LOGICAL GRAMMAR AND THE REALITY

The notion that the language which we make use of to account for our world of experience by and large represents the structure of the world was the thrust of the linguistic analysis. In the beginning of the analytical tradition there were questions regarding the feasibility of this project as far as it concerned the ordinary language, with which we usually describe our daily experience. The construction of an ideal language was proposed in order to avoid vagaries and pitfalls of ordinary language. This can be discerned in Wittgensteins statements: "That is to say, where ordinary language disguises logical structure, where it allows the formation of pseudopropositions, where it uses one item in an infinity of different meanings, we must replace it by a symbolism which gives a clear picture of the logical structure, excludes pseudopropositions, and uses its terms unambiguously."¹

At the very outset of analytic philosophy, it was clear that newly rich logic will take a place of importance in the logical analysis of language, or better to say that new

developments in logic prompted philosophers to venture out for a new philosophical perspective on language.

The early phase of the analytic method was largely characterised by the applications of new rich logic and opinions among philosophers weighed heavily on the construction of an ideal language, instead of considering ordinary language, since the vagueness of the ordinary language was beyond, they thought, corrections.

"We find logical forms which have very little similarity with the norms of ordinary language. We meet with the forms of space and time with the whole manifold of spatial and temporal objects, as colurs, sounds etc., etc., with their gradations, continuous transition, and combination in various prepositions, all of which we cannot seize by our ordinary means of expression."²

Philosophers, like Frege, Russell and early Wittgenstein settled with the logical analysis and construction of an ideal language, which would have clarity and precision of mathematics. Where as philosophers like the later Wittgenstein, Quine, Strawson and all took a drastically different stand that since we describe our world of experience in the ordinary language, the proper understanding of the functioning of ordinary language vis-a-vis the world of experience would be an appropriate way of philosophising.

In the earlier chapters I undertook the task of presenting briefly each philosophers, of both formal or ideal and ordinary language, the main concern being the relation between logic.

² "Some Remarks on Logical Form." p.33.
language and reality. In spite of the differences in their views about the proper role of philosophy, and also about language and its structure, and semantics, I would like to elaborate and show that there are some steady undercurrents on which they agree, namely on the nature of logical grammar and its locus standi in mapping or representing the structural features of reality. In the case of formal language philosophy the link between the logical grammar discerned by analysis of language and that of the structure of the reality is obviously demonstratable in nature, while the mapping of linguistic structure onto the reality in ordinary language philosophy depends on how we reconstruct the nature of the grammar of ordinary language.

In the ideal language philosophy the isomorphic relations between the structure of language and reality gave an impetus to the idea that the concepts or categories of reality conform to the structure of the language. Hence, the structural features of language could be read onto the structural features of reality. This amounts to be a position that was ushered into Philosophy by Kant's Copernican Revolution. Anyway, even though the ordinary language philosophers were apparently against deriving an isomorphic relation between language and reality, their attempt amounts to accounting for our world of experience via language, because our experience is channelled into our thought, and thought, in turn, is invariably related to our linguistic habits. Language and thought are insuperably related. Therefore, even analysis of ordinary language leads to the logical structure which is invariably the structure of the world of experience. In this chapter I will attempt to show how in both
formal and ordinary language philosophy, the structure of grammar reveals the structure of the world.

2. LOGICAL GRAMMAR AND THE IDEAL LANGUAGE

Early Wittgenstein was responsible for the celebrated linguistic turn. It is true that many of the essential ideas of the linguistic turn were provided or embedded in Frege's writings. The ideas or insights, of Frege such as philosophical problems are pseudo problems arising out of the imperfection of natural language, such problems can be solved by constructing an ideal language, and the construction of ideal language can be based on technical notions of logic, had far reaching consequences in the philosophical development thereafter. Logical notions such as logical function, quantification, functional calculus, the sense-reference distinction, grammatical or logical form, played a cardinal role in the philosophical analysis of language.

The Tractatus is a logico-metaphysical system, in the sense that ideal language is constructed by making use of the logical tools which are supposed to be isomorphic with reality, since the structural features of such a language are of the same nature as those of reality. Inspite of this the Tractatus laid emphasis on a clear cut demarcation between what can be said and what cannot be said in language. Accordingly, what can be said includes only propositions of natural sciences. Because the idea of truth-functionality of propositions permits only propositions of natural sciences as meaningful. Hence the question of truth
or falsity arises only with regard to those propositions; whereas, in the case of all other propositions, including the metaphysical, the truth or falsity of the proposition cannot be settled down. Logic does not permit us to discuss any underlying structure or form so that they cannot be validated truth-functionally. Hence, these statements are, according to the Tractarian Wittgenstein, construed as 'What cannot be said' and meaningless. The Tractatus conception of truth and meaning are inter-related. What makes sense and meaningful of a proposition is its correspondence with an objective fact or state of affairs. One to one correspondence of a simple or atomic proposition with that of atomic fact is the key notion by which we determine the truth of a proposition and, hence, its meaning.

Any complex propositions are supposed to be combinations of atomic propositions whose truth and meaning are sought to be the truth-functionality of its component propositions.

In this Tractatus picture the metaphysical propositions, stand to lose because neither they have logical form of the sort discernible in the propositions of natural science to determine its truth, nor have any meaning like the propositions of natural sciences. This logical analysis of the structure of language invariably projects a picture that the Tractatus is a anti-metaphysical treatise in which no room has been provided for any sort of metaphysics.

In spite of this picture of the Tractatus the body of philosophical perspective presented in it can be seen as a doctrine of logico-metaphysical nature. The structure of ideal language constructed out of the logical considerations is of
essentially a logical kind. This logical construct is supposed to be derived out of, or embedded in, the experience about the world. Since the language we make use of is invariably related to our experience of the world. In other words, the structure of language thus derived is the structure of the world. Since such a structure of language is the logical construct, we map the structure onto the world of experience. Hence the emerged structural features of the world could be seen as the extension of the idea or conception of ideal language. This is nothing but to say that the Tractarian analysis of language and, consequently, of the world is logico-metaphysical in nature.

Post-Tractarian Wittgenstein nurtured a plan to construct a phenomenological language in which appropriately we grasp or present our world of experience. Thus he writes:

Our ordinary language, which of all possible notation is the one which pervades all our life, holds our mind rigidly in one position, as it were, and in this position sometimes it feels cramped, having a desire for other position as well. Thus we sometimes wish for a notation which stresses a difference more strongly makes it more obvious than ordinary language does, or one which in a particular case uses was more closely similar forms of expressions than our ordinary language. Our mental cramp is loosened when we are shown the notation which fulfil these needs. These needs can be of the greatest variety.3

The shift in Wittgenstein’s approach is closely related to a thought that phenomenology is grammar, that is to say, that the phenomenological investigations is no more than, or comes to the

same as our investigations of what it makes sense to say.

2. Grammar and what it makes sense to say

Wittgenstein took the responsibility of explaining what he means by the phenomenology in the investigation of possibilities by appealing to the idea that phenomenology is concerned with what makes sense to say. He states, "... but the essence of language is a picture of the essence of the world and philosophy, as guardian of grammar, can in fact grasp the essence of the world, only not in the propositions of the language, rather in rules for this language which exclude nonsensical combinations of signs." The reason that the phenomenological investigation, i.e., to the possibilities of phenomena, had seemed so important was that it provided Wittgenstein with means to determine what could be sensibly said, and thus what the rules of syntax of the 'Begriffsschift' should permit. Now he comes to recognize that the phenomenological investigations into what it makes sense to say about phenomena are the same as the grammatical investigations of the words used to describe immediate experience.

As what it makes sense to say assumes importance in the grammatical investigation, the notion of the construction of a notation becomes redundant. Therefore, the important task is to get clear about what it makes sense to say in our familiar language. As a consequence of this the understanding of the nature of grammar replaces the construction of a

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phenomenological language for a proper understanding of the framework of language with respect to reality.

3. ARBITRARINESS OF GRAMMAR

The change of mind from the idea of phenomenological investigation to the grammatical investigation implies Wittgenstein's understanding of the nature of grammar. The identification of phenomenology with grammar presupposes that phenomenology is concerned to describe the norms, standards, or rules of the methods of representation one employs. But, in course of time, this conception of phenomenology has been replaced by concern of grammar and its nature as, he writes in the opening of Philosophical Remarks, the investigation of the rules of usages of our language, the knowledge of these rules and their perspicuous representation, come to same thing, that is, achieves the same as what one often wants/aims to achieve through the conception of a 'phenomenological language.'

Wittgenstein considers these rules of grammar as conventional and arbitrary because these grammatical rules or conventions cannot be justified by appeal to the supposed fact that they enable us to represent reality correctly. He writes:

If I could describe the point of grammatical conventions by saying they are made necessary by certain properties of colour (say), then that would make the convention superflous, since in that case I would be able to say precisely that which the conventions exclude my saying. Conversely, if the conventions are necessary, i.e., if certain combinations of words had to be excluded as nonsensical, then for that very reason I cannot cite a
property of colours that makes the
convention necessary, since it would then
be conceivable that the colours should not
have the property, and I could only express
that by violating the convention. ⁵

Grammatical rules do not have propositional nature because
any proposition presupposes grammatical rules, in that sense,
are prior to experience. On the questions of the justifiability
of grammatical rules as propositions Wittgenstein states that,

I do not call a rule of representations a
convention if it can be justified in
propositions; propositions describing what
is represented and showing that the
representation is adequate. Grammatical
conventions cannot be justified by
describing what is represented. Any such
description already presupposes the
grammatical rules. That is to say, if
anything is to count as non-sense in the
grammar which is to be justified, then it
cannot at the same time pass for sense in
the grammar of the proposition that justify
it. ⁶

When he argues for the conventionality and arbitrariness of
grammatical rules, the idea is not a total independence from
what it is represented. The grammatical rules are essential to
the description of our experience and constitute the meaning but
not the reason to have meaning. It becomes clear when he says
that "grammar is not to keep as such reality. Grammatical rules
determine meaning (constitute it) and are therefore not
responsible to any meaning and are to that extent arbitrary." ⁷
The relation between grammatical rules and what has been

⁵ Philosophical Remarks, p.53.
⁶ Philosophical Remarks, p.55.
⁷ Philosophical Grammar, p.184.
represented in proposition, and to what extent they are independent have been made clear by Wittgenstein in the following passage:

Rules of grammar are in the same sense arbitrary and in the same sense not arbitrary as the choice of a unit of measurement. But that can only mean that they are independent of the length of that which is measured. And that the choice of one unit is not 'true' and that of the other 'false' as the statement of the length true or false which is of course only a remark on the grammar of the words 'unit of length'.

From these arguments it is clear that Wittgenstein considers rules of grammar as arbitrary and, hence, autonomous. This recognition has the force to ask the question regarding what it makes sense to say about immediate experience, viz., the grammatical investigation of the language used to describe experience. In one interpretation it has been characterised as requiring the inspection of experience, or the phenomenon itself. The claim that grammar is arbitrary amounts to the recognition, for example, that a statement like 'This is no such thing as reddish-green' is not true because there is no grammatical convention regarding it in our language.

On Hintikka's reading of Wittgenstein, he had thought that phenomenological language would perfectly mirror the structure of reality. A proposition of phenomenological language is transparent through which immediate experience can be examined. The grammar of phenomenological language is far from arbitrary, rather it is determined by the essential nature of immediate

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8 *Philosophical Grammar*, p. 185.
experience. It was only after the realization of the impossibility of a phenomenological language that Wittgenstein embraced the idea of the arbitrariness of grammar. Indeed, in this view, Wittgenstein's recognition of the impossibility of a phenomenological language just was tantamount to the recognition that there could be no language the grammar of which was determined by the nature of reality.

But Hintikka's interpretation has been questioned. It was not the impossibility of a phenomenological language that convinced Wittgenstein of the arbitrariness of grammar. It is the other way around. His investigations deeper into the functioning of the language with respect to reality led him to the idea of arbitrariness of grammar, hence the impossibility of a phenomenological language. Long before his notion of arbitrariness of grammar Wittgenstein had the idea that in fact phenomenological investigations and grammatical investigations of language are one and the same. This led him, finally, to realise that the appropriate philosophical task ought not to be that of developing a notation that is structurally isomorphic with reality, but rather to be that of understanding what it makes sense to say about experience. Since what it makes sense to say about experience is independent of what experience is like—since any description of what experience is like begs the question of what it makes sense to say about experience--there is no need for phenomenology, nor for a new phenomenological notation.⁹

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Irrespective of differences in interpretation, what strikes more is the role grammatical investigation plays in articulating or describing our immediate experience of the reality. Any understanding of the nature of experience and, therefore, reality demands or presupposes the grammar. The organization of our experience has necessarily been related to the rules of grammar.

The transition from the Tractatus with its 'right' method of philosophy to the Philosophical Investigation with its denial of a single right method and its insistence of many methods was due to profound changes in Wittgenstein's thinking, many of them were rejection of Fregean elements in his early philosophy. He rejected the truth-functional conception of propositions, Frege's idea of logical form as something hidden beneath the grammatical surface of sentences together with the associated idea of revealing the logical form by logical analysis, Frege's construction of sense of a proposition as the objective representation of reality, and the ideal language construction as a calculus with fixed rules.

It could be seen that most of the ideas Wittgenstein developed in the Tractatus are to be abandoned as a consequence of the deep changes in his philosophical perspective. In spite of all these changes two important ideas have their place in his new philosophy. The thesis that metaphysics is sheer nonsense, because it transcends the limits of language, could find out a place, and the notion that what can be said are the propositions of natural sciences or rather the propositions of natural history.
Tractatus provided a framework in which metaphysics is seen as nonsense, but as a consequence of abandoning the Tractatus, the thesis had to be reformulated in a new framework. Tractarian notion of 'meaning,' 'limits of language' and 'transcendance' are all given up in order to accommodate different notions concerning language and reality. Language is conceived as if it is a game-like activity in which participants use signs in accordance with rules, analogous to rules of chess and other social practices. These activities by making use of rules are part of our social life and, therefore, is a social art which can generally be called as 'forms of life'. In contrast to the Tractatus conception, meaning is not something to be sought beneath the surface grammar of signs; finding logical structure out of the sentence by analysis became irrelevant. Meanings are out there, in the very activity itself, in the use of signs. What constitute meaning of a sentence is its use.

Mastery of a language is nothing but the proper understanding and use of words in multifarious ways appropriate to the situation; to Fregean calculus as determining meaning gets replaced in the new theory. This amounts to saying that everyday use or functioning of the language sets its limits. Transcending the limit is now a matter of departing from ordinary use in ways that outstrip our practice and thereby go beyond the possibilities for meaningful application contained in the rules. This construal of language and meaning still excludes metaphysical sentences as piece of plain nonsense and the work of philosophy is still to prevent "bumps that the understanding has got by running its head up against the limits of language."
From the perspective of the Philosophical Investigations the Tractatus itself transcends the limits of language, because it employs Frege's and Russell's theoretical conception of meaning and language and much of the metaphysics goes with it. While the Tractatus curved out a space for those sentences which are meaningful, the The Philosophical Investigations had to go for a much larger space so that it can accommodate, all legitimate human linguistic activities than mere 'natural science' granted in the Tractatus. This change could be brought out by extending the notion of meaningfulness from propositions of natural science to the whole spectrum of 'natural history.'

What we are supplying are remarks on the natural history of human beings; we are not contributing curiosities however, but observations which no one has doubted, but which have escaped remarks only because they are always before our eyes.\footnote{Philosophical Investigations, 119.}

According to the Tractatus the essence of language is the general form of propositions which constitutes the meaning. Meaning is hidden in the language as the logical form. Logical form is the sense of the proposition. Logical form is lying beneath sentences and disguised by the grammatical clothing. In order to unearth the hidden logical form it is necessary to penetrate beneath words to the meanings they disguise. Thus the Tractatus deeply commits itself to a logical theory that posits the hidden meaning and form, and this very logical theory cannot be considered a part of natural science, but a piece of metaphysics.
The role of logical theory in philosophy is thus seen, in some significant respect, as that of the theory in science. It takes us to places that observation cannot reach and provides us with the understanding essential to solving problems. But in the *Philosophical Investigations*, it seems, the above conception of a logical theory, does not have any place. The theories present us a picture which keep us away from seeing, according to the *Investigations*, how the things really are. Therefore, what the *Philosophical Investigations*, advocates is that the aim of philosophy should be to arrive at a proper method which enables us to see what the actual natural history of human beings is. Thus Wittgenstein writes:

Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain. For what is hidden, for example, is of no interest to us.\textsuperscript{11}

This envisages a picture in which any sort of logical theory is ruled out; discerning a logical structure of language which correctly portrays the structure of reality by making use of logical notions becomes superfluous. If that was the case, the *Philosophical Investigations* committing itself to logical theory is of a remote possibility and against the spirit of the endeavour. But according to the *Investigations* what constitute the meaning of words are its multifarious uses in different contexts of social activities and, hence, in the language games in general. And this very language game is played according to

\textsuperscript{11} *Philosophical Investigations*, 133.
the grammatical rules which are conventions in language. Even though those rules are conventional and arbitrary in nature, they constitute the rock bottom of the activity of language-games, hence become the foundation of the language. There are questions regarding whether these grammatical rules are apriori or not, whether universal or specific to each language and the ground for its justification; thus grammatical rules indirectly acquire the functions of all those meant by a logical theory.

As we have seen, that as the Tractatus gave recognition only to those propositions of natural science as meaningful, and all others, including metaphysical propositions as nonsensical and meaningless, the Fregean and Russellian elements in it with regard to proposition, logic and, generally, language made it a metaphysical treatise. Nevertheless, the logical positivists took the Tractatus 'naturalistic' view that what can be said is the proposition of natural science literally and attempted to construct a philosophical perspective shaped according to the logico-linguistic thesis of Wittgenstein's thought. As a consequence of the adoption of these ideas, they opposed the philosopher's claim that there are things outside the causal nexus which are beyond the reach of the empirical methods of natural science. Their strict criterion of what can be said naturally led them to question the legitimacy of the claim that our logical, mathematical and metaphysical knowledge is about non-natural objects and that acquisition of such knowledge fully rests on the faculty of intuition.

The metaphysical doctrine is that significant truths divide exhaustively into those expressing relations of ideas and
expressions of matters or empirical facts. But in his later philosophy Wittgenstein transcends all these constraints and embraces a comprehensive and holistic philosophy. Any non-natural entities and non-natural knowledge are supposed to be abandoned according to the newly formulated critical philosophy which has a new conception of language and reality in order to keep closer to the revelation of the natural history.

4. QUINE'S NATURALISM WITH ONTOLOGICAL COMMITMENT

Quine is one who got disappointed himself of the overwhelming accommodation of non-natural entities as intensions within the logico-linguistic framework of ideal language of Frege and early Wittgenstein. He thought that the reason and the breeding ground for this lies in the analytic-synthetic distinction and the rejection of such a divide will provide an impetus to have a fulledged naturalism which keeps pace with modern scientific development. And to that effect it was necessary for him to separate theory of meaning from the theory of reference.

Once the theory of meaning is sharply separated from the theory of reference, it is a short step to recognizing as the business of theory of meaning simply the synonymy of expressions, the meaningfulness of expression, and the analyticity or entailment of statements; meanings themselves as obscure intermediate entities may well be abandoned. This is the step that Frege did not take... there is great difficulty in tying this well-knit group of concepts down to terms that we really understand. The theory of meaning, even with the elimination of the mysterious
Quine's rejection of non-natural entities and logical knowledge was accomplished by constructing his own variety of naturalism supplemented with a conception of the structure of knowledge. This variety of naturalism, Quine believes, accounts better for the certainty of logic and mathematics. In contrast to Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as a therapy, Quine treats philosophy as a naturalised epistemology, as natural science reflecting on itself. For Quine, a metaphysical principle is not ipso facto nonsense; it may be either a scientifically efficacious myth like the posits of physical objects or a scientifically impotent myth like that of Homer's Gods.

Quine's behaviouristic theory of meaning is well stretched to encompass all departments of human experience and knowledge. And in such a theory analyticity does not hold good to provide breathing space for non-natural entities, and, consequently, the thesis of necessary truths becomes superfluous. The tenor of Quine's naturalism could be discerned from the following passage:

... we see all of science--physics, biology, economics, mathematics, logic and the rest--as a single sprawling system, loosely connected in some portions but disconnected nowhere. Parts of it--logic, mathematics, game theory, theoretical parts of physics--are farther from the observational or experimental edge than other parts. But the overall system, with

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all its parts derives its aggregate empirical content from that edge; and theoretical parts are good only as they contribute in their varying degrees of indirectness to the systematizing of that context.

In principle, therefore, I see no higher or more austere necessity than natural necessity; and in natural necessity, or our attribution of it, I see only Hume’s regulations, culminating here and there in what passes for an explanatory trait or the promise of it.  

Quine conceives all knowledge as a composite whole and continuous with the paradigmatic natural sciences of physics, chemistry and biology. Since other disciplines like logic and mathematics have a certain degree of centrality, they occupy a central position in our overall belief system. Unlike non-naturalist philosophers, who argue that the centrality of such disciplines are derived from the non-natural objects which are outside our causal nexus and are known in a different way the greater degree of certainty, Quine argues, which logic and mathematics enjoy is because of their being more central in our belief system and drawing their strength from other disciplines which are in the periphery. The revision of logical or mathematical statements disturbs the system as a whole far more than the revision of statements of natural sciences, which lie close to its observational or experimental edge. The greater support that the former statements give to and receive from other statements—in virtue of their central position in the system—accounts for their greater certainty.

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Once we concede the intensionalism, Quine believed, which mainly stems from Frege's ideas on logic and language, then acceptance of mysterious, non-natural objects is taken for granted. While fashioning his own naturalism, which is in consonance with the contemporary science, Quine found the intensional semantical doctrines as incorrigible hurdles, especially Carnap's articulation of positivism with Fregean ideas. Fregean views on logic and language survived a great part in Carnap's philosophical doctrines.

Carnap's empiricism was based on the Fregean logic which was wedded to the analytic-synthetic distinction. What Quine targeted was this analytic-synthetic divide which found its optimum use in Carnap's empiricism. Therefore it became necessary for Quine to expose the meaninglessness of the distinction in order to deny of the possibilities of positing non-natural entities in the pretext of analyticity. The Fregean senses and propositions have to find a way out in the absence of that distinction.

Once it is done, then what is left are the entities or objects of natural science or, rather, natural history. As we have seen, the whole belief system encompasses all objects, both entities of natural sciences like physics, chemistry, biology--entities positioned away from the centre of belief system and conditioned by experimental or observational data--and of those entities of abstract science like logic and mathematics, which are at the centre of our belief system. Given this picture, what should be the field of enquiry of a philosopher? is what lies open to public view. Unlike Wittgenstein, Quine does not have an
aversion towards theories, though he concedes the limitation in the desirability of objective and behaviourist constraints on such theories. However, there is no meaning independent of languages; meaningfulness is relative to a language system and its cultural matrix. Hence there is no place for a conception of absolute necessity in Quine's system and so he eschews hope of truth "given and for all; and independently of any future experience."¹⁴

Quine demolished the myth of analytic-synthetic distinction in his celebrated paper 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' and paved way for an unhindered conception of naturalism. He held that the sort of naturalism envisaged should be characterised in which all truths are contingent, all objects are natural objects and all knowledge is acquired on the basis of the empirical methods of the natural sciences. All branches of science form an epistemologically seamless web of belief about an ontologically unified world. Any bifurcation of the ontological realm by intensionalist theory of meaning is not accepted. Hence, non-naturalist characterization of language and logic as a kind of knowledge depending on a faculty of intuition over and above sense perception is ruled out.

Quine held that the unit of meaning and truth is to be considered within the conceptual framework as a whole. What entities one then takes to exist are those entities whose postulation yields the simplest and most comprehensive framework. Whether mental entities exist, then, becomes a question about whether such entities need be postulated and not

¹⁴ Philosophical Investigation, p. 92.
a question about whether they are found in experience. If one then asks about what conceptual framework determines the entities to be postulated, the answer is the framework suitable for the accommodation of science, logic and mathematics.

To accomplish this the standard epistemology is to be rejected and fresh and more down to earth approach is to be adopted. This involves accepting the deliverance of modern science. Taking science for granted, the question to be addressed is how did we achieve scientific knowledge? Because language is fundamental to the acquisition of such knowledge, the question of reference assumes fundamental with regard to any language, and the task finally reduces to an enquiry into the 'roots of reference.'

Since acquisition of knowledge is invariably related to learning language and its reference, and so what ontological commitments one has to have and how this ontology related to the language becomes very significant. When we take into account the ontological commitments, we are speaking nothing but about objects. Quine writes,

we are prone to talk and think of objects. Physical objects are obvious illustrations when the illustrative mood is on us, but there are also all the abstract objects, or so these purported to be: the states and qualities, numbers, attributes, classes. We persist in breaking reality down somehow into multiplicity of identifiable and describable objects, to be referred by singular and general terms.¹⁵

Speaking of objects has to be understood as one's

¹⁵ Quine, 'Speaking of Objects,' in Ontological Relativity and Other essays, p. 1.
ontological commitments through the acquisition of language. A language is learned by conditioning: the teacher conditions the child to respond thus-and-so in the appropriate situations. A crucial step in the psychogenetic development from learning simple terms to learning science is the attainment of objective reference, which Quine regards as occurring when the learner has mastered predication by way of quantification. The referential apparatus of natural language is less tidy than logic, where it is effected by the quantifiers and variables they bind.

But, according to Quine, the objective reference is inaccessible to observation, so that the grounds on which the belief of objects are justified become very problematic. The acquisition of knowledge, hence, heavily depends upon our ability to get rid of these constraints on observation conditions. How do we do that? Quine says,

Grant that 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 be taken into account an empirical evidence for or against the truth of the sentence. If we thus go on to assign the sentence some import in point of existence of objects by arbitrary projection in the case of the heathen language or as a matter of course in the case of our own, there upon what has already been counted as empirical evidence for or against the truth of the sentence comes to account as empirical evidence for or against the existence of the objects.\(^\text{16}\)

This nature of the stimulus condition of knowledge acquisition and, consequently, its indeterminatness of the objects we speak in a sentence render the idea that objects we

\(^{16}\) "Speaking of Objects," p. 11.
speak are of the nature of posits. However, for Quine's ontology is a matter of speaking of objects. Accordingly, ontologies may be identified and the differences among them recognized, by what kinds of objects they posit or countenance. Sophisticated language of quantification helps us to make clear which ontological commitments are involved in a stretch of discourse.

The question of general ontological commitments has to do with the semantics of the language. For this purpose the use of quantifiers will serve equally well to indicate the domain of objects over which the quantifiers range. On the other hand, the use of some of the quantifiers or some array of them to translate the logical structure of a specific sentence has to do with the truth-condition for that specific sentence.

5. CARNAP'S CRITICISM OF ONTOLOGY

Quine attempted to restore legitimacy and meaningfulness of this branch of enquiry, i.e., ontology. At the outset of analytic philosophy there was a strong philosophical conviction to treat any ontological questions as illegitimate, since they are framed in a wrong way and there is no mechanism by which we can settle the question, and hence, the whole enterprise is meaningless. This strong objection could find more rigorous and refined form in Carnap's articulation of semantic structure of language and conceptual framework in which we meaningfully describe our experience.

The enterprise of ontology is unwarranted and meaningless within Carnap's formulation of epistemology in particular and
human knowledge in general. According to Carnap, philosophers engage in dispute over the status of abstract objects like numbers, class, propositions etc., without recognizing a very important distinction within which only any sensible solution to those disputes are possible. The distinction he proposes is that one between the question regarding external nature or internal nature of the question and by making such distinction one is in a position to find out possible answers to the question regarding existence. Insofar as the external questions are concerned, they do not have any cognitive validity, hence are pseudo questions, and possibly we cannot find any answers to those questions. Whereas in the case of 'internal questions' we are in a position to find out answers because those questions have cognitive validity. To determine which questions have cognitive validity and which do not have wholly depends upon the 'linguistic framework'. Carnap writes:

Are these properties, classes, numbers, propositions? In order to understand more closely the nature of these and related problems it is above all necessary to recognize a fundamental distinction between two kinds of questions concerning the existence or reality of entities. If someone wishes to speak in his language about a new kind of entities, he has to introduce a system of new way of speaking, subject to new rules, we shall call this process the construction of framework for the new entities in question. Now we must distinguish two kinds of questions of existence; first, questions of existence of certain entities of the new kind within the framework; we call them internal questions; and second, question concerning the existence or reality of the framework itself, called external questions. Internal questions and possible answers to them are formulated with the help of the new form of expressions. The answers may be found
either by purely logical methods or by empirical methods, depending upon the framework is a logical or factual one. An external question is of a problematic character which is in need of closer examination.  

The introduction of framework assumes, according to Carnap, importance in answering the ontological question. From the above paragraph it is clear that ontological questions are about the framework, and are, therefore, external. The questions regarding the framework are of such nature that a linguistic or semantic enquirer is not possible into those expressions and, therefore, they are pseudo-questions. There are no scientific, logical or mathematical procedures available to settle those questions. Therefore, Carnap concludes, ontological questions about reality or existence are 'external' and should be treated differently from science.

Quine has a large area of agreement with Carnap as well as an area of disagreement. The adoption of linguistic or conceptual scheme or framework is very relevant and important to Quine too and 'stepping outside' the use of a linguistic framework to answer 'What there is' is to be rejected. Both agree upon the pragmatic or practical considerations of choosing a language among other available languages, which would be effected by its economy, simplicity etc. But, Quine rejects the idea of a sharp distinction between science and ontology because both require the use of some language or other and what holds true for one holds equally for another. According to him,

any enquiry must make use of some language, hence, whatever be the result, it is relative to the resources of that language. The question of cognitive status and related constraints or conditions that crop up in ontological enquiry are equally applicable to all branches of enquiry. Therefore, Quine affirms, all enquiries depend upon one or other linguistic framework and its resources. The constraints or possible limitations on the determination of ontology of a theory or discourse, and the possible revisions or modifications of ontology are all the consequence of the relative nature of the enquiry. The division of science and ontology gets blurred. In fact Quine stands for a different sort of distinction in which ontology is concerned with broad categories of expression whereas science is preoccupied with expressions of a sub-class. Totally independent and absolute enquiry of any sort is out of question. One’s ontology comprises objects posited or approximated within the linguistic framework.

6. 'WHAT THERE IS' AND THE ESSENCE OF LOGICAL GRAMMAR

It is clear from the above discussion that ideal language philosopher’s attempts were to arrive at the structure of the world of experience through the logical analysis of language. This presupposes that language has a definite structural pattern. This logical structure of language is construed as identical with the structure of the world. Therefore, logical grammar discerned in the analysis of language represents the structure of the world, or, rather, what we experience about the world are those things and events given in or represented in the
logic of language. Language is thus the only medium in which we conceive the world. Consequently logical grammar of the language represents the essence of our world of experience. It presupposes one-to-one representational relation between the structure of language and that of reality.

Whereas, the ordinary language philosophers could not find much meaning in constructing logical notations; they were interested in studying the functioning of ordinary language vis-a-vis the world of experience. They thought that our experience of the world gets crystalized into different linguistic expression. These linguistic expressions represent the content of our experience of the world. But they too agree that our language has a logical grammar. Irrespective of the question regarding conventionality of logical grammar, this stays at the rock bottom of the 'social practice' i.e., language. Hence, in our language the world of experience manifests, and organization of those experience into language is done by logical grammar. Thus, organization of our experience into language by making use of logical grammar ultimately amounts to that, our world as we experience it, is the one fashioned by the language and its logical grammar.