how the being is divided to form different levels of it according to its different natures.

At the topmost height of **being** is the idea of good. Socrates explains its role in the realm of existence with the help of the example of the **role** of the sun, which shines in the visible world. We should not lose sight here of the **Platonic-**Socratic conviction that the ordinary wold is an imitation of the intelligible world. It follows from this conviction that when Socrates explains in *Republic* the role of the

idea of good in the intelligible world he has in mind its intimate relation with the evanescent world. The sun is the source of light in the visible world and also provides for its generation, growth, and nurture; yet it itself is not generated by anything in the visible world for which it is responsible. The visible world is seen by the eyes because of the presence of the sun in the sky. But neither the eye nor the vision is identical with the sun, though it is responsible for the vision in the eye. And Socrates points out that the eye is "the most sunlike of all the instruments of sense". The power of the eyes to see, Socrates says, is what it receives from the sun as an influx. Here we see that the sun gets a divine place in this scheme. In this what is literally and ordinarily understood and given gives way to what is metaphorical and metaphysical, but for Plato what is metaphysical is always at the service of the mundane and the less real as it is being the source of their existence. Let us not digress so that we will not miss the spirit of Socratic analogy of the sun to understand the idea of good and its relation with the intelligible world.

The sun makes possible the vision of the visible world to the eye. And the some vision beholds the sun also. The sun can be seen by the eye and it is an important feature of the vision. Socrates calls the sun the cause of the vision and the eye the vehicle of it. If the sun were not there, in spite of the world's and the eye's being there the eye will be blind to the world. It explains well the important role the sun has to play in making the vision possible. But the sun always transcends both the vision and the visible. In the same way the idea of good transcends the intelligible world though it is responsible for its being lit up for the eye of the soul. And the sun, Socrates says, is the offspring of the idea of good in the visible world. In his own words as given in the dialogue:

"This, then, you must understand that I meant by the offspring of the good which the good begot to stand in a proportion with itself. As the good is in the intelligible to reason and the objects of reason, so is this in the visible world to vision and the objects of vision."[4]

In **the** light of dim **luminaries** of **the** night cither the edges of our eyes arc blunted or they appear almost blind and we feel then that the vision is either dim or impossible. If the soul does not locate the good in the sky of the intelligible world the ideas in it will not be given to the soul. The soul will be blind to the ideas of that world though they are very much **there.** When the **soul** does not behold the good and see the entire existence and being in that light it can only opine in the matters of world and knowledge about it **will** lie far away from it. And in that case it of necessity takes the changing world for the real and indulges in opinions about it with the belief that these opinions are what we are entitled to have about the existence.

As the sun gives the eyes the power for vision, so the good gives power for knowledge to the rational part of the soul. Just as the sun, though responsible for the generation and growth of the visible world, is not as same as it and transcends it, so too the good, being the source of essence of the ideas of the intelligible world, is not as same as it and transcends it. The sun gives visibility to the visible world and the good provides the world of ideas with light of the truth. It is through metaphors and similes Socrates brings home the role of the idea of good as he perceives it in making the world possible.

It is only after describing the **idea** of good and its relation with the intelligible **world, Socrates** explains how different planes of being can be represented through a divided **line.** He asks his companions in the dialogue to divide a **line** unequally into two sections. One of these sections will represent the intelligible world and the other the visible. We have to remember here that the intelligible world will have less number of objects than those in the visible. And each of the above sections will have to be divided further into two sections in the same ratio as before. So the section which represents the intelligible world will be of two unequal parts, so also that which represents the visible or the ordinary world. In the section representing **the** intelligible the small part portrays the purest being of ideas and the other, which is bigger than this, represents the ideas thought with the help of images. When soul

attains to the purest ideas it does not require the help of images to think about them, but they are given immediately in thought. The lower section of the line also has also two unequal parts and among these the smaller pertains to the objects and creatures of the ordinary world and the bigger to the exaggeration of it through shadows, reflections, and picturing of them on different planes such as water, mirror, and other surfaces like them. We are familiar with the section, which represents the visible world and also the part of the section of the intelligible where images represent the forms of objects. We can think of the common form of all tables in the world with the help of an image, but we do not know what it is in its purest form, where images which describe it disappear and the most real being of it presents itself to us. It is in the realm of the purest being that the soul finds the real without being mediated through any image whatsoever and it is here that it is face to face `with the splendour of existence and life.

These four levels of being correspond to four kinds of affection in the soul. The affection of the soul which corresponds to the shadows and reflections Socrates gives the name *picture thinking* or *conjecture* and that which corresponds *to* the objects, plants, and creatures of the ordinary world is *belief* , and he calls the affection due to the realm of being which is represented by images about ideas *understanding* , and the highest is *knowledge,* which is the affection of the soul where it thinks the ideas as they arc without mediation through any image whatever. The aid to the soul in attaining to knowledge of ideas, Socrates says, is *dialectic,* the method of question and answers. He includes the truths of mathematics and astronomy where abstract thinking finds its aid in images under understanding and our grasp over the ordinary objects, plants, and creatures involve sensory aspects in it and for him the name it deserves is belief. And the picture thinking is at the farthest end from the most real. Only the dialectician can know the ideas and he only sees how the good lights up the intelligible world as the sun the visible world.

Socrates equates the life of those who have been taken in by the ordinary world of myriad colours and sounds with the prisoners who have been chained in a

cave and not seen the world of objects lit up by the sun from their childhood up. The analogy of the cave in *Republic* explains vividly the detrimental force of ignorance of the reality and its outcome. And it also narrates the liberation from the fetters of being away from the truth and the need to know the truth, which sustains and gives reality to even the most trifling matters of existence. Let us see how Socrates introduces this analogy. He asks his friends in the dialogue to imagine a subterranean cavern. In it are men who have been chained in such a way that they lie there on their back facing the **wall** of the cave opposite its face. And they cannot even move their heads, but **only** can see the **wall** that fronts them. Behind them, higher up and at a distance, a fire is burning, and between fire and the prisoners there is a road along which there has been built a low wall. Past the wall men are carrying images and shapes of men and animals wrought in stone and wood and other materials, and the shadows of these images will be cast on the **wall** of the cave which the prisoners face. As the wall screens the men, who are carrying the artifacts, their shadows **will** not be cast on the wall, which fronts the prisoners. **And** if these men speak when they move along the low **wall** carrying the images then it **will** produce echo in the cave and the prisoners **who** have never seen living human beings or animals, not even each other, will think that it is the shadows of the artifacts that they see on the wall who are speaking. Their state of this is that of picture thinking and the moment they see each other and realise the presence of the fire that burns over their head they **will** rise to the level of belief, and the states of understanding and knowledge, which arc **represented** in this analogy as corresponding to the visions of objects at their different reality in the world outside the cave which witnesses the splendour of the majestic sun, are still far from these prisoners.

Socrates in the dialogue conveys to us that a man can order his life justly only when he knows the order of the world in relation to the ideas. A man, who is just, knows himself and also his responsibilities and duties in the society. He judges the matters of ordinary existence not in their relativity but in their relation with what absolutely is. This will enable him to know the right and wrong of the ordinary

matters of existence in their dependence on the absolute standard. He **will** see that his personal interests do not clash with the common good of **the** society but rather harmonise with it without the slightest difference between them. And he further says that only when a society is ruled by those, who through dialectic attains to the knowledge of ideas which will **enable** them to see the social reality with a mind which does not waver in decision making and in its adherence to the truth even in the midst of most adverse and difficult circumstances, it will be a just society, where what matters is not the desires of the individuals which stem from picture thinking and belief but the order of reality. Plato in *Republic* relates the question of justice with the question of the truth about reality and shows how it breathes in the idea of good, which lights up the world of ideas where time cannot damage or destroy its form and content. Plato in his dialogue magnificently connects the time bound existence with the timeless and eternal reality and explains to us the need of this endeavour taking into consideration **the** invincibility of the truth and the ethical demands on our life from different quarters.

Immanuel Kant and Questions of Knowledge as Questions of World

Plato does not start his inquiry by an examination of the possibilities and limitations of the **soul** in its ability to know the world. His question is not how much the **soul** can know but where it can reach through knowledge, to which he believes it has access undoubtedly. Kant questions the claim of Plato that the subject or the soul is endowed with the ability to know what he defines as ideas, and argues that the world we have is a construction of the subject through its categories. Kant's Conceptual Field docs not exist outside the subject, and includes in it *a priori* being of space, time, and twelve categories of the understanding.

Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* states that human reason does not possess an unlimited power to know. This limitation on human reason is the result of the conjunction between the understanding and the sensibility, a faculty of the mind and the capacity of it to receive the representations from objects through the senses respectively. It is the understanding in conjunction with the sensibility which

makes the world **we** have possible for us. In this process the understanding is limited by the sensibility, and this is the reason why he calls the knowledge of the object or the world *empirical.* But for him the knowledge of what makes experience possible is *a priori ami transcendental.* It is because of the reason that what is transcendental, though it always **stands** in relation to experience, is independent of and presupposes it. And our aim now is to see what Kant means by experience and how the sensibility and the understanding produce it which define the realm of human reason in regard to its claim to knowledge.

For Kant, experience, which is empirical, consists of *a priori* and transcendental elements as well as contingent matters of fact. The contingent matters of fact change according to the difference in situations in which experience takes place. But the transcendental and *a priori* elements of experience are fixed and account for the necessary structure of knowledge. And knowledge may be either *a priori* or empirical. The knowledge of object is empirical for in it along with *a priori* elements of experience, sense experience, that is, the contingent matter of fact, is also involved. On the other hand, knowledge we have in mathematics and that of the basic propositions of physics, **are** *a* priori for **they** are necessary, and possible only as related to **the** transcendental and necessary structure of experience. Kant calls them not **only** *a priori* but also synthetic owing to what he sees as their nature that being *a priori,* the propositions of mathematics and those express the basic laws of nature have in them their subject terms which do not yield their predicate terms through analysis and the latter stands outside the former in spite of the fact that they are in a relation of necessity.

Kant traces the *a priori* elements of knowledge or experience to the subject. These elements are *a priori* and transcendental because they provide the ground for the synthetic *a priori* propositions about the structure of our experience. Here we are concerned in respect of these *a priori* elements only with how they make experience of object **possible.**

Kant says that we can know an object only as it appears to us. We cannot know what an object is in itself. So the necessary and therefore *a priori* elements of knowledge cannot be found in the object as it is in itself but only as it appears to the subject which experiences it. It is the subject which makes an object appear to itself and it shows, Kant says, that the *a priori* elements of knowledge of object arc a contribution of the subject to experience. Here we see how the concepts of philosophy find a subjective source in Kant.

Kant gives *a priori* status to space and time. He says that if they are not viewed so, the propositions of space in geometry and those of time in arithmetic cannot be understood as necessary. And this view of space and time in *Critique of Pure Reason,* is necessitated also by the view that space and time are necessary accompaniments of all our experiences. And these factors about experience make the propositions of arithmetic and geometry *a priori.* Kant also discovers twelve categories of the understanding that correspond to the concepts of general logic. They are *a priori* and transcendental for him for it is evident from the *a priori* knowledge we have in physics and this can also be proved from the fact that every mode of our experience presupposes them as its necessary and unavoidable general structure. An important feature of Kant's view of knowledge is that the twelve categories stand in combination with space and time and without this combination knowledge in general is impossible.

Sensibility, the capacity of the mind to receive the representations, receives the manifold of representations as given to it through the senses by the object. And it is through the *intuition,* which sensibility yields, our knowledge is related to the object. Space and time are *a priori* intuitions of the sensibility. Besides being intuitions themselves they are also *a priori* forms of all intuitions. Kant explains their relation with the object in the following manner:

"What objects may be in themselves, and apart from all this receptivity of our sensibility, remains completely unknown to us. We know nothing but our mode of

perceiving them- a mode which is peculiar to us, and not necessarily shared in by every being, though, certainly, by every human being. With this alone have we any concern. Space and time are its pure forms, and sensation in general its matter. The former alone can we know *a priori*, that is, prior to all actual perception and such knowledge is therefore called pure intuition. The latter is that in our knowledge which leads to its being called *a posteriori* knowledge, that is, empirical intuition. The former inhere in our sensibility with absolute necessity, no matter of what kind our **sensations** may be; the latter can exist in varying modes."[5]

Sensibility receives "representations through the mode in which we are affected by objects". And we have seen that space and time, for Kant, are *a priori* forms of sensibility, which intuit the relation **between** knowledge and objects. Of these, space is **the** property of the mind, which enables us to represent objects as outside us. And time is the form in which the mind, its states, and all other intuitions without exception are given. No intuition whether inward or outwardly projected, can escape **time.** The feature of time as formal condition of all appearances makes it different from space, and this nature of time has an important role to play in that part of the Critique where the connection between sensibility and the understanding is contemplated.

"Time is the formal *a priori* condition of all appearances **whatsoever.** Space, as the pure form of all *outer* intuition, is so far limited; it serves as the *a priori* condition only of outer appearances. But since all representations, whether they have for their objects outer things or not, belong, in themselves, as determinations of the mind, to our inner state; and since this inner state stands under the formal condition of inner intuition, and so belongs to time, time is an *a priori* condition of all appearances whatsoever"[6]

Space and time, as the pure and *a priori* forms of sensibility, which can only receive the representations of the object in the mode in which the mind is affected, are passive in nature. In that respect, they cannot account for how these

representations are synthesised in different ways. To make these manifold belong to an original consciousness in their synthesised form, a faculty of the nun which is spontaneous as opposed to its faculty of the passive receptivity, is needed. The faculty of the mind that acts thus for the spontaneous act of synthesis of the manifold of representations received in sensibility is the understanding. The understanding does it by means of categories, which correspond to the pure concepts of general logic. These categories, as explained earlier, are *a priori* in that they are prior to experience and also transcendental in that they relate to experience to make knowledge of the world possible.

We have already seen that the pure forms of sensibility are passive and categories of the understanding active. Another difference between them is that space and time are pure and *a priori* forms of intuitions only in relation to the way in which the senses are affected by objects. They are limited this way. But categories of the understanding belong to the original apperception of the mind in that they represent the thought in general. They can produce knowledge of objects in conjunction with sensibility even if intuitions are given to it in a different mode of sensibility. And also the category can *think* of an object not limited by the forms of sensibility. But we cannot know what will be the nature of object that is the result of the combination of the categories of understanding and a sensible intuition, which is different from ours. In the case of the non-sensible intuition, as it implicates the absence of intuition in the sensibility' to correspond to the thought of the understanding, knowledge of an object is impossible. (Here we may remember Plato's ideas as examples of this conviction of Kant's, but a little reflection on this matter will inform us that even Kantian scheme of thought cannot do without positing a realm of entities which can only *be thought of*, but he makes them subject oriented and qualify them. by different descriptions in his attempt to justify his conviction).

As it is, categories or concepts of the understanding can yield knowledge only in conjunction with the mode of our sensible intuition. Kant writes:

"space and time, as conditions under which alone objects can possibly be given to us, are valid no further than for objects of the senses, and therefore only for experience. Beyond these limits they represent nothing; for they are only in the senses, and beyond them have no reality. The pure concepts of understanding are free from this limitation, and extend to objects of intuition in general, be the intuition **like** or unlike ours, if only it be sensible and not intellectual."[7]

The table of pure concepts or categories of the understanding given by Kant is as follows:

<div align="center">

Of Quantity
Unity
Plurality
Totality

</div>

Of Quality		Of Relation
Reality		Of Inherence and Subsistence
Negation		Of Causality and Dependence
Limitation		Of Community

<div align="center">

Modality
Possibility-Impossibility
Existence-Non-existence
Necessity-Contingency

</div>

Kant addresses the problem of sensibility's intuiting the categories of understanding, which are pure and non-sensible through the notion of *transcendental schema*. The transcendental schema is *intellectual* in one respect and *sensible* in another. So it can mediate between sensible intuitions and the pure categories. In order to understand what the transcendental schema is we have to understand what the faculty of imagination is, as the schema is a product of this faculty.

As time provides the formal condition for both inner and outer appearances, it must be a condition with a formal unity. Otherwise appearances cannot hold themselves into a unity when they are given in sensibility before being taken up for the combination by the categories to determine them as objects. Moreover space and

time, being intuitions themselves, have their own *a priori* manifold of representations which are also to be united at the very beginning. We have to remember here that the unity now in question is absolutely formal and is the one that is present in all the combinatory activities of the categories as an unavoidable presupposition. As 'to unite' is a spontaneous activity it cannot be the function of either space or time, which are passive in nature. And this activity belongs to the understanding and its categories. And Kant says that the only unity we know is the unity that the subject provides to experience and in his scheme of thought the question whether the world independent of the subject is united or not is impossible to arise.

Space and time, the formal conditions of experience, passively receive the representations and at the same time they are united formally before the understanding take the matter given in them for combination in order to make them determinate objects. How does it take place? As the understanding is purely intellectual it cannot reach out to space and time, which are sensible. What is intellectual and what is sensible are heterogeneous from one another. But there is a fatal link between both and this is provided by time. Time of necessity is the formal condition of both outer and inner appearances or experiences. It shows that even the understanding is intuited and as understanding is not something extended out there, Kant concludes that it is intuited in time. Kant seems to think that intuitions are present in the sensibility passively and without this passive forms the world we have will lack a proper characterisation. One may wonder that the relation between the intuition and experience in Kant's framework is analogous to the attraction that lies between the magnet and the iron. And the subject and its faculty, the understanding, are not beyond the clutches of time and they are intuited under it. This explanation of the knowledge of subject satisfies Kant's general definition of knowledge that nothing *is* known to us except through the sensibility. And this relation between time and the understanding is the background for the faculty of imagination to be a medium for the understanding to effect the formal unity of sensibility. But here the movement is reverse and in this act of effecting the formal

unity of experience obviously the beginner is the understanding. In this time, which is sensible, becomes intellectual in nature and it is in a double role now. The understanding keeps its dignity of being intellectual in this act but transforms time through the imagination. The *a priori* productive imagination determines time as an act of the understanding and thus makes a synthesis of time. As whatever is in space is also in time, this formal unity will encompass both time and space. Kant calls this transcendental determination of time by the understanding through the imagination by the name transcendental schema. In its temporal aspect the schema is sensible and in its relation to the category it is intellectual. The schema provides what is given in the sensibility to the categories in accordance with what is given there and now the understanding is at work to supply it with the final synthesis that construct the objects of our experience and it is these objects which make up our world. And it shows that the schema has a pivotal role in making the link possible between the categories of understanding and the sensible matter and if it reminds us of the thought of pure ideas through images in *Republic* it is not incidental. But the schema is not something we can understand as the thought of Plato's ideas through images, and its activity is hidden from us. Kant writes:

"This schematism of our understanding, in its application to appearances and their mere form, is an art concealed in the depths of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze. This much only we can assert: the *image* is a product of the empirical faculty of reproductive imagination; the *schema* of sensible concepts, such as of figures in space, is a product and as it were, a monogram, of pure *a priori* imagination, through which, and in accordance with which, images themselves first become possible."[8]

The schema is a thought image, the result of the relation between the understanding, the imagination, and time. A schema is not like a sensible concept that is exemplified, for example, as a figure in space. It "can never be brought into

any image whatsoever". This is the reason why Kant says that schema **"exists** nowhere but in thought".

"Indeed it is schemata, not images of objects, which underlie our pure sensible concepts. No image could ever be adequate to the concept of a triangle in general. It would never attain that universality of the concept which renders it valid of all triangles, **whether** right-angled, obtuse-angled, or acute angled; it would always be limited to a part **only** of this sphere. The schema of the triangle can exist nowhere but in thought."[9]

There are differences and similarities between *Republic* and *Critique of Pure Reason.* In *Republic* ideas are taken as what give reality to the world and they cannot be counted as the categories of the understanding. Ideas are non-sensible and when they are thought with the help of images they become sensible and it is only in their non-sensible form we can have *knowledge* of them. And, most importantly, ideas are independent of the subject, which aspires to know them. In *Critique of Pure Reason* instead of ideas we have the categories and they number twelve and in that respect they are radically abstract. There is no question of our aspiring to know them because they are within us and are intuited under the formal condition of time. But, just like ideas they are not concrete and require the mediation of the schema for them to be the part of experience. Nevertheless we know them as the transcendental and *a priori* elements of experience, though we do not know what they are as such. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* both the object in itself and the subject in itself cannot be known to us. It also may be noted here that what corresponds to the Platonic idea of good in Kant is 'the synthetic unity of apperception', which is a priori and presupposes any synthesis whatever. Whereas Plato opens to us the vistas for the unbridled metaphysical thought provided we train ourselves for it through systematic methods, in Kant metaphysics depends on the possibilities and the limitations of the subject in knowing things. But the striking similarities between both these philosophers may tempt one to see the project of Kant in *Critique of Pure Reason* as a subjective restatement of Platonic thought in general.

Early Wittgenstein and his Challenge to Philosophy

The early Wittgenstein questions the credibility of philosophical propositions as meaningful signs. In his epoch making book *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* he finds that the mistake philosophy committed was its forgetting of asking the question: how its propositions get meaning. He urges us to look only for the meanings of propositions and the entities in the ordinary world which correspond to them. And it is his conviction in *Tractatus* that meanings cannot be read off from the traditional philosophical theses and that we do not know what they are actually about. If we want to feel that it liberates us from the arduous task of philosophical thinking we are in the wrong for the reason that Wittgenstein himself in his book entertains metaphysical entities which resemble Platonic ideas and Kantian categories and notions. But his metaphysical entities, one may argue, are minimal and soft and do not come in the way of our understanding of them and without their being postulated, a reflection on the world is a difficult task. But one had better remind oneself here of the fact that what we need is not the liberation from philosophical thought at the cost of a grasp of the truth of the enigmatic nature of the world for the sake of a literal and transparent view of it. Let us see how Wittgenstein sees the world and language and also his approach to philosophy, which is that of calling philosophical propositions nonsensical and among the nonsense thus called he includes the propositions of his own book *Tractatus* also.

For Wittgenstein this world is not less real in comparison with a more real one. This position of his is an outright rejection of Plato's conception about the world. And also he never goes for the categories such as Quantity, Quality, Modality, and Relation as Kant does for the simple reason that they do not refer to anything in the world. In his book if at all he wants to posit the concepts of metaphysical entities, his aim is simply to find the thinkable limits of the world through them. And he says that the purpose of *Tractatus* is to clarify thought and after one uses it for this purpose one can throw it away safely!

In *Tractatus* what Wittgenstein seeks is a **concrete** description of the world. Nothing abstract is admitted into this description. We have seen that Plato and Kant developed their metaphysical concepts through the method of abstraction. **Wittgenstein** does not find this method suitable to a correct description of the world. He expresses this in the following manner:

"5.5563   In fact, all the propositions of our everyday language, just as they stand, are in perfect logical order.-That utterly simple thing, which we have to formulate here, is not an image of the truth, but the truth itself in its entirety.

(Our problems are not abstract, but perhaps the most concrete that there are)''[10]

The whole of endeavour of Wittgenstein in his early phase is to capture this logical order of ordinary language and the order of the world corresponding to it. This definite logical order of language Wittgenstein finds in propositions and for him propositions with their relations with one another constitute language. And, in his vision, what corresponds to this structure of language is a world, which he sees as states of affairs with their relations with one another. And the.thinkable limits of this world are objects and the subject, both no doubt, are metaphysical in nature and it is an important feature of them that one of them cannot exist without the other.

Objects and States of Affairs

It is stated in the *Tractatus* that objects make up the substance of the world. They are simple and do not change, but their configurations are what change. It is the nature of an object that it is always in some configuration of objects. There cannot be an object that is not in someway related to other objects at any point of time. Wittgenstein says:

"Just as we are quite unable to imagine spatial objects outside space or temporal objects outside time, so too there is *no* object that we can imagine excluded from the possibility of combining with others.

If I can imagine objects combined in states of affairs, I cannot imagine them excluded from *the possibility* of such combinations."[11]

At the outset of a reading of *Tractatus* we have to keep in mind that the statements of necessity which Wittgenstein makes in **it** do not belong to the world and they lack sense. No statement of necessity, Wittgenstein says, can belong to the world, which is that of the contingent matters. So the statements of *Tractatus* which *describe* the world ought to be nonsensical. Wittgenstein attempts to explain the order of the world and the logic of language and it is to define their being and sense. But the world as it is is independent of this explanation. Let us take for example one of the statements of *Tractatus:*

"2.012 In logic nothing is accidental: If a thing *can* occur in a state of affairs, the possibility of the state of affairs must be written into the thing itself."[12]

This is a statement about the order of the world as Wittgenstein sees it and it expresses the necessity of the world to be so. Does it mean anything? Does this refer to anything in our ordinary world? And if we follow Wittgenstein in letter and spirit we must reject this statement and other statements of *Tractatus* as nonsensical. Wittgenstein sees the dilemma involved in a description of the sense of the world:

"6.41 The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen: *in* it no value exists-and if it did exist, it would have no value. •

If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and what is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental.

What makes it non-accidental cannot lie *within* the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental.

It must be outside the world."[13]

Given the framework of *Tractatus,* it is a kind of paradox that the sense of the world lies outside the world. We may doubt the rationale of the *Tractatus* because of this paradox. But Wittgenstein is justified in indulging in this paradox for the reason that ever-changing world is with a being that being gives language its sense. But Wittgenstein, contrary to the approaches of Plato and Kant, does not want to accept this feature of the world as something that we can account for within our world and being in our language. So he himself rejects his attempt to formulate the sense of the world as nonsensical.

"6.54   My propositions serve as elucidation in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them-as steps-to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.)

He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright."[14]

Wittgenstein explains how meaning has to be understood and at the same time, considers this explanation nonsensical. But he believes that his explanation indicates the perfect logical order of everyday language. And this logical order cannot accommodate an attempt to explain itself for the reasons explained now. And it cannot also accept the ethical propositions as propositions with sense because

"propositions can express nothing that is higher". And let us see how he explains the order of the world and the sense of language, each one of these cannot be understood without the other.

For Wittgenstein, the world consists of actual and possible states of affairs. He identifies a state of affairs as a fact. He says:

"2 What is the case -a fact- is the existence of states of affairs.
2.01 A state of affairs is (a state of things) is a combination of objects (things)"[15]

Any world, which we may imagine, even in its radical difference from the world of our actual experience, has something in common with the actual one. And it is objects that constitute any world whatsoever. Wittgenstein thinks that it is objects that explain the solidity of the world and make the propositions of language meaningful. And they can do it because though their configurations change they do not. If everything is in change world cannot be said to have sense at all. The changing material properties, which are due to the configurations of objects, cannot explain the sense of the world but the ideality of permanent objects, which form the substance of the world, do it. We can ideally conceive an object, which is in a different configuration now, to be in a past one in which it was, to explain the sense of a proposition which depicts this past configuration. This is made possible because of the fact that the object in question has not changed. Wittgenstein says:

"2.0271   Objects are what is unalterable and subsistent; their configuration is what is changing and unstable.
2.0272 The configuration of objects produces states of affairs."[16]

In a state of affairs objects stand in a determinate relation with one another. And it is the states of affairs that account for the material properties of the world. Wittgenstein calls the determinate way in which objects are related to one another in a state of affairs the structure of a state of affairs. And for him the totality of

existing states of affairs also determines the states of affairs that do not existence. He says that once objects are given along with it all the actual and possible states of affairs are also given. It is not that there can be a state of affairs, which is not already there as either an actual one or a possible one. We cannot have a state of affairs as an unexpected guest in this scheme. Tractatus envisages a world that is already arranged in every respect to perfection. Let us see how Wittgenstein defines world thus.

"2.06 The existence and non-existence of states of affairs is reality." [17]

Suppose we have three states of affairs such as "this solid chair", "this blue flower", and "this dog which likes sweet". The being of these states of affairs determines, according to Wittgenstein, not only their existence but also their non-existence in different combinatory ways. For example, it is a possibility that none of them exists and the probability for this is 1, or any one of them may exist and the others not and the probability for it is 3, or any two of them exist and the other does not and the probability for this is 3, or all the three may exist and the probability for this is 1. The summation of all the possible existence and non-existence that prevail on the actuality and possibility of these sates of affairs put the number at 8. Wittgenstein says:

"4.27 For *n* states of affairs, there are

$$K_n = \sum_{v=0}^{n} \binom{n}{v}$$

 possibilities of existence and non-existence.

Of these states of affairs any combination can exist and the remainder not exist." [18]

Picturing States of Affairs

In *Tractatus* Wittgenstein says that language *pictures* reality, and it has the same order of the world. According to him, each proposition pictures a state of affairs. Before we go on to consider the nature of language's picturing reality, we will see how Wittgenstein understands the nature of a picture in general in its relation with what it pictures.

For him, a picture is a model of reality. The relation between a picture and what it pictures is *immediate.* This *immediacy* of the relation between a picture and what it pictures is of crucial importance to the tractarian description of the world. In the words of Wittgenstein:

"2.1511   *That* is how a picture is attached to reality; it reaches right out to it"[19]

In a picture an element of it corresponds to an object, which is a part of what it pictures. The relation between the elements of picture corresponds to that of the elements of what it pictures. The structure of a picture represents the possibility of its materialisation in the actual world. But irrespective of its taking place in the actual wold a picture possesses this possibility. In a true picture this possibility is materialised and that is why it is called true. The picture's possessing the structure of what it pictures irrespective of its materialisation in the actual world, as explained now, is intrinsic to it and Wittgenstein calls it by the name *pictorial form.* This form is logical for him, so he calls it also *logico-pictorial form* and it, under this name, connotes its richer implication that every picture is logical though not every one of them is meaningful or true. And he further says that the logico-pictorial form of a picture cannot be pictured but is shown in it. A picture *shows* its logico-pictorial form. Wittgenstein makes use of this important feature of the relation between a picture and what it pictures to get rid of many a difficulty, which one

may face in a philosophical reflection on reality. Wittgenstein talks about this feature in the following way:

"2.172 A picture cannot, however, depict its pictorial form: it displays it."[20]

A picture is called true when it is in agreement with reality. Here Wittgenstein seems to mean by reality the actual states of affairs only. A picture can represent anything possible, but that does not make it a true picture. The truth or falsity of a picture comes to the front when it is compared with reality. The point, which Wittgenstein drives home here, is that there is a divide between a picture and what it pictures. It shows that the truth of a picture is not a matter of a priori contemplation. We have to compare it with reality to know whether it is true. He says:

"2.223   In order to tell whether a picture is true or false we must compare it with reality.
2.224   It is impossible to tell from the picture alone whether it is true or false.
2.225   There are no pictures that are true a priori."[21]

Wittgenstein says that every picture represents a possible situation in logical space. He explains what logical space is in his discussion on objects in *Tractatus*. Logical space is the sphere of actual and possible occurrences of objects in different states of affairs. He is of the opinion that "every picture is a logical one at the same time". It is not that a picture is a picture only if we make it on a plane outside us. A thought is a picture whether we give it a physical form or not, and it depicts a possible situation in logical space. Of thoughts, which are pictures in virtue of their depicting possible states of affairs there are true ones and also false ones. The true thoughts agree with the actual states of affairs and the false ones do not. Against this background Wittgenstein makes the following remarks:

"3 A logical picture of facts is a thought.

3.001   'A state of affairs is thinkable': what this means is that we can picture it to ourselves.

3.01   The totality of true thoughts is *a* picture of the world."[22] (Italic added)

Language as a Picture of Reality

Language expresses thoughts through its propositions. A proposition gives sensible cloth to a thought, which is a logical picture of facts. The difference between a thought and a proposition that expresses it is that the latter can be perceived by the senses. A proposition can be a written or an oral statement. Wittgenstein says:

"3.1   In a proposition a thought finds an expression that can be perceived by the senses"[23]

A proposition represents a possible situation in logical space. This possible situation is its sense. And the existence and non-existence of states of affairs form logical space. Language, Wittgenstein says, can only correspond to logical space and not be as same as that. It points to the fact that a proposition expresses a sense and it cannot contain it. The sense of a proposition is not in itself **but** in logical space. A proposition is a projection of its sense and is not its sense itself.

In *Tractatus,* a proposition isa combination of names, which are defined as simple signs. These simple signs correspond to objects in reality. And object is the meaning of a name. It is the combination of names that change, not the names themselves; and they always mean the same objects. Now it is clear that a proposition corresponds to a state of affairs and that they both change in different ways. But a proposition has a sense and a state of affairs being. In the scenario where change is the law what preserves the sense of a proposition is the names out of which it comes into being and what guarantees the being of a state of affairs its being is the objects. About the possibility of a proposition's having sense, Wittgenstein writes:

"3.23   The requirement that simple signs be possible is the requirement that sense be determinate"[24]

Propositions correspond to states of affairs in every respect. If there are n states of affairs, as we have seen, there are 2^n combinations about their existence and non-existence. This is a feature of propositions also. An example will explain this. Suppose we have three propositions such as "This chair is solid", "This flower is blue", and "This dog likes sweet". There is a possibility for all of them to be true, or that of any one of them or any two of them or all of them. If we add all the possible ways in which they can be true or false in their combinations we will see that it comes to 8 ways. In the words of Wittgenstein:

"4.42   For n elementary propositions there are

$$\sum_{v=0}^{K_n} \binom{K_n}{k} = L_n$$

ways in which a proposition can agree and disagree with their truth possibilities."[25]

Abstraction and General Form of Proposition

The theory of language that *Traclatus* offers is a referential one. The whole edifice of this book is based on the assumption that language refers to reality. Wittgenstein in this book conceives reality as consisting of existence and non-existence of states of affairs. And in this picture of the world it is also shown that each state of affairs is independent of the other. From one state of affairs, Wittgenstein says, it is impossible to infer the existence or non-existence of the other. As he believes in the change of states of affairs, which are independent of one another, and attributes unalterability only to objects, he does not see a vista for what is common to several material properties that may look alike for a prejudiced onlooker. And this approach takes him to reject the possibility for the existence of

abstract qualities. It follows from this view that the propositions that talk about abstract qualities do not refer to anything in reality.

The relations that exist between propositions are understood in *Tractatus* as that of truth-functions. Wittgenstein says that a proposition is a truth-function of itself, that is, it is either true or false, and related to other propositions as a truth-functional component. By limiting the relations between propositions into that of truth-functional ones Wittgenstein closes the door of his world to abstract qualities of Platonic or Kantian genus.

But, strangely, Wittgenstein finds here that there is a form that is common to all propositions. And he calls this the general form of a proposition. Nevertheless, he gives this form only the status of a variable. He points out that this form cannot be articulated in a proposition but is *shown* in each proposition. As it is a variable it is obvious that it does not refer to anything in reality. But Wittgenstein considers it an indispensable feature of a proposition. He says:

"The existence of general propositional form is proved by the fact that there cannot be a proposition whose form could not have been foreseen (i.e. constructed). The general form of a proposition is: This is how things stand."[26]

A proposition represents a possible situation in logical space. An elementary proposition, says Wittgenstein, represents an elementary fact or a state of affairs. By relating elementary propositions by means of truth-operations such as 'either...or', 'if...then', 'and', 'negation' etc. we construct non-elementary propositions. Propositions other than elementary ones can be analyzed into elementary ones and they in turn correspond to possible states of affairs. One may wonder what it might be a truth-operation refers to. Wittgenstein says that truth-operations do not refer to anything and the relations they represent in language are pseudo ones.

"5.42   It is self-evident that v, ID, etc. are not relations in the sense in which right and left etc. are relations.

The **interdefinability** of Frege's and Russell's '**primitive** signs' of logic is enough to show that they are not primitive signs, still less signs for relations."[27]

The nature of a primitive sign is that it defines itself and cannot admit itself to be defined in terms other signs. But we know that each truth-operation we have can be defined in terms of the others. Wittgenstein includes logical product and logical sum among the truth-operations. He distinguishes generality sign from logical product and logical sum and says that the former cannot be understood in terms of truth-operations of the latter sort and that it is a necessary accompaniment of the representation of reality. A truth-operation does not characterize the sense of a proposition and there are cases in which their disappearance does not affect the sense of the proposition in question. He explains it with the help of '**negation**'.

"The proposition '∼∼p' is not about negation, as if negations were an object: on the other hand, the possibility of negation is already written into affirmation.

And if there were an object called '∼', it would follow that '∼∼p' said something different from what 'p' said, just because the one proposition would then be about ∼ and other would not."[28]

Wittgenstein admits **only** one logical constant into the tools of language which it cannot do without. This logical constant is the general form of a truth-function. Since each proposition is a truth-function and related to other propositions as a truth-functional **component ,** it is the general form of a proposition as well. In his own words:

"6 The general form of a truth-function is $|\,\overline{P},\overline{\xi},N(\xi)\,|$.
   This is the general form of a proposition.

6.001 What this says is that every proposition is a result of successive applications to elementary **propositions** of the operation $N\,(\bar{\xi})$."[29]

(In the above remark: '$\bar{P}$ stands for **all** atomic propositions, $\bar{\bar{\xi}}$ stands for any set of propositions, and $N\,(\bar{\xi})$ stands for the negation of all the propositions making up $\bar{\xi}$'. See Russell's introduction to *Tractatus.*)

Russell states in the introduction to the *Tractatus* that it is Wittgenstein's application or mimicking of the Sheffer Stroke that makes him see the general form of a truth-function this way. The Sheffer Stroke means '**not...or** not...' and all logical relations can be translated to it by a successive application of it. Though in practical discourse the Sheffer Stroke does not help us in any manner, Wittgenstein makes use of the rationale behind this to capture the general form of a truth-function and a proposition. It may not be out of the context to quote Cordell's remark about the Sheffer Stroke when it is viewed in the context of ordinary discourse:

"Suppose a young man wished to tell his girl friend, "If you wouldn't go to Europe with me, I will go with Mary." If he were an enterprising logic student and wanted to express this using just the stroke, the simplest thing he could say would be "Either not either you will not go to Europe with me or you will not go to Europe with me or not either I will not go with Mary or I will not go with Mary"- hardly a contribution to mutual understanding."[30]

A proposition can generate from it propositions of number, property etc. It is due to their nature of containing in themselves references to number and properties of different kind. States of affairs and the propositions that depict them cannot escape the mathematical multiplicity they necessarily possess. Wittgenstein states this in *Tractatus.* But he· says that this shall not take us to postulate an abstract world for numbers. When he shows what is the general form of a transition from a proposition to another related to it he makes it clear that what emerges as an outcome **in** this process always depends on the source. He refuses to accept a

different world to make meaningful the propositions obtained through transition. He stands for concrete reference of the propositions in *Tractatus.*

We can conclude this section with a glance at what Wittgenstein thinks about the sign of identity in *Tractatus.* He says that a thing cannot be identical with another thing. And his view about states of affairs is that they are different from one another. To say a thing is equal to itself, Wittgenstein says, is to say nothing. He shows how we can rewrite the statements of formal logic which express the relation of identity in such a way that the sign for it will not find a place in it thereafter. Let us take a familiar example and see how it works in an ordinary context. We have the statement in language that "Morning star is evening star". This statement expresses a relation of identity between the two terms because both of them refer to the planet Venus. But we can rewrite this sentence as "The planet Venus appears in the morning and it also appears in the evening" or in some similar way.

Tractatus and **Philosophy**

In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein rejects philosophy as a meaningful discourse on the basis of the analysis of language which he thinks lays bare the mechanism of its function. The analysis convinces him that only the statements that refer to existence and non-existence of states of affairs are meaningful signs. Though he accepts that all signs of language are logical because of the very fact that they are possible as linguistic signs he does not accord **all** of them **meaningfullness.** For him the propositions of logic and mathematics are tautologies and cannot refer to anything in the world. Tautologies are true independent of what is the case in the world. In the case of contradictions the case is reverse where they are false regardless of what is happening in the world. When talking about logic he says that its propositions represent the scaffolding of the world and are a priori and for this reason, they cannot mean anything. But they are not nonsensical. And the propositions of mathematics, he says, take after those of logic **and** their truth or falsity can be

decided by looking at the structure of propositions themselves. They stand in relation with the world, but being a priori they do not mean anything in it.

Wittgenstein says that we can very **well** give an a priori description of language. But the actual functioning of it is a question of actuality. This is the reason why he doe not hesitate to call the propositions of his own book nonsensical as it offers an a priori description of the functioning of language which is not affected by the contingencies of matters of fact. As his book does not claim for itself a cover of immunity that **will** protect itself from the blistering attack he makes on philosophy in general, the only purpose of the book is to clarify our thoughts so that we will remind ourselves of the nonsense of philosophy and see the world aright. He categorically states that philosophical propositions are not only without meaning but also nonsensical.

Philosophy, Wittgenstein says, confuses an expression of language for another one. He explains this with the help of the example of the statement: 'Green is green'. In it the first word is a proper name and the last an adjective. His complaint about philosophy is that *it* does not realise the order of words. A philosopher finds comfort in the thought that in the above statement the last word is also a proper name and wants to consider it independent of the first word. For Wittgenstein, the above statement depicts a state of affairs in a logical space and its function does not necessitate any metaphysical ado about it. He says about philosophy:

"4.003   Most of the propositions and questions to be found in philosophical works are not false but nonsensical. Consequently we cannot give any answer to questions of this kind, but can only establish that they are nonsensical. Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language."

Wittgenstein limits the function of philosophy into that of a 'critique of language'. It has to show only the way that language functions and where the limits of a meaningful discourse lie. And it can check thus the illusion that may arise out of the misunderstanding of the function of language. He says that limits of one's language are limits of one's world and one cannot transcend them.

In his later period Wittgenstein rejects this picture of the world of his in favour of what he believes to be a more dynamic and concrete one. And there he attacks philosophy more severely and he does not spare from this attack even his own philosophical leanings in his early period.

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CHAPTER II

Indefinite Sense and Rejection of **Ideality**
Later Wittgenstein

Like Plato, the early Wittgenstein was obsessed with the concept of ideality. What Plato wished was the transcendence of the **soul** to the knowledge of the eternal world of ideas. Plato demanded of the soul this transcendence, if it needs knowledge. For Plato the world of ideas represented the objectivity of the entire reality. He **also** wanted this objectivity to be the basis of the social order and called the society so based the just society. We have seen in the previous chapter that in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* this objectivity was translated into categories of the understanding and the related concepts with a subjective dimension. Kant also, **like** Plato, reached these concepts through the method of abstraction. The early Wittgenstein, different from Plato and Kant, did not rely on abstraction to formulate his ideality. He adopted what he then believed to be a concrete method to find the ultimate elements of reality and this was the method of analysis. He thought then that these elements explained the ideality of reality and their counterparts in language that of meanings of words. The picture of the world he had through this conception of ideality led him to reject transcendental philosophy represented by Plato and Kant among others. He was under the impression that his method of analysis provided one with the ultimate elements of reality. In his later work *Philosophical Investigations* (hereafter PI) he questions not only the transcendentalism of philosophy but also its obsession with the ideal understanding of phenomena. He now realises that his earlier method was no different from that of the other traditional philosophers at the fundamental level.

Wittgenstein' s Rejection of Ostensive Definition

In PI Wittgenstein emphasises that when we use language we are not concerned with its correspondence to reality. The right or wrong use of a word, he

says, is not a matter of its correspondence to reality but a matter of following the **rule** of *it*. The rules of language are to be looked upon not as consisting of a relation of correspondence it has with the world but as something inherent in it. And the following of the rules of language do not suggest anything ideal or transcendental about it and it is an ordinary feature of the uses of words.

Wittgenstein understands the use of language as an act now. An act does not refer to anything outside itself. If A gives B a gift it is an act complete in itself. What validates this act is its taking place, not an ideal counterpart of it elsewhere. He gives the following example to show the nature of language as an act:

"Now think of the following use of language: I send someone shopping. I give him a slip marked **"five** red apples". He takes the **slip** to the shopkeeper, who opens the drawer marked "apples"; then he looks up the word "red" in a table and finds a colour sample opposite it; then he says the series of cardinal numbers - I assume that he knows them by heart - up to the word "five " and for each number he takes an apple of the same colour as the sample out of the drawer. —It is in this and similar ways one operates with words."[1]

The question may arise here: Doesn't the word **'red'** correspond to the colour sample in the table? Wittgenstein says that the table is only a representation of the uses of colour words. And it does not make sense, he believes, to ask such a question. His opinion is that when one uses for example the word **'red'** one uses it *blindly*. In the context of the above example he writes:

" "But how does he know where and how he is to look up the word **'red'** and what he is to do with the word 'five'?"- **Well,** I assume that he *acts* as I have described. Explanations come to an end somewhere. - But what is the meaning of the word "five"? - No such thing was in question here, **only** how the word "five"is used."[2]

This standpoint of Wittgenstein is pitted against his own name theory in the *Tractatus* and also the transcendental and idealist conception of the meaning and

existence in general. Wittgenstein understands now that the sense of language and the being of the world as something related to the uses of words in accordance with the rules in the actual situations of life. By rejecting the possibility for a formulation of the rules of language independent of the concrete uses of words he wants to show that the ordinary language as it is 'performs its offices' without being in need of a transcendental shore up.

The name theory of meaning is based on the belief that language refers to a world of objects independent of its use. This belief takes the form of ostensive definition when it is stated that what a name means is what can be pointed to when that name is used. Wittgenstein writes about the name theory:

"If you describe the learning of language in this way you are, I believe, thinking primarily of nouns like "table", "chair", "bread", and of people's names, and only secondarily of the names of certain actions and properties; and of the remaining kinds of word as something that will take care of itself."[3]

Wittgenstein rejects the name theory of meaning as it is monotonous and static which does not do justice to the varied uses of words in multifarious contexts of our forms of life. He also finds that the ordinary uses of words do not point to the fact that they require anything other than their own rules to make them usable. So *it* was a mistake on his part that he in his early period formulated objects to correspond to names and believed that there was a division between language and the world that way. Here he raises the question: Inspite of the fact that language does not suggest a world of references detached from the uses of its words what is it that tempts us to postulate it? His answer to this is that the transparency of meanings of words given in a primitive use of language beguiles us to do so. Wittgenstein gives the following example of a primitive use of language:

'The language is meant to serve for communication between a builder A and an assistant B. A is building with building-stones: there are blocks, pillars, slabs and beams. B has to pass the stones, and that in the order in which A needs them. For this purpose they use a language consisting of the words "block", "pillar", "slab",

"beam". A calls them out; --B brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at **such-** and -such a call. --Conceive this as a complete primitive language."[4]

Language conceived now as an act is a form of life for Wittgenstein. A child, when it learns a language, is initiated into a form of life shared by a community. A child may be taught its language through an ostensive teaching, though its learning it is more than this teaching can include. But this teaching makes sense only in the overall context of language and as such is *a part* of the training the child undergoes to adjust itself into a form of life. It is natural for a child to have a way of acting upon the world and this way is very much simultaneous with the situations it is in. A child learns a language as it learns to walk and in learning it no mental images of words which the child may have help it in determining the success of it. In the above example B's understanding of **A's** calls consists in acting in certain ways at them and it is immaterial whether some mental images of the building-stones in question come before his mind at those calls. Similarly in the case of the child that learns language what matters is its success of actions in, and reactions to, situations, not what come before its mind when it uses words. Suppose someone says that whenever he uses a word a picture of the object in question comes before his mind. Wittgenstein's response to it runs as follows:

"But if the ostensive teaching has this effect, -am I to say it effects an understanding of the word? Don't you understand the call "Slab!" if you act upon it in such-and-such a way? —Doubtless the ostensive teaching helped to bring this about; but only together with a particular training. With different training the same ostensive teaching of these words would have effected a quite different understanding.

"I set the brake up by connecting up rod and lever." - Yes, given the whole of the rest of the mechanism. Only in conjunction with that is it a brake-lever, and separated from its support it is not even a lever; it may be anything, or **nothing**."[5]

The ostensive definition or teaching of meanings makes sense only in the overall context of the uses of words in a language. It presupposes the uses of words

as given in different contexts as a sign-post does an already existing way and its use to indicate that way. Suppose I see a red object and I say to someone: "That is the colour red". Wittgenstein will say that my reaction in this context is determined by the way language is used by a community and my learning it. But doesn't the word 'red' refer to the colour red? The answer to this within the framework of the PI is the question: Where will we locate the divide between the colour and the word? When I touch a tree and say that I touch a tree now the proof of the statement is the fact that 'I touch a tree **now'.** And what is in inverted comas here is a use of words.

Wittgenstein equates language with a form of life and the nature of both is that they evolve historically. And this contextual and a priori historicity that Wittgenstein now relies on finds its beautiful expression in the following remark of his:

"Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses."[6]

And he adds to this the following remark that equates language with form of life:

"It is easy to imagine a language consisting only of orders and reports in battle. -Or a language consisting only of questions and expressions for answering yes and no. And innumerable **others.----And** to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life."[7]

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In the determination of the sense of language what helps us is the contexts of life in which it is used. We cannot point to a precisely set contours of this context for this but the context as such with its vague boundaries. No *one* action of mine in a context can determine the meaning of my being in a context but the whole of my

living it through my internal and external actions and reactions and understanding it in its entirety as a part of an evolved and given form of life. This shows how superfluous the ostensive definition of meaning is in determining the sense of language. What it actually doing is pointing to what is already there as a part of an activity called living, which exists there independent of an ostensive gesture on our part.

And it is against the background of seeing language as a form of life Wittgenstein questions the rationale of the belief that pointing to an object sets the boundary of the relation between the use of a word and an object. He says it is not pointing to the object in question that matters in the use of a word but its use as such, as an act in a context. He illustrates this point with an example. He says that when someone points to the colour of an object he or she does something different from pointing to the shape of it. And it gives us the feeling that the difference in these acts is given through the pointing, which can also explain the meanings of words. And it is here where our temptation to see language as situated independent of the world of objects finds its justification. But Wittgenstein points out that the shape and the colour of the object in question and also the distinction between them are not the creation of our will but the unavoidable ingredients of the contexts of the uses of words that mean them. What is not created by our will forms the contexts of our life. Wittgenstein writes:

"You attend to the shape, sometimes by tracing it, sometimes by screwing up your eyes so as not to see the colour clearly, and in many other ways. I want to say: This is the sort of thing that happens *while* one 'directs one's attention to this or that'. But it isn't these things by themselves that make us say someone is attending to the shape, the colour, and so on. Just as a move in chess doesn't consist simply in moving a piece in such-and such way on the board--nor yet in one's thoughts and feelings as one makes the move: but in the circumstances that we call "playing a game of chess", "solving a chess problem", and so on."[8]

In solving a chess problem a player engages himself not with the question whether a piece in it refers to anything outside the game but the position of it in the context of the game. Similarly in a language-game what matters is not the question of a word's referring to anything but the appropriate way in which it **falls** in place. The following sentences that Wittgenstein gives as examples of how the word **'blue'** is used in different contexts show that a reference of the word is not the point of its meaning but its use in the given contexts:

"Is this blue the same as the blue over there? Do you see any difference? -"

"You are mixing paint and you say "It's hard to get the blue of this sky"

"It is turning fine, you can already see the sky again."

"Look what different effects these two blues have."

"This blue signal-light means...."

"What's this **blue** called? - Is it 'indigo'?"

In the occurrences of the word 'blue' in the above sentences what we see is not the word's act of referring to a colour but a speaker's reactions in different contexts like a player's with a piece when he or she is in a game of chess. A pristine correspondence between the word 'blue' and the colour blue is missing in these utterances. The question whether the word refers to the colour **in my** eye or the one out there gives way to the one how the word is used as an action or a reaction in a situation. A use of a word is like 'to be angry', 'to be happy', 'to **walk',** 'to **look',** 'to be in pain' etc. These acts are complete in themselves, so are the uses of words.

Language as a Game and Its Implications

Wittgenstein now says that language can be better understood by a comparison of it with a game. Different uses of language are like different games. Aren't there tragic as **well** as happy games in life? Also there are innumerable otl ers. In the following passage Wittgenstein shows what his analogy of games means:

"Here the term "language-game" is meant to bring into **prominence the** fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life.

Review the multiplicity of language-games in the following examples, and in others:

Giving orders, and obeying **them-**

Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements-

Constructing an object from a description (a drawing)-

Reporting an event-

Speculating about an event-

Forming and testing a hypothesis-

Presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams-

Making up a story; and reading it-

Play-acting-

Singing catches-

Guessing riddles-

Making a joke; telling it-

Solving a problem in practical arithmetic-

Translating from one language into another-

Asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying.

-It is interesting to compare the multiplicity of the tools in language and of the ways they are used, the multiplicity of kinds of word and sentence, with what logicians have said about the structure of language. (Including the author of the *Tractatus Logico-Philos ophicus.*)"[9]

The author of *Tractatus* was in search of the essences of the world and language. He found them in objects and names. He thought that the essences he arrived at there were the concrete and hard facts about reality as opposed to the abstract and transcendental ones postulated by Plato and Kant. Now he realises that **what** he thought concrete essences and what Plato and Kant had thought transcendental ones are the two sides of the same coin and both the views ignore the

multiplicity and context dependent richness of the uses of words that form our world. Now he believes that he is in the know of what had misled him in *Tractatus*.

It is a feature of language that it is non-arbitrary. According to him, we are tempted to attribute this non-arbitrariness to the conception that language refers to a world which lies outside it. And he says that he too was under the spell of this temptation in *Tractatus*. When we discuss his notion of rules as explained by him in PI we **will** see how he explains the non-arbitrariness of the use of language now. In *Tractatus* he thought that the determinacy of sense and its **clarity** could be understood by unearthing the ultimate conceptual framework that language and the world hid from our view. There the ultimate elements of the world were objects and those of language names and they gave the rough world and the vague language their crystal clear base. And objects corresponded to names *eternally* without being marred by the contingent destruction and creation of the ordinary world through change. It was also thought in that context that existence and non-existence could not be attributed to objects and that they could only be named. The reason for this conception was that what made existence and no-existence of states of affairs possible were not subject to the conditions of existence and non-existence. And now Wittgenstein understands that this conception was a result of his attempt to represent the means of representation as something independent of the representation. What lies in language as a means of representation cannot have an actual and independent representation by means of language. He says that any attempt to separate the means of representation from language to represent it runs the risk of being an idle talk and it was what he had indulged in *Tractatus*.

He makes this point clear with the help of the example of the standard metre scale kept in Paris. The standard metre scale is the means by which we represent the length in metre, but of that we cannot say whether it is of one metre length or not. That is, it cannot be represented in metre. He writes:

"One would, however, like to say: existence cannot be attributed to an element, for if it did not *exist,* one could not even name it and so one could say nothing at all of it. - But let us consider an analogous case. There is *one* thing of which one can say neither that it is one metre long, nor that it is not one metre long, and that is the standard metre in Paris. — But this is, of course, not to ascribe any extraordinary property to it, but only to mark its peculiar role in the language-game of measuring with a metre-rule. - Let us imagine samples of colour being preserved in Paris like the standard metre. We define: "sepia" means the colour of the standard sepia which is there kept hermetically sealed. Then it will make no sense to say of this sample either that it is of this colour or that it is not."[10]

To ascribe an extraordinary property to what we *believe to be* the ultimate elements is like ascribing the same to the standard metre in Paris. The arbitrariness involved in the measurement of length in metre has been done away with by our agreement to use a standard for it. Is this agreement something extraordinary? Not at all: It is as ordinary as anything called standard in our daily life. In the case of the uses of words we do not come across 'set paradigms' like the standard metre, but they are immanent in language. In the absence of the set paradigms about the uses of words we wrongly feel that there is something extraordinary about the meanings of words and that it is our task to explain this. Wittgenstein sometimes calls this a superstition about meanings or being in general. He rejects this superstition calling it a 'going after chimeras'.

Another point which Wittgenstein considers a reason for our temptation for the search of ultimate elements is our belief in the determinate sense of the word independent of the spatio-temporal contingencies of its uses. He explains this with the help of the sentence: "Excalibur has a sharp blade". If the sword Excalibur is destroyed it is not the case that the word "Excalibur" ceases to have meaning. We, according to Wittgenstein, as it were are tempted to think here that it is something extraordinary and that the meaning of the word "Excalibur" in that case has to be explained in terms of the ultimate elements that we believe survive the destruction

of the material object called Excalibur. On this line we attribute to the world its essences as its eternal being. It was this picture, he believes, which guided even him to postulate his own version of metaphysics in *Tractatus.* And its *transcendental* counterparts we can see in Plato's *Republic* in the form of *ideas* and in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in the form of *categories of the understanding and pure forms of sensibility.* Wittgenstein now realises that he himself in *Tractatus* and transcendental philosophers in general are in the grip of an unnecessary anxiety about the permanence of meanings and the being of the world. And this anxiety, he shows in PI, is due to a misconception about the ways that ordinary language functions. Even in the face of the absence or destruction of objects words make sense as in the case of the word "Excalibur" that makes sense even when *it* is destroyed. And *it is an ordinary feature of the uses of words.* He writes:

"In §15 we introduced proper names into language (8). Now suppose that the tool with the name "N" is broken. Not knowing this, A gives B the sign "N". Has this sign meaning now or not? - What is B to do when he is given it? - We have not settled anything about this. One might ask: What *will* he do? Well, perhaps he will stand there at a loss or shew A the pieces. Here one *might* say: "N" has become meaningless; and this expression would mean that the sign "N".no longer had a use in our language-game (unless we gave it a new one). "N" might also become meaningless because, for whatever reason, the tool was given another name and the sign "N" no longer used in the language-game. - But we could also imagine a convention whereby B has to shake his head in reply if A gives him the sign belonging to a tool that *is* broken. - In this way the command "N" might be said to be given a place in the language-game even when the tool no longer exists, and the sign "N" to have meaning even when its bearer ceases to exist."[11]

Wittgenstein's rejection of the ultimate elements of reality takes him to question the method of analysis that leads to them. He himself, we know, practiced this method in his early period. The tenet of this method is that everything complex can be analysed into the component parts of it and at the end it will present us with

the ultimate elements of it which survive the destruction of the complex. Wittgenstein says that this method draws upon certain facts visible to us in the ordinary world in relation with the objects in it. But an ordinary fact about an object in the world does not warrant the extraordinary **postulation** of " the ultimate elements" of it or a method for this. He writes:

""A *name* signifies only what is an *element* of reality. What cannot be destroyed; what remains the same in all changes." - But what is that? - Why, it swam before our minds as we said the sentence! This was the very **expression** of a quite particular image: of a particular picture which we want to use. For certainly experience does not shew us these elements. We see *component parts* of something composite (of a chair, for instance). We say that the back is part of the chair, but is in turn itself composed of several bits of wood; while a leg is a simple component part. We also see a whole which changes (is destroyed) while its component parts remain unchanged. These are the materials from which we construct that picture of reality."[12]

In this context Wittgenstein raises an interesting question about the results of analysis in an ordinary case. He asks whether the two forms of what is believed to be the same sentence are the same act or different ones. He takes the example of the order: "Bring me the broom". And one may say that this order is *as same as* saying: "Bring me the broomstick and the brush fitted on to it". But Wittgenstein objects to this way of seeing this saying that these are two different uses of words and that there is nothing that underlies them to make them the same. If at all they express the same sense it is then by virtue of their *achieving the same* through their uses. And their differences in their uses are as important as their similarities. He asks us to imagine a table in which the column (a) represents the sentences analysed and the other (b) the constituent parts of them reached through analysis. Then he raises the question whether we can say an order in one can mean the same in the other:

""**But** all the same you **will** not deny that a particular order in (a) means the same as one in (b); and what would you **call** the second one, if not an analysed form of the first?" - Certainly I too should say that an order in (a) had the same meaning as one in (b); or, as I expressed it earlier: they achieve the same. And this means that if I were shown an order in (a) and asked: "Which order in (b) means the same as this?" or again "Which order in (b) does this contradict?" I should give such-and - such an answer. But that is not to say that we have come to a *general* agreement about the use of the expression "to have the same meaning" "to achieve the same". For it can be asked in what cases we say: "These are merely two forms of the same game.""[13]

He says that what is analysed and its constituent parts reached through this are two different uses of words. This position of Wittgenstein is allied to his opposition to his earlier notion that there is a general form of a proposition shared by all propositions. In *Tractatus* it was believed that though the propositions were different from one other they shared a general form. In PI Wittgenstein not only questions the very concept of the proposition as understood in the *Tractatus* but also the notion of the general form of it nurtured in that book. He says what a use of language holds with its immediate relatives as well as its distant unknown cousins is a relation of similarities and differences. This is what makes them different activities in what he calls our form of life. He writes:

"-- Instead of producing something common to **all** that we **call** language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for **all**, - but that they are *related* to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all "language"."[14]

Wittgenstein calls the different uses of language "language-games". He introduces the analogy of game to drive home the point that uses of words are acts with their differences and similarities and their being called by the name **'language'**

can be understood on the line of games being called by the name 'game' inspite of their differences. If one thinks that the word 'game' as the common name for different games captures the essence of a game in general he asks us to look at different games and find whether there is anything called essence revealed through them. He says that what make different games "games" are the similarities they have between them in their differences. We call, he says, Board-games, Card games, Ball-games, Olympic-games and so on "games" and some of them, he adds, have striking similarities with some others and in the case of some they look absolutely different from many others. He makes it clear that one should not search for a fundamental concept to explain the being of the games. Rather one should understand, he explains, the nature of games in general in the following manner:

"And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail."[15]

Wittgenstein characterises the similarities between games as "family resemblances". The resemblances between different members of a family such as 'build', 'feature', 'colour of eyes', 'gait', 'temperament', etc., cannot admit of themselves a definition by means of *a* category, which is common to them. And it is the nature of a family that even its members who do not look strikingly alike share some subtle features among themselves. And games are no different from the members of a family in this respect; they also resemble one another in numerous ways in their differences.

Wittgenstein understands the relations between uses of language as family resemblances as in the case of games. He takes the example of the concept number to show that the word 'number' does not denote any common feature of different numbers. We have numbers like -1, +1, 2, 3, -9, and different others. What defines them as numbers is not any category that exists over and above the particular instances that they are. In the same way what make different uses of words belong to *language* are the criss-crossing and overlapping of their similarities of different

sorts. If we look at the individual words such as **'Man'**, 'Cat', 'Dog', Leaf, 'Skylark', etc. we see their differences but we know at the same time that they are all called words.

Wittgenstein's position as to understanding the concept 'game' is as follows:

"How should we explain to someone what a game is? I imagine that we describe *games* to him, and we might add: "This *and similar things* are called 'games'". And do we know any more about it ourselves? Is it only other people whom we cannot *tell* exactly what a game is? - But this is not ignorance."[16]

The concept of game cannot be explained in a definite way. But at the same time we **all** know for sure what a game is. This is the nature of a language-game **also.** We all know what a use of language is, but **all** the same we cannot give a definite explanation of *it.* Wittgenstein explains meaning **also** in the same way. He says that a clear description of what is it 'to mean' cannot be given, though it is a fact that our uses of words are not without meanings. We are not ignorant of what we mean, but this does not mean that we have a definite conception of meaning. He writes about our knowledge of game:

"What does it mean to know what a game is? What does it mean, to know it and not be able to say it? Is this knowledge somehow equivalent to an **unformulated** definition? So that if it were formulated I should be able to recognize it as the expression of my knowledge? Isn't my knowledge, my concept of a game, completely expressed in the explanations that I could give? That is, in my describing examples of various kinds of game; shewing how **all** sorts of other games can be constructed on the analogy of these; saying that I should scarcely include this or this among games; and so on."[17]

It is in the context of Wittgenstein's use of the analogy of game to explain the uses of language we have to make sense of his behaviourism about meaning. He thinks that the behaviour of mankind as users of language is just like that of players of a game. A player in a game is as if guided *blindly* in his actions and reactions in

it. He says in PI that **'the** common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown **language'.** The behaviour of a player is not the totality of his sense experiences in a game, nor are his abstract thoughts independent of the context of *some* game, but the way he acts and reacts in it as if compelled by the rules of the game he is in.

Non-arbitrariness as Rule-Following

Language-game is not an arbitrary but a rule governed activity. Wittgenstein is of the view in the PI that though the use of a language is governed by the rules it does not mean that it conveys a definite sense through that use. The efficacy of a language-game is not that it conveys a determinate and definite sense but that it accomplishes the task for which it is meant. And in that process what make it do its work properly are its rules. And it is the rules that **help** us distinguish the normal uses of a word from its abnormal ones.

A **rule** says to us how a word is used in a language. It determines its place in a language-game or different language-games. But Wittgenstein does not allow us to have a conception of a rule of the uses of a word independent of its uses. It is the uses of a word that give the rule of it its rationale, but without its rule, which is the way it has to be in a language-game, it cannot have its usefulness. The uses of words and its rules are interrelated. Without the uses of the word 'red' it cannot have a rule of its uses. If there is not a rule about it, then it cannot have its place in a language-game. Wittgenstein says that when one obeys the rule one obeys it *blindly*. That is, one does not bother here whether rules determine the uses of words or it is vice versa. Suppose I say: "That red object is shining". I do it blindly. What matters in this utterance is not my being conscious of the rules of the uses of words used here but its function in the context. But aren't there cases where there will arise the problem of an unexpected use of a word due to the compelling reason of the situation at hand? But Wittgenstein rules out this possibility as something which takes care of itself and he limits the role of a rule in the uses of a word, which may

include normal and abnormal ones, into that of something **dependent** on their contexts. To quote him:

"I say "There is a chair". What if I go up to it, meaning to fetch it, and it suddenly disappears from sight? — "So it wasn't a chair, but some kind of illusion". — But in a few moments we see it again and are **able** to touch it and so on. — "So the chair was there after all and its disappearance was some kind of illusion". **---But** suppose that after a time it disappears again — or seems to disappear. What are we to say now? Have you rules ready for such cases — rules saying whether one may use the word "chair" to include this kind of thing? But do we miss them when we use the word "chair"; and are we to say that we do not really attach any meaning to this word, because we are not equipped with for rules for every possible application of it?"[18]

Wittgenstein does not attribute to the rules of the uses of words an a priori logical status. The rules of language are attended by the same contingencies as the uses of language. How do I know that my form of life, which is my world, will be the same tomorrow? How do I know that the concepts as rules **will** remain the same regardless of whatever may happen to the content of the world? The only a priori conviction we can have of the world is that whatever may be its nature it will have certain order. And when the world understood as language used in the contexts of the situations of life, this conviction, which is prior to **all** that is possible **will** be: '**Whatever** may be the ways of its uses, it has rules for its uses'. But it is a fact about the **rule** that one has to obey it and one obeys it. It is like saying: Whether one likes *it* or not one has to have a world and one always has one as **long** as one has one. And a player in a game cannot deny his being in it. Wittgenstein writes:

"Doesn't the analogy between language and games throw light here? We can easily imagine people amusing themselves in a field by playing with a ball so as to start various existing games, but playing many without finishing them and in between throwing the ball aimlessly into the air, chasing one another with the ball and

bombarding one another for a joke and so on. And now someone says: The whole time they are playing a ball-game and following definite rules at ever)' throw.

And is there not also the case where we play and — make up the rules as we go along? And there is even one where we alter them — as we go along."[19]

For Wittgenstein knowing a **rule** of the uses of a word is like knowing how to go by a sign-post. We know how to go by the sign-post through the ways of its use. And it is a matter of practice how to follow a sign-post for a purpose and the same is applicable to the rules of language also. No a priori knowledge helps us in learning a language but living a form of **life** gives us the uses of words.

We can imagine a table *to* be a formulation of the rules of language. This table may take the form of two columns: One of them will have words in it and the other the objects which they mean. Wittgenstein considers such a formulation of the rules primitive. But he does not fail to see the practical possibility of such a formulation. His objection to it is that it more often than not may beguile us to think that objects in the world correspond to the words in language and that as the former are subject to change its being must be something that is independent of change and the sense of language in such a case must be because of this being. And he knows very **well** that a transcendental picture of the world akin to that of Plato and Kant and that of the picture of it he had earlier has so much to do with such an ideal notion or similar ones of reality. Wittgenstein understands now that the ideality that took him to postulate the realm of ultimate elements is no way fundamentally different from the transcendental ideality of Plato and Kant which took them to postulate their own ideal essences. This ideality is a myth of logical inquiry for him that prevents us from seeing the actual uses of words in life. The later Wittgenstein does not give us a scope for the thought of having an ideal essence of the world, nor does he believe in an ideal rule of the uses of a word. To quote him:

'"A proposition is a queer thing!' Here we have in germ the subliming of our whole account of **logic.** The tendency to assume a pure intermediary between the

propositional *signs* and the facts. Or even to try to purify, to sublime, the signs themselves. — For our forms of expression prevent us in all sorts of ways from seeing that nothing out of the ordinary is involved, by sending us in pursuit of chimeras."[20]

This remark is a criticism of philosophical inquiry in general and *Tractatus* in particular. Language and world, according to Wittgenstein, are understood properly *as they are* without being subjected to a logical sublimation. Their ordinary reality explains their usefulness perfectly and for that there is no need of the postulation of concepts by means of a logical or conceptual thinking.

The failure of the correspondence theory which states that a rule of the use of a word is explained through its correspondence to the object *it* denotes is one of the points Wittgenstein time and again emphasises in PI. To quote him:

"Other illusions come from various quarters to attach themselves to the special one spoken here. Thought, language, now appear to us as the unique correlate, picture, of the world. These concepts: proposition, language, thought, world, stand in line one behind the other, each equivalent to each. (But what are these words to be used for now? The language-game in which they are to be applied is missing.)" [21]

One may feel that if there is nothing a priori about the being of the rules then what makes their presence in language possible is a causal relation. The causal relation about the rule following is that we follow a rule because a situation always causes us to do so. I call the colour shared by those two objects 'red' *because* I have been trained to do so. Wittgenstein denies such an explanation of rule following because *it* cannot explain the ontological implications of the uses of language as they are given. He writes:

"Let me ask this: what has the expression of a rule — say a sign-post — got to do with my actions? What sort of connexion is there here? — Well, perhaps this one: I have been trained to react to this sign in a particular way, and now I do so react to it.

But that is **only** to give a causal connexion; to tell how it has come about that we now go by the sign-post; not what this going-by-the-sign really consists in. On the contrary; I have further indicated that a person goes by sign-post **only** in so far as there exists a regular use of sign-posts, a custom."[22]

The necessity of my using a language is not merely a causal necessity explained in relation with the training I haVe received to pick it up. It has something to do with the ways in which a community uses it for the purposes of living in the world and **also** with a member of the community necessarily and *blindly* using the language of it. To have a language is to follow certain customs that form our life-world. It is not my readiness to learn a language that creates a language for me but its being there independent of my will as shared by many who may include myself as well. Wittgenstein says:

"And hence also 'obeying a **rule'** is a practice. And to *think* one is obeying a rule is not to obey a **rule.** Hence it is not possible to obey a **rule 'privately':** otherwise thinking one was obeying a **rule** would be the same thing as obeying it."[23]

Wittgenstein says that there cannot be an ultimate ground ("beyond which we cannot go") which justifies our following the rules of language. He makes *it* clear that the search for the ultimate ground as the justification for the rules will show us our limits:

""How am I able to obey rule?" — if this is not a question about causes, then it is about the justification for my following the rule in the way I do.

If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: This is simply what I do""[24]

The relation between language and the situations of its uses is that of simultaneity. One cannot imagine language without its being related to the situations of its uses one way or other. The simultaneity of the uses of words and their situations explain the immediacy and blindness involved in the following of the rules. Wittgenstein says:

"One does not feel that one always has got to wait upon the nod (the whisper) of the rule. On the contrary, we are not on tenterhooks about what it **will** tell us next, but it always tells us the same, and we do what it tells us.

One might say to the person one was training: "Look, I always do the same thing: I…."[25]

But what does the sameness of following the rules consist in? It consists in our agreement in the uses of words in different ways. We know instinctively which way we are placed in a situation and **also** the nature of our actions and reactions in relation with it. My always doing the same thing in following a rule explains only the nature of following a rule and it **also** shows that where my spade is turned at some point of my search for ultimate justification of my following a rule. If I say everyday to someone that I would meet him the next day by using the same words it is quite obvious that I mean different days by these words but at the same time they mean the same thing, that is, my possible seeing him the next day. Another example Wittgenstein gives to show the nature of following a rule, which has in it the differences and sameness related to each another, has been taken from mathematics. One may say that in the series **1,3,5,7,….the** same rule is applied and it is the formula $2x + 1$. But what about the difference between the numbers in the series? But this feature of the rules does not create any practical problem for our solving a mathematical problem. And in the case of following the rules in language also we see that the *different* uses of the *same* words find their appropriate ways in the contexts of their applications.

In short, it is our language that forms our world as it is placed in the situations of its uses. Language used naturally in concrete situations does not fall short of content. And it is the rules that explain the order and role of words in a language-game. If rules are not there we cannot have the notion of **'sameness'** or **'permanence'** that explain the sameness or permanence of objects around. This is the reason why Wittgenstein says that *essence* is expressed by grammar or the rules. It is grammar (the rules) that tells us the roles of words in language. He follows his **line** of thought to say that 'grammar tells what kind of object anything is'. And he does not find any difficulty to accept theology as a grammar, but he finds it difficult to accord philosophical discourse a natural status in language. He considers philosophy of ideal kind an idle talk and wants to do away with it.

Sense as Use and Rejection of Ideality

Wittgenstein likens words to the tools in a tool-box. What makes a tool what it is, is the *use* that we can make of it. In the cabin of a locomotive we see "handles looking more or less alike". But they are different in their functions. The handle of a crank moves continuously, that of switch is either on or off, that of a brake-lever is that on which the harder one pulls the harder it brakes and the handle of a pump moves to and fro. As they are all to be handled they look more or less alike. And the words, as they are all written or spoken, look or sound alike, but are of different functions. Wittgenstein identifies meaning of a word as its function or use in a language-game.

There are words that are same in their meaning. Wittgenstein says that this sameness is not due to their sharing a common content but by the reason of their uses in the contexts in question. Suppose the words 'xyz' and **'abc'** are taken to have the same sense in a language. The physical appearances of these words are different, as is the sound they make. Inspite of these differences they mean the same owing to the fact they can act in the same **role** in specific language-games. In the example that Wittgenstein offers A says to B "Slab" instead of "Bring me a slab". But the

purpose it accomplishes is **B's** bringing the slab. These words mean the same because of the *role* they have in the context. Wittgenstein says here:

"—Of course one might object here: **"You** grant that the shortened and the unshortened sentence have the same sense. **---What** is this sense, then? Isn't there a verbal expression for this sense?" —But doesn't the fact that sentences have the same sense consist in their having the same *use?* —(In Russian one says "Stone red" instead of "the stone is red"; do they feel the copula to be missing in the sense, or **attach it in** *thought*?)"[26]

In place of meanings as essences exemplified in reality Wittgenstein offers now the picture of words which says that they may mean the same or different depending upon the roles they have in the contexts of their uses. The uses of words are the ways of our acts in the situations of the life. Instead of groaning, a child learns to say that it is in pain. In the words of **Wittgenstein---** the child makes use of its newly learned pain-behaviour now. He says that our search for definite sense of a word is in vain as its use is a part of our behaviour or action, which cannot have precise contours of content. He explains his position:

"----**Consider** another case. When I say "N is dead", then something like the following may **hold** for the meaning of the name "N": I believe that a human being has lived, whom I (1) have seen in such-and-such places, who (2) looked like this (pictures), (3) has done such -and-such things, and (4) bore the name "N" in social life. — Asked what I understand by "N", I should enumerate **all** or some of these points, and different ones on different occasions. So my definition of "N" would perhaps be "the man of whom **all** this is true". — But if some point now proves false? — Shall I be prepared to declare the proposition "N is dead" **false---even** if it is only something which strikes me as incidental that has turned out false? But where are the bounds of the incidental? — If I had given a definition of the name in such a case, I should now be ready to alter it.

And this can be expressed like this: I use the name "N" without a *fixed* meaning. (But that detracts as little from its usefulness, as it detracts from that of a table that it stands on four legs instead of three and so sometimes wobbles.)

Should it be said that I am using a word whose meaning I don't know, and so am talking nonsense? — Say what you choose, so long as it does not prevent you from seeing the facts. (And when you see them there is a good deal that you will not say)"[27]

This remark delineates meaning as indefinite and shows that it fails to meet the ideal standards of precision. For the purposes of living, our language is a useful instrument and it is in that respect like the table that has four legs. But as meaning cannot be fixed in a precise manner it is like the table which, though it has four legs, wobbles. The following remark of his shows how he looks at the indefiniteness of sense:

"The sense of a sentence---one would like to say ---may, of course, leave this or that open, but the sentence must have *a* definite sense. An indefinite sense--- that would really not be a sense *at all*. — This is like: An indefinite boundary is no really a boundary at all. Here one thinks perhaps: if I say "I have locked the man fast up in the room---there is only one door left open"---then I simply haven't locked him in at all; his being locked in is a sham. One would be inclined to say here: "You haven't done anything at all". An enclosure with a hole in it is as good as *none*. — But is that true?"[28]

Wittgenstein says that if an indefinite boundary does its function then indefinite sense of words also performs its offices. And, for him, the belief in the pure being of the world and the definite sense of language is a myth, which has come into being out of our superstition about the uses of language. He asks: Doesn't the word "Moses" as seen in the Bible make sense? We understand the words of our language in the way that we make sense of the word "Moses" in the Bible. He writes:

"Suppose I give the explanation: "I take 'Moses' to mean the man, if there was such a man, who led the Israelites out of Egypt, whatever he was called then and whatever he may or may not have done besides." — But similar doubts to those about "Moses" are possible about the words of this explanation (what are you calling "Egypt", whom the "Israelites" etc.?). Nor would these questions come to an end when we got down to words like "red", "dark', "sweet"."[29]

Wittgenstein does not suggest here that our language is imperfect. On the other hand, he glorifies the ordinary uses of words with their indefinite meanings. What he challenges here is the philosophical demand for a formulation of definite sense, which philosophers want to believe to be *hidden* in our ordinary uses of language. One may worry here about the fate of the ideality of logic and mathematics in the backdrop of his notion of sense in general. Wittgenstein is of the opinion that whether it is mathematics or logic they function as uses of words meant for certain purposes. They also have their rules and their applications, and as language-games their efficacy lies in how they are played to fulfil their purposes. The position of Wittgenstein in PI is that no body of knowledge or beliefs is free from the general features of our forms of life and that these features do not yield to an exact and definite formulation of them.

Wittgenstein on Mentalism

In *Tractatus* Wittgenstein believed that world could make sense of its being only as *my* world. He there held on to the view that there was a metaphysical subject that underlied the contingent occurrences of the psychological or empirical Ts. The Tractarian picture of the world had in it as its thinkable limits on the one hand objects and on the other, the metaphysical subject. And one of them could not be understood without being related to the other. Now in PI Wittgenstein invites us to take a look at the practical consequences of such a picture. He shows a case where the individual self is helpless to make sense of an expression foreign to its comprehension unless aided by the conventions of its use in a language. The case in point is:

"It may now be said: "The way the formula is meant determines which steps are to be taken". What is the criterion for the way the way formula is meant? It is, for example, the kind of way we always use it, the way we are taught to use it.

We say, for instance, to someone who uses a sign unknown to us: **"If** by 'x!2' you mean x^2, then you get *this* value for y, if you **mean 2x,** *that* one." — Now ask yourself: how does one *mean* the one thing or the other by **"x!2"?"**[30]

It is not from one's own individual cases one knows the uses of words. So the use of language cannot be viewed as founded upon the individual self. Wittgenstein's position against solipsism is placed in the larger context of his outlook that opposes mentalism as a base for a theory of meaning or for one's having a world. His argument against mentalism includes his putative position against the possibility of private language also. He says that while there is a grammatical difference between the words that mean mental phenomena such as 'happiness', 'depression', 'hearing a tune', 'pain' etc. and those that mean objects like 'stone', 'leaf, 'table' etc. or creatures like 'man', 'deer', 'dog', 'pelican', etc. all these words are meant in a language used by a community. A word gets its sense not in a speaker's mind but in a language-game. And this sums up in a nutshell his view against looking for a mental base for meanings of words or being in general. Let us have a brief look at it.

When we use words, Wittgenstein says, it is not the case that either a physical or mental image of the word comes before our minds. For example, my use of the word 'cube', he explains, is validated not on the basis of the picture that may or may not come before my mind at the use of it but on the basis of how I use it in a discourse. And it has to do with the given contexts where I have located the uses of this word and also with the uses I make of it in the ways approved by the rules of language. But one may think here that in the case of the words that mean mental phenomena we have no public criteria to determine their valid uses but only the private ones. That is, to know the correct use of the word 'pain' we have to look at

what is happening in the mind of the man, who is in pain. But Wittgenstein says that even the man who cries out that he is in pain does not look into his mind to mean his words so uttered, but uses the words, which are at his disposal in virtue of his having a language. He writes:

"How do words *refer* to sensations? — There doesn't seem to be any problem here; don't we talk about sensations every day, and give them names? But how is the connexion between the name and the thing named set up? This question is the same as: how does a human being learn the meaning of the names of sensations? -of the word "pain" for example. Here is one possibility: words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation and used in their place. A child hurt himself and he cries; and then adults talk to him and teach him exclamations and, later, sentences. They teach the child new pain-behaviour.

"So you are saying that the word **'pain'** really means crying? — On the contrary: the verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it."

An objection may be raised here against this way of characterising the words of mental phenomena saying that when I say that I am in pain the hearer has to understand it as *my* pain not as *his* pain. That is, I understand the meaning of the word 'pain' from my own cases and the other from his own cases. But Wittgenstein refutes this by pointing out that in the ordinary uses of words we do not come across a situation like 'knowing meanings from one's own individual cases'. However, he says that it is perfectly true and obvious that when I am in pain I *have* my pain and you do not have it. But his question as to this is: What does it have to do with the meaning of the word 'pain'? . In the usual circumstances of my having pain you understand that I am in pain through either my words or my groaning. Wittgenstein states that there is no hidden mental phenomenon at work in this process. He says that there exists even the possibility of two persons' having the same pain as long as there is a possibility of the *uses of words* to mean it. His concept of meaning is that meaning is not a matter of our having it privately but that of our

having it in the language we use. And he says that this is true of the meanings of the words of mental phenomena as well.

Wittgenstein's is of the view that the grammar of the expression 'to know' is closely related to the grammar of expressions such as 'can', 'be able to', etc. His intention to define 'knowing' this way is to show that it is not a mental activity. Suppose A is writing down a series: 1, 5, 11, 19, 29 . . . . . and B is watching it to know how to continue it. After some time the formula $a_n = n^2 + n - 1$ occurs to B and he says that now he knows 'how to go on'. But Wittgenstein points out here that the mere occurrence of the formula to B or his thinking of the formula while watching the series does not stand testimony to B's knowing how to continue the series. It may be the case sometimes that a formula actually occurs to B, but when he tries to continue the series in accordance with *it* he gets stuck and he says that that formula is not the right one for the series. So the criterion of B's knowing to continue the series is his *being able* to continue the series correctly in the given context. When B comes to know how to continue the series he may have feeling of relief or happiness. And this feeling is no doubt mental though his knowing to continue the series is not, but the words that express this mental phenomenon is understood *in a language*. This fact leads Wittgenstein to the conviction that an inner process stands in need of an outer criterion. The person, who is happy, does not generally say that he has a feeling that no one has and it cannot be expressed. Wittgenstein's point here is that the words one uses are meant in a language, not outside it. If one says that one has a 'private language' that explains the meanings of the words that denote one's sensations and that these meanings of one's cannot be expressed to anyone else Wittgenstein says that such a language is an impossibility for the simple reason that meanings are given only in a language used by more than one user of it. And for Wittgenstein a language of this kind, if at all it can exist through some mystery, is a language that even the possessor of it cannot understand or follow.

It is not in our thoughts we mean words. This is one of the points Wittgenstein emphasises time and again in PL The example of 'expectation' which he gives to illustrate this point is worth mentioning. Suppose someone says: "I

expect he is coming". At least two broad sets of acts are involved in this statement. One is that of someone's **real** coming and the other someone's expecting it. And these sets are of different natures, but they make their contact in a statement here. Where does this contact take place? In the above speaker's mind? In that case how someone's coming can become someone else's mental phenomenon? Is it the case that when I expect your coming, you come in my mind prior to your **real** coming to me? Wittgenstein explains this point in the following way:

"But it might now be asked: what's it **like** for him to come? — The door opens, someone walks in, and so on. — What's it like for me to expect him to come? — I walk up and down the room, look at the clock now and then, and so on. — But the one set of events has not the smallest similarity to the other! So how can one use the same words in describing them? — But perhaps I say as I **walk** up and down: "I expect he **will** come in" — Now there is a similarity somewhere. But of what kind?!"[32]

Language as an act involves not merely the uses of words, but using them in concrete contexts. And this is what accounts for its being our form of life. It is not in my mind someone is coming when I expect it but in my seeing it as a possibility that can be materialised out there in our life situations. The use of words which is an act is many dimensional and in that it makes possible our form of life with its richness. Wittgenstein writes:

"It is in language that an expectation and its fulfilment make contact."[33]

Now it is clear that Wittgenstein does not want to translate the grammatical difference between the words of mental phenomena and the rest into a distinction between what is private and what is public. For him their grammatical difference is important, but they make sense in the same language, or in the same form of life. The same criterion of usefulness is what matters in any use of language and the grammatical differences between the uses of words do not privilege a use of language over the other, or there cannot arise a division of criteria of meaningfulness on that basis. Our concern with this discussion on Wittgenstein's

notion of mentalism is not so much with his rejection of empiricist or Cartesian ways of doing philosophy as with its implications for philosophy in general and the postulation of transcendental world of concepts in philosophy in particular. He may read into the Platonic as well as Kantian world of concepts a hidden mental phenomenon where the decisions of the mind independent of the situations of concrete world gain justification owing to the imaginative meanings of words so proposed. And his criticism of mentalism is also the criticism of the journey of mind into metaphysical uses of words, and this journey can be either into the world of sensations or into that of what philosophers believe to be the verities of the reality which in their being different from sensations can be either independent of the subject as in Plato or a transcendental subject as in Kant. And another important consideration behind our engagement with his notion of mentalism is that without it an integral picture of his notion of language and its ways cannot be given.

Wittgenstein and Philosophy

Wittgenstein's approach to philosophy is a semantical one throughout. His complaint about philosophy is that it bases itself upon a misunderstanding of the meaning of words. In *Tractatus* this misunderstanding was explained through a reference theory of meaning. There philosophy was looked upon as a vain attempt to locate references of transcendental nature. In PI, on the other hand, the reference theory as such was rejected and instead language has been viewed as a rule-governed activity. In PI at one place philosophy has been described as a phenomenon emerging out of a primitive idea of how language functions. We, he says, feel wrongly that the meanings of words are definite and clear as the uses of words in a very primitive language where everything is strikingly transparent. He writes:

"That philosophical concept of meaning has its place in a primitive idea of the way language functions. But one can **also** say that it is the idea of a language more primitive than ours."[34]

71

Wittgenstein demands that our reflection on the world or language take us not beyond the consideration of words as they are applied in the contexts of life. In the contexts of the uses of words we do talk about the *same* colour, the *same* shape, etc. But he points out that the concept of sameness as understood in the contexts of the ordinary uses of words will not give us the feeling that there is *something* common to different objects of the same colour or of the same shape and this *something* is the most real aspect of the colour or the shape in question. Wittgenstein's question is not whether the world of objects and living beings with their different qualities is less real as understood by Plato or whether it is the case that this world is that of contradictions and unrelated experiences if it is not founded transcendentally as Plato or Kant imagined. He says that it is the uniform appearance of words written or spoken that confuses us into the formation of sameness of meanings independent of the actual uses of them. He writes:

"Of course, what confuses us is the uniform appearance of words when we hear them spoken or meet them in script and print. For their *application* is not presented to us clearly. Especially not, when we are doing philosophy!"[35]

The word 'table' has different possible uses and the object *called* table different instances of it. Plato traced the source of common being of particular tables to the idea called 'table'. And Kant through radical abstraction traced them to a limited number of categories and concepts. Wittgenstein says that the possibilities of the world do not demand of it a transcendental plane where these possibilities have been shown as originated from an unchanging and indestructible structure. His challenge to such a structure is evident in the following remark:

""Something red can be destroyed, but red cannot be destroyed, and that is why the meaning of the word 'red' is independent of the existence of a red thing."— Certainly it makes no sense to say that the colour red is torn up or pounded to bits. But don't we say "The red is vanishing"? And don't clutch at the idea of ᴄ always being able to bring red before our mind's eye even when there is nothing red any more. That is just as if you chose to say that there would still always be chemical

reaction producing a red flame. — For suppose you cannot remember the colour any more?- When we forget which colour this is the name of, it loses its meaning for us; that is, we are no longer able to play a particular language-game with it. And the situation then is comparable with that in which we have lost a paradigm which was an instrument of our language"[36]

This passage clearly shows that our **talk** about the ideal or universal world has to be dependent throughout on the contingent matters of the uses of words. So this poses a serious problem for the methods of philosophy in general. Wittgenstein conceives philosophy as 'holiday of language', as it does not have an actual use in a meaningful and concrete manner. When language does not work we feel that there is something materialised in it independent of the actual uses of it. Philosophy for him represents such an **idle** language where everything is static and given once forever. He is satirical of the ideality that philosophy searches for:

"The ideal, as we think of it, is unshakable. You can never get outside it; you must always turn back. There is no outside; outside you cannot breathe. — Where does this idea come from? It is like a pair of glasses on our nose through which we see whatever we look at. It never occurs to us to take them off."[37]

Wittgenstein sees that our attempt to represent the method of representation of language takes us to the belief in the highest general order of the world. Suppose I want to represent the way the word **'red'** is used. I choose for this a shade of the colour red and keep it as a standard on the line of the standard metre scale in Paris. And I say now that the colour that corresponds to this sample is called **'red'.** And this symbolic way of **representing what** we cannot otherwise represent gives *us the* impression that this standard ideal red is predicated of all the instances of the red colour in the world. Wittgenstein says that this is because of our mistaking a symbolic gesture for **what** is actually the case with the uses of words. A sample of the colour red is a particular shade of it and the generality it now **acquires** is by reason of our *using* it so. Wittgenstein's criticism of seeing the symbolism involved

in this use as an actual correspondence between the standard colour and different instances of the colour is expressed in the following way:

"**We** predicate of the thing what lies in the method of representing it. Impressed by the possibility of a comparison, we think we are perceiving a state of affairs of the highest generality."[38]

Wittgenstein shows that the philosophical notion of ideality cannot have an ontological foundation. And his position about the philosophical notion of ideality is diametrically opposed to the notion of ideality expounded by Plato, Kant, and his own earlier self. And the ideality he wants to propose now is the ideality of the ordinary uses of words and for him that is the whole ideality we have of the world. He writes:

"We are talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, non-temporal phantasm. [Note in margin: **Only** it is possible to be interested in a phenomenon in a variety of ways]. But we talk about it as we do about the pieces in chess when we are stating the rules of the game, not describing their physical properties.

The question "What is a word really?" is analogous to "What is a piece in chess?""[39]

His point here is that what looks **like** an abstract entity is actually a concrete fact about the ordinary uses of language and there is nothing abstract about it really. A **rule** of the uses of a word is very much a part and parcel of its uses. And it cannot have an existence independent of its particular uses. Now a natural question that arises in this context is: Does it mean that philosophy gives way to empirical inquiries? Wittgenstein knows it very well that it is not from an empirical outlook about reality that the philosophical problems arise. And his reflection on this matter includes an outline of what is to be the task of philosophy now. In his own words:

"And we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all *explanation,* and

description alone must take its place. And this description gets it light, that is to say its purpose— from the philosophical problems. These are, of course, not emprical problems; they are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: *in despite of an* urge to misunderstand them. The problems are solved, not by giving a new information, but by arranging what have always known. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language."[40]

We, according to Wittgenstein, take a grammatical joke seriously and the result is the search for the depth of phenomena in philosophy. The grammatical joke Wittgenstein has in mind is the *look* of the symbolic attempt to capture the method of representation of language as an actual phenomenon of language. And the persistence of the mind in seeing it as real in its search for ideality in philosophy is what he calls an illness of it. And he says that there are different methods to solve philosophical problems, as there are different therapies to cure mental illness. One of them is to explain how language functions in daily life by means of analogies and examples taken in various ways.

The following remark indicates the nature of the methods he favours to solve the philosophical problems:

"When philosophers use a word- "knowledge", "being", "object", "I", "proposition", "name" --and try to grasp the *essence* of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language-game which is its original home? —

What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use."[41]

Wittgenstein believes in PI that it shows philosophy of the ideal kind the way of its disappearance. He imagines there that he has succeeded in giving philosophy "peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* in question". Our question now is: isn't it the nature of philosophy to face up to the

enigmas posed by what Wittgenstein considers to be the misplaced questions? And isn't philosophy ever ready to engage itself with the ironical questions about reality?

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CHAPTER III

Quine's Critique of Transcendentalism

Quine's rejection of transcendentalism is conditional upon his empirical approach to the world and language. For him a theory of the world is also a theory of language at the same time. So his aim is to examine the empirical evidence underlying the world and language. His article 'Two dogmas of empiricism', which is called a classic in the recent philosophy, shows that he is not satisfied with the modern empiricism as it contains in it notions that are not empirically tenable. He writes:

"Modern empiricism has been conditioned in large part by two dogmas. One is a belief in some fundamental cleavage between truths which are *analytic*, or grounded in meanings independently of matters of fact, and truths which are *synthetic*, or grounded in fact. The other dogma is *reductionism:* the belief that each meaningful statement is equivalent to some logical construct upon terms which refer to immediate experience. Both dogmas, I shall argue, are ill-founded. One effect of abandoning them is, as we shall see, a blurring of the supposed boundary between speculative metaphysics and natural science. Another effect is a shift toward pragmatism."[1]

For Quine both these dogmas are identical at root. If correspondence with a possible empirical fact is the criterion of **meaningfulness** of a statement as reductionism urges, then where will one find the possible empirical facts that correspond to analytic truths, which do not seem to refer to any facts at least directly? So the way out of the dilemma for the modern empiricist was to say that they were true **independent** of facts. A synthetic statement is generally represented in philosophical discourse by a statement like "Human beings are biped" and an analytic one by "Human beings are rational animals". Quine's objection to defining some truths as independent of facts is that it goes against what he considers the

78

basic tenet of empiricism that any truth is verifiable in sense experience. In the following remark Quine briefly sketches the history of analyticity as it was held by Hume and non-empiricists like Kant and Leibniz:

"Kant's cleavage between analytic and synthetic truths was foreshadowed in Hume's distinction between relations of ideas and matters of fact, and in Leibniz's distinction between truths of reason and truths of fact. Leibniz spoke of the truths of reason as true in all possible worlds. Picturesqueness aside, this is to say that the truths of reason are those which could not possibly false. In the same vein we hear analytic statements defined as statements whose denials are self-contradictory. But this definition has small explanatory value; for the notion of self-contradictoriness, in the quite broad sense needed for this definition of analyticity, stands exactly in the same need of clarification as does the notion of analyticity itself. The two notions are the two sides of a single dubious coin.

Kant conceived of an analytic statement as one that attributes to its subject no more than is already conceptually contained in the subject. This formulation has two shortcomings: it limits itself to statements of subject-predicate form, and it appeals to a notion of containment which is left at a metaphorical level. But Kant's intent, evident more from the use he makes of the notion of analyticity than from his definition of it, can be restated thus: a statement is analytic when it is true by virtue of meanings and independently of fact. Pursuing this line, let us examine the concept of *meaning* which is presupposed."[2]

It is evident from this remark that the notions such as 'self-contradictoriness' and 'containment', according to Quine, fail in defining analyticity, the former being as undefined as analyticity and the later metaphorical. And he will show in the later part of the article under consideration that a sentence as taken to consist of subject and predicate is not the basic meaningful entity of language in the philosophical sense but language as a whole in which different parts of it such as sentences, words, and their various relations find themselves meaningful in virtue of their being in it.

So he says that Kant's definition of analyticity commits the mistake of its being about a sentence taken as a relation between subject and predicate in isolation. Still he pursues Kantian definition by paraphrasing it as about meanings to know whether *meanings* support the claim that analytic truths are independent of facts.

Quine finds that as far as language is concerned there cannot be anything called "meanings" as entities in the world that make it meaningful. So we must look at meaningfulness of language which is expressed in synonymies, instead of meanings, and how these synonymies make sense of sense experience. If the meanings of the terms 'morning star' and 'evening star', being different from each other in meaning, are not the Venus that they refer to commonly, then for Quine there is nothing called meaning. And what we have is on the one hand synonymies like "Morning star is evening star" in language and on the other, references like the planet Venus seen at different times. So the synonymy that 'Morning star is evening star' has to be analysed in terms of the relation between it and its reference. Quine seems to believe that any complete expression in language is some sort of a synonymy. To follow this line of thought is to see 'He is John' as a synonymy of 'he' and 'John', 'He is 20 years old' as that of 'his age' and '20 years' and 'Red' as 'red' and 'the colour true of whatever is red', or to see each linguistic expression as synonymous with itself. For language all what is there about it is nothing but its being meaningful as related to field of our sense experience. If we do not find entities called meanings in this relation we should abandon our faith in their being and settle for language as meaningful not by its containing "meanings" that lie outside itself as intermediary entities between it and its reference but in its unmediated relation with reference. Thus the 'morning star' becomes 'the Venus seen in the morning' and the 'evening star' 'the Venus seen in the evening' and these relations can express synonymies in different ways. Quine writes:

"Once the theory of meaning is sharply separated from the theory of reference, it is a short step to recognizing as the primary business of the theory of meaning simply

the synonymy of linguistic forms and the analyticity of statements; meanings themselves, as obscure intermediary entities, may well be abandoned."[3]

Now Quine sees that his task is to see whether sense can be made of the claim that analytic truths are truths independent of fact by looking at the relation of synonymy involved in it. He recognises two classes of analytic truths: the first class of them is represented by, (1) No unmarried man is married, and the second class by, (2) No bachelor is married. He calls the first class logical truths and the second analytic truths. He says that the first are trivial truths explained in terms logical particles such as 'no', 'un-', 'if, 'then', 'and', etc., whereas the second class need to be defined in terms of their empirical content for the reason that they are not logical truths, which are trivial like 'a = a'. But there is an argument that if we substitute 'unmarried man' for 'bachelor' in (2) it becomes the logical truth expressed by (1) and that it shows that its truth is not dependent on facts. But Quine says that it amounts to saying that 'bachelor' is logically equivalent to 'unmarried man' and that it cannot be a proper characterisation of these two terms as their equivalence is not a matter of logic for him but of empirical evidence relevant to it. And he holds that the empirical evidence cannot show how 'bachelor' is equivalent to 'unmarried man' properly, but he adds here that this does not mean that truths like them are logical truths as they still depend on empirical evidence in indirect ways.

This position of Quine amounts to a rejection of a priori truths outlined and explained by Plato and Kant. He admits the possibility in language of the a priori truths only of the trivial kind which do not say anything factual about the world and are of the form 'a = a'. If one says that 'to be human being is to be a rational animal necessarily' Quine will argue that the concept of necessity involved in this cannot be made sense of given the fact that we have a world which is contingent in nature and a language which is equally contingent like it. This paves way for his doing away with transcendental and a priori truths in general in his system.

Quine examines now the defence of synonymy **of 'bachelor'** and 'unmarried man' offered in terms of definition, interchangeability and semantical rules. He first questions the claim that given our language we can define 'bachelor' as 'unmarried man' independent of fact. According to this view, once it is established by some way that John is an unmarried man it will follow from it a priori that John is a bachelor because 'unmarried man' and 'bachelor' are synonymies by definition. But Quine says that there cannot be an a priori definition of their being synonymies. A definition always has its roots in the matters of fact of the world one way or other. He holds that a transparent definition of synonymy in general and analyticity in particular is not possible owing to the evasive nature of the relation between language and the facts of world. In his own words:

"Just what it means to affirm synonymy, just what the interconnections may be which are necessary and sufficient in order that two linguistic forms be properly describable as synonymous, is far from clear; but, whatever these interconnections may be, ordinarily they are grounded in usage. Definitions reporting selected instances of synonymy come then as reports upon usage."[4]

The problem, as Quine sees it, with the claim that 'unmarried man' and 'bachelor' are synonymies independent of matters of fact ~~fact as~~ they are
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interchangeable in all contexts whereby the meaning or truth of the statements ~~concerned are~~ not affected is that it shows only that an *extensional agreement* exists between them. So interchangeability, according to him, fails in providing us with a necessary connection of the desired type between the two expressions. He writes:

"There is no assurance here that the extensional agreement of 'bachelor' and 'unmarried man' rests on meaning rather than merely on accidental matters of fact, as does the extensional agreement of 'creature with a heart' and 'creature with kidneys'."[5]

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An attempt to define analyticity in terms of semantical rules can be explained by the following example. Suppose we have to clarify the contours of ordinary language to get rid of its vagueness by constructing an artificial language with explicit semantical rules. In ordinary language sense is not definite (let us remember the later Wittgenstein here), but it may be expected that in an artificial language it will be. Suppose a rule of such a language says "a statement of the form 'S is P' is a proposition" (Carnap gives such a description of an artificial language in his article 'Empiricism, Semantics, And Ontology'[6]). Then the statement in that language "'Chicago is large' is a proposition" (Carnap's example in that article) is analytic for its truth follows from the semantical rule concerning a proposition in it. Here one can argue that the notion of analyticity is saved in such an event because beyond the empirical determination of a language, the language in question derives some truths only on the basis of its semantical rules. And this notion by extension can be viewed as holding for any language in general including the ordinary one. But Quine argues here that this supposed break of the truth from empirical determination described thus is a myth and that it cannot do without the notion of semantical rules, which are either left unexplained like the notion of analyticity itself or are to be explained by appealing to the rationale of a possible or actual use of language.

Following this line of thought Quine states that truth in general is dependent on both language and extralinguistic fact. And, for him, any attempt to separate them from their mutual dependence is bound to fail. So he insists that there cannot be truths that are true in terms of meanings of language alone on the one hand and those in terms of the relation between language and the world on the other. And when we examine his concept of ontological relativity we will see that our having world as we have now out of our sense experience is due to the structure of our language.

Along with the dogma of analytic-synthetic distinction what goes by the board in Quine's thought is a belief in radical reductionism. He says that the

empiricists like Locke and Hume thought that the basic units of experience are individual ideas, in semantical jargon, the ideas which correspond to individual terms. But later it was found, owing to Frege and Russell, that ordinary language consists of sentences basically and a term gets its meaning in the context of a sentence, which refers to a fact in the world. Russell has shown how an ordinary name can be seen as a description incomplete in itself and how a sentence as a whole in which it appears makes it meaningful in his theory of definite description. Now what Quine suggests is that language does not have its sentences separately given in it but as related to one other making it a composite whole. If one believes in radical reductionism, he writes, one cannot explain how 'is at' in 'Quality q is at x;y;z;t' (it reads that a given quality in three spatial dimension and one temporal dimension) corresponds to an immediate data of sense experience. But when language is taken as a practical adjustment to cope up with nature, he argues, it looks reasonable to think about its relation with the world not in terms of reductionism but in that of not so transparent connection it has with sense experiences. Quine writes:

"The dogma of reductionism survives in the supposition that each statement, taken in isolation from its fellows, can admit of confirmation or **infirmation** at all. My counter suggestion, issuing essentially from **Carnap's** doctrine of the physical world in the *Aufbau*, is that our statements about the external world face the tribunal of experience not individually but **only** as a corporate body."[7]

Following this he says that language is a man-made fabric and only its edges touch sense experience. The interior part of it, according to him, is related to sense experience only through indirect ways. Whereas the statements such as 'His face is dirty' and "Human beings are featherless biped' are in close touch with sense experiences, the statements such as **'No** bachelor is married' and **'Human** beings are rational animals' are away from them. For Quine all kinds of statements are related to sense experience with varying degrees of distance; some are very close to it and some far away from it, and in between lies infinite others. And he further says that if tomorrow it is shown that the empirical statements 'John is a featherless biped[1] and

'John is a human being' are not equivalent to each other it may affect the truth value of what we generally call as the analytic statement 'Human beings are rational animals'. His point is that there is no conceptually defined truth over and above what is related to sense experience. He writes:

"Conversely, by the same token, no statement is immune to revision. Revision even of the logical law of the excluded middle has been proposed as a means of simplifying quantum mechanics; and what difference is there in principle between such a shift and the shift whereby Kepler superseded Ptolemy, or Einstein Newton, or Darwin Aristotle?"[8]

Quine is of the view that empirical statements, logical ones, theoretical ones, logical connections and other devices of language are to be understood in the context of their relation with sense experiences and their serving our purpose of survival in nature. No one of them is privileged over any other and **all** of them serve the purpose of our ways of relation with the world in different but related capacities. In this picture if certain statements are seen to be more germane to sense experience particularly and others are not, he clarifies that this feature is a matter of our dealing with the relation between language and sense experience to leave the talk of the world the least disturbed. And he concludes his celebrated article 'Two dogmas of empiricism' with the affirmation of a pragmatic approach towards language and the world. To quote him:

"Each man is given a scientific heritage plus a continuing barrage of sensory stimulation; and the considerations which guide him in warping his scientific heritage to fit his continuing sensory promptings are, where rational, **pragmatic.**"[9]

Quine on Physical Objects

Quine's ontological view is determined by his belief that the reality is a **flux** of stimulations produced on our senses from without and that we can know them

not as they are but through the physical objects, which are not real as such but a result of the interaction between language and stimulations. He thinks that his belief in stimulations is **scientific.** He writes:

"Science tells us that our only source of information about the external world is through the impact of light rays and molecules upon our sensory surfaces."[10]

The nature of our belief in the world of physical objects, according to Quine, is conditioned by our expectation of the stimulations that they follow certain patterns in their repeated occurrences. We have seen the rising of the sun in the east many a time and we expect the sun **will** rise in the east tomorrow also. But each sunrise, to follow Quine, is a distinct event and what makes us expect it tomorrow again as before is that we are *reinforced* in our disposition to believe that the world is marked by the repetition of *similar* events. We learn that fire burns us from our experience and when we go near fire next time we do not think that this fire, as it is distinct from the old episodes of fire, will not burn us. We establish in each one of us the relation of similarity between events, which are taken to be similar on the basis of our past experience. And Quine says that even animals are guided in their life by the similarity patterns they experience in nature. But he adds here that the similarity standards on which these patterns are based are innate and subjective in their nature in that my similarity standards are in me and yours in you. And it is these similarity standards, Quine says, that make induction and prediction possible for us. We think for example that all ravens are black because we have learned from the past on the basis of our innate similarity standards, which inform us about the uniformities in nature, that when we recognise a certain being at the instance of certain stimulations it is always black. We predict that the sun **will** rise tomorrow based on our **innate** standards, which have helped us recognise so far a recurring uniform pattern called the rising sun at a particular time. In short, Quine finds the uniformities in nature as phenomena that can be explained only in terms of a combination of our innate standards and the relevant stimulations.

But Quine notices that our language and science contain in them knowledge that cannot be explained merely in terms of observed similarities in nature through our stimulations. When we say: "All men are mortal", we go beyond the bounds of observations to include even the men in the distant times to come and in that it is different from the statement: "Now I see a man in front of me". But the sentence "All men are mortal" still has intimate connection with the observed phenomenon called the mortality of man. And when we examine, Quine believes, the sentences like 'Human beings are rational animals' we see that they lack a transparent explanation in terms of stimulations and induction by way of their justification. Quine says that here what helps us in making such judgments is the hypothetico-deductive method which though related to stimulations hews the way for us to go beyond them in our encounter with nature. And the whole body of mathematical and logical knowledge along with sentences like 'Human beings are rational animal' and 'No bachelor is married' owe their connection with the stimulations to this method. He writes about this method:

"In any event, and for whatever good it may do us, the hypothetico-deductive method is delivering knowledge hand over fist. It is facilitating prediction."[11]

It is important to know for a student of Quine that he believes that stimulations are not private sense data. What makes them the shared events of a community of speakers of language is that we can either assent to or dissent from *uniformly in public* the sentences queried at their instance. That is, they are not our creations but happen from without. Quine says that a red object is red not only for me but also for others. And it takes him to say that there holds an agreement between our different subjective innate standards and this agreement, for him, is the basis of our shared public world at the instance of stimulations caused from without. He writes:

"Happily the agreement holds; and no wonder, since our similarity standards are a matter partly of natural selection and partly of subsequent experience in a shared

environment. If substantial agreement in similarity standards were not there, this first step in language acquisition would be blocked."[12]

Though our innate similarity standards agree with each other's, Quine emphasises, it does not mean that you and I share the same stimulations even when we in our **talk** refer to the same object that wee see before us now. My stimulations are different from yours any time. Then what prevents them from being private sense data? Quine is of the view that though we are prompted to talk at the instance of our stimulations, which are subjective, our talk is not a report on what is happening in us *privately* but a pointer to what is out there and in that respect it is objective. Quine retains a distinction between the subjective stimulations and an objective talk about the world on the basis of them. And for him this distinction is there even in our **talk,** which is objective, about what *only we* can feel within us that include the pain I may have in my stomach and not you, and phenomena like that. A **talk** about any phenomena is such that the stimulations that are responsible for it remain subjective, but it on that **account** does not remain a report on private sense data. If one feels something strange about this distinction then Quine shows in his philosophical theory that this strangeness is that what underlies our language and the world. Of course for Quine there is nothing strange about the distinction. He writes about the distinction in the following way:

"We have been beaten into an outward conformity to an outward standard; and thus it is that when I correlate your sentences with mine by the simple rule of phonetic correspondence, I find that the public circumstances of your affirmation and denials agree pretty well with those of my own. If I conclude that you share my sort of conceptual scheme, I am not adding a supplementary conjecture so much as spurning unfathomable distinctions; for, what further **criterion** of sameness of conceptual scheme can be imagined?"

Quine puts forward the view that a child in **its** early phase is confronted not with a world of objects at all but with a field of stimulations. And it is at the later

period that the child finds a world of objects for himself which he shares commonly and publicly with his society and that the transition to this from the field of stimulations on his senses is through his picking up of language which makes individuation of objects from stimulations possible for us in general. In the initial stage of his learning his language the child does not learn terms such as "mama", "red" and "water" as references for objects but as "a matter of learning how much of what goes on about him counts as the mother, or as red, or as water". And the theory of stimulation leads Quine to opine that there is a stage in the life of child where individuation of objects from his stimulations is felt necessary for him in his learning the language given the fact that the language encourages it. And it occurs when he has come to the stage of learning words that refer to objects, which ought to be distinguished from one another and identical with themselves taken individually. The example Quine offers is the way that the child picks up the use of the term "apple" to refer to an object as distinguished from the ones that are also called by the same term. A child cannot have two mothers biologically in the normal circumstances, so the individuation of the mother as different from others does not arise, and water is scattered about like red with the difference that "things can be red, but only stuff is water". Quine believes that when it comes to the learning of terms like "apple" as *terms for individual objects* (for Quine sees the possibility of the child's learning "apple" as a term like "red" in the initial stage of his learning the language) obviously the scene is different and it demands of the child the skill of individuation of objects from stimulations. He seems to think that the child learns its language in a linear fashion in which first comes bulk terms like "water" and "red" and then terms for physical objects and other phenomena. He writes:

"It is only when the child has got on to the full and proper use of *individuative* terms like "apple" that he can properly be said to have taken to using terms as terms, and speaking of objects. Words like "apple," and not words like "mama" or "water" or "red," are the terms whose ontological involvement runs deep. To learn "apple" it is not sufficient to learn how much of what goes on counts as apple; we must learn

how much counts as *an* apple, and how much as another. Such terms posses built-in modes of **individuation."**[14]

The individuation of objects takes place in the child's learning language, Quine says, when he gets on to the use of terms such as "same", **"another"**, "an", "that", **"not** that" etc., in relation with terms **like** "apple", **"ball",** "block", etc. The child starts making sense of the uses, for example with reference to **'apple',** such as "that apple", "not that apple", "an apple", "same apple", "another apple" "these apples" and the **like** at a particular stage of his learning the language. And these uses develop *the habit* of individuation in him. Quine writes:

"Doubtless the child gets the swing of these peculiar adjectives "same," "another," "an," "that," "not that," contextually: first he becomes attuned to various longer phrases or sentences that contain them, and then gradually he develops appropriate habits in relation to the component words as common parts and residues of those longer forms. His tentative acquisition of the plural "-s," lately speculated on, is itself a first primitive step of the kind. The contextual learning of these various particles goes on simultaneously, we may suppose, so that they are gradually adjusted to one another and a coherent pattern of usage is evolved matching that of one's elders. This is a major step in acquiring the conceptual scheme that we all know so well. For it is on achieving this step, and only then, that there can be any general **talk** of objects as such. Only at this stage does it begin to make sense to wonder whether the apple now in one's hand is the apple noticed yesterday."[15]

Once the child learns how to individuate objects from stimulations as his elders, Quine points out, it does no way settle the problem of the reference of a sentence in language. To drive home this point he makes a distinction between truth and reference. If I utter a sentence **"That** is a rabbit" pointing to a rabbit, to follow Quine, it is *true* on the basis of empirical evidence if I actually see a rabbit in front of me but it does not show what I am actually referring to. It can be, according to him, a rabbit taken as a whole or a temporal segment of it or an undetached part of

it or what is believed to be a local manifestation of rabbithood. The same simulations vouch for all these or more referents at the same time inspite of our frame of reference that clearly effects a demarcation between them in our usual talk about the world for practical purposes. It is not the reference that makes a sentence true but the sensory stimulations at which it is uttered. And this position of Quine makes a transparent picture of truth impossible as we cannot have clear knowledge of stimulations except through reference which he considers inscrutable. He writes:

"Grant that a knowledge of the appropriate stimulatory conditions of a sentence does not settle how to construe the sentence in terms of existence of objects. Still, it does tend to settle what is to count as empirical evidence for or against the truth of the sentence."[16]

After elaborating on the different stages of a **child's** learning his language Quine recognises in those a plane of language that contributes to the tendency of abstraction in and through language. It is at this level a space is sought for attributes and qualities and "is marked by the advent of abstract singular terms like "redness," "roundness," "mankind,"" and the like. He explains this level as follows. The child learns in the initial stage of his learning of language terms like **'red',** 'water' etc., as bulk terms referring to certain stuff or scattered phenomena, but later on he sees with the advent of individuation in his engagement with the world through language that they must also have a level of individuation where they become singular terms for individual objects. So the child develops, though unknowingly may be, a psychological tendency to see them as terms referring to individual objects like apple or ball. And the individuation of red and water cannot be a phenomenon of our ordinary world and it requires, Quine shows, a positing of an abstract world where they may be looked upon as abstract individual attributes shared by things and stuffs of different kinds of the ordinary world. Thus **'water'** becomes an attribute shared by "sundry puddles and glassfuls" and 'red' by red things and stuff. Quine does not see this abstraction as a logical requirement for the use of language and it is for him rather a result of certain confusions that **haunt** the

use of language. Quine believes that it is the tendency to abstract in the face of the uses of terms like "red" and "water" that, later on, becomes the rampant tendency for abstraction with regard to the use of any term resulting in an abstract world of entities.

Quine sees in the use of words for abbreviated cross-references another reason for the tendency to abstract. And instead of taking these cross-references as the uses of terms, Quine says, there develops in us wrongly a tendency to take them for words with extraordinary ontological commitments. He writes:

"Another force for abstract terms, or for the positing of abstract objects, lies in abbreviated cross-reference. E.G., after an elaborate remark regarding President Eisenhower, someone says: "The same holds for Churchill." Or, by way of supporting some botanical identification, one says: "Both plants have the following attribute in common"-and proceeds with a double-purpose description. In such cases a laborious repetition is conveniently circumvented. Now the cross-reference in such cases is just to a form of words. But we have a stubborn tendency to reify the unrepeated matter by positing an attribute, instead of just talking of words."[17]

In this context Quine sees how what he calls "an archaic precedent for confusing sign and object" is at work in the positing of abstract entities for terms that do not refer to objects. A baby is rewarded when he babbles "mama" in the **presence of the mother. The baby** *hears his own utterance* **and** *sees his mother,* **and** finds that his word signifies what he sees when he is rewarded for the use of the term "mama". So the baby tends to think, given the object-directed pattern of language, that any meaningful use of a term even when it fails to refer to an observed entity refers to an individual object on an abstract plane. And Quine sees that the case of positing abstract attributes for abbreviated cross-references testifies to this. And for him the attributes have no plane of existence. Suppose someone says the sentence "It is an apple". According to Quine, in this there cannot be three terms referring to three objects which are: one, the singular term **'it'** as referring to

the present apple; two, the general term 'apple' as referring to apples in general; three, an abstract implicit singular term referring to an abstract attribute called applehood. Quine admits only the first two in his conceptual scheme based on his naturalistic conception of language in which terms do justice to the practical requirements of language, as they can be made sense of stimulations in relation with which only we have a world of objects, but rejects the last as arising out of some confusions in the use of language.

To recapitulate, Quine believes a child learns his language with his picking up of terms as bulk terms meant for stuff or scattered phenomena. Later on with the learning of the uses of terms **like** 'apple', 'ball', etc., as meant for objects he gets on to the conceptual scheme of language that makes individuation of objects from stimulations possible. But when the child does not find a way out to individuate phenomena referred to by terms like **'water'** and 'red' in the context of their uses on the line of those referred to by 'apple' and 'ball' at the concrete level of existence, he finds a way for it at the abstract level. And this leads to the postulation of attributes as abstract entities as answering the demand for the individuation of certain phenomena like red, water, etc., though they remain ordinary stuff of our senses. And this brings in the tendency to see all expressions in attributive position as referring to **attributes** out on an abstract plane. So we, according to Quine, accommodate terms like 'redness', 'roundness', 'mankind' as terms referring to attributes in language. Quine takes objection to the claim that there are attributes for it cannot be justified in terms of stimulus conditions. He says that the assertions such as 'there are red brick houses' and 'there are children playing on the ground' are related to our sensory stimulations one way or another and that attributes are unlike them as there are no stimulations that show that they exist like the 'the red brick houses' and 'the children playing there'. So admitting singular and concrete general terms in language from the point of view of reference he rejects the possibility of there being abstract singular terms in it.

Quine's Ontological Relativity

Quine's notion of ontological relativity involves the notion of a background language and that of different conceptual schemes or ways of talking which are due to this background language but incompatible with one another even when they conform to the same empirical reality. He denies in his account of ontological commitments any space for the conceptual thinking called first philosophy that seeks the reality of world beyond the realm of sense experiences. Rather he emphasises the need for philosophy to be an explanatory base for naturalism which will show us where the concrete and objective thinking helps us understand how we have a world of physical objects through an interaction of language and stimulations. In his John Dewey lecture entitled 'Ontological Relativity' he writes:

"Philosophically I am bound to Dewey by the naturalism that dominates his last three decades. With Dewey I hold that knowledge, mind, and meaning are part of the same world that they have to do with, and that they are to be studied in the same empirical spirit that animates natural science. There is no place for a prior philosophy."[18]

Quine takes objection to the view that meanings are either mental ideas or *ideas* that reflect physical reality. He says that meanings are to be understood in terms of our behaviour in a given situation. The basis of his argument against mentalist conception of meaning is that language is not the creation of my or your mind but "a social art which we all acquire on the evidence solely of other people's overt behavior under publicly recognizable circumstances". This position of his is reminiscent of the later Wittgenstein's view. But Wittgenstein's behaviourism is not an empirical one. Wittgenstein does not define it in terms of sense experience. His behaviorism, as we **have** seen, goes beyond the causal necessity, which Quine favours, to find a logical sphere for the ordinary language and in that it sees that language bases itself not on a mere causal connection between itself and a world outside itself but on something that is logically binding about it as it is used in

concrete situations and for Wittgenstein this makes it our way of life with its blind compelling force. Quine's version of behaviourism makes its way for explaining meanings by positing what he calls our sensory stimulations due to an external realm of existence, which we in our ordinary talk call physical objects but actually are posits after them, and seeing our reactions to them. Quine says that neither stimulations as such nor use of language as such provides us with meanings but the relation between them as different entities and that this relation is for him a concrete matter of our behaviour. So meanings are, for him, not some entities but the ways of our response to given stimulatory conditions. He writes about his conception of meaning:

"Uncritical semantics is the myth of a museum in which the exhibits are meanings and the words are labels. To switch languages is to change the labels. Now the naturalist's primary objection to this view is not an objection to meanings on account of their being mental entities, though that could be objection enough. The primary objection persists even if we take the labeled exhibits not as mental entities but as platonic ideas or even as the denoted concrete objects. Semantics is vitiated by a pernicious mentalism as long as we regard a man's semantics as somehow determinate in his mind beyond what might be implicit in his dispositions to overt behavior. It is the very facts about meaning, not entities meant, that must be construed in terms of behavior."[19]

A problem with stimulations is that they are subjective in nature. I have my own stimulations and you your own. Nevertheless we acquiesce in the fact that we share common world though our access to this is through our subjective stimulations. How this takes place? A reason for this is that stimulations we have at a time about what we call an object in front of us are dictated by that object itself and in that respect they are not our imaginary product. But this does not prove that you and I see the same rabbit when we say "rabbit" pointing to the rabbit we see now. But we believe that we see the same rabbit before us. Quine says that this is made possible *through our language.* Wittgenstein also says the same thing when he

points out in *Philosophical Investigations* that you and I can have the same pain as long as there is a possibility in language where we can say "you and I share the same pain now". But his view that language is our form of life brings home the point, in contrast with that of Quine, that we are not alien to one another in our language and the features of language, whatever they may be, are our common heritage in the most fundamental sense. Quine's position as to this is evident from his view that our agreement in the belief that we have a common world is a provincial one in that there is a divide between our subjective stimulations and the referents language ordinarily communicates to us. He says that you and I, inspite of our limitations as being subjective in our relation with the world, reach out to each other to have faith in a tangible concrete world. He writes:

"Each of us, as he learns his language, is a student of his neighbor's behavior; and conversely, insofar as his tries are approved or corrected, he is a subject of his neighbor's behavioral study."[20]

Quine finds that it is language that helps us divide stimulations dictated to our senses from without into different wholes, which we call objects. To go by this stand means that we cannot know whether we really have **a** world of physical objects, which we tend to think have been referred to by language as the basis of its meanings. But Quine shows that it is physical objects that set the concrete criterion of the objectivity of meanings though we are deprived of their real nature. The point that emerges here as a challenge to the transcendental philosophy is that even the world of physical objects is a result of our managing the sensory stimulations through language, and its utility **lies,** as we have already seen, in the fact that it helps us in predicting future events in the light of our experience in the past and present and in such a situation ontology of transcendental kind is due to its authors' ignorance of how language works in relation with the world of physical objects. We will see this point in more detail when we examine Quine's view that **'to** be is to be a value of a variable'.

Quine sees language as a natural phenomenon and **believes** that like any other natural phenomenon it is governed by natural laws. And the natural laws of language can be found only in our overt behaviour as the speakers of it. If our overt behaviour does not suggest an objective criterion of the use of a word then we have to **rule** out it as unnecessary. He sees the overt behaviour of people as speakers of language in relation with the sensory stimulations that prompt their speech dispositions in general. This standpoint leads Quine to reject not only transcendentalism but also determinacy of meaning and reference. He shows in his argument for ontological relativity that the standards of behaviour cannot settle whether a word refers to one and the same object even at the same time under the publicly recognisable circumstances relevant to its use, even for an individual speaker. The inscrutability of the reference of a word makes its meaning indeterminate and it is natural for we do not know then what we mean by a word otherwise than a behavioural response to given stimulations. Quine writes:

"For naturalism the question whether two expressions are alike or unlike in meaning has no determinate answer, known or unknown, except insofar as the answer is settled in principle by people's speech dispositions, known or unknown. If by these standards there are indeterminate cases, so much the worse for the terminology of meaning."[21]

Let us take Quine's example of the word "rabbit" as it is used to refer to a being. He says that from the point of view of stimulations caused on us by what we understand as rabbit it is not clear what we refer to by this word: it can be a rabbit or an undetached rabbit part or a temporal stage of the rabbit at the same time. Wherever any of these words occurs, the others can be substituted for it and all of them equally conform to the same stimulations. He writes:

"If you take the total scattered portion of the **spatiotemporal** world that is made up of rabbits, and that which is made up of undetached rabbit parts, and that which is made up of rabbit stages, you come out with the same scattered portion of the world

each of the three times. The only difference is in how you slice it. And how to slice it is what ostension or simple conditioning, however persistently repeated, cannot teach."[22]

One may **feel** here that the nature of the ending of word, being either plural or singular, **will** show whether the word refers to an entity called rabbit or its many undetached parts, as *a* rabbit will have *several* undetached parts. And notion of the identity can **also** be an aid for this. We can ask: **"Is** this rabbit the same as that one?" while pointing to different undetached parts of it to decide whether different parts or the whole of rabbit are being referred to by the word. But Quine says it works **only** with reference to the language we have already got used to as our way of contact with reality. And in principle the indecision on the reference of a word is an unresolved predicament for language. He says one can understand "is same as" as "belongs with". Nothing can prevent one's understanding of it this way, according to him, given the fact that stimulations have no say in deciding what we mean by these phrases. In such a situation the question "Is this rabbit the same as that one?" can be *translated* or paraphrased as "Is this a rabbit part that belongs with it?" This shows Quine's avowed aim which is to show that language does not have either mental or physical entities as its meanings but it in an indeterminate manner helps us respond behaviourally to stimulus situations.

Quine does not want to insist that we do not ordinarily make sense of our claim that language has definite references. But he says that this claim is limited in nature and that a philosophical reflection on this claim **will** unsettle the certainty of the references of words on the one hand and show the greatness of language as it makes possible for us a way to tide over the difficulty arising out of it, on the other. Quine disturbs us by saying that you and I have different set of stimulations and in that respect we are alien to each other. And at the same time he says that language brings us together by its referring to a world that is common to us in behavioural terms and is seen as independent of us. A move of this kind is not there in Wittgenstein. In him there is no division between you and I in terms of the use of

language. If language is indefinite in making sense, for Wittgenstein this has nothing to do with the fact that you and I are different beings but for him it is a fact about public and objective phenomenon called language. Wittgenstein rejects an empiricist view of language as for him it is the internal necessity of a way of life that makes us linguistic beings. This internal necessity of Wittgenstein is blind and spontaneous and cannot be reduced stimulations observable or **unobservable** on which Quine discovers the base of language. We have seen earlier that use of language is a kind of reflex action for Wittgenstein, but this reflex action may include the stimulations concerned but not as a base for it, and is a result of the necessity, which is strikingly metaphysical in a respect though Wittgenstein himself may not call it so, and can be felt more tangibly in the expression "Given the situation I/we act this way and I/we cannot help it". And for Wittgenstein even your inner most emotions can be conveyed to me fully and it is because of language, which makes you myself and me yourself. If these emotions are evasive in certain ways they are evasive for both of us in the same way. And such an attitude of Wittgenstein in his PI makes it a hosanna sung in praise of oneness of human experience and the world at an illuminated level.

Quine sees that the use of language is attended by extraordinary problem of reference even for an individual speaker. An individual speaker himself does not know what he refers to by his words. So it comes down to this, for Quine, that we are alien to each other and also as individuals each of us does not know what we refer to by language. Wittgenstein does not see an extraordinary difficulty attending the use of language. However, Wittgenstein denies language an ideal and precise sense that a philosopher like Plato or Kant or his early self sees about it. He does not think that you and I are alien to each other or that even as an individual I do not know what I refer to by my words. When somebody says the shopkeeper "Five red apples" Wittgenstein notices that no difficulty of communication exists between him and the shopkeeper even in principle. In PI what he shows us is that ordinary language does its work most efficiently and he explains there the nature of the ways of its performing its office. For Quine, on the other hand, language does its work in

a precarious manner and only an evolutionary process may make it more perfect by bringing it closer to sensory stimulations to make it firmer in its sense.

If we leave the example of rabbit and come to that of objects like apple, which does not have different parts like rabbit, still there is not much improvement in the matter of indeterminacy of meaning and inscrutability of reference in the ways of their relation with language. We have no transparent notion of the nature of relation between, for example, the term 'apple' and its relation with stimulations. Quine says that except through the conceptual apparatus provided through language we have no way at the basic level of stimulations to say how one apple is different from the other and where this difference lies. He writes:

"Also, if the term is a term of divided reference like "apple," there is the question of individuation: the question where one of its objects leaves off and another begins. This can be settled by induction from multiple ostensions of a more elaborate kind, accompanied by expressions like "same apple" and "another," if an equivalent of this English apparatus of individuation has been settled on; otherwise the indeterminacy persists that was illustrated by "rabbit," "undetached rabbit part," and "rabbit stage."[23]

Language. Variable and Ontology

Quine defines ontology as relative to language. For him language does not provide us with either determinate meanings or a way to settle the problem of this indeterminacy in terms of reference, as reference is inscrutable. He understands meaning of a word as what it shares with its translation. When Quine uses the term 'word' what he means by this is 'one-word sentence', as for him the division of sentence into words is our way of using language to make it simpler and more convenient. That is, the word 'Red' and the sentence 'That flower is red" are both sentences by way of reactions to given sets of stimulations. And we consider one of them word and another sentence for the reason of our need for a simplified version

of the use of language. Having said this, we will now turn to his definition of meaning as what a word shares with its translation as it requires some explanation.

When I converse with my native neighbour what actually happens there? If we take Quine seriously, what happens there is a **homophonic** translation in that it is essentially no way different from a heterophonic translation between two different languages. Suppose a linguist after observing a tribe understands that they in their language **uses** the word 'gavagai' to denote what we call rabbit. So when the linguist engages himself in a conversation with that tribe he has to understand their 'gavagai' as **'rabbit'** of his English. And when we turn to our home language, the same translation takes place there as well but in a different way where it is homophonic "which simply carries each string of phonemes into itself. When we understand 'rabbit' as 'rabbit' either in my conversation with my neighbour or in my soliloquy in English I translate 'rabbit' as 'rabbit'. But if Quine says like this, is it not then a case of truism? Not so for Quine. For, according to him, the word 'rabbit' can mean as 'rabbit as a whole', 'undetached rabbit part', 'temporal stage of rabbit' at the same time and all these uses conform to the given stimulations. So it is through a homophonic translation that we prefer one of them, in this case 'rabbit', to others as its translation.

To see meaning as what a language shares with its translation is not something that **will** find favour with Wittgenstein. He considers language as a social act where people reach out to each other and to themselves at once without the mediation of a process called translation. And we have seen that he understands the uses of words as games. In a game a player cannot wait for anything, but has to act spontaneously. In a language game a use of word sets the contours of its significance in it effectively and in the process it validates itself. For Wittgenstein language is used without much ado. But for Quine, on the other hand, use of language is a process of translation and it establishes its meanings with much ado. Inspite of the disturbing factors related to meaning and reference that he reads into language

Quine finds that a provincial agreement as to meaning and reference of it is reached among speakers.

Quine says that we cannot say what corresponds to a word in absolute terms. He writes:

"It is meaningless to ask whether, in general, our terms "rabbit," "rabbit part," 'number," etc., really refers respectively to rabbits, rabbit parts, numbers, etc., rather than to some ingeniously permuted denotations. It is meaningless to ask this absolutely; we can meaningfully ask it only relative to some background language. When we ask, "Does 'rabbit' really refer to rabbits?" someone can counter with the question: "Refer to in what sense of 'rabbits'?" thus launching a regress; and we need the background language to regress into. The background language gives the query sense, if only relative sense; sense relative in turn to it; this background language."[24]

Rabbit is rabbit only relative to a background language where the word for *it* has a use in relation with other words. The word "rabbit" is relatively closer to the field of stimulations, whereas terms represent numbers are situated away from this field. But both kinds of words serve us in our endeavour of making our engagement with the field of stimulations simple and pragmatic and the result is that we have a postulated world of physical objects and related phenomena to talk about, though not without the problem of indeterminacy of meaning and inscrutability of reference that attend the reference and meaning. If we make a regression to some background language to make sense of references of terms, then on what this background language depends to make sense of itself? Relative to a further background language? But, then, this background language can be made sense of **only** in terms of another background language and so on. Needless to say what results in is a desperate regression. But Quine finds that it cannot go on like this in practice. He writes:

"And in practice we end the regress of background languages, in discussions of reference, by acquiescing in our mother tongue and taking its words at face value."[25]

But in principle this background language does not settle the problem of reference and meaning. And we have seen how **"rabbit"** *means* "rabbit", **"undetached** rabbit part" and "temporal stage of rabbit" at the same time in principle and the indeterminacy of meaning and inscrutability of reference that arise thus holds for background language also. So it comes to this for Quine that our ontology is relative not only to a settled way of using the background language, where we do not care for the said indeterminacy and inscrutability, but also to its unsettled possibilities where an object is one and many, is and is not, at the same time. This is the reason why he says our ontology is doubly relative.

In his article **'On** what there is', Quine proposes the maxim: 'to be is to be the value of a variable'. This maxim is to show that our ontology is relative to a background language and also that there are ontological commitments that we can dispense with in the light of a pragmatic approach to meaning and reference. Let us see how he accomplishes these purposes.

Quine admits that even the descriptive phrases that talk about the non-existent entities like **'the** round square cupola on Berkeley College' and 'the present king of France' are meaningful, but he objects to the view that this means that we have to admit in our ontological commitments entities, whether abstract or imaginary, to correspond to them. He writes in the article, following Russell, that the meaningfulness of the above phrases lies in the fact that they can appear in a sentence as a part of it. For example we can say: "The round square cupola on Berkeley College is" or "the present king of France is bald". And it is only in this way even the sentences that affirm truths about objects, which exist, make sense. When someone says "rabbit", it means only in the context of a sentence. He shows then that the example 'The round square cupola on Berkeley College is pink',

following Russell, can be rewritten as 'something is round and square and is a cupola on Berkeley College and is pink, and nothing else is round and square and a cupola on Berkeley College'. ('Nothing else' is to show that only one object is referred to and not more in the context, and this way the uniqueness of the definite article 'the' is maintained in the new sentence). Here the expression 'something' cannot take on any specific object as its value and remains a variable, and it is this variable that long with rest of the linguistic expressions which makes the sentence meaningful and not its alleged reference. For Quine even the descriptive phrases, which really refer to concrete objects, in the context of sentences can be explained as sentences with variables that take on objects for their references. To take an example, the sentence 'The author of *Waverley* was a poet' may have a reference in the community of human beings and this cannot be verified on the basis of the significance of the sentence alone. But this, for Quine, only shows that the variable of this sentence may not fail to refer if everything goes well, and he explains the form of above sentence as 'Someone (better: something) wrote *Waverley* and was a poet, and nothing else wrote *Waverley*'. He writes about this method of analyzing language:

"The virtue of this analysis is that the seeming name, a descriptive phrase, is paraphrased *in context* as a so-called incomplete symbol. No unified expression is offered as an analysis of the descriptive phrase, but the statement as a whole which was the context of that phrase still gets its full quota of meaning -whether true or false."[26]

Quine writes that language in general contains in it a tendency to refer and that it is the nature of language. This general tendency of language is due to its variables that form a basic unit of it. And variables as such do not stand for specific objects and it is only an empirical verification that can show whether the given sentence asserts something true or not. While Quine recognises the **meaningfulness** even of contradictions he denies that there are entities that stand for every

104

meaningful statement. This move of his is contrary obviously to the transcendental conception of world advocated by Plato and Kant. He writes:

"But in Russell's translation, '**Something** wrote *Waverley* and was a poet and nothing else wrote *Waverley*', the burden of objective reference which had been put upon the descriptive phrase is now taken over by words of the kind that logicians call bound variables, variables of quantification, namely, words like 'something', 'nothing', 'everything'. These words, far from purporting to be names specifically of the author of *Waverley*, do not purport to be names at all; they refer to entities generally, with a kind of studied ambiguity peculiar to themselves. These quantificational words or bound variables are, of course a basic part of language, and their **meaningfulness,** at least in context, is not to be challenged. But their **meaningfulness** in no way presupposes there being either the author of *Waverley* or the round square cupola on Berkeley College or any other specifically preassigned objects."[27]

Following this he says that there cannot be universals like 'redness', 'householod', '**rosehood**', etc. He writes:

"The words '**houses**', 'roses', and 'sunsets' are true of sundry individual entities which are houses and roses and sunsets, and the word 'red' or 'red object' is true of each of sundry individual entities which are red houses, red roses, red sunsets; but there is not, in addition, any entity whatever, individual or otherwise, which is named by the word 'redness', nor, for that matter, by the word 'householod', 'rosehood', 'sunsethood'."[28]

Quine's point here is in accordance with his view that meaningfulness of linguistic expressions cannot vouch for their ontology. There may be some sense due to the general nature of language, according to him, in saying that we agree in calling all houses by the term "house", and then in imagining that this points to that they must be sharing something common among them to be called by the same term.

But that does not mean for him what is called common to different houses names an abstract entity called 'household'. The concrete reference of a term is a matter of empirical verification for Quine. Quine subsequently argues for a notion of language as consisting of variables which make them meaningful one way or other and for a theory of reference as the values of those variables. He calls variables of language pronouns and the values of them "propronouns". By this position he denies the ordinary names their tendency to be fundamental about the use of language and brings into prominence the structure of language and its relation with concrete reality as the basic phenomenon that accounts for meaningfulness and reference of our language.

His position that the names as referring to physical objects are not the basic components of language can be justified, but only as a consequence of his belief that what underlies the world of physical phenomena is a flux of sensory stimulations and physical objects are myths to be imported into our conceptual scheme to make sense of these stimulations. Nevertheless he insists that for pragmatic purposes we have to retain these myths. And when he talks about the nature of mathematics he yields to the pragmatic consideration of allowing Platonic abstract entities there. He says that mathematical rules are meaningful and in that respect they are like the sentential forms with their variables. But, he further says that their notations do not refer to concrete observable objects, so they are meaningless. It follows from this that mathematical objects do not exist and the mathematical propositions make sense only because of their rules or forms, which have remote connections with stimulations. But his **phenomenalistic** position towards reality ends at a point where practical considerations come into play and there he grants reality to physical objects, which are concrete and observable, and also objects of mathematical propositions which are abstract. But for him from an epistemological point of view it makes no sense to say that either physical objects or abstract mathematical objects exist. He writes:

"From among various conceptual schemes best suited to these various pursuits, one-the **phenomenalistic-** claims epistemological priority. Viewed from within the **phenomenalistic** conceptual scheme, the ontologies of physical objects and mathematical objects are myths. The quality of myth, however, is relative; relative, in this case, to the epistemological point of view. This point of view is one among various, corresponding to one among our various interests and purposes." [29]

This shows the liberal trait immanent in Quine. Though he advocates ardently for phenomenalism and naturalism in philosophy he says that our views on matters of ontological commitments can vary from one epistemological position to another determined by our interests and purposes. This can be considered a tribute paid to the philosophical inquiry in general with its varied directions and commitments by a philosopher, who asserts that a thorough going epistemological outlook cannot countenance anyhting but an empirical approach to reality. But we will see later on whether his empirical approach to reality will stand the test. Let us now turn to Quine's view on translation to see how he explains meaning and reference of language through it.

Quine on Translation

We have seen that for Quine it is through a process of translation that we have meanings of linguistic terms. In our home language this translation is **homophonic** one and when between two different languages it is **heterophonic.** And both of them involve the same conceptual dilemmas about reference and meaning and none of them does have an advantage over the other in this respect. In his book *Word and Object* Quine concentrates on a hypothetical translation that takes place between English and language of a tribe hitherto unknown to the English. And Quine sees that the English linguist, who carries out this translation faces many a predicament and difficulty, and for him they are as same as the ones we face in our daily communication in our home language. We do not know, he says, how different sentences are understood in our language in terms of their references and meanings

and we, in the same manner, **also** do not know, he adds, how a translation is effected between two languages. As we have got used to the use of our home language, according to Quine, we are not ordinarily aware of our predicaments as to reference and meaning there, and he believes that in a translation between two entirely alien **languages** they crop up in a striking manner and that it can mirror the situation in our home turf.

Before we go on to Quine's description of translation in the book, let us have a look at some introductory remarks he makes in that. He says there that we have knowledge of the physical objects only through the effects they "induce at our sensory surfaces". But he notices that we do not in general talk about reality in sensory terms but in terms of physical objects. He finds the reason for it in the way we acquire language. We acquire it as a phenomenon related to objects out there on the evidence of other people's speech dispositions. But he says that it ought not prevent us from seeing the role of sensory stimulations in acquisition of our language and the knowledge of physical objects, as it is the basis for them. And it is the interaction between language and the stimulations that accounts for our having a world in the way as we have it now.

Though Quine considers physical objects myths, he does no way degrade their status in our present conceptual scheme. He says that they help us have a simple and coherent account of the world. And, more importantly, Quine looks to them as the observational criteria of our use of language as responses to sensory stimulations. According to him, when we utter: "That is a rabbit" by way of a response to certain stimulations that hit my sensory surfaces, the observational criterion of these stimulations and the response lie in the physical enduring object that we see before us. He writes that the physical objects may not be real but as things stand now we **have** nothing else to depend on for making our talk concrete and objective. In his own words:

"It was a lexicographer, Dr. Johnson, who demonstrated the reality of a stone by kicking it; and to begin with, at least, we have little better to go on than Johnsonian usage. The familiar material objects may not be all that is real, but they are admirable examples."[30]

But he believes that this must not lead us to base our explanation of reality on what is perceived as world of physical objects. Philosophy, he urges us, must emulate science where its neologism replaces familiar objects by its own entities. So, on the same line philosophy can look into the matter with its own concrete method and it doses not matter if it displaces ordinary conception of the word. He writes:

"Scientific neologism is itself just linguistic evolution gone **self** conscious, as science is self conscious common sense. And philosophy in turn, as an effort to get clearer on things, is not to be distinguished in essential points of purpose and method from good and bad science." [31]

We have seen that for Quine it is in the context of a language as a whole that a sentence of it makes sense. But can we consider a sentence as consisting of many words? Quine understands that a sentence is uttered as a whole in response to given stimuli. For him sentences are either one-word ones as **'Red'** and **'Rabbit'** or many-word ones like **'My** hand hurts', where what is considered each word makes sense either as one-word sentence (e.g. 'My hand') or in the context of the sentence **(e.g.'…hurts')** in question. This way of looking at language helps Quine sidestep physical objects as references of it to see it as a collection of sentences primarily related to stimulations. For him language viewed as consisting of words referring to distinct objects is a derivative phenomenon answering our practical needs out of reality.

It may be asked how far we can rely on our sensory stimulations? This question makes its point **felt,** for example, when we see an object from a moving car of which we cannot say whether it is a crumpled paper or a stone. Which

stimulations are responsible for this indecision? If stimulations are solid and clear in themselves they ought not create confusions of the above sort in us on any occasion. But Quine says that the above indecision about the object can be settled by a reexamination of it by the people in the car and that this indecision owes its being to the influence of other past stimulations on our present ones. His position is that our concern is not with how far stimulations are pure absolutely in a situation but with how far we can make sense of our talk of the world in terms of them.

Quine says that even if we know miraculously **all** the truths about the world expressed through language it will not **help** us have the definite references or determinate senses for its sentences. Consider the sentence **'Brutus** killed Caesar'. How we will make sense of this sentence except as relative to a frame of reference evolved out of the relation of our non-verbal stimulations with language? But there the references of it are not settled in one way but in several ways at the same time. This makes the sense of the sentence indeterminate. But only thing we can be sure of this sentence, if it is true, according to Quine, is that there is empirical evidence that substantiate this sentence, and it, given his philosophical approach, obviously will not help us believe that we have a determinate access to its references. So Quine writes that our absolute claims to truths always remain relative to our frame of reference. This position no doubt rules out the view of Plato and Kant that there is an absolute and ideal base of our ordinary world. In his own words:

"Within our own total evolving doctrine, we can judge truth as earnestly and absolutely as can be; subject to correction, but that goes without saying."[32]

In language, according to Quine, sentences broadly fall into occasion sentences and standing sentences. The occasion sentences are the ones for the utterance of which current stimulations are needed. One learns one's mother tongue in the beginning through learning the use of occasion sentences that are uttered by elders in the presence of publicly shareable non-verbal stimulations caused by seen objects. And standing sentences are standing reports on occasion sentences. **'Red',**

'It hurts', 'His face is dirty', 'I see a man in front of me', 'This man is a bachelor' etc., are occasion sentences. And the sentence 'A man called X stood in the Abids City Square at 6.30 P.M on March 24, 2002' is a standing sentence as this sentence is stating a fact that may be true independent of current stimulations. And among occasion sentences there are sentences that will admit verifiability about them in publicly observable terms and others that are not so. The sentence: 'I see a red object in front of me' is an example of the former, whereas an angler's sudden exclamation: "I just felt a nibble" is that of the latter. Quine calls the sentences that admit the public verifiability about them observation sentences and for him they are the sentences that a learner depends in the beginning for the acquisition of his mother tongue.   And there are occasion sentences, according to Quine, of which observation in terms of non-verbal stimulations tied to observable phenomena is not possible though their meanings are shared among the users of language. He calls them non-observational sentences, and an example for them is: 'He is a bachelor', uttered by one at the sight of one's bachelor friend.

For Quine what determines the classification of sentences thus is the gradation of observationality about them in terms of non-verbal stimulations. So this classification is one in degree and not in kind. The sentences like 'Red' are less problematic in terms of observationality as we have less indeterminacy in deciding on what is it that we call by it, compared to other observational sentences like 'Rabbit' whose references cannot be determined at all in principle definitely.   And in the case of 'Bachelor' we have no set of non-verbal stimulations that determine their meanings. A bachelor friend provides us with only the stimulations of a human face and it is verbal networks that define the meaning of the sentence 'Bachelor' for us by their relations with remote non-verbal stimulations. Quine writes:

"What we have is a gradation of observationality from one extreme, at 'Red' or above, to the other extreme at 'Bachelor' and below."[33]

Suppose the native language of the tribe has a sentence **'Gavagai'** which the linguist translate as **'Rabbit'** in English. This translation for Quine is as same as our making sense of 'Rabbit' as 'Rabbit' in English. This translation is possible because of the observationality of the enduring physical object called rabbit and the difficulties attached to the translation of this for the linguist are only that of examining different native informants on different occasions to confirm it. But this translation no way settles the indeterminacy of meaning of the sentence and also the inscrutability of its reference. Suppose the linguist translates the sentence **'Gavagai'** by converting it into 'gavagai' to mean it as general term referring to a specific being as a whole referred to by the general term 'rabbit' in English. Quine explains the situation arising out of it:

"For, consider 'gavagai'. Who knows but what the objects to which this term applies are not rabbits after all, but mere stages, or brief temporal segments, of rabbits? In either event the stimulus situations that prompt assent to **'Gavagai'** would be the same as for 'Rabbit'. Or perhaps the objects to which 'gavagai' applies are **all** and sundry undetached parts of rabbits; again the stimulus meaning would register no difference. When from the sameness of stimulus meanings of 'Gavagai' and 'Rabbit' the linguist leaps to the conclusion that a gavagai is a whole enduring rabbit, he is just taking for granted that the native is enough like us to have a brief general term for rabbits and no brief general term for rabbit stages or parts."[34]

Quine sees that the truth functions in a language such as negation, conjunction and alternation can be translated in behavioural terms. The rule of negation is that it comes into being for a sentence when it is dissented from as different from the other occasion on which it was assented to. And for the settled sentences the conjunction is true when **all** the components of a compound sentence are assented to at a **given** time. And an alternation is considered false only when **all** its components are dissented from at a time. But Quine finds that there are no behavioural criteria to settle the meanings of the native equivalents of quantifiers such as 'All', 'Some' etc. for translation. And the nature of the translation of these

logical particles explains for Quine how we make sense of their equivalents in our home language.

Quine asks: how one understands 'Bachelor' as 'Unmarried man'? No non-verbal stimulations can account for this understanding. And the case is similar for the translation of the native sentence that has been translated as 'Bachelor'. There cannot be a translation of sentences like it into English from the native language on behavioural evidence in terms of non-verbal stimulation. If we take the socialisation of 'Bachelor' as 'Unmarried man' is the base for its being understood so then Quine says that they affirm a synonymy relation between them in a quite inconclusive manner and that meanings of them are radically indeterminate. And, for him, the sentences like them and their synonymies are to be made sense of the remote indeterminate relations they have with the non-verbal stimulations through devious verbal links. And for him we cannot have an objective use of a sentence whatever except as related to sensory stimulations one way or other.

The consideration of the above translation leads Quine to assert that not every sentence is translatable easily in behavioural terms from one language into another in principle. There are problems as to even the sentences that are translatable, not that of induction but that of meaning and reference in principle. But in practice translation between two remotely related languages can take place. But Quine is making a philosophical point. Quine calls the sentences of the form: 'No bachelor is married' stimulus analytic sentences and says that they cannot be made sense of non-verbal stimulations and that a translation of them from one language into another is only a matter of the recognition of their uses in relation with the languages in question. In short the conclusion he has reached by the method of examining a translation is not so much merely about the relation between two languages as about our own home language. In our language, to put it briefly, according to Quine, we can make sense of observation sentences and logical connectives on behavioral evidence and we cannot do so of stimulus analytic sentences and quantifiers. But even for the observation sentences, he says, the

determination of their meanings is only a practical one and in principle the indeterminacy of them and the inscrutability of their reference cannot be settled. So Quine says that even when in practice there exists a translation of a language into another it is not the unique translation between them. And there can be translations of one language into another which are incompatible with one another and the recognised one and all of them at the same time **will** conform to the behavioural evidence of the recognised one. In other words, our home language makes sense of itself **only** in a pragmatic manner and there is nothing ideal about it. Thus Quine rejects an ideal picture of reality and rules out the possibility for a transcendental and a priori base for it.

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CHAPTER IV

Derrida's Notion of Absence
and Deconstruction

We have seen in the first chapter of this thesis that it is to define the objectivity of the world in its absoluteness that Plato and Kant have formulated their fields of transcendental concepts. The early Wittgenstein also wants to formulate this objectivity conceptually, but in terms of concrete metaphysical entities. Later on he realises that concrete ideality is no different from transcendental one in their conceptual import and that both have no basis in our ordinary language and the world in it. His rejection of ideality is so tremendous and formidable that it looks as if transcendental philosophy had to either bow out of the scene or it owed an explanation to our day-to-day life. Quine articulates the rejection of ideality of the objectivity of world in empiricist terms and we see in him a concept of indeterminate meaning and inscrutable reference and it means that, according to him, our conception of ideal objectivity is a myth. And now in this chapter we come to Derrida, who questions the very concept of objectivity on the basis of his assumption that the world itself is an impossibility originally. He shows the impossibility of the world as presence through a notion called *differance* and calls his method of analysing being in general into absence deconstruction.

Derrida's notion of the absence of the being of world is a rejection of the determinate picture of reality we ordinarily adhere ourselves to. In place of this picture we have in him a notion of the world which makes it a phenomenon of which we cannot say anything. We will see what *differance* is and it is the concept (or non-concept) on which Derrida founds his theory (or non-theory) of absence.

Derrida and *differance*

Derrida sees our world as a flux. This flux does not consist of elements but is a trace of **'is'** and **'is** not' combined into each other. He calls this trace or flux

temporalisation of space and spacing of time. An ordinary object can be seen destroyed or deconstructed into its 'is and is not' at once in this flux. This deconstruction is the reality, for Derrida sees that the spatio-temporal dimension of the world makes it *different* each moment in a radical manner in which an element in the chain of traces that make up the world for him is not the same as its preceding one or the following one. And it in itself becomes a non-entity and this is the reason why this flux is not of elements but of the absence of being.

If world is full of differences that constitute its absence how we feel that we have a world presented to us. This presence is due to our expectation of its being as a future event. That is, the being of the world is not given now but we expect it of it in a future which, according to Derrida, never comes. His concept of differance involves in it both the difference and the deference or the postponement of being to an unreal future that make the world an illusion of presence. Differance thus makes the identity of an object an enigma. So this concept (or non-concept) makes the world an identity postponed to an unreal future through a chain of differences. Derrida writes about the French word "to differ" that has both the meanings that differance is defined to have:

"In the one case "to differ" signifies nonidentity; in the other case it signifies the order of the *same.* Yet there must be a common, although entirely differant [*differante*], root within the sphere that relates the two movements of differing to one another. We provisionally give the name *differance* to this *sameness* which is not *identical:* by the silent writing of its a, it has the desired advantage of referring to differing, *both* as **spacing/temporalizing** and as the movement that structures every dissociation."[1]

Derrida is not concerned in his view of the reality with the French connotations of the word "to differ" in their literal sense but with differance that shows difference and deference as the nature of the flux that makes up our reality. In the above remark he only indicates those connotations of the French word in

question. In his employment of differance we will see that he means spacing of time and **temporalisation** of space are indistinguishable from each other and are in their unity responsible for differences of the world that make it an absence or an expectation about its presence in an unreal future.

Let us now see the different ways through which Derrida makes sense of differance, though in certain instances we feel that he repeats the same point over and again to substantiate the rich implications and connotations of it. Differance is neither a word nor a concept. This outlook goes very well with his position that nothing can be said positively about anything for being in general is an absence. He follows this line of thought to say that differance is neither an act of the subject nor the passivity of the object. That is, it is neither active nor passive. Then what is it? He says it is the middle voice that makes it a combination of opposites denying an essence to it. Being the middle voice this way it destroys the Kantian subject and Platonic objectivity that is not subject dependent. For Derrida the objectivity that Plato and Kant **takes** as the basis of the articulations of their conceptual fields is due to the illusion that a world is present there. He says that this presence is always an articulation of absence as a postponement towards being over differences and a postponement in a void.

Then a question arises here: How does Derrida make sense of differance if no talk is possible about anything whatsoever? He views his description of differance as a strategic move to show that everything comes down to a mere absence at the end. He writes:

"Reflection on this last determination of difference will lead us to consider differance as the strategic note or **connection--relatively** or provisionally *privileged* — which indicates the closure of presence, together with the closure of the conceptual order and denomination, a closure that is effected in the functioning of traces."[2]

Striking the operation of differance on an indescribable level that undoes the concept of entity in general Derrida points out that all convenient distinctions of the presence mark not only their absence in themselves but also that of their relation as opposites. They themselves are assailed by their condition called differance which conditions their relations as opposites as well. Derrida opines that we cannot call differance either a concept of sensibility or that of intelligibility for differance is the general condition of the distinction between sensibility and intelligibility which makes the distinction as such a non-essence.

Plato and Kant depended upon intellect of man to arrive at the essences of being. They think that the world of senses do not reveal the objectivity of the world as such. Plato has shown that the same thing may be hot and **cold** at the same time for two different persons at the same time or for the same person at different times. He searches then for the absolute heat and the absolute cold which no matter their contingent condition of being is retain their respective identity and this is the reason why he thinks such absoluteness is independent of space and time. And Kant criticises Hume for his confining himself to the world of senses at the cost of the intelligible part of man that, according to him, constructs the world. Pitted against the view of Plato and Kant is **Derrida's** notion of absence that, .he believes, reaches out to the differences that go beyond even the relative differences of the ordinary world. On this notion the world is given neither in sense experience nor in intelligible reflection originally but **all** such distinctions are a result of illusion called presence. Neither differance itself is either intelligible or sensible. He writes:

"We must be referred to an order, then, that resists philosophy's founding opposition between the sensible and the intelligible. The order that resists this opposition, that resists it because it sustains it, is designated in a movement of differance (with a) between two differences or between two **letters.**"[3]

Neither pure rationality nor a method of empirical examination reveals what differance is. Derrida envisages a *play* that violates the logic of empirical and

conceptual enquiry which **will** eventually provide us with something that appears risking its disappearance, something which makes being **'an** endless **calculus'** of absence. In his own words:

"The concept **of** *play* [*jeu*] remains beyond this opposition; on the eve and aftermath of philosophy, it designates the unity of chance and necessity in an endless calculus of absence."[4]

Derrida is very cautious to see that differance does not come to be seen as a transcendental concept. To be transcendental is for him to endorse an anchor that is solid and intense in its presence. Of course, in his *Of Grammatology* he describes the operation of differance as transcendental, but he makes it clear there that this is to show that it does not function at the level of ordinary objectivity but at a level where the distinction between the ordinary and transcendence **(ontic-ontological** difference) cease to be significant. He calls it transcendental there as a strategy to show that no concept of objectivity can master the play of differance. Though Derrida does not **call** the reality a flux his view suggests it from its employment of time and space to this effect. Rather it may be that he does not directly do so as it will be a kind of naming something in philosophical mode which cannot have a philosophical name or a name in general for that matter. But for all that, the practical reasoning of differance will show us that reality is flux of being and not-being that makes itself absent as a chain of traces, which are fluxes in turn. Derrida prefers the word trace to describe differance. For him differance as trace is a trace without an origin and a purpose. He explains how differance is a reality out of the differences being created eternally by time in conjunction with space each forming the **interior** of the other, a reality that negates or deconstructs the presence of being:

""To differ" in this sense is to **temporalize,** to resort, consciously or unconsciously, to the temporal and temporalizing mediation of a detour that suspends the accomplishment or fulfillment of "desire" or "will," or carries desire or will out in a way that annuls or tempers their effect. We shall see, later, in what respects this

temporalizing is also a **temporalization** and spacing, is space's becoming-temporal and time's becoming-spatial, is "primordial constitution" of space and time, as metaphysics or transcendental phenomenology would call it in the language that is here criticized and displaced."[5]

Derrida does not view a sign as secondary to a presence or an object that is generally taken to be represented by it. He holds that as **long** as a sign is considered a substitute for an object, in it presence is deferred in the sense that presence is desired in it. Presence is desired in a sign and it is desired as a future possibility as no one knows what a thing in itself is **except** through configurations of signs **called** language. However he points out that if language is different from its reference then this relation is a matter of differance. So he calls signification "the differance of temporalizing". Broadly what it means is that reference is written into language as its negation and language is written into reference as its negation. That is, language is not alien to reference and also the latter to former. So in the chain of differences we find what we are accustomed to think as an exclusive difference between language and reference; but Derrida says that this difference is not on a different level but on the same level where differance makes its movement possible as an impossibility.

This view of Derrida is an outcome of his belief that an entity is related to other entities in the world through differences. According to this view what makes an object what it is is its being determined not on its own but by relations with other objects. This is his questioning of absolute being of an object in its uniqueness and asserting a deconstruction of it into its different relations of difference. So here we may take note of the fact differance is not merely a linear **trace** of 'is' and 'is **not's** but in its general purport a chain of traces in different modes of differences. Nevertheless, its underlying logic cannot be anything other than a play of Ms and is not'. The table I see in front of me, according to this move, *is* what it is in its being what it *IS not*. It is its relations with the other entities. We may not lose sight here of the important conviction of Derrida which stipulates that even if an object is taken

in isolation provisionally it is not a **presence** but a desired **presence** over a chain of differences and this **conviction** is his basic and subtle view on which his various demonstrations of it on macro plane depend.

Though Derrida is critical of Saussure for his privileging speech that represents presence over writing, which represents absence, he appreciates his view that language is a configuration of differences of terms. Language understood thus gives Derrida the possibility of seeing the negation of an object/sign into its differences constituted by its relations with other objects/signs, a technique he makes use of in his criticism of Plato on the basis of Plato's use of word *pharmakon* in **Phaedrus.** And this possibility is that of locating the play of differance on an ordinary plane, of course, at the risk of its negating itself and naturally that is the fate of this play as Derrida himself points out. He writes about **Saussure's** view on difference:

"It was Saussure who first of all set forth the *arbitrariness of signs* and the *differential character* of signs as principles of general semiology and particularly of linguistics. And, as we know, these two themes - the arbitrary and the differential - are in his view inseparable. Arbitrariness can occur only because the system of signs is constituted by the differences between the terms, and not by their fullness. The elements of signification function not by virtue of the compact force of their cores but by the network of oppositions that distinguish them and relate them to one another."[6]

Translated in ontic terms this view will be that the individual entities of the world can be replaced by other individual entities and their present position is not a necessity but a contingent situation in the network of relations. And these relations, for Derrida, are articulations of **absences** that point to differance without an origin and a purpose. Like a sign in the language **the** tree over there can give way to some other entity that will replace it and what matters in this replacement is the relations of the entities in question with other entities. **Derrida's** radical version of this view

makes everything disappear from its generally perceived place and it fills this space with negation of its being for ever. Derrida expresses his view as to this in the following way:

"The first consequence to be drawn from this is that the signified concept is never present in itself, in an adequate **presence** that would refer **only** to itself. Every concept is necessarily and essentially inscribed in a chain or a system, within which it refers to another and to other concepts, by the systematic play of differences. Such a **play, then--differance--is** no longer simply a concept, but the possibility of conceptuality, of the conceptual system and process in general. For the same reason, differance, which is not a concept, is not a mere word; that is, it is not what we represent to ourselves as the calm and present self-referential unity of a concept and sound [*phonie*]."[7]

Derrida's concept of time and space is in **effect** a rejection of the presence of them. Time is making **the** entire existence a nothing. Derrida says an interval is desired in the flux of time to make sense of being even in its negative sense that will give us a grip over sense. And Derrida calls this interval spacing. But he says time does not make itself absent within this interval and as a result we see this interval dividing itself into its differences or absence and he calls it temporalisation of space. This constitutes his explanation of time's becoming spatial and space's becoming temporal. He calls this phenomenon not only differance but also protowriting, prototrace, pharmakon, etc.

Derrida makes the **semiological** differences the very condition of reality and thus its absence. **He** says that there cannot be *any presence* "before the semiological difference or outside it". He believes that when Saussure says that language is not a function of the speaking subject he is echoing the death of the subject conceived independent of language. Absence of the object and subject that language heralds through its differences as its very condition makes everything a phenomenon of

language. As a network of differences, language determines its own absence eternally as also being in general. Derrida writes about "the subject":

"This implies that the subject (self-identical or even conscious of self-identity, self-conscious) is inscribed in the language, that he is a "function" of the language."[8]

It is not difficult for a follower of the later Wittgenstein to understand Derrida's move here. However, there are differences between them. Whereas Wittgenstein stops at blind necessity and vague sense as the bedrock of being Derrida translates this blindness and vagueness into an abyss of absence of being and according to him 'there is no support to be found and no depth to be had for this bottomless chessboard where being is set in play". Derrida starts from where Wittgenstein stops positively to sec everything comes down into an eternal indescribability of negative kind, though he himself may not call it negative as he does not see anything positive there to oppose it to.

Derrida envisages the destruction of opposites into the traces where one of them does not stand diametrically opposite to its other, but determinant of the other and being determined by the other. For example, according to his view, good can be made sense of only in terms of its relation with bad and it marks the destruction of the pure concept called good. Good will be a conjunction of what it is and what it is not and this conjunction is not that of two external concepts but of finding each one of them in the interior of the other as each other's internal disappearance. Good is the differance or is and is not of bad. He objects to all coupled oppositions such as the intelligible vs. sensible, life vs. matter, culture vs. nature and the like on the same logic. It shows his deconstruction works not only within a particular entity taken in isolation where it is a trace or traces on its own but also in its relations with other entities where these relations viewed as operating within the entities themselves in question. In *Dissemination* he calls this phenomenon the polysemy of a word that is believed to represent an object. The polysemy of a word for Derrida is its

destruction of identity as it **will** be related not only to its different meanings in it but also to its opposite meanings conceptually as, for example, good is to bad.

Differance is not something absent but an absence of the **conceptuality** that projects an illusion called presence as the **opposite** of absence. What it shows is that the being of the world is a deference over differences and, therefore, it is absent. But this showing or differance or this movement of making the being absent is not itself either absent or present. Differance as it is is that which "exceeds the alternatives of presence or absence". Differance marks the absence of what we call presence and it in itself is neither present nor absent but appears risking its disappearance. What the title of this chapter indicates is that which Derrida names "the delimitation of ontology (of presence)"[9]. Derrida says that the language of presence or absence cannot account for differance which does not make distinctions of this kind in its original move. Rather this move is a formidable question mark on any coupled opposition. The following remark by Derrida sums the points we have just made:

"What is questioned by the thought of differance, therefore, is the determination of being in presence, or in **beingness.** Such a question could not arise and be understood without the difference between Being and beings opening up somewhere. The first consequence of this is that differance is not. It is not a being-present, however excellent, unique, principal, or transcendent one makes it. It commands nothing, rules over nothing, and nowhere does it exercise any authority. It is not marked by a capital letter. Not only is there no realm of differance, but differance is even the subversion of every realm."[10]

Derrida calls our accepted world in its presence a transgression. In Quine we have seen that this world is an outcome of a pragmatic approach towards what is otherwise an inscrutable whole. However, Quine does not question the presence of being but only the defmiteness of reference and determinacy of meaning. Derrida, on the other hand, questions the very thing called **presence** and, instead, he puts forward a play called differance that is absent and present at the same time which

makes the presence called transgression absent in **its being** present and absent at the same time and it makes it an original trace without an origin and purpose. We cannot say whether **differance** is either present or absent but **only** that in it presence is written into absence and vice versa and it thus exceeds the meaning of ordinary language to be is and is not at the same time. Differance is a "false beginning or end of a **game"**[11] called reality and what lies between this beginning and this end cannot be for the same reason different.

Derrida calls differance protowriting in his article we have been considering now. And he develops what he provisionally calls a science of this writing in his *Of Grammatology*and we will now see briefly what are his reflections on differance as writing as explained in that book.

Differance as protowriting and **Grammatology**

Derrida criticises the view that privileges speech over writing. According to this view writing derives its being from a spoken language. What gives the spoken language this **'alleged** superiority' is the fact that it is live with a subject and intentions present in it as its owners. And this view takes writing as devoid of a live subject and consequently of independent of someone who can correct an understanding of it if its intentions are sometimes misunderstood. But for Derrida the live subject, object and intentions connote their own absence and if it is speech that makes us feel that presence is there, then speech must be considered causing an illusion. Derrida here makes his shift for privileging writing over speech as the condition for speech as well as writing. However this privileging is not that of ordinary writing which still is anchored to a spoken subject who has written it but that of protowriting which connotes the complete absence. Taking the clue from the provisional absence of subject in the ordinary phonetic writing Derrida derives his view called protowriting or nonphonetic writing that marks the absence even of the secondary presence that phonetic writing represents. Thus, **Derrida's** objection is not merely to speech but also to phonetic writing. But this does not make him call

the transgression called presence through phone, or disguises that is created through it as forms of presence, a contingent factor. Or, what can be contingent in the necessary movement of **differance? He** writes:

"These disguises are not historical contingencies that one might admire or regret. Their movement was absolutely necessary, with a necessity which cannot be judged by any other tribunal. The privilege of the *phone* docs not **depend** upon a choice that could have been avoided. It responds to a moment of *economy* (let us say of the "life" of "history" or of "being as self-relationship")."[12]

One may **feel** here that Derrida is in the grip of **Wittgenstein's** dictum of leaving everything as it is. A close scrutiny will but reveal that Wittgenstein's dictum is translated into an interpretation of it in terms of a deferred presence over differences in Derrida. Derrida obeys and disobeys Wittgenstein at the same time. In a way Wittgenstein **also** docs the **same** as his PI testifies to the fact that he docs not want to leave everything as it is whatever its historical compulsions may be. But Wittgenstein remains a philosopher of forms of life that come into play with their rules out of blind necessity and Derrida, on the contrary, questions the fundamental presence that a form of life communicates.

Derrida understands that there is a kind of fundamental solipsism at work in making the illusion of presence possible. This solipsism dictates that the experiencing subject is in close touch with the world. Even if one says that I do think that the world is independent of myself there is a reference to **'I'** or **'subject'** even in this denial of subject-dependent view of the world. Derrida calls this phenomenon "hearing (understanding) **-oneself –speak".** We have seen that the later Wittgenstein by making the subject a rule or a move of language-game like any other rule or move of it has questioned the primacy of the subject in making the world possible. And it is the same move Derrida favours with regard to the subject but the difference he has with Wittgenstein is that he makes language a realm of absence resulting from the play of **differance.**

By taking a stand for protowriting Derrida deconstructs the subject that *speaks* or experiences the world into a trace or traces that make **presence** of any sort an impossibility. It is a trace of absence in the sense that it makes presence an illusion by placing itself beyond the distinction between presence and absence. By this deconstruction what Derrida announces is the "death of speech" as he calls it. And for him this death is that of presence in general. He writes:

""Death of speech" is of course a **metaphor** here: before we speak of disappearance, we must think of a **new** situation for speech, of its subordination within a structure of which it will no longer be the **archon.**"[13]

Derrida traces the history of privileging speech at least to Plato. His **well** known article on Plato entitled 'Plato's **Pharmacy'** is a criticism of Plato on his favouring speech over writing in his philosophy in general and in *Phaedrus* in particular. This favouring for Derrida is the favouring of presence over differance or favouring of **logo-centrism** and for him this Platonic bias regulates the western philosophy until now. He quotes Aristotle and Hegel to show that how they see writing in its derivative nature. For him the reality is that of the absence of being or that of being deferred over differences and it is protowriting that represents this deference or absence, it being neither absent nor present. And it is the fear of this absence that Plato and other philosophers **articulate** in their preferring speech to writing, which is not fully that of absence but heralds it in a way. Derrida, preferring the other course of reflection, questions the very presence of the world and argues for its absence that will give way to its being as non-being or differance.

We have seen that for Derrida there is no presence outside language. As language is a configuration of differences each term in it is a negative determination whereby it is what it is and what it is not in itself. Here we may note that Derrida questions the notion that there is a distinction between the **signifier** and **the** signified, the former being a sign and the latter a solid content, whether it is a

mental idea or object independent of the mind. Derrida's position as to this is: can we have a notion of the signified except through a sign? Take for example the word 'tree'. We say it has a content called 'tree out there'. But the 'tree out there' is combination of words. So any presence whatsoever is revealed through signs or words. It is not that we can have a world independent of language or signs. Derrida sees reality as a play of signifiers through differences and a play which these differences make one of the absence of being and of the 'is and is not' in manifold ways. Derrida finds that protowriting or differance determines language and in it there is no distinction between content and form but what is give there as it is. This determination is the determination for its own absence and for the appearing of the protowriting which risks its disappearance in the same event. Derrida writes about the protowriting or nonphonetic writing that questions the substantiality of language and reality through it:

"If the nonphonetic moment menaces the history and the life of the spirit as self-presence in the breath, it is because it menaces substantiality, that other metaphysical name of presence and of *ousia.* First in the form of the substantive. Nonphonetic writing breaks the noun apart. It describes relations and not appellations. The noun and the word, those unities of breath and concept, are effaced within pure writing."[14]

Derrida realises pure or nonphonetic writing as the condition of epistemology. And it is for him the presupposition of history and science. All kinds of objectivity owes their being to the play of this is and is not. So objectivity *contains* in itself its own evasion. This evasion is presupposed eternally. Derrida calls a study of this possibility "a science of science" and it, he says, "would no longer have the form of *logic* but that of *grammatics*".[15] It is this science that Derrida calls *grammatology*.However, this science is not that of objectivity or of episteme but that of their closure. It is the description of the movement called differance.

Grammatology is to be seen as opposed to linguistics. The fault Derrida finds with linguistics is that it bases itself on the emphatic presence of phone. And it cannot see the closure of logic and **episteme** as the object of its study. Grammatology, on the other hand, makes its object of articulation this closure as the condition of language and the study of it. It liberates protowriting from it's being suppressed by phone and its allies. In the context of a comparison between phonetic writing and **(nonphonetic)** writing Derrida writes:

"The system of language associated with phonetic-alphabetic writing is that within which Iogocentric metaphysics, determining the sense of being as presence, has been produced. This logocentrism, this *epoch* of the full speech, has always placed in parenthesis, *suspended,* and suppressed for essential reasons, **all** free reflection on the origin and status of writing, all science of writing which was not *technology* and the *history of technique,* itself leaning upon a mythology and a metaphor of a natural writing."[16]

The fear that haunts Derrida now is that his conception of protowriting may be considered dependent upon the objectivity of presence as a postulation of it through an irony. By accepting the play of irony of the objectivity as the rejection of objectivity of the accepted kind he wants to find a transcendental realm for the movement of protowriting. However, he cautions that this transcendental move is not to locate an ideal or ordinary presence but to show that beyond the naive objectivity how we eternally lose our being as present. His adherence to transcendentalism here is strategic move which negates **itself** as a transcendentalism of ideal presence. He says that we are in the grip of an **'unperceived** and **unconfessed** metaphysics' even in our scientific thinking and that it is to avoid **falling** back into this metaphysics that he wants to see his notion of protowriting as a transcendental move. And it is more than obvious that it is not concerned with any kind of **essentialism** and its essence is the rejection of essence. The transcendental anchor that Derrida desires for differance is **only** a request to view it free of naive objectivism of ordinary existence and science.

In his article 'Differance' Derrida has called trace or differance a middle voice to show that it is neither active nor passive. And in *Of Grammatology* he says that it is merely passive. Nevertheless, there is no contradiction involved in it. The former is to show that trace is a force of **'is** and is not' and the latter that it is invariable in that our world cannot be imagined to have a different move or mode.

Derrida invites metaphysics to reflect upon protowriting as "its death and its resource". This is a strange invitation. But the strangeness involved in it is only apparent. For "metaphysics of logos" is concerned with being and this being is a product of protowriting as deference, as a dream of a future that never arrives. So it is this dream of being that is the subject matter of metaphysics, according to Derrida. And such a dream is its own negation and it thus heralds at the same time the death of metaphysics.

Is a positive science of **grammatology** possible? Derrida answers in the negative to this question. This impossibility compels one to articulate this science provisionally in the language of ordinary objectivity. However, he insists that this articulation must at the same time **'point** beyond the *episteme***'** or objectivity of presence. At the end he confesses his inability to articulate it otherwise when he says that 'grammatology, this thought, would still be **walled-in** within presence'.

'Plato's Pharmacy' is the article where Derrida locates the play of differance on a macro **plane** by seeing how **the** word **'pharmakon' iterates** and reiterates its different, often heterogeneous, meanings in its very structure to mark its destruction as a unified determined whole of presence. For Derrida **pharmakon** thus becomes the other word of protowriting. We **will** see his engagement with pharmakon now.

Derrida on Plato and Pharmakon

In 'Plato's Pharmacy' Derrida says that Plato's dialogue *Phaedrus* hides in its text the possibility of showing how differance and not presence is the very

131

condition of the reality. So he aims at a deconstruction of the text to bring out this condition that it hides. He does it by throwing light upon the way the word 'pharmakon' appears in the dialogue. He says there that we are not to be bothered in this process about the stated or unstated intentions of Plato in the dialogue but about how Plato becomes a representative of presence, which is an illusion or transgression, with or without his being aware of it.

In *Phaedrus* Plato says that it is speech and not writing that a dialectician has to prefer in his search for essences of the world. His contention here is that writing only records what we speak and when we speak our hearers can be in a direct dialogue with us. And in the case of writing, he says, there is a possibility that it may be misunderstood by some of the readers of it. Socrates in the dialogue raises objections to writing as the primary vehicle of knowledge through a myth. He narrates the myth where Theuth, the inventor of writing, comes to the king Thamus to state to him that writing, as it will increase memory and wisdom, ought to be introduced to the subjects. But the king in the myth says that writing will do the opposite of what Theuth has said. It will increase forgetfulness as people will not take the trouble of utilizing their memory for knowledge and will commit whatever they know to written words that will take care of their memory. As they will no longer be interested in live knowledge through conversation they will depend on written words for their knowledge which can only provide them with mechanical repetition of it, they will become people of the conceit of wisdom. After narrating this myth Socrates adds that it does not mean that one should not write but one should not prefer it to speech. We must keep in mind here that in the same dialogue Socrates explains how matters of knowledge have become matters of articulations of anarchic and irresponsible thoughts in Greece then. The writers remain hidden behind their writing and their modes of thinking are shaping a culture of knowing that does not have to be anchored to a responsible method. It is against this background writing is looked down upon by Socrates. But he mentions in the context that those who remember from within may make use of the service of writing that is from without as a reminder of *what they ought to know from within*

and for them this reminder will not substitute for their memory. It may be the case that Socrates is over worried about the effects of writing in the dialogue. In the case of **Derrida's** reflection on Plato's view of writing what matters is not this but the conceptual questions involved in prioritising speech over writing.

Before we consider **Derrida's** symbolic understanding of Plato through *Phaedrus* let us pause for a while to state briefly what this dialogue is all about. This dialogue is about the **love** between a man and a boy. Socrates in the dialogue is of the opinion that this love is not bad as such if it is guided by the realisation of beauty in itself, which is the intelligible form of beauty seen in the ordinary world. He says a man who really loves a boy will not think of having a physical relation with him but will be an admirer of his beauty that will take him to the contemplation of the heavenly beauty. And he adds that even if the man with heavenly heart has physical relationship with the boy by chance, his prime concern cannot be with the pleasure arising out of it but with the good of the boy and his growth in **all** respects. Socrates appreciates the former love the most and then the latter. What he depreciates is the love between a man and the boy where the only concern of the man is the satisfaction of his bestial pleasures through that. And he calls this love sinister love and condemns it in the strongest terms.

Phaedrus shows that **there** is something called ideal beauty and beholding it is seeing the splendour in the world of essences. This belief of Plato in essence is the point of contention for Derrida with Plato. Derrida finds the source of **Plato's** aversion to writing in his belief that there is something called the essence of the world. Derrida believes that an essentialist outlook about the world will forget or ignore the absence of being of an entity and its condition called differance. For him writing represents the absence of being and it resembles **protowriting** that makes up the world as its absence where it will be a play of being and non-being without bringing forth any solid presence in the play.

Plato gives speech the superiority over writing and says that we understand writing on the basis of spoken language. Derrida says that this way of looking at language is to accord it a relation with reality that holds in presence. But he finds that the world is not in our hold and that it is not present but absent and what is real is differance, which is neither present nor absent. To understand this he implies a suggestion in his article that urges us to look at meaning as a passage from writing to speech. It will be, then, a passage from confusion to an illusion of presence and one from absence to an economy of life called transgression. It will be putting what Plato does in a reverse order. So Derrida does not take Plato's disparaging writing in its literal sense but in a symbolic sense where what Plato does is arguing for the illusion called presence against the reality called differance, which in 'Plato's Pharmacy' is called Pharmakon.

In the myth which Socrates evokes to condemn writing in the dialogue, **Theuth** says that it is a *pharmakon* (medicine or remedy) for memory and wisdom. And the king refutes it saying that writing is a *pharmakon* not for memory and wisdom but for forgetfulness and the conceit of wisdom. So writing that represents protowriting here for Derrida is a pharmakon. Derrida asks: what can be the essence of any writing, if at all it can be called essence? Writing in its non-essential form itself is given a secondary status as it imitates the absence of being that will result in seeing the world in its being conditioned by differance. The essence of writing of vulgar or phonetic kind is differance and not speech for Derrida. The whole Platonic enterprise is to save presence from being engulfed by this protowriting called differance. Derrida reads Plato's condemnation of writing not as a condemnation of phonetic writing but as that of nonphonetic writing or differance. He writes:

"What, in depth, are the resemblances underlying Socrates' statements that make writing homologous to painting? From out of what horizon arise their common silence, their stubborn muteness, their mask of solemn, forbidding majesty that so poorly hides an incurable aphasia, a stone deafness, a closedness irremediably

inadequate to the **demands** *of logos?* If writing and painting are convoked together, summoned to appear with their hands tied, before the tribunal of *logos*, and to respond to it, this is quite simply because both are being *interrogated:* as the presumed representatives of a spoken word, as agents capable of speech, as depositories or even fences for the words the court is trying to force out of them. If they should turn out not to be up to testifying in this hearing, if they turn out to be impotent to represent a live word properly, to act as its interpreter or spokesman, to sustain the conversation, to respond to oral questions, then bam! they are good for nothing. They are mere figurines, masks, simulacra."[17]

This remark is a response to Socrates' position in the dialogue that if you ask a piece of writing to clarify your doubts or respond to your objections to it, it will retain the majestic silence of a painting. This **silence** indicates its inability of articulating presence that speech represents. And **differance** cannot likewise articulate presence but marks the absence of being and is the movement of writing that makes being written into the anterior of non-being and vice versa. Pharmakon or writing is this absence that Plato fears and wants to cast out beyond the **pale** of speech, and phonetic writing only vaguely imitates this absence. Socrates' objection to phonetic writing is basically an objection to protowriting and the absence it marks.

The word pharmakon is **used** in *Phaedrus* and other dialogues of Plato in different ways, with its positive and negative connotations. In the dialogue in question Socrates goes out of the town that is his habitual place, which he normally **does** not leave, because of a piece of writing which the individual called Phaedrus carries with him while taking his walk to the country side. Socrates says to Phaedrus that he has carried a pharmakon with him to take himself out of the town where he discusses philosophy with people. So pharmakon is here something which will take you out of the way and it is writing that is referred to as pharmakon here. It means that Socrates does not want to reject presence as he wants to remain in his habitual presence but he is being guided/misguided to leave that because of pharmakon.

Pharmakon or **differance** causes the disappearance of presence and in place of it installs a movement of being and not-being, both of which are written into each other as the destruction of both presence and **absence.**

Derrida equates pharmakon with differance as a determination of both substance and antisubstance at the same time. In his own words:

"The *pharmakon* would be a *substance*--with all that that word can connote in terms of matter with occult virtues, cryptic depths refusing to submit their ambivalence to analysis, already paving the way for **alchemy--if** we didn't have eventually to come to recognize it as antisubstance itself: that which resists any philosopheme, indefinitely exceeding its bounds as **nonidentity, nonessence,** nonsubstance; granting philosophy by that very fact the inexhaustible adversity of what funds it and the infinite absence of what founds it."[18]

In **Greek 'pharmakon'** means remedy, drug, poison, sorcery, paint, recipe, philter, antidote, etc., in different contexts. But Derrida says that **even** in the same context of a **use** of it it iterates and reiterates **all** these meanings. So it contains its being and non-being at the same time in it. For example when Socrates says pharmakon takes himself out of his habitual place where philosophy flourishes to a country side we are informed by this not only the good effect of getting along someone like Socrates for a discussion on it but also its bad effect of taking someone out of a place where philosophy belongs in Greece. We know Socrates dies of pharmakon. Is it good or bad in itself? Derrida raises this problem. It causes the death of Socrates. But Socrates says before taking pharmakon (hemlock) that pharmakon will take him to the world of great souls. Derrida says that it is good and bad at the same time and if we separate one of them as its meaning of it in a context, then what we do is to try to conform it to a kind of objectivity, which is originally an illusion. And for him each word hides in itself its own disappearance and the Greek word **'pharmakon'** is a striking example to show this.

Derrida sees a chain of paradoxes and contradictions in *Phaedrus.* In the beginning of the dialogue Socrates says that he dos not want to engage himself with certain myths as that will not serve his avowed aim of knowing himself or self-knowledge. Then why does not he reject myth as such as it does not represent the literal and ideal objectivity that he is in search of in the dialogue by preferring speech to writing? We see a little later Socrates makes use of myths in the dialogue. It is clear in the context of the dialogue that Socrates uses these myths to drive home certain convictions that will serve us to have an understanding of the ideal world and the way to it. Derrida's point here is that myths are not transparent and they cannot take one to the ideal knowledge of the self and the world of essences that Plato defines as the real knowledge. So according to him Plato embraces a contradiction in his approach to myth. Moreover, it is through a myth that writing is condemned saying that writing is secondary. Derrida asks: Is a myth primary or secondary in the ladder of entities?

Again, Socrates is initiated into self-knowledge not through a speech of an oracle but through an engraving at Delphi, which is a kind of writing. If writing is secondary, (hen Socrates is initiated into self-knowledge through a secondary means. And Derrida's question here is: how what is initiated by a secondary phenomenon can have the profundity that Socrates claims for it? Derrida believes that the platonic assertions contain in them their own denials and it is what pharmakon proves in its movement. In *Phaedrus* Socrates calls the living speech a written discourse in the soul as the subject of it is present along with it with his intentions. Derrida points out that Plato himself shown that writing secondary and how, then, it can be primary only because it is written in the medium of soul. So writing assails not only object but also soul and everything comes down for Derrida to the eternal absence of being. And this absence, he says, cannot be removed and what Plato does through his dialectic is to make an attempt to forget this absence. So dialectic is forgetting of pharmakon. However, forgetting something is not the removal of it and this leads Derrida to call dialectic "inverted pharmakon". Derrida sees in pharmakon the general condition of any talk and being as its absence.

Derrida finds that it is Platonism that "sets up the whole of Western metaphysics in its **conceptuality**"[19] and it implies that his criticism of Plato is the criticism of Western transcendentalism in general. The project of **Derrida** makes the Kantian attempt to define a priori and objective basis of the world **look** like an attempt in vain. What Derrida heralds is not only the end of Western transcendentalism but transcendentalism in general that articulates presence of being one way or other.

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CHAPTER V

A Defence of Transcendentalism

We will now look into the rationale of transcendentalism and its field of concepts as postulated by Plato and Kant. Also, in this connection we will see the early Wittgenstein's conceptual field as a version of transcendentalism. What Plato has done in *Republic* is the offering of a solution to the scepticism that he envisages as to the knowledge and possibility of the world in general in his *Theaetetus*. Kant and Wittgenstein also articulate a solution to this sceptical outlook in their own ways.

Scepticism of *Theaetetus*

In *Theaetetus* Socrates considers several views on knowledge and the world. And he finds them unsatisfactory and subsequently rejects them. But he does not in his turn offer in it a valid definition of knowledge or the world and what we feel at (he end of the dialogue is that we have no certain knowledge of the world and that the being of the world itself may be a myth. It is not that we will understand *Theaetetus* only in its given way here but sec the profound implications of it along with the given form of it.

Socrates first examines the view that knowledge is nothing but perception. He says that this view is generally considered as allied to the notion that world is a flux and also the one that says that man is the measure of all things. He further states that this view has been held by Heraclitus, Protagoras and Empedocles in Greek then. Once world is a flux we will not be able to talk anything of it and it will have no identity and Socrates says that objects and creatures cannot have existence in such a flux. This view of Heraclitus leads Protagoras to say that if anything exists then it must be understood as an illusion of man, who himself is an illusion. And this is the reason why he says that man is the measure of everything that there is and that which is not there. If everything

140

is a flux, how can man have an objective view of the world? Socrates says that man becomes the measure of existence and being not through an objective means for the followers of this outlook but through perception that vary from one man to another. Socrates finds that this outlook makes everything illogical and irrational and asks whether such view can sustain itself.

What is the nature of knowledge that Socrates wants it to have to prove the certainty of it? Suppose I say that I know for sure that there is an objective world. Socrates' question here is how far this knowledge is reliable so that the objective world is a reality without doubt. For Socrates knowledge of any kind ought to be self-evident and it is on this basis that he refutes the definitions of knowledge offered in *Theaetetus.*

Socrates finds that Protagoras makes each individual the measure of the world by his dictum that man is the measure of everything. The reason for Protagoras to say this is the conviction that when I perceive, for example, through touch the water in front of me to be hot you perceive through touch that it is cold or not as hot as I make it to be. Here Socrates asks how in such a situation we can say that the world is objective independent of us. Another example Socrates cites in favour of this view as stated by its followers is that a sick man tastes the wine sour and a healthy man sweet. Socrates finds that the message of such a view is that we cannot ever know whether there is anything called wine independent of our sense experience or perception. So we have to conclude on the above view that each individual is the measure of everything that is there and that which is not.

Socrates now examines this view to see whether this definition of knowledge is self-evident or not. He then states the outcome of such a definition as follows. There will not be an objective world independent of a man. And Heraclitus has already stated that there is no world of objectivity and what there is is a flux. Our illusion makes us believe that there is an objective world and in

this illusion knowledge cannot be anything other than perception. Perception in turn is always about a thing and in that there is a mutual dependence of the one who perceives and what is perceived and we cannot say what each one of them is in itself independent of the other. This outcome as put forward by Socrates is as follows:

"The conclusion from all this is, as we said at the outset, that nothing *is* one thing just by itself, but is always in process of becoming for some one, and being is to be ruled out altogether, though, needless to say, we have been betrayed by habit and inobservance into using the word more than once only just now. But that was wrong, these wise men tell us, and we must not admit the expressions **'something'** or **'somebody's'** or **'mine'** or 'this' or 'that' or any other word that brings things to a standstill, but rather speak, in accordance with nature, of what is 'becoming,' 'being produced,' 'perishing,' 'changing.' For anyone who talks so as to bring things to n standstill is easily refuted. So we must express ourselves in each individual case and in speaking of an assemblage of many –to which assemblage people give the name of 'man' or 'stone' or of any living creature or kind."[1]

Nothing is at standstill and everything is becoming. And perception is about this becoming and this becoming does not result in the creation of anything that is in itself and by itself. Heraclitus-Protagoras view *in a way* anticipates Derrida's *differance*. Socrates wishes to know whether the view that man through his perception is the measure of everything is a sound definition of the world and the knowledge of it and whether it does justice to the practical world of ours. We must quote here Socrates' description of Protagoras' view before we go on to the way he criticises it:

"Socrates: Then my perception is true for me, for its object at any moment is my reality, and I am, as Protagoras says, a judge of what is for me, that it is, and of what is not, that it is not."[2]

Before Socrates examines perception and its nature he asks whether it is true to say each man is the measure of **everything** that is and that which is not. He shows that this view of Protagoras leads to a contradiction in that view itself. Suppose someone thinks based on his perceptions or thoughts that Protagoras is wrong in his assumption. Since, according to Protagoras, each man is the measure of everything, he cannot say that that man is wrong and he has to admit the truth of his thought that contradicts his own. Another important objection he raises to the view is that though it may be admitted for the sake of argument that my health at present is a matter of my present perception and I am the measure of its being, can I, who is not a physician, predict its future based on certain problems or symptoms it has now? This prediction can be done **only** by a physician in a true manner (and, of course, it is not the case that this prediction will always be true but as long as it is objective in the case under consideration it **will** turn out true) and it shows that I cannot be the measure of everything related to me. Now Socrates asks: Can perception through which each man is the measure of everything be the source of true knowledge of the world?

It is here that he questions the very notion that knowledge is perception in the backdrop of its allied notion that everything is in change. If everything changes without any permanence, which makes it identifiable in some way, is any being possible? When 1 am about to name my perception called "seeing", I understand that it is not there and only change is left without a name. I understand it as seeing at this moment, but its reality is change and it destroys itself into something else next moment. Even I cannot call a moment **"moment"** as it changes into something else immediately and nothing is permanent and identifiable in it. Change makes everything its not-being every moment and so being becomes *is* and *is not* at the same time. So perception is non-perception at the same time and knowledge non-knowledge. Socrates concludes that the definition that knowledge is perception in its relation with the theory of flux not only makes knowledge impossible but also being in general. He understands that

perception cannot point to any permanent being as it is about changing phenomena and in that respect it fails to account for knowledge. Why the same wine is sour and sweet for the same person? The reason for this is that the person changes and accordingly the wine also. On the basis of this view it is surmised that even when the wine is sweet it does not have a permanent quality, nor the person who tastes it because he also changes. Socrates says that the view of change and perception explained above cannot explain either knowledge or being of the world of which knowledge is.

Perception is always sense perception. And one sense cannot do the work of another. Eyes cannot smell and nose cannot see. And the organ of touch cannot either smell or hear. Colour is the object of the perception called sight and sound that of hearing. Socrates points out that sound is *different* from colour and there is no sense through which we perceive this *difference.* And we know one sense organ cannot do the work of another and there are no senses to perceive not only difference between objects but also their existence, number, likeness, unlikeness, etc. I can hear sound and see colour. Can we *see* anything called *difference* or *number* or *existence,* or can I *hear* any one of them?

Knowledge is about objects that exist. There cannot be knowledge about something to which existence is not an attribute. Existence is the truth of an object and knowledge is truth. If perception cannot reach existence, then it does not reach truth and as a result it cannot be called knowledge. It is mind without the help of senses that contemplate the truth of things which is equal to their existence. It also contemplates their differences, identity of each of them with itself, their number, etc. without the help of the senses. Socrates shows the difference between what the mind achieves through its senses and what it achieves by itself in the following way before he concludes that bare perceptions cannot amount to knowledge:

"**Socrates:** Wait a moment. The hardness of something hard and the softness of something soft will be perceived by the mind through touch, will they not?

Theaetetus: Yes.

Socrates: But their existence and the fact that they both exist, and their contrariety to one another and again the existence of this contrariety arc things which the mind itself undertakes to judge for us, when it reflects upon them and compares one with another."[3]

In *Republic* Plato shows that over and above the world of sense perception that is uncertain there is a world of certainty, which is that of ideas and is related to the ordinary world in providing it with its being that cannot be questioned by the uncertainty of contingent matters of fact. He there makes it clear that it is not senses that see the being of the world but the mind as a copy of the original and transcendental existence and being. We will discuss this point after a while. Let us now concentrate on *Theaetetus.*

After rejecting the notion that knowledge is perception for the above reasons Socrates now examines the suggestion by Theaetetus that true judgment is knowledge. This takes Socrates to wonder whether there can be anything called false judgments so that knowledge is not what it is. Socrates' question now is: How false judgment is possible? False judgment cannot be mistaking a thing we know for another thing we know because the very fact that we *know* both the things makes it impossible. It cannot be our mistaking a thing we do not know for another thing we do not know as it is impossible to mistake a thing unknown to us for another thing unknown to us. The other way of looking at the false judgment is to take it for mistaking a thing we know for another thing we do not know or vice versa. Socrates asks: how it is possible at all? Once we know a thing we know and once we do not know it we do not know it and how there can be a mistake about it.

Socrates now examines whether false judgment is to think about something *which is not there.* His rejection of this view is that we cannot think about something **that** is not. So false judgment is not about something which is not there. If I mistake a cow for buffalo this mistake cannot be about something that is not **there** as **the** being of what 1 think in any manner *is* and not *is not.* Socrates finds it difficult to find what a false judgment is. In this context Socrates examines the view that false judgment is thinking a thing that exists as another thing that exists. Socrates says about this possibility:

"Socrates: Do you suppose anyone else, mad or sane, ever goes so far as to talk himself over, in his own mind, into stating seriously that an ox must be horse or that two must be one?"[4]

If there are no false judgments all judgment **will** be of the same nature and we cannot tell the true ones from the false ones. Socrates says that this will make knowledge an impossibility. Therefore, according to him, we **have** to show that false judgments exist as distinguished from the true ones. Let us see what will come of his attempt in this direction.

Socrates now talks of false judgment as something arising out of ill-fitting of knowledge or thoughts and perception. The difference between knowledge and perception is that the former is an activity of the mind and the latter that of senses. One must not lose sight here of the fact that Socrates here takes knowledge for granted without defining it to understand whether false judgment is possible at all. I know a thing only when beyond its being perceived I recognise its existence though the instrumentality of my mind. And Socrates has not explained so far what this recognition consists in but takes it for granted. His point now is that I may know you and this knowledge is an imprint in my mind, but when my senses perceive someone else whom I may or may not know **l** mistake him for you because of the imprint of you in my mind goes on to this perception to **fit** that. But it turns out to be an ill-fitting. There are different

ways in which such an ill-fitting can take place and Socrates summarises it in the following remark:

"Socrates: Take things you know. You can suppose them to be other things, which you both know and perceive, or to be things you do not know, but do perceive, or you can confuse two things which you both know and perceive."[5]

Socrates explains these possibilities and we will not elaborate upon them now. There are mainly two problems with this account of false judgment. One is that even after we have knowledge of certain things we are prone to be mistaken about them in the presence of perception. Then how far this knowledge is reliable? Another problem with this definition of false judgment is that it takes for granted what we have in the mind as imprints, arc true and self-evident. However, the fact is that we sometimes make mistakes in ~~the~~ realm of what we- ~~consider~~ in this realm of self-evidence itself. For example, some people who know both 5+6 **(11)** and 12 will judge that the one is the same as the other. If they really know both of them, then this **misjudgment** should not occur under any circumstances. What these factors show is that the ill-fitting of thoughts or knowledge to perception cannot account for this false judgment and we really do not know whether it is a definition of false judgment at all.

To account for false judgment Socrates now makes a distinction between possessing knowledge and having it. When I possess a coat it does not mean that I always have it about me by wearing it. Similarly, when I possess knowledge it does not mean that I have it about me. An arithmetic teacher possesses his knowledge in arithmetic always and when **he** explains it to a student he has it about him. So Socrates says that when one possesses knowledge there is no possibility for mistake in it. For example, there $5 + 3 + 3$ will always remain **11,** but when we engage ourselves with it for some purpose even at the level of reflection it may be thought as 12. Socrates now raises the question: how can 11 be considered 12 in the handling of them to make a false judgment as they are

two different *pieces of knowledge*? It is like saying that when combined two rays of light will give rise to a dark ray. Socrates is still faced with the same difficulty of not having a way to distinguish a true judgment from a false one or knowledge from falsehood.

Let us conclude our engagement with *Theaetetus* with a look at how Socrates rejects the suggestion that knowledge is a true belief with an account added to it. A true belief without an account cannot be knowledge. It is evident from the predicament of a judge in a court who has a true belief when he passes a judgment based on the arguments he is presented with and he knows very well that what he believes is true in all probability. Our knowledge of the world is not like this, if at all we have it. We know that it is day now for sure and also that $5 + 6 = 11$ with certainty. If what we have thus is knowledge then it must be a true belief with an account. The basis of this notion is that if we cannot give an account of a thing it is not knowable. Socrates finds an example of such a notion in the saying that we can know the world because it is complex and can be given account but the simples of which it is made up cannot be known but only thought of since no account can be given to them. Socrates refutes this particular saying of some by pointing out that when one knows the name 'Socrates' one knows the letters of which it is made up. For him if you know the world you know at the same time its essences or what it is made up of. So he rejects the view that we know the world without knowing its ultimate elements.

There is a conviction that an account of a thing is the getting hold of the difference it has from other things and when this account is added to true notion of it it will become knowledge of it. But Socrates dismisses this view by saying that when we have true notion or belief of a thing its differentness in relation with other things is already given in that notion or belief and that by getting hold of differentness of a thing one is not going to know it as it is not an account added to it but a part of the same notion or belief of it. So the view that

knowledge is a true belief with an account added to it does not show what knowing or knowledge is.

The sceptical questions that Socrates throws up about knowledge are applicable to the being of the world as well. The question in its ontological perspective in connection with the scepticism of *Theaetetus* is that if knowledge is not possible as self-evident how do we know that we have a world at all, or if we have it how do we know its real nature? Plato understands in *Republic* that only a transcendental approach to the being of the world can do justice to it and that sceptical views about it are not integral in their nature but base themselves on certain evasive features of the reality.

Transcendentalism and Being of the world

The fundamental problem of *Theaetetus* is how we know that we have a world and if we have it how we know its real nature. Plato understands there that the ordinary world and a reflection on it provide us with the reason for doubting the being of the world. However, it is a fact that the world exists at least practically. And this practical existence ought to be the existence that we must concern ourselves with in our understanding of it. But the notion that takes the world as a flux questions the very identity of the world. If we think that reflection will show the being of the world, Socrates in *Theaetetus* shows that there is no guarantee that it is a reliable source of knowledge of the being. Nevertheless, in *Republic* Socrates finds a way to define the being of the world.

In *Republic* Socrates finds that the ordinary world is an enigma in a way. It is one and many, is and is not at the same time. But, for all practical purposes, we have a world that is identical with itself. Moreover, whatever may be the enigma that defines the nature of the world, it is hard to reject its being in general and the objectivity that it makes possible for us inspite of itself. Socrates understands the objectivity of that the world has in it about it cannot be its own

creation since whatever is viewed from within it is not certain. And this objectivity must be something provided to it from an ideal world that transcends it though it remains in relation with it in some manner. Socrates defines this ideal world by taking the ordinary world for granted in a way and he considers it inevitable and for him the rationale of doing so is the fact that we have the ordinary world not in a haphazard manner.

He admits that we do not know what hot or red or sweet or a being in itself is. But he asks whether what we feel ordinarily as hot or red or sweet or a being has something in common with its other instances. And it is this feature of objects that provides Socrates with the clue to define the relation between the transcendental essences called ideas and the ordinary world. Socrates shows that the one thing that is common to all beings in the world is *existence*. Everything exists. And this notion of common feature takes him to the idea of good that illuminates the entire being of the world. The lesson we have to learn from this Socratic postulation of the transcendental world is that an a priori and transcendental world has to be there to account for the being of the world as in its contingent spatio-temporal form it destroys itself beyond recognition. We have seen how Derrida explains this phenomenon of destruction about the world.

The early Wittgenstein is very much aware of the fact that the world in its ordinary contingent form is devoid of its being. He finds its being in objects that are prior to any combinations of them and therefore are a priori. And they are not in space and time also. In Kant we have a priori space and time over and above the ordinary non-identical space and time which, for Derrida, is spacing of time and temporalisation of space. Kant envisages a transcendental and a priori world that will be the ground for the being of the any world that a subject has. Tomorrow the sun may rise in the West, or what is considered cause so far may become effect or the entire world may change beyond recognition into a different order. But for Plato the essences of any world lie outside it and they provide it

with being in its **manifoldness;** for Kant the a priori intuitions of the sensibility and categories of the understanding of the human subject make the human world possible whatever may be its particular form at a given time; for the early Wittgenstein it is objects that form the essences of any world and that which are prior to any **existence.**

One may doubt that the tractarian view of the essences is transcendental. But this doubt is out of place for its objects or simples are essences that are similar to the transcendental essences of Plato and Kant. And they function in the same manner in their relation with the ordinary world. Wittgenstein himself realises the affinity they have with the Platonic and Kantian transcendental essences in the *Tractatus* itself and this leads him to **call** them there nonsensical **like** other metaphysical propositions. And we know that in PI he **objects** to his notion of objects in the same way that he objects to transcendentalism in general.

The essence of transcendentalism is that the ordinary world cannot explain its essence in its own terms but has to do it in terms of the relation it has with a transcendental and a priori being. And it is this that the anti-transcendentalist views of the later Wittgenstein, Quine and Derrida call into question. We know that Derrida goes to the extent of saying that this world is not present at all originally. Let us now **see** where anti-transcendentalism advocated by these philosophers fail.

Critique of Wittgenstein

The later Wittgenstein believes that our desire to see the world having an ideal being is due to our being deceived by the transparency of the primitive uses of words where everything looks clear and distinct into thinking that the entire being must have an ideal and transparent being of that **kind. He** argues that even the relatively primitive uses of language are meaningful only through their indefinite functions and this **indefiniteness** is strikingly felt in the complex uses

of language. For him philosophers are like savages who wonder at complex phenomena in their ideal simplicity and this wonder takes them to see these complex phenomena in the light of their misplaced simple ideality.

Wittgenstein thinks that the blind necessity of the indefinite sense of the words takes care of the being of the world. There is no need of a search for a transcendental realm of being which is believed to be the source of the being of the ordinary world. What makes the being of a game possible is, according to Wittgenstein, the following of its rules blindly by its players. He believes that a use of language is a game, an activity that takes care of itself through its rules that are an inevitable part of it one way or other. And it is language that determines the being in general as a matter of our way of life that is expressed through it in its complexity and richness.

We have seen that Plato depends on the attributes such as 'redness', 'hotness', 'table-ness', etc., that are shared by several objects to find the relation between what is transcendental and what is bestowed being by it. Wittgenstein questions the world of attributes. He says that there arc no attributes over and above the similarities or resemblances between things and beings. This standpoint is a rejection of essentialist notion of attributes. In Kant we have seen that what is common to the manifold beings become radically abstract and are few in number as a result of it. Wittgenstein's aversion to a priori essences and his favouring grammatical essences leads him to question the concept of a general being of the world. He himself in his early period believed in the general form of a proposition in relation with the whole gamut of states of affairs. And his notion of general form of a proposition is an imitation of Plato's idea of good and Kant's notion of the synthetic unity of apperception. But now Wittgenstein, being someone who is no more deceived by the illusory ideal being of transcendental philosophy, settles for the uses of words in their indefinite sense.

152

Wittgenstein, however, fails to give a cogent criticism of transcendentalism. Where does he fail in his attempt? To understand this we have to examine the three concepts that play the pivotal role in his criticism of transcendentalist concepts. They are: the notion of indefinite sense, the blind necessity of the use of a word or rule following and family resemblances of uses of words. We will start with the indefinite sense of the use of language.

It seems that Wittgenstein has taken the search of transcendentalism for ideal being in a literal sense though he himself has done it in *Tractatus.* As a criticism of transcendental ideality he asks: can we draw an exact and ideal boundary anywhere? But it is a fact that when Plato or Kant or for that matter his own early self has searched for ideal and pure being they have done it not for the sake of doing it? It was a search for an ideality that gives being to an ever-changing phenomenon called the ordinary world. What does it give its being? This is the question that guides that search. And this search was suggested by the ordinary world itself in its being self-identical inspite of the possibility of perpetual destruction of itself in the Heracletian flux. It is strange that Wittgenstein says now that since his earlier method of analysis was suggested by the phenomenon that a thing has its parts, it is not profound and is as ordinary as anything in the world. Wittgenstein misunderstands transcendentalism here. It is not a search for something extraordinary but for something that explains the being of the world in its objectivity. Plato's search for an ideal being is not as same as an attempt to draw an exact boundary on the earth. It has deeper and profound implications and we have explained them a while ago.

Wittgenstein contends that it is not an ideal being that provides the ordinary world with its being but that the blind necessity of the uses of words takes care of the being in question. It is this blindness that must prevent us from seeking the source of the objectivity of the world on a transcendental plane and must urge us to leave everything as it is. If this blind necessity has to be the ground of being it has to be either transcendental or it must fail in it. At times we

feel that Wittgenstein's use of this necessity makes it transcendental. If it is a transcendental phenomenon it must be a priori, otherwise the contingency and change that question the being of the ordinary world in general **will** push it **also** into the abyss of non-identity that Derrida very ingenuously articulates. But once Wittgenstein admits that it is transcendental then his criticism of transcendental philosophy **will** come to a naught, for what he does then is shifting transcendentalism from a Plato-Kantian plane to a new plane. And this move **will** make PI another transcendental treatise and it **will** hardly be a criticism of it. And we have no objection to a move that will make PI a transcendental treatise this way, but we **will** admit it **only** as a version of transcendentalism with its own differences with other versions of it.

If the blind necessity of Wittgenstein is not transcendental then it will not be able to explain how the world retains its identity inspite of its being assailed by the change and deconstruction caused by the spatio-temporal and other related phenomena. Plato and Kant show that only what is beyond ordinary space and time can save the world from its falling into the absence of its being. If Wittgenstein thinks that the blind necessity of the ordinary language is irreducible and it takes care of itself, then such an attitude of his will be that of escapism. Plato, Kant and his early *self* at least point to the direction in which a responsible and serious inquiry into being in general ought to move. Wittgenstein's concept of blind necessity in its **anti-transcendentalist** mode fails to justify the being of the world as its being itself is assailed by *differance* as any other object or sign in the world. And it is transcendentalism that shows how being is the inevitable presupposition of even a talk about *differance.*

Wittgenstein says in PI that the uniform appearance of the words in their written or spoken form deceive us into thinking that there is something that underlies the different things in the world as a common factor. He is of the opinion that when we look at the uses of words which testify to the fact that there is no common origin or general form but only differences we will not ask what

underlies them as a common being. But it is strange then that in PI itself he makes statements that denote the common features of the uses of language. For example: he says that we follow rules blindly. He also talks about the sameness of pain that you and I have inspite of his arguing for differences between different things. In PI blind necessity is the force that unite the entire world into a whole. The blind necessity of Wittgenstein cannot be a similarity between different thing as redness or hotness between different red things or different hot substances but something more fundamental than that as it makes a rule what it is. So it seems that Wittgenstein is ambivalent in his rejection of common essence of language and the world.

Wittgenstein does not explain how family resemblances come into being. There is nothing strange in such an act of his for he wants to leave every thing as it is. But it goes without saying that if objects and beings are different in their material content it is a question of the being of the attributes: how are they shared among them? Wittgenstein sidesteps this question by taking family resemblance for an irreducible phenomenon that ought to be left alone. So at the end it comes to this: his criticism of transcendentalism is not coherent and if at all it is coherent it will not be able to do justice to the being that we live through in our existence in the world positively.

Critique of Quine

Quine's criticism of transcendentalism is an outcome of his theory of stimulus meaning. He argues that reference is inscrutable and meaning indeterminate. The reason for this inscrutability and indeterminacy is due to the fact that a set of stimulations can vouch for more than one referent at a time. In the case of statements that are situated away from stimulations we are in the dark about how they get their meaning in terms of stimulations. And for Quine there is only stimulus meaning. He says that statements situated away from stimulations get their meaning in indirect ways through their relations with

stimulations and therefore they lack a proper characterisation in terms of stimulations. In this picture of language and the world there is no way that we can make sense of an ideal being of them and here we have to settle for a pragmatic approach to our life and existence.

The founding stone of Quine's criticism of transcendentalism and his theory of inscrutability of reference and indeterminacy of meaning is his belief that sensory stimulations in their relation with language make our world possible. In PI Wittgenstein asks whether we cast a sidelong glance at stimulations when we use language. We will base our criticism of Quine on this question. But we will not follow Wittgenstein in this beyond a certain limit. For Wittgenstein, there are no a priori and transcendental essences that make the being in general possible. For him, blind necessity of the use of language is the beginning and the end of everything. We have already shown why we cannot agree with such a notion in its apparent formulation. If we ask Wittgenstein whether there will not be an ideal and essential **'red'** that survives the disappearance of the entire particular instances of this colour, he will answer that the use of language or the behaviour of the people will take care of such an eventuality. He in his example of builder and his assistant envisages a scene where the builder asks for a tool that is broken and absent. In such a situation the assistant may shake his head or communicate to him the absence of the tool some way. And for Wittgenstein there are always different ways of coping with the problem of absence and presence in language.

What gives an object its being is not the blind necessity of the ordinary language which is itself assailed by the non-identity of the ordinary existence but a non spatio-temporal and transcendental world of essences as it only can explain being in general. We see that the starting point of our knowledge of the reality is not the stimulations but a publicly .**observed** criterion of an ideal objectivity. And it is this objectivity that determines the objectivity of any kind

and even that of Quine's talk about indeterminacy and inscrutability. And we will see briefly how this transcendental presence is presupposed by Quine.

Quine says that our sensory stimulations originate from an outside agent. And for him this agent is not the physical objects but something we cannot know as we have no access to it. Is not there something transcendental about such an agency? Plato says that when all tables are destroyed the ideal table remains. By extension this argument is applicable to the agency that Quine presupposes as the origin of our sensory stimuli. It follows from this that an a priori and transcendental ideality ought to survive the possible disappearance of such an agency as the ideal presupposition of the source of stimulations. And this argument makes use of the structure of Quine's own argument for questioning it.

On the side of the sense organs also this quest for a priori ground persists. Here the question can be put more directly and in terms of a **Heraclitus-Derrida** jargon. How the field of stimulations will survive the movement of *differance* given the fact that they have no transcendental base for Quine? If Quine presupposes their being in any manner, then this presupposition can make sense only in a transcendental manner.

In our daily life we do not come across the indeterminacy and inscrutability that Quine adheres to. It is not on the language of science that our ordinary talk about the world is based. Rather, it is the other way round. If Quine's scientific theory of stimulations contradicts the objectivity of ordinary talk on which any objectivity is based, then Quine has to change his theory. And we always make sense of the world and life not in terms of our stimulus conditions but in terms of the objectivity that presupposes any objectivity whatever. It is here that Socrates' conviction in *Theaetetus* that bare sense perception cannot show us how a thing exists and that for it a much more fundamental sense of objectivity is required is in need of a renewed articulation.

Critique of Derrida

Derrida, we have seen, argues for the absence of being. He does it through the notion called *differance* which is neither absent nor present. If it is absent, then it cannot act as a factor that deconstructs presence into its absence. If it is present, it goes against Derrida's view that nothing is present anywhere. Derrida sees our world as an aberration and it determines its own absence in its presence. This is because of the fact that it is a play of 'is' and 'is not' in different ways. But, is it the case that we miss our being perpetually?

Derrida begins from the mistake of making absolute one dimension of the being to see that each entity is its presence and absence at the same time. The dimension that Derrida privileges about being is its spatio-temporal aspect. The destruction that the being faces in its contingent dimension is not something that is unknown to Plato, Kant and the early Wittgenstein. However, they realise that there is another dimension of the world that gives it its being in its transcendental determination. For Plato this determination is the relation of ordinary contingent being with the world of eternal ideas, for Kant the transcendental subject constructs the word in accordance with its a priori elements, and Wittgenstein finds the permanence of a priori elements provide being to the world in its perpetual change. And the transcendentalism they advocate is an articulation of the a priori being that we cannot escape in any manner.

Derrida believes that this conception of a priori being that transcendentalism makes its base has its roots in the aberration called our faith in the presence of the world we ordinarily have. But strangely this aberration makes everything possible including Derrida's differance. And this is the reason why he says that his **grammatology** is still **"walled-in** within presence"[6]. He describes there that it is a necessary trap to be in this presence but this presence

is an illusion. In his discussion on differance we have seen that the articulation of this concept in the language of presence is a strategic move and it in principle cannot be articulated at **all.** The talk of strategy and of inevitable necessity of being in illusion of presence that Derrida indulges in shows that Derrida wants to save his view of absence and protowriting through a jugglery of words and play of vulgar logic, which has its sustenance in the one dimensional view of the world that takes into consideration only the contingent and changing aspect of it. **Derrida's** view communicates to us two important exigencies as lessons to be learned: One, we cannot deny the being of the world and it is of a priori nature and this is the reason why he has to find himself in it time and again after his rejection of the same; two, the need of formulating transcendentalism in new ways taking into account not only his theory of absence but **also** other anti-transcendentalist views that are allied or related to it one way or other.

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[2] ibid., p. 866.

[3] ibid., p. 891.

[4] ibid., p. 896.

[5] ibid., p. 899.

[6] Jacque Derrida, *Of **Grammatology***, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivac (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1976), p. 93.

CONCLUSION

What we have done so far in this thesis is an examination of both transcendentalism and the rejection of it in the context of the eternal question of being that philosophy makes its subject-matter. Our reflections as expressed here on this question take us to the conclusion that only a transcendental outlook provides an answer to this question. Now we will see in this brief conclusion how certain characterisation of philosophy by Wittgenstein, Quine and Derrida fail to hit the mark and we will see it in the context of transcendentalism.

In *Tractatus* itself Wittgenstein calls the propositions of transcendentalism nonsensical and he also includes his own propositions of it in the category of nonsense. His attitude of this nature is guided by the notion that he had then which considers the logic of necessity something that cannot be captured in the language of day-to-day life though the latter is in perfect logical order. It shows that he there sets limits for human reason and its engagement with the question of being. This feature of *Tractatus,* though perhaps not others, is *in some sense* reminiscent of the Kantian limits of human reason as Kant asks of it to limit itself into the boundaries of sensibility and the understanding. An important feature of Plato's thought is that he believes in the ability of human mind to know the being in itself. His reason for this belief is that we are not foreigners to the ground of our being. Though Kant sets the boundaries for reason he sees that transcendentalism as a meaningful discourse is possible and his *Critique of Pure Reason,* he believes, provides it. But the strange feature of Wittgenstein is that he reserves the meaningfulness only for propositions of science which he is not engaged with in *Tractatus* and his calling its own propositions nonsense along with the transcendental thought in general. And what we can do here is to ignore his fear about the relation between pure being and ordinary reality and sets his book in its Plato-Kantian mode that makes it a profound treatise of transcendetalism.

But in PI, a book of tremendous depth and rich reasoning, but sadly with the intention to bury the question of transcendental being forever, Wittgenstein says that our disposition to philosophising is a mental illness. And he proposes there that the cure for it lies in the realisation of the possibility of this disease and philosophy as a means of this realisation should act as a force of its own undoing. Philosophy, he suggests, must be a therapy! But a little reflection will show us that it is not the search for the ground of our being that ought to be an illness but the Wittgensteinian dictum that we must be content with our ordinary uses of words. Wittgenstein's taking the profound subject matter of philosophy in its literal and elementary logical sense holds him in the captivity of a disease called the fear of seeing beyond.

Quine's easy method of settling the problem of what is there is to see it as a value of a variable. His attempt to trivialise the question of a priori being thus is a result of his thought that our language in combination with the sensory stimulations is responsible for whatever is there. And we have already shown that unless the being of stimulations and language is transcendentally grounded it will be engulfed by the Derridean differance.

Derrida equates our epoch with that of aftermath of philosophy. He **writes** that it is the eve and aftermath of philosophy and the beginning of literary engagement with reality where nothing holds onto a determined order and everything gives way to its other within itself as an eternal abyss of its own absence. Plato examines this absence in *Theaetetus* and rejects this possibility in his entire philosophical endeavour. So Plato thus marks the end of differance. Differance is not a stranger to transcendentalism and Derrida knows it. And Philosophy is eternally the death of differance and the aftermath of protowriting.

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