



DARSHAN

Vol. 4, No-1, April, 2026



DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
TINSUKIA COLLEGE

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Department of Philosophy
Tinsukia College

Editor :
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‘Darshan’ – Vol-4, Issue No.-1 : Edited by Debananda Bhattacharyya
and published by Department of Philosophy, Tinsukia College
and published on April, 2026.

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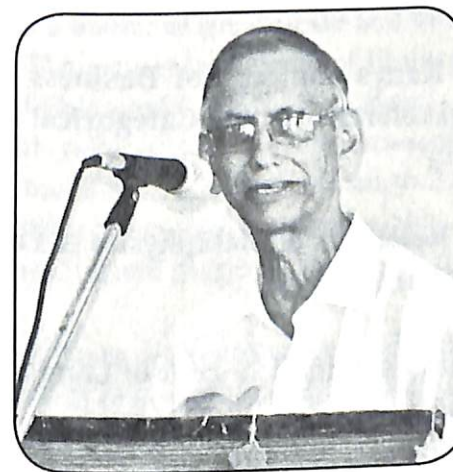
Publisher and
Publication right : Department of Philosophy
Tinsukia College
In Collaboration in with
IQAC, Tinsukia College

Price : Rs. 50/- only

ISBN No. : 978-93-5812-008-0

Printed by : Touchwood
Swahid Khargeswar Bazar
Tinsukia (Assam)

Editor is grateful to the contributors of the articles and is not
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*Dedicated in the fond memory of
Late Sibnath Sarma
(Ex-student and Former Professor of our Department)
Retired Professor, Gauhati University.*





Principal's Message

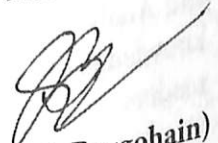
"Philosophy is not merely an academic subject; it is a way of understanding life, guiding us to think clearly, act wisely, and live meaningfully". It is a matter of great pride and satisfaction to share a few words for the Departmental Journal of Philosophy, published by the Department of Philosophy, Tinsukia College.

This journal reflects the sincere academic efforts of the Department. The inclusion of themes related to Analytic Philosophy and Ethics in this issue is especially commendable, as these areas help sharpen logical thinking and deepen our sense of moral responsibility in today's world.

I am delighted to see such enthusiasm and dedication in bringing out this publication. It not only provides a platform for intellectual expression but also encourages young minds to question, analyze, and explore new ideas with confidence.

I congratulate the editorial board, contributors, and the entire Department of Philosophy for their hard work and commitment. Their collective effort has made this journal a valuable addition to our academic community.

I hope this publication will continue to inspire curiosity, critical thinking, and a love for wisdom among readers. My best wishes for its continued success in the years to come.


(Dr. Bhairab Borgohain)
Principal
Tinsukia College

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Editorial

It gives us immense pleasure to present the new issue of Darshan, Vol. 4, Issue 1, the academic journal of the Department of Philosophy, Tinsukia College. The word Darshan itself signifies "vision" or "insight," and philosophy, in its true sense, is the pursuit of such insight into life, reality, knowledge, and values. Through this journal, we aim to encourage thoughtful reflection and scholarly dialogue among students, teachers, and researchers.

Philosophy has always played an important role in shaping human understanding of the world and our place within it. In an age dominated by rapid technological advancement and complex social challenges, philosophical thinking becomes even more necessary. It helps us to question assumptions, examine moral values, and develop a deeper awareness of the relationship between human beings, society, and nature.

This issue of DARSHAN brings together a collection of articles that reflect diverse philosophical themes and perspectives. The contributors have explored subjects ranging from classical philosophical ideas to contemporary debates mainly related to ethics, and Analytic Philosophy. Such discussions not only enrich academic knowledge but also inspire critical and independent thinking among readers.

The Department of Philosophy, Tinsukia College, has always been committed to promoting intellectual curiosity and academic engagement. The publication of this journal is a small step toward

creating a platform where ideas can be expressed, examined, and shared. We hope that the journal 'DARSHAN' will encourage young scholars and students to participate actively in philosophical inquiry and research.

We sincerely thank all the contributors for their valuable articles and the editorial team for their dedicated efforts in bringing out this issue. We also express our gratitude to the Principal and IAQC, Tinsukia College for their financial support and encouragement.

We hope that this issue of DARSHAN will stimulate thoughtful discussion and inspire readers to explore the deeper dimensions of philosophy.

Debananda Bhattacharyya
Editor
'DARSHAN'



Immanuel Kant's Concept of Business Ethics: A Study with Special Reference to the Categorical Imperative

Ruma Payeng

Abstract

The categorical imperative, which for Kant is the fundamental principles of ethics, determined the morality / immorality of actions, including business activities in a simple and straight forward way. He believed that reason provided the basis for the categorical imperative. Kant's moral philosophy centres on duty, rationality, and respect for human dignity. According to him, the moral worth of an actions is determined not by its consequences or the motives behind it, but by the intrinsic nature of the action itself. Commentators on the categorical imperative highlight three formulations of this principle, which are distinct but interconnected and which together epitomize the moral philosophy of Kant. These formulations are:

- (1) Act only on maxims, which you can will be universal laws.
- (2) Always treat the humanity in a person as an end, never as a mere means.
- (3) So, act as if you were a member of the ideal kingdom of ends in which you are both the subject and the sovereign.

All these three formulations of the categorical imperative, collectively and distributively, have important bearings on business actions and hence on business ethics. This article examines the application of the business ethics of Immanuel Kant with special reference to the categorical imperative. The study explores the key

formulations of the categorical imperative particularly the principles of universalizability and respect for humanity and demonstrates their relevance in business decision-making.

Keywords: categorical, imperative, business, ethics etc.

Introduction :

Business ethics is a form of professional ethics that examines ethical principles and moral or ethical problems that can arise in a business environment. It applies to all aspects of business conduct and is relevant to the conduct of individuals and entire organizations. Among the most influential ethical theories applied to business is the deontological ethics of Immanuel Kant. Deontological ethics is based on, the moral worth of an actions is determined not by its consequences or the motives behind it, but by the intrinsic nature of the action itself. His deontological ethics teaches that an action is morally right if it is done from duty and can be universalized, regardless of its consequences. He believed that only human beings can follow laws of their own choosing (i.e. act rationally). Human beings are the only creatures that are free, and it is fact that we are free that enables us to be rational and moral. The ethical person is the person who acts from the right intentions. We are able to action this way this because we have free will. The fundamental principles of ethics, the categorical imperative, is a requirement of reason and is binding on all rational beings. These are the essentials of Kant's ethics.

Kant argued that the highest good was the good will. To act from a good will is to act from duty. Thus, it is the intention behind an action rather than its consequences that make that action good. For example, for Kant if a merchant is honest so as to earn a good reputation, these acts of being honest are not genuinely moral. The merchant is only truly moral if he or she is honest because being honest is right (one's duty). Persons of good will do their duty because it is their duty and for no other reason. It is this emphasis on duty, and the lack of concern with consequences, that makes Kant the quintessential

deontologist. There are the most important three formulations of categorical imperative such as (1) Act only on maxims, which you can will be universal laws. (2) Always treat the humanity in a person as an end, never as a mere means. (3) So, act as if you were a member of the ideal kingdom of ends in which you are both the subject and the sovereign.

Objectives of the Study:

- To examine Kant's moral philosophy and understand the fundamental principles underlying his deontological ethical theory.
- To analyse the concept of Categorical Imperative, particularly its key formulations universal and humanity as an end.
- To explore the relevance of Kantian ethics in business practices, including honesty, fairness, and corporate decision making.

Methodology :

The research paper is descriptive and analytical in nature. The source of collection is primary as well as secondary data.

Discussion :

- "Act only on maxims, which you can will be universal laws."**
The ethical philosophy of Immanuel Kant offers a rigorous and principled framework for evaluating business conduct. Unlike consequences-based theories that assess morality in terms of profit, utility, or outcomes, Kantian ethical emphasizes duty, intention, and adherence to universal moral law. This distinction is especially significant in the corporate world, where decisions are often justified on the basis of financial performance or competitive advantage. Kant's first formulation of the categorical imperative is "Act only on that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." This maxim shows that what is right is universal, and that what is expedient is not universal. Your actions, including business

actions, must be based on that maxim, which you can will as a universal law.

In order to know of an action if it is moral or morally acceptable, one has to ask whether the principle behind the action can be universally willed, whether it can be a universal law that everyone can act upon. What would happen if everyone acted on it? These questions can be asked of all human actions, including business actions and decisions. Kant asked this question, by way of illustration, regarding a conduct that pertains more to business ethics: that of making a promise with no intention of keeping it. Just because one is desperately in need of money, should one borrow it from someone promising to pay it back without the intention of doing so? Does or can one's extreme desperation justify this false promise? Can this principle of action be universalized? And would such a universalized maxim be logically coherent? Kant's answer to this is categorically in the negative, because this principle, if universalized, would be incoherent and hence the action (of false making promises) would be self-defeating. Thus: Kant: And could I say to myself that everyone may make a false promise when he is in a difficulty from which he cannot escape? Immediately I see that I could will the lie but not a universal law to lie. For with such a law there would be no promises at all, inasmuch as it would be futile to make a pretense of my intention in regard to future actions to those who would not believe this pretense or – if they over hastily did so – would pay me back in my own coin. Thus, my maxim would necessarily destroy itself as soon as it was made a universal law.

Thus as a matter of logic and conceptual condition, a promise that is made to be broken always would be no promise but a pretense and would not interest any financier or promoter, just as a business contract made to be broken or violated always would not attract financiers and stakeholders. The concept of

making false promises, if everyone made such promises always, would be bad -morally bad -not because the consequences would be bad, but because the concept is incoherent. Such concepts and principles, therefore, cannot be universalized and cannot be consistently applied in practice. Most naturally, action based on such principles would be self-defeating. The categorical imperative thus provides a test, which every action of man must pass in order to be morally acceptable. On Kantian morality, every action, every business decision, must be such that the maxim on which it is based can be willed universally and coherently, i.e. without involving self-contradiction, for only on this condition the maxim can be applied consistently.

(2) **"Always treat the humanity in a person as an end, never as a mere means."**

Since human beings have free will and thus are able to act from laws required by reason, Kant believed they have dignity or a value beyond price. Thus, one human being cannot use another simply to satisfy his or her own interests. This is the core insight behind Kant's second formulation of the categorical imperative: "Always treat the humanity in a person as an end and never as a means merely." The maxim orders us to treat personality as of absolute worth. Man is essentially rational. Only rational nature is such an end, and has absolute worth.

Freedom of the person may be constructed as both negative and positive. Negative freedom is the freedom not to be coerced and deceived. For coercion and deception are the most fundamental forms of wrong doing to persons. "physical coercion treats someone's as a tool, and lying treats someone's reason as a tool." Kant finds it naturally "horrificing", for while forcing a person to do what he does not want to do is the worst disrespect to his humanity, making him do such a thing through deceitful means is a gross misuse of one's reasoning power, besides being mistreatment and disrespect of the other person. It is therefore

vitaly important for the "respect for persons" principle that people should refrain from coercive and deceptive actions and behaviour towards others. However, this is not enough. Respecting the person as an end requires the exercise of his positive freedom to develop his human capacities, which for Kant means developing his rational and moral capacities.

Viewed from this perspective, the business firm is a moral community in which the stakeholders are the members of a kingdom of ends, where there is no distinction of substance between the owner / employer and the employees in respect of the rules that govern the business. The business must respect the humanity in its employees so that they are not treated as instrument or tools through coercion and deception. Treating the humanity in a person as an end, in a business, means two things; first, negatively, people in a business relationship must not be used, i.e. not be coerced and deceived, and second, positively, business organizations and business practices must be such that they create conducive conditions for the development and exercise of the rational and moral reasoning by all concerned. This will provide a kind of organizational legitimacy.

Businesses interact daily with employees, customers, suppliers, and communities. Kant insists that each of these stakeholders must be treated as an end in themselves, possessing intrinsic worth and rational autonomy. Exploitative labour conditions, manipulative marketing strategies, and unsafe working environments violate this principle because they reduce individuals to mere instruments for profit. Respect for human dignity, therefore, becomes the cornerstone of ethical corporate governance.

3. **"So, act as if you were a member of the ideal kingdom of ends in which you are both the subject and the sovereign."**
Kant's third formulation of the categorical imperative, which follows from the second, envisions persons as a member of

an ideal kingdom of ends in which you are both subject and sovereign at the same time. Treat yourself and every other human being as of equal intrinsic value; behave as a number of an ideal republic in which each citizen is a sovereign and a subject in which each is a means and an end, in which each realizes his own good in promoting the good of others. A "kingdom of ends" is an ideal society of rational persons following the moral law. The idea is that, in a moral community there is no discrimination between the sovereign and the subjects, for the universal law applies consistently all, always and everywhere. Because of their freedom and rationality human beings are able to act from laws required by reason and this confers on them a unique sort of dignity. Organizations are composed of persons and, given the nature of persons, organizational structures must treat the humanity in persons with dignity and respect (as an end). Moreover, the rules that govern an organization must be rules that can be endorsed by everyone in the organization. This universal endorsement by rational persons is what enables Kant to say that everyone is both subject and sovereign with respect to the rules that govern them.

A Kantian views an organization as a moral community. Each member of the organization stands in a moral relationship to all the others. On one hand, the managers of a business firm should respect the humanity in all the persons in the organization. On the other hand, each individual in a business firm, managed as a Kantian moral community, should view the organization other than purely instrumentally, that is, as merely a means for achieving individual goals. Organizations are created as ways of achieving common goals and shared ends. An individual who views the organization purely instrumentally is acting contrary to the "respect for persons" principle.

One major implication of Kant's ethics is that it acts as an effective moral critique of authoritarian hierarchical organizational

structure and helps promote democratisation of the workplace. For, on the third formulations of the categorical imperative, coupled with the first, the rules that govern an organization/business are those that are universally endorsed by everyone in the organization, irrespective of whether they are owners/employers or the employees, who participate in the process of decision-making and determination of these rules before they are given effect to. This has the merit of getting the interest of all the stakeholders, especially the stockholders and the employees, focused on responsible participatory business conduct which, in turn, will lead to maximum of profit and owner value.

Criticism:

However, Kant's concept of business ethics has its limitations and challenges too, the most conspicuous for the present work being that it is a bit too demanding. It has been argued that principles of ethics, which are meant to provide guidance in practical life, must be such that it should be empirically possible to apply them to solve real life problems. But certain elements in Kantian ethics, e.g. its emphasis on the respect for persons principle and on purity of motive as condition of truly moral actions, if taken literally to the exclusion of contextual considerations, may make it difficult to be applied in practice. Especially it may appear too austere to apply to business. For it is a well-known fact about business's good acts are almost always justified, if such actions results in profit. But though in the best interest of the recognized purpose of business, such actions of corporate houses and business organizations would not be considered truly moral by Kantian parameter. The principle of Kant "respect for persons" may thus not strictly apply in business.

However, limitations like these notwithstanding, the merits of Kant's ethics far outweigh in its impact on shaping up a sound business ethics theory and what is to count as ethical conduct in business remains reasonably undisputed.

Importance :

The application of Immanuel Kant's ethical framework to business practices yields several important findings:

1) **Universal law as a Moral Test:**

Business actions such as deception, corruption, and exploitation fail the test of universal law. When evaluated under the categorical imperative, unethical practices cannot be consistently willed as universal law without undermining trust and market stability.

2) **Respect for persons:**

The principle of treating person as an end establishes that stakeholders-employees, consumers, shareholders, and communities – must never be used merely as instrument for profit. Ethical business conduct requires transparency, fairness, and informed consent.

3) **Primacy of duty over profit:**

The study demonstrates that moral obligation in business are unconditional. Financial gain, competitive pressure, or market success cannot justify actions that violate moral duty.

4) **Relevance to corporate world:**

Kantian ethics supports the development of principled corporate policies grounded in honesty, accountability, and respect for autonomy. It promotes the long-term trust and sustainable relationships.

5) **Limitations identified:**

While Kant's theory provides a strong moral foundation, its strict rule-based nature may pose challenges in complex corporate situations where multiple duties conflict or where outcomes significantly impact stakeholders.

CONCLUSION:

The analysis confirms that Kant's concept of business ethics, centred on the categorical imperative, offers a powerful normative framework for evaluating corporate behaviour. Kant's

three formulations of the categorical imperative, collectively and distributively, have important bearings on business actions and hence on business ethics. By emphasizing universal moral law, act from duty, and respect for persons, Kantian ethics demands integrity and rational consistency in decision-making. Business guided by these principles are obligated to act truthfully, honour commitments, and uphold human dignity irrespective of financial consequences. Although practical challenges may arise in applying strict duty-based ethics in competitive markets, the core insights of Kant's moral philosophy remain highly relevant in contemporary business environments. Ultimately, Kantian business ethics affirms that ethical conduct is not merely a strategic advantage but a moral necessity. ■

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A. J. Ayer's Rejection of Metaphysics in Logical Positivism

Manash Pratim Goswami

Introduction:

The twentieth century witnessed a major shift in philosophical thinking, especially in the field of language and meaning. One of the most influential thinkers in this movement was A. J. Ayer. He was a British philosopher and a leading supporter of 'Logical Positivism', a philosophical movement that attempted to make philosophy more scientific and meaningful. Ayer became famous for his strong criticism and rejection of metaphysics, which traditionally dealt with questions about God, the soul, ultimate reality, and the nature of existence.

Ayer argued that most metaphysical statements are not only false but actually *meaningless* because they cannot be tested or verified through experience. His ideas were mainly presented in his famous book 'Language, Truth and Logic', published in 1936. In this work, Ayer developed the 'Verification Theory of Meaning', which became the main tool for rejecting metaphysics.

This article discusses Ayer's rejection of metaphysics within the framework of Logical Positivism and explains the Verification Theory of Meaning.

Logical Positivism: Background:

Logical Positivism was a philosophical movement that emerged in the early twentieth century, mainly associated with the thinkers of the Vienna Circle. This group believed that philosophy should follow the methods of science and focus on clear and meaningful statements.

According to logical positivists, meaningful statements are of two types:

1. Analytic statements
2. Empirical or synthetic statements

Analytic statements are true by definition. For example, "*All bachelors are unmarried.*" The truth of this statement can be known simply by understanding the meanings of the words.

Empirical statements, on the other hand, are statements that can be tested or verified through observation or experience. For example, "*Water boils at 100°C at sea level.*"

Logical positivists argued that any statement that is neither analytic nor empirically verifiable is meaningless. This principle became known as the 'Verification Principle', which was strongly defended by A. J. Ayer.

The Verification Theory of Meaning:

The Verification Theory of Meaning is the central idea in Ayer's philosophy. According to this theory, the meaning of a statement lies in the method of its verification. In other words, a statement is meaningful only if it can be verified through experience or observation.

Ayer believed that if a statement cannot be tested or verified in any possible way, then it does not express any real fact about the world. Therefore, such a statement is meaningless.

For example:

➤ "*The sky is blue.*"

This statement is meaningful because we can verify it by looking at the sky.

➤ "*There is life on Mars.*"

This statement is also meaningful because it could potentially be verified through scientific investigation.

But consider a metaphysical statement like:

➤ "*The Absolute is perfect.*"

➤ "*God exists beyond time and space.*"

According to Ayer, these statements cannot be tested or verified

through any experience. Since there is no possible method to confirm or deny them, they are considered *Meaningless* rather than simply false.

Thus, the verification principle became a powerful tool for eliminating metaphysical statements from philosophy.

Ayer's Criticism/Rejection of Metaphysics:

Metaphysics has been an important branch of philosophy since ancient times. Philosophers like Plato and Aristotle discussed questions about the ultimate nature of reality, existence, and the soul. Later philosophers such as Immanuel Kant also explored metaphysical problems.

However, Ayer believed that most metaphysical discussions are meaningless because they do not satisfy the verification principle. According to him, metaphysicians often use language in a way that appears meaningful but actually does not convey any factual information.

For example, a metaphysician might say:

"Reality is spiritual."

"The world is ultimately one."

Ayer argued that these statements cannot be tested through observation or experiment. Therefore, they do not provide any real knowledge about the world. He claimed that metaphysical statements are not even false. Instead, they are '*pseudo-statements*', which means they look like meaningful statements but actually lack real meaning.

Meaningful and Meaningless Statements according to A. J. Ayer:

Ayer divided statements into two categories: *Meaningful and Meaningless*.

➤ **Meaningful Statements:** A statement is meaningful if it meets one of the following conditions:

- a) It is analytically true (true by definition).
- b) It can be empirically verified.

For Examples:

- "All triangles have three sides."
- "It is raining outside."

These statements either depend on definitions or can be tested by observation.

➤ **Meaningless Statements:** Statements that cannot be verified or tested are meaningless.

For Example: "The universe has a spiritual purpose."

"The soul exists beyond physical reality."

According to Ayer, such statements cannot be confirmed or denied through experience. Therefore, they do not express real facts.

Religion and Metaphysics:

Ayer's rejection of metaphysics also affected religious language. Statements like "*God exists*" or "*God is eternal*" were considered metaphysical because they cannot be verified through sense experience.

Ayer did not claim that these statements are false. Instead, he argued that they are meaningless from a philosophical or scientific point of view, because there is no method to test their truth. This view created a strong debate between logical positivists and religious philosophers. Many critics argued that Ayer's theory was too strict and ignored important aspects of human experience.

According to A. J. Ayer there are two types of Verification. These are Weak Verification and Strong Verification of meaning.

➤ **Strong Verification:** A statement is meaningful only if it can be directly and conclusively verified through observation. However, this form is too strict because many scientific statements cannot be completely verified.

➤ **Weak Verification:** Ayer later accepted a weaker version of verification. According to weak verification, a statement is meaningful if it can be *verified in principle*, even if it is not verified immediately.

For example, the statement "There are mountains on the far side of the moon" could not be verified in the past, but it was still meaningful because it could potentially be verified in the future.

Criticism of Ayer's View:

Although Ayer's rejection of metaphysics was influential, many philosophers criticized his theory.

- One major criticism is that the Verification principle itself cannot be verified through observation. Therefore, according to its own rule, the principle might be meaningless.
- Another criticism is that many meaningful statements in ethics, religion, and art cannot be empirically verified, yet they still have significance in human life.
- Philosophers argued that Ayer's view was too narrow and ignored many important forms of knowledge and understanding.

Significance of Ayer's Philosophy:

Despite criticisms, Ayer's philosophy played an important role in modern philosophy. His ideas encouraged philosophers to analyze language carefully and to distinguish meaningful statements from meaningless ones.

His work also helped develop Analytic philosophy, which focuses on logic, language, and clarity of thought. By challenging metaphysical speculation, Ayer pushed philosophy toward a more scientific and logical approach.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, A. J. Ayer strongly rejected metaphysics as part of the movement of Logical Positivism. According to him, meaningful statements must either be analytically true or empirically verifiable. This idea is known as the Verification Theory of Meaning.

Using this principle, Ayer argued that metaphysical statements about God, the soul, or ultimate reality cannot be verified through experience. Therefore, they are not false but meaningless. Although his theory faced many criticisms, it had a major influence on twentieth-century philosophy and encouraged a clearer and more scientific approach to philosophical problems.

Thus, Ayer's rejection of metaphysics remains an important part of modern philosophical discussion about language, meaning, and knowledge. ■

Ludwig Wittgenstein's Concept of Language-Games: An Analysis.

Debananda Bhattacharyya

(i)

Analytic Philosophy deals with the movement of linguistic analysis, leading towards a renaissance in the philosophical history. It takes the linguistic turn to answer the philosophical problems. Linguistic turn may be placed in two phases. The first one is related to artificial linguistic philosophy or formal linguistic analysis and the second one is concerned with ordinary people language. Referring to the two types of analysis of language, analytic philosophers can be divided into two groups. The first group is associated with logical or formal or artificial language which is based on logical and mathematical axioms or principles includes the philosophers like Bertrand Russell, early Ludwig Wittgenstein, Schillick, Ayer and Carnap etc. and the other group related to ordinary people language or common people language includes philosophers like G.E. Moore, later Wittgenstein, Ryle, Strawson and Austin etc. Wittgenstein as a genius comes to philosophy under the network of philosophy of language. His philosophy can be termed into two streams. The first one is connected with logically perfect language or artificial language and the second stream is related to ordinary language. In his early period he emphasizes on the meaning of language and in the later part he gives importance to the uses of language.

(ii)

There can be no serious doubt that the most powerful and

pervasive influence upon the philosophy in the 20th century has been that of Ludwig Von Wittgenstein (1889-1951). Wittgenstein is the follower of Frege and Russell to some extent and one of the best advocates of linguistic Analytic Philosophy. He says that although philosophy is considered as a science of the true propositions it serves the invaluable function of clarifying the meanings conveyed by language. Regarding the true method of philosophy he elucidates that all philosophy is a critique of language.

Everyone knows that there is a fundamental difference between his *Philosophical Investigations* (later Wittgenstein) and *Tractatus* (early Wittgenstein). One can say that the first one is the criticism and rejection of the second one. In his *Investigations*, Wittgenstein gives up his earlier stance, namely that the language is faithful picture of reality and that every elementary proposition is a picture of some simple atomic facts. In *Investigations*, his language and facts undergo a behaviorist and relativist transformation. He feels that language is a form of life – a tool to activity – a way of performance and behavior. It is like a game with words as tools like pieces of chess. According to him there are in-numberable language system, each serving a purpose and having different structural rules. For Wittgenstein, now language is not simply for asserting facts, portraying reality but also for asking, describing, thinking, cursing, wishing, greeting, praying, scolding, commanding, guessing, joking and so on. So he says, do not bother for the meaning, but think for the use of language.

Wittgenstein says that there is no essence or general form common to language. He says that there is no any fixed atomic and simple elements of reality corresponding to elementary propositions and words. For this reason one has to come across with philosophical problems arise when language goes on holidays. And the cure of it, he remarks, lies in bringing "words back from their metaphysical to their every day or common use".

Wittgenstein concepts the notion of 'use' wide that of language-games when urges to examine the use of the word, he refers to

language games played with words. Malcolm reports an interesting incident that shades light on the origin of the language-games: One day Wittgenstein was passing a field where a football match was in progress the thought first came to him that in language we can play game with words".

According to Wittgenstein a proposition does not presuppose a language- game, but a language- game will be only a small segment of the whole of language. Wittgenstein gives an example of language-game in his early part of *Philosophical Investigations*. The example is that there is a construction work going on of a building where there is a builder and his helper. The building materials are blocks, pillars, slabs, and beams etc. The two men have a language consisting of words blocks, pillars, slabs, beams etc. etc. When the builder calls out one of the words the helper throws the respective material. Wittgenstein calls it is complete in itself and could even be conceived to be entire language of a tribe.

In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein rejects his *Tractatusian* view that there is a universal form of language, that is to picturise or mirrorise reality. He says that there is nothing common to various forms of language. So, the case with language-games, just there is nothing common to all games. That is games are different. If we find one feature common to two games, we may find that it is absent in another. A multiple of relationship makes all them games by over-lapping and criss-crossing. And according to Wittgenstein this is what called family resemblance which unites a family as well as games. In *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein that there is a universal form of number which is common to all members. But he rejects it in *Philosophical Investigations*. He discovers the characteristic concepts of language in *Investigations* that there is nothing common to various forms of language that makes them language. The language is an activity in which we speak or write whatever we think, feel and will to communicate with others just like performing an action or playing a game. One language-game is different from other language-game.

These activities of language are similar with playing game. There is nothing common to all games. There are, for example, board game, card game, ball game and the variety within each game. If we speak out a feature common to two games we shall find nothing common. Not all require competition between players and so on. What make all of them game is not some feature present in all games but a multitude of relationship overlapping. Wittgenstein calls this family resemblance, which are mere resemble of genus, not common to species. One can often see a striking resemblance between several generations of same family. One may find there is no common quality in them. The eyes or the build or temperament are different. The family resemblance is due to many features that overlap and criss-cross. The unity of games is like a family resemblance.

Wittgenstein says that the use of an expression is the language in which it plays a part of course he does not regard the word 'meaning' and 'use' as synonymous. Some have arrived at the mistaken idea that by the 'use' of an expression Wittgenstein has meant its ordinary or the correct use. Wittgenstein says that grammatical similarities often mislead us. So, he warns us not to accept ordinary language. He says that perfect grammatical language can save us from danger. So, he suggests that once we command a clear view of the uses of a word we can solve all the philosophical problems.

Wittgenstein admits that the words of our language are dead and meaningless. He is willing to admit that if language is to be vital and important, speakers must mean something by their words and the listener must understand the same. He however says that the behavior of speaker-listener is more important than the meaning of the word. He says that if we behave accurately we are actually playing a language-game.

It can be said that Wittgenstein's later conception of language modelled by his key concept of language-game has brought into sharp focus the view that language is a system of proposition woven into the fabric of human life. After all, language is seen as rule

involved activity that represents a form of life replacing the atomistic conception exposed by Frege, Russell etc. We use words in language and the use of words in language is explained in terms of language-games. In language-games statements have roles in the contexts of our actions.

(iii)

Wittgenstein develops an influential philosophy of language, especially in his later work of *Philosophical Investigations*, where he introduced the idea of language game. Although highly influential his views, have received several criticisms from various philosophers. Critics argue that Wittgenstein never clearly defines what a language game is. His concept of language games is flexible and descriptive rather than precise. Because of vagueness, it is difficult to use the theory systematically in philosophy of language. Some feel that this theory also lacks analytical clarity.

Wittgenstein's language-games leads to confusion and puzzles. Etymologically 'language' and 'game' are different and their meanings are not similar. So, for Gilbert Ryle, later Wittgenstein commits category mistake as they belong to two different categories. In this context Wittgenstein fails to comprehend the two different meanings of the two words, language and game. He assimilates 'language' and 'game' in order to formulate the concept of language-games overlooking its different meanings or functions. For example, a game can be played by a person but a game cannot be. Because language requires both speaker and listener, otherwise language would be a private one. Again language can have different functions but a game has a limited purpose.

Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblance is also not free from confusion. He holds that games form a family. Just as there is no common feature among games so also in a family we do not find a common feature among the members of a family. From analogical point this may be correct but actually it is not. Although we find different features among games still the commonality among features

is that these are games. So also the commonality among the members is that they belong to one family .

Wittgenstein's view that meaning depends on the use of within a form of life suggests that meaning varies across communities . It may lead to linguistic relativism, where truth and meaning become dependent on social practices. This may undermine the idea of universal meaning or objective truth..

According to some philosophers one can't treat language as games. Scientific and mathematical language seeks precision and fixed rules. Wittgenstein's emphasis on everyday language can't explain the structure of scientific theories or formal logic. Wittgenstein's focus on public language also weakens the importance of private language and the psycho-physical feelings and mental aspects of human beings.

(iv)

Wittgenstein is the key figure in the development of contemporary linguistic analytic philosophy in the west. He has influenced the very course of philosophy in the 20th century in the west by the force of his imaginative and creative thinking. He remains a beacon light for the pursuit of philosophical knowledge.

He is mainly concerned with the basic question how meaning and interpersonal communication are possible. He makes it clear how human beings come together to understand one another by introducing his notion of language games. The social dimension of language is made sole dimension of linguistic activities. From this emerges the idea of forms of life which dominates the entire Wittgenstein's later philosophy of language and logical analysis of the same.

(v)

Language-game is the fundamental question of Wittgenstein analysis of language that measures the sense of expression. He begins to analyze the philosophical problems from a new dimension.

Wittgenstein deals with language into two ways. According to him one can use public language to communicate and on the other hand one can use private language. The public language is applied to our ordinary discourse by following rules of language . It can convey meaningful ideas as it is governed by rules. Using a rule in language-game is a must, as we use a rule in games. In Wittgenstein's philosophy of language-games rule-following concept has been given more importance for understanding the meaning of language. A successful game is guided by rule of the game. So is the case with language. Wittgenstein maintains that the meaningful statements are only those statements expressed in public language which are shareable and testable. He says that a private language is not governed by the rule of language. Language in the form of introspective talk , dreams, hallucinations, imaginations are under private language which have no value in public domain. The private language is outside the purview of language rule and it does not abide by any rule and according to Wittgenstein has nothing to play in language-games .

Wittgenstein's philosophy of language has tremendous impact in the history of analytic philosophy. Modern analytical philosophers like G. Ryle, P.F. Strawson and J.L. Austin derive their inspiration from later Wittgenstein's philosophy. Therefore, Wittgenstein is one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century . Although his philosophy can be criticised on some points still we cannot give a full stop to his philosophical importance and legacy. * ■

**Helps are taken from various sources while preparing this article.
Writer.*



Darshan

Logical Atomism, Proposition and Fact: An Analytical Study of Bertrand Russell's Philosophy

Anushka Gogoi

(i)

The development of analytic philosophy in the twentieth century marks a decisive shift in the method and aim of philosophical inquiry. At the centre of this transformation stands Bertrand Russell, whose theory of logical atomism attempted to bring clarity, precision, and scientific rigor into philosophy. Russell's logical atomism is not merely a theory about the structure of the world; it is equally a theory about language and its relation to reality. His analysis of propositions and facts forms the backbone of this philosophical framework and offers a systematic way to understand truth, meaning, and knowledge.

Logical atomism emerges from Russell's dissatisfaction with the vague and speculative nature of traditional metaphysics. He believed that many philosophical problems arise because language is not properly analyzed. According to him, philosophy should adopt the method of logical analysis, breaking down complex ideas into their simplest components. Just as science analyzes matter into atoms, philosophy must analyze reality into its most basic elements. These elements, in Russell's view, are "atomic facts," and they constitute the ultimate structure of the world.

Russell famously asserted that the world is the totality of facts, not of things. This statement reflects a fundamental shift from substance-based metaphysics to fact-based ontology.

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Traditionally, philosophers focused on "things" or "substances" as the primary constituents of reality. Russell, however, argues that it is not things in isolation that matter, but the way in which they are related. A fact is not merely an object; it is a state of affairs involving objects and their relations. For instance, the statement "the book is on the table" does not simply refer to a book and a table separately; it expresses a relation between them. This relational structure is what constitutes a fact.

(ii)

In Russell's framework, facts are composed of particulars and universals. Particulars are individual objects that exist in the world, such as a person, a tree, or a table. Universals, on the other hand, are properties or relations that can be shared by many particulars, such as "redness," "being on," or "larger than." A fact arises when particulars are connected through universals. Thus, the fact "the apple is red" involves a particular (the apple) and a universal (redness), united in a specific relation. This analysis allows Russell to explain how the world is structured in a logical and intelligible way.

A key aspect of logical atomism is the distinction between atomic and complex facts. Atomic facts are the simplest, indivisible units of reality. They cannot be further analyzed into smaller facts. For example, "the cat is sleeping" may be considered an atomic fact if it cannot be broken down into simpler relational structures. Complex facts, by contrast, are composed of multiple atomic facts connected by logical relations. A statement such as "the cat is sleeping and the dog is barking" represents a complex fact because it combines two simpler facts through the logical conjunction "and." This distinction is crucial because it reflects the hierarchical structure of reality, where complex phenomena are ultimately grounded in simpler elements.

(iii)

Closely related to the notion of fact is Russell's concept of proposition. A proposition, in his view, is the linguistic or logical expression that represents a fact. It is through propositions that we describe the world, make judgments, and communicate knowledge. Propositions are capable of being true or false, and their truth depends on their correspondence with facts. For example, the proposition "the sky is blue" is true if and only if there exists a corresponding fact in reality. If no such fact exists, the proposition is false. This view is known as the correspondence theory of truth, which Russell strongly defended.

The relationship between propositions and facts is central to logical atomism. Propositions are not arbitrary linguistic constructions; they have a definite logical structure that mirrors the structure of the facts they represent. This idea implies a deep connection between language and reality. The structure of a proposition reflects the arrangement of objects and relations in the corresponding fact. For instance, the proposition "Ram loves Sita" has a subject-predicate structure that corresponds to a relational fact involving two particulars (Ram and Sita) and a relation (love). This parallelism between language and reality ensures that meaningful propositions can accurately represent the world.

(iv)

Russell further distinguishes between atomic and molecular propositions. Atomic propositions correspond directly to atomic facts and express simple, indivisible states of affairs. Molecular propositions, on the other hand, are formed by combining atomic propositions using logical connectives such as "and," "or," and "not." The truth of a molecular proposition depends on the truth of its component atomic propositions. For example, the proposition "it is raining and it is cold" is true only if both constituent propositions are true. This logical structure allows

for the systematic analysis of complex statements and plays a crucial role in formal logic.

An important feature of Russell's theory is his emphasis on the logical independence of atomic facts. According to him, atomic facts are independent of one another, meaning that the existence or non-existence of one fact does not logically determine the existence or non-existence of another. This independence ensures that the world is not a monolithic whole but a collection of discrete, self-contained elements. It also allows for the possibility of different combinations of facts, which gives rise to the diversity and complexity of the world.

The influence of logical atomism extends beyond Russell's own work and is evident in the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, particularly in his early work, the *"Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus"*. Wittgenstein developed the idea that propositions are "pictures" of facts, meaning that they share a common logical form with the reality they represent. Although Wittgenstein later moved away from this view, the early connection highlights the significance of Russell's ideas in shaping the trajectory of analytic philosophy.

Despite its elegance and systematic nature, logical atomism has been subject to various criticisms. One major criticism concerns the notion of atomic facts. Some philosophers argue that it is difficult, if not impossible, to identify truly indivisible facts, as most facts appear to be interconnected and context-dependent. The assumption that reality can be neatly divided into independent units may oversimplify the complexity of the world. Furthermore, the strict correspondence between propositions and facts has been questioned, especially in cases involving abstract concepts, moral statements, or fictional entities, where the relation to concrete facts is not straightforward.

Another criticism arises from the later development of ordinary language philosophy, which challenges the idea that language can be fully understood through formal logical analysis.

Philosophers in this tradition argue that everyday language is rich, flexible, and context-sensitive, and cannot be reduced to a set of rigid logical structures. This perspective suggests that Russell's approach, while valuable for certain purposes, may not capture the full range of linguistic meaning.

Russell discussed about the different types of fact. These are:

1) **Particular fact:** Particular fact is that in which makes a particular proposition true or false. "This is white" is a proposition true or false. 'This is white' is a proposition which fact makes it true or false is called particular fact.

2) **General fact:** General fact is that which makes a general proposition true or false. "All men are mortal" is a general proposition which facts makes it true or false is called general fact.

3) **Positive fact:** Positive fact is that which makes a positive proposition true or false. "Socrates is a philosopher" is a positive proposition which facts make it true or false is called positive fact.

4) **Negative fact:** Negative fact is that which makes a negative proposition true or false. "Kautilya is not a philosopher" is a negative proposition. Which facts make it true or false is a negative fact.

5) **Atomic fact:** An Atomic proposition is a simple kind of proposition, asserts certain things has a certain quality. It's asserts with fact this called simple Atomic fact. "This is white". He also said that a Complex fact built on a simple fact.

Nevertheless, the importance of logical atomism cannot be denied. It represents a pioneering effort to apply the tools of logic to philosophical problems and to establish a clear relationship between language and reality. Russell's analysis of propositions and facts provides a framework for understanding truth as correspondence, meaning as representation, and knowledge as grounded in the structure of the world. His work laid the foundation for many subsequent developments in logic, philosophy of language, and analytic philosophy as a whole.

(v)

In conclusion, the theory of logical atomism, along with the concepts of proposition and fact, constitutes one of the most significant contributions of Bertrand Russell to modern philosophy. By emphasizing the analysis of language and the structure of reality, Russell sought to transform philosophy into a discipline characterized by clarity and precision. Although later developments have revised and, in some cases, rejected aspects of his theory, the core insights of logical atomism continue to influence philosophical thought. The relationship between propositions and facts remains a central issue in the philosophy of language, and Russell's work provides a valuable starting point for exploring this enduring problem.

Bertrand Russell's theory of logical atomism provides a powerful framework for understanding the relationship between language and reality. By analyzing the world into atomic facts and language into atomic propositions, Russell attempted to create a clear and scientific method of philosophy. The concepts of fact and proposition are central to this theory. Facts represent the actual structure of the world, while propositions are the means by which we describe and understand that structure. The correspondence between propositions and facts forms the basis of truth.

Although logical atomism has its limitations, its influence on modern philosophy is undeniable. It laid the foundation for further developments in analytic philosophy and continues to be an important topic of study in logic, language, and metaphysics. Thus, Russell's work remains a significant milestone in the journey toward clarity, precision, and logical understanding in philosophy. ■





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“ Life is not a
PROBLEM
to be **SOLVED**
but a
REALITY
to be
EXPERIENCED.”

- S.Kierkegaard

ISBN No. 978-93-5812-008-0

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