CHAPTER II

WHAT CAN BE SAID?

Introduction

As it is already mentioned in the previous chapter, the entire work of Wittgenstein is, by and large, classified into that which can be said and that which cannot be said. In this chapter we would concentrate on what can be said, according to Wittgenstein. What can be said needs to be conceptualized. In order to conceptualize what is perceived one must possess required linguistic equipment. Therefore, like Kant, Wittgenstein is of the opinion that what can be said must be put into concepts. The thought cannot remain as mere thought for it needs language to express itself. In other words, thought finds its expression through language. Thus thought and language are interdependent. One cannot think of pure thought, for any formation of thought requires conceptual schema. This is in a way the essence of Wittgenstein’s picture theory. Wittgenstein, to my mind, echoes Kant. The latter viewed that concepts without percepts are empty and percepts without concepts are blind. In other words, pure percepts and pure concepts are of no use, for they do not yield any knowledge of reality. Similar view is also advocated by Indian epistemologists. According to them, perception (pratyakṣa) is of two types. They are: determinate (savikalpaka) and indeterminate (nirvikalpaka). The former is so called because the elements of perception are conceptualized, hence conceivable; and the latter is so
called because the elements of perception cannot be conceptualized, hence inconceivable. Let us discuss Wittgenstein’s views on what can be said.

The Composition of the World

*Tractatus* is written by Wittgenstein in a unique style with a view to maintain precision and clarity. This is typically the approach of a matured scientist rather than a philosopher. Unlike a philosopher who aims at understanding the subject-matter in question with a wide range of examples and explanatory notes, the explanations provided by a scientist are accurate and precise. Therefore, one does not find any examples in *Tractatus*. It is a work that brings out the symbiotic relation between language and reality. In the absence of language, reality becomes a no-entity. Similarly, language is of no use in the absence of reality the elements of which it mirrors. This simple but most significant aspect is dressed in a characteristic style by Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus*. Although the entire work is summed up in seven propositions (elucidations), each proposition has its own role to play in the explanation of the project in question. The most important propositions are numbered from 1 to 7, and the logical importance of each of them is represented by the decimals.\(^\text{65}\) Therefore Wittgenstein’s style of writing indirectly suggests us what is important and what is less important.

Wittgenstein develops a definite system of ontology in his *Tractatus* in order to show the isomorphic relation between language and reality. In his ontology he recognizes the existence of external world (reality) consisting of facts. The

\(^{65}\text{Pitcher, G. The Philosophy of Wittgenstein, New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, 1972, p.17.}\)
ontological and linguistic doctrines which he developed during his early period are intertwined. These doctrines cannot be understood in isolation from each other. The world of facts and their configuration is something that is perceivable and conceivable. He starts his *Tractatus* with the following propositions.

“"The world is all that is the case."”\(^{66}\)

“"The world is the totality of facts, not of things."”\(^{67}\)

“"The world divides into facts."”\(^{68}\)

The above statements of Wittgenstein reveal something interesting. Normally we are of the opinion that the world consists of things or objects. Rather he holds the view that the world is the sum total of facts. What is the advantage of using the expression “facts” instead of the expression “things”? Of course, there is an advantage. As a philosopher with a scientific bent of mind, Wittgenstein might have thought that the expression “things” does not really serve the purpose, for it does not represent the relations existing among the entities of the world. The world does not merely consist of entities dumped into it, but the relations that relate one entity with another is also important. A relation that relates one entity with another is a fact in as much as an entity is a fact. Therefore, for Wittgenstein the world is represented by the totality of facts. But facts are not the content of the world. According to him, objects are the content of the world. But his conception of object is something different. An object is not an entity with physical existence. On the contrary, he holds that: “Objects make

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\(^{67}\) Ibid., 1.1.

\(^{68}\) Ibid., 1.2.
up the substance of the world." The world is made up of objects. So to say objects are like atoms. Just as the physical world is made of physical atoms, the world of facts is made up of objects. These objects of Wittgenstein represent his ontological position. In other words, objects constitute the substance or content of the world of facts. These objects cannot be identified with chairs and tables, for every chair and table is a fact. All these facts are constituted by these objects. But there are some serious objections against such a view. When we say that the world is a totality of facts, a complete stock verification is needed to describe the nature of the world (reality). Is it humanly possible? Of course any amount of stock verification does not satisfy our requirement, for the facts of the world cannot be enumerated. When Wittgenstein speaks about the facts of the world he is referring to all existing entities and the relations among those entities. Every entity is a fact by itself and every relation is also a fact by itself. Thus the world (reality) is a complex phenomenon. By simply enumerating the entities existing in the world (reality) one cannot get an adequate picture of it. A comprehensive understanding of the world (reality) suggests that the world is the totality of facts. It is also a fact that the facts of the world (reality) and their configuration is beyond verification. Even to describe the parts of a flower and the arrangement of those parts within a flower itself is a difficult task. Therefore, Wittgenstein’s view that the world (reality) is the totality of facts is suggestive.

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69 Ibid., 2021.
It can also be viewed in the following manner. The configuration of the world of facts is very complex, for there are many possibilities of arranging the facts of the world. The actual world of Wittgenstein consists of facts that determine the structure of the world. One can imagine many possible worlds, but they are different from the actual world. What is the case can only be expressed. If the world is the totality of facts, then what can be said about facts themselves? Wittgenstein evidently thought of a fact as being a kind of complex entity existing in the world, as being a group of thing arranged or combined in a certain way---as though, for example, the fact that the cat is on the mat is the former is on the latter. That he so viewed them is shown by the kinds of statements he makes about facts and states of affairs. For example, “A state of affairs (a state of thing) is a combination of objects (things).” 70 “In a state of affairs objects fit into one another like the links of a chain.” 71 Further he writes: “In a state of affairs objects stand in a determinate relation to one another.” 72 The above statements of Wittgenstein suggest us that every state of affairs is a combination of various objects. These objects are configured in a definite way. The relation between one object and another is a determinate one. The later Wittgenstein did not approve of it. In his Blue and Brown Books, Wittgenstein writes: “I shall not pause to give the arguments against such a view of facts.” 73 According to Lucas, “This view is false; and not only false, but dangerously false. Facts are not at all what people think they are; they are not the simple solid elements out of which the whole fabric of our knowledge is constructed, and the

70 Ibid., 2.01.
71 Ibid., 2.03.
72 Ibid., 2.031.
belief that they are is responsible for many of the obsessions which afflict academics, not least the historians.”74 Perhaps, Lucas is of the opinion that an object or thing is observable, but not a fact. Facts are not simple substantives for Lucas. The ambiguous nature of the expression ‘fact’ makes our understanding of the world more difficult. In fact, the scientists’ use of the expression ‘fact’ results in type-token ambiguity. Somehow the early Wittgenstein was a victim of this temptation.

If we go by Wittgenstein’s analysis of the world into facts, facts into states of affairs, and state of affairs into objects we arrive at a clear view of his analysis of the world. These objects are supposed to be simple and unanalyzable. Atomic facts are not simple for they are made up of components which are not simple. These atomic facts are supposed to be the building blocks of the world (reality). The constitution of the world is dependent on the atomic facts which can exist on their own. Now we need to give proper justification to suppose the facts are ultimately break up into atomic facts. Also, we need to explain the structure of an atomic fact. Wittgenstein is of the opinion that our use of language indirectly suggests us the composition of the world. We use atomic propositions to represent simple or atomic facts. This itself is a justification for Wittgenstein’s claim. In the Tractatus, Wittgenstein asserts: “The simplest kind of proposition, an elementary proposition, asserts the existence of a state of affairs.”75

To say something of the existence of any state of affairs (sachverhalt), is to describe the nature of an atomic fact. It is, in fact, our use of language that suggests

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us the structure of reality. The complexity of any given fact is represented by a proposition. From the nature of a proposition we know the nature of a given fact. Therefore Wittgenstein approaches the world (reality) through language. But the view that every word or phrase denotes something in reality is something unwarranted. There are several words like ‘if’ ‘or’ ‘all’ and the verbs do not refer to anything in the world. Similarly, there are certain imaginary objects like ‘winged-horse’ ‘gold-mountain’, ‘round-square’ which do not have any existence. Even Russell thought the definite descriptions would always pick up an unique entity or subject. This assumption presupposes that every word or phrase does name an entity. The entity in question may be an object, quality, relation, or whatever. But Russell learnt that this assumption is unwarranted, for imaginary objects do not represent anything in reality. If a word or phrase does name something it is a true proper name. Russell also held that the expressions ‘this’, ‘that’ are logically proper names. In that sense whatever is named by such a word or phrase is its meaning. The reason why we need to harp on Russell’s analysis is that early Wittgenstein’s picture theory of meaning is a variant of Russell’s naming theory of meaning.

Russell was of the view that a noun does in fact name an object and that object is its meaning. The same meaning is carried through by that word or phrase in all contexts. What is peculiar to Russell’s theory is that whether the noun occurs in a sentence or not its meaning is retained. This is typically that characteristic feature of Russell’s proper name. The names such as Scott, Socrates are not real proper names as they are the disguised descriptions. According to Russell, definite descriptions are fundamentally different from proper names. In the case of proper names they retain
their meaning in isolation from the sentences in which they occur. But this is not the case with definite descriptions for they do not refer to any object. But this view of Russell is contested on the ground that the definite descriptions like ‘the author of the Republic’ name a certain individual. Therefore there is no fundamental difference between a proper name and a definite description. It is true that imaginary objects do not name anything therefore they do not possess any meaning. The empiricist ontology of Russell does not admit those entities for those entities are fictitious. Similarly the definite descriptions like ‘round-square’, ‘present king of France’ do not refer to anything. But the sentence “The present king of France does not exist’ is meaningful from the point of view of surface grammar. We cannot simply say that this sentence is meaningless. Therefore, the way out of such a dilemma is to analyze a given sentence logically. The logical analysis of a given sentence reveals its meaning. However, we are confronted with some peculiar definite descriptions which pick up unique entities. Then we need to treat them as proper names. But Russell does not agree with this view. Perhaps, as pitcher held: “One might answer this objection by arguing that the logical nature of a form of words cannot plausibly be thought to vary with empirical matters of fact. But whether Russell would agree with such an answer or not, and whether it is sound or not, it would need in any case, an elaborate defense; Russell thought he could show that no definite descriptive phrase can be true proper name, no matter what the word happens to contain.” 76 Russell analyses it in the following manner:

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“Scott is the author of Waverley.” This proposition expresses an identity. In that if ‘the author of Waverley’ is taken as a proper name, then it is supposed to refer to some object (C). Then the proposition would be Scott is C. But, if C is anyone except C, then the proposition is false. Suppose Scott is C, then the proposition “Scott is Scott” is trivial and completely different from the proposition “Scott is the author of Waverley.” 77

“The author of Wavelery’s is not constituent of the proposition at all. There is no constituent really there corresponding to the descriptive phrase.” 78 Thus Russell aimed at showing that the grammatical form of a sentence does not represent its logical form. Wittgenstein’s appreciation for Russell’s analysis is seen in the following statement. “It was Russell who performed the service of showing that the apparent logical form of a proposition need not be its real one.” 79

And he says earlier:

Language disguises thought. So much so, that from the outward form of the clothing it is impossible to infer the form of the thought beneath it, because the outward form of the clothing is nor designed to reveal the form of the body, but entirely different purposes. 80


80 Ibid., 4.002(4).
Russell’s theory can be criticized on the following grounds. First of all, what sort of expressions do name objects in language? What are the real names in language? Such questions arise because all phrases, namely, the definite descriptions, do not name objects. First of all we need to identify them. What are the characteristics of an expression which is counted as a genuine name? languages? What characterizes much an expression possesses in order to be counted a genuine name? If all complex propositions are analyzed into simpler ones, how far does one carry this exercise? Is such analysis possible? What kind of order or structure does one find in such analysis? Is there one unique form of analysis? Or does it differ from one complex proposition to another depending upon its structure? If so, are these analyses formed into a heterogeneous collection? All these objections need to be met with. Although Wittgenstein was concerned with foundations of mathematics, he too had to think these objections seriously. The content of the Tractatus is the outcome his labour to settle these long pending issues in philosophy. Clarity and precision marked his approach. That which could not be expressed clearly is left out honestly by him as something unassailable.

Propositions express thoughts. In other words, a thought finds its expression in language. And what a sentence expresses is a proposition. A proposition does not belong to any language, whereas a sentence is composed of words as per the rules of syntax and can be written in any natural language. The English sentence “The cat is on the mat” can be written in other natural languages too. But the proposition that is expressed by these sentences means the same thing. A proposition is a candidate for truth or falsity, but sentences cannot be true or false. Therefore, it is meaningless to
seek an answer for the question: “Is the English sentence ‘It is raining’ true or false?” Only our assertions about things or phenomena are either true or false insofar as our assertions have reference.

For instance the expression “satz” in German can mean a sentence or a proposition. But we must figure out in what sense did Wittgenstein use this expression in his *Tractatus*. The statement: “A proposition can be true or false only in virtue of being a picture of reality.” 81 clearly states that the expression “satz” is used by Wittgenstein in the sense of a proposition. In fact, Wittgenstein uses the expression “satz” to refer to a sentence and also to refer to a proposition. How do we know that he uses this expression to refer to a sentence or to a proposition? The context in which he uses this expression reveals its true reference. For instance Wittgenstein’s use of “satz” in the following sections bring out its reference.

“If an elementary proposition is true, the state of affairs exists: if an elementary proposition is false, the state of affairs does not exist.” 82 “If all true elementary propositions are given, the result is a complete description of the world.” 83 The inventory of the world is completed when all the elementary propositions are described by showing which of them are true and which false. Elementary propositions represent the states of affairs. The existence and non-existence of states of affairs is determined by elementary propositions. The truth of a given elementary proposition confirms the existence of a state of affair and the falsity of a given elementary proposition confirms its non-existence.

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81 Ibid., 4.06.
82 Ibid., 4.25.
How does Wittgenstein define an elementary proposition? It is simple and cannot be analyzed into further simples or basic propositions. An elementary proposition is like an atomic fact which does not have any components within itself. According to Wittgenstein, there is a class of absolutely basic propositions of which no such further analysis is possible. To quote Wittgenstein in this context: "An elementary proposition is one consisting entirely of names."\(^{84}\)

Here the expression ‘name’ does not refer to a name which is used in its ordinary sense. Wittgenstein is using the expression ‘name’ in a technical sense. For instance, normally we say the name ‘crow’ refers to a bird, and the name ‘triangle’ refers to a geometrical figure, and the name ‘Aristotle’ refers to the well-known ancient Greek philosopher. A name for Wittgenstein is that which is contrasted with anything that is verbally defined. It can neither be analyzed nor be defined. A name is a simple logical atom. These simple logical atoms constitute; language for Wittgenstein. As he puts it: “A name cannot be dissected any further by means of a definition: it is a primitive sign.”\(^{85}\) Therefore, Wittgenstein does not consider the expressions such as ‘crow’, ‘Aristotle’, ‘triangle’ as names. As Moore puts it each of them is definable in terms of their parts. Each one is a complex concept. Proper names do not qualify as names in the special sense of the expression ‘name’, for one does not find any definition for the expression ‘name’ in Wittgenstein’s sense. Ordinary proper names can be defined or analyzed by stating certain essential features or facts about the objects or entities or persons that they refer to. Russell calls proper names abbreviated definite descriptions. For any term to be a name it

\(^{84}\) Ibid., 4.22.
\(^{85}\) Ibid., 3.26.
must defy all attempts of definition and analysis. However, Wittgenstein admits, the
only way of defining a name is through ostensive definition, namely, by pointing out
to whatever it denotes. Wittgenstein would agree with Russell that proper names
are abbreviated definite descriptions. Ostensive definition is possible only when a
name refers to some observable entity. Otherwise even this possibility is also ruled
out.

All propositions containing terms are analyzed into elementary propositions.
These elementary propositions contain names. In fact, the terms of a given
proposition do not denote anything directly. They denote only through some other
proposition. This process goes on until we reach a proposition, through analysis, that
contains nothing but names. According to Wittgenstein, a proposition has sense only
when its terms designate something existent. Suppose, now that I express the
following proposition: “The broom is in the corner.” What kind of analysis of my
proposition would Wittgenstein offer? The kind of analysis he would give, at this
point anyway, is indicated in the section immediately preceding.

Every statement about complexes can be resolved into a statement
about their constituents and into the propositions that describe the
complexes completely. Wittgenstein offers the following analysis of
a proposition to render its terms with any meaning.\textsuperscript{86}

The stick is in the corner,

The brush is in the corner,

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 2.0201.
The stick is attached to the brush in such and such a way.\textsuperscript{87}

In the above analysis the terms refer to something existing and the subject of the proposition "the broom" refers to something existing. What Wittgenstein tries to drive home here is that whether the subject 'the broom' refers to something is completely dependent on the nature of analysis of the terms that refer to something existing. However, Wittgenstein is confronted with a bigger issue here. In our day-to-day life we make statements about mythical and fictitious objects and persons. We can construct apparently meaningful statements by using these fictitious entities as subjects like 'the Present king of France is bald'. But on logical analysis their true nature is revealed. Wittgenstein agrees with this view of Russell. The following statement of Wittgenstein brings of his agreement with Russell. "A proposition that mentions a complex will not be nonsensical, if the complex does not exist, but simply false." \textsuperscript{88}

Starwson in his famous article "On Referring" argues against the statements such as "The Present king of France is bald'. The statements of this sort, according to him, are neither true nor false. They must refer to something in reality if at all they have any sense. Therefore, their status is in no way different from the statements such as "round-square exists", "God is omnipresent". If something is unverifiable, then it cannot be brought under the purview of logical analysis at all. First of all, the subject of all these statements is a fictitious one. Therefore, these statements are dubious and they are not about anything. Wittgenstein does not differ with

\textsuperscript{88} Op. cit., Tractatus, 3.24 (2).
Strawson in this regard. Suppose ‘the broom’ in the statement does not refer to anything then the entire statement is false. But in order to ascertain the truth of a given statement it needs to be analyzed into a conjunction of statements as Russell did in the case of “The present king of France is bald.”

Suppose our analysis leads us to no absolutely simple objects, and then the analysis would be an endless exercise. There always remain constituents of constituents. Then it results in the analysis of analyses. How does one arrive at any kind of reference? In that sense the truth of any given proposition is completely dependent upon whether certain other propositions are true. It amounts to saying that if there are no absolutely simple objects, then the question whether ‘the broom’ in any proposition has any sense is dependent upon certain other propositions. Apparently this is not acceptable to Wittgenstein. Once we know this is an unavoidable thing, namely, the reference to existents is required for determining the sense of any proposition, it is not necessary that the proposition on which its truth is dependent must also have the reference to existents. Wittgenstein’s answer to this is negative. He holds that if there are absolutely simple objects, then this problem does not arise. The regress of analysis will not be there if the elementary propositions are constituted by names, which are simples.

If the names refer to existents, the propositions constituted by these names would also refer to existents. The meaning of these indefinable signs (names) are the objects that they name.”\(^{89}\) Suppose they do not name any object they would remain as merely meaningless marks and not considered as names. This reference to

\(^{89}\) Ibid., 3.203.
existents by the elementary propositions into which a proposition can be analyzed is enough to assign any sense to that proposition. Although the elementary propositions have sense, it is not necessary that they must be true. The objects are the meanings of the names. When these names are combined in accordance with the rules of syntax they represent the configuration of the objects which they refer to. Thus propositions are said to have sense.

The above argument is contested on the ground that it has illicitly smuggled in the truths about existents. A name becomes a meaningless mark if it does not refer to an object. In other words, an elementary proposition that contains a name has sense or not is dependent upon the truth of another proposition which asserts that the name exists. This is the case with all elementary propositions. Therefore, as long as it is made mandatory that the reference to existents is made compulsory, the sense of a proposition is necessarily dependent upon the truth of other propositions irrespective of the existence of simple objects. Wittgenstein clarifies this objection by holding the view that if a name is a meaningless sign in an elementary proposition then it is not a proposition at all. Hence the sense of an elementary proposition cannot depend on the truth of any other proposition. The crux of Wittgenstein’s argument is that if there are simple objects as existents which are referred to by names then the elementary proposition which contains these names has sense. If there are no simple objects, as we have seen, the dependence will be rather on whether some elementary propositions in the analysis of a proposition are true. But Wittgenstein does not agree with this view. Therefore, in order to avoid this situation there must exist simple objects.
From the above analysis we come to know the overall picture of language and its relation to the world of existents. The analysis provided by Wittgenstein is simple and interesting. The analysis of reality (world) into facts, and facts into states of affairs and states of affairs into objects and correspondingly the analysis of language into propositions and propositions into elementary propositions, and elementary propositions into names is done with a sense of imagination. But Wittgenstein’s sense of imagination is amply supported by logic. The ultimate units of analysis on the both sides hold key to the supposed connection between language and reality. We would not come across these simples of both sides, yet the entire foundation of both language and reality are constituted by these simples. The reduction of complexes to simples is an art of philosophizing which is classic in itself. Of course Wittgenstein also gives due credit to Plato in his *Philosophical Investigations*. He writes as follows:

What lies behind the idea that names really signify simples?—Socrates says in the *Theaetetus*: “If I make no mistake, I have heard some people say this: there is no definition of the primary elements so to speak-out of which we and everything else are composed; for everything that exists in its own right can only be named, no other determination is possible, neither that it is nor that it is not … but what exists in its own right has to be … named without any other determination. In consequence it is impossible to give an account of any primary element; for it, nothing is possible but the bare name; its name is all it has. But just as what consist of these
primary elements is itself complex, so the names of the elements
become descriptive language by being compounded together. For
the essence of speech is the composition of names.90

According to Wittgenstein, Russell’s ‘individuals’ and his ‘objects’ are such primary
elements. As it was held by A.N. Whitehead, the European philosophical tradition is
a series of footnotes to Plato. This statement of Whitehead should not be mistaken.
All that he means is that a wealth of information with regard to the fundamental
issues concerning philosophy is already found in the writing of Plato and it remains
a good source for the entire western philosophical thinking.91

**Sense of a Proposition**

As regards a proposition Wittgenstein is in agreement with the definition of a
proposition as advanced by formal logicians. A proposition is a statement which is
said to be either true or false. Further he makes a distinction between meaning of a
proposition and meaning of a name. He used the German expressions *Sinn* and
*Bedeutung* respectively to show this reference. The English translation of these two
expressions is sense and meaning respectively. In other words, a proposition has
sense and a name has meaning. These expressions were also used by gottlob Frege.
But Frege apparently did not make any distinction between these two expressions.
Rather they are used as synonyms. Both these expressions are treated as sense by
him. Wittgenstein holds that that propositions have only *Sinn* and no *Bedeutung* and

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names have only *Bedeutung* and no *Sinn*. This is clear from the following statement of Wittgenstein: “Only propositions have sense; only in the nexus of a proposition does a name have meaning.” and “A proposition thus does not name a situation; on the contrary, it describes it.”

Frege held that the thought is ‘contained’ by declarative sentences and that the thought is “not the subjective performance of thinking but its objective content and is capable of being the common property of several thinkers,” (source of this quotation). The sense of any proposition represents this strange kind of objectivity that is apprehended by the mind in the process of understanding it. Instead of using this circuitous route to explain a proposition all that Wittgenstein did was that the sense of a proposition simply describes a situation. He equated the sense of a proposition with a situation that it depicts. A proposition, as we shall see, is a logical picture” and “What a picture represents is its sense.”

This sounds in the first place that there is no distinction between a name and a proposition. There is a possibility of recurring the old problem of a false proposition. What is its sense? What situation does it describe? There are two alternatives here. 1. A false proposition does not describe any situation therefore it has no sense. 2. A false proposition does not describe a situation for such a situation does not exist at all. The first alternative is not acceptable for we understand the

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92 In an earlier work, “Notes on Logic” (reprinted in *Notebooks*), Wittgenstein has assigned both *Sinn* and *bedeutung* to propositions, see *Notebooks*, p. 94.
94 Ibid., 3.144(1) and 4.023(3).
sense of a proposition whether it is true or false. As a consequence the second alternative is imposed on us. But Wittgenstein accepts the first alternative. He uses the expressions ‘situation’ (Sachlage) and ‘states of affairs’ (sachverhalt) to represent actual, possible and non-existent situations or states of affairs. He speaks of “possible situations” in his Tractatus (2.202, 3.11, 4.125 and elsewhere), and of the existence and non-existence of states of affairs. “The existence and non-existence of state of affairs is reality.”97 (We also call the existence of state of affairs a positive fact, and their non-existent a negative fact.)

States of affairs are elementary or atomic. They are what correspond to elementary propositions. “The simplest kind of proposition, an elementary proposition, asserts the existence of a state of affairs.”98 An elementary proposition cannot be further analyzed into simples. Similarly, states of affairs cannot be further analyzed into any more states of affairs. Just as an elementary proposition consists of names, a state of affairs consists of objects. The combination of names gives rise to an elementary proposition and a combination of objects gives rise to a state of affairs.

“A state of affairs (a state of things) is a combination of objects (things).”99

Wittgenstein’s use of the term ‘situation’ is a genus one and ‘state of affairs’ is a species in this genus. In other words, a genus (situation) represents a cluster of states of affairs and a state of affairs is only one among this cluster called genus. Wittgenstein uses the terms ‘situation’ and ‘states of affairs’ in truly technical sense,

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97 Ibid., 2.06.
98 Ibid., 4.21.
99 Ibid., 2.01.
but not in ordinary sense.\footnote{Wittgenstein thus uses the terms ‘situation’ and state of affairs’ in technical senses. The reader is hereby warned that, in this book, these terms will be used as Wittgenstein uses them, not ad they are ordinarily used.} Now the question that arises is: How are states of affairs relate themselves to facts (tatsachen) and the reality? Wittgenstein uses these terms in \textit{Tractatus}, 201 and 2.06. A state of affairs is a combination of objects (things). According to him the existence of states of affairs is a combination of objects and these combinations represent both positive and negative facts. Let us consider positive facts first, what exactly is a positive fact? How is it associated with state of affairs that exists? The clearest answer is provided in the following statements. “The world is the totality of facts, not of things.”\footnote{Op. cit., \textit{Tractatus}, 1.1.} “The totality of existing states of affairs is the world.”\footnote{Ibid., 2.04.}

The above statements suppose the identity of facts with existing states of affairs. From them alone, one would think that the identity is complete. However in 2.062, it is clear that the identity of states of affairs is only possible with positive facts but not with negative ones. Since every state of affairs is an atomic one it represents a positive atomic fact alone. The world or reality is nothing but the totality of these positive atomic facts. But from 2.06 we understand that the world or reality is more than the totality of positive atomic facts. Even negative facts are also included in this totality. But how do we define a negative fact? Is it simply to assert that P is not S and S is not P? A true negation of an elementary proposition could be counted as a negative fact. Absence of existence of an individual or an entity can also be treated as a negative fact. For instance, the assertion ‘There is no television in this room’ can be viewed as a negative fact. It only tells us the absence of existence of something.
Wittgenstein may not accept this view. In a way this is also a combination of various objects representing the absence of existence of something in question.

The reality (world), according to Wittgenstein, includes all the positive facts or the existing states of affairs and negative facts or non-exiting states of affairs. If what is expressed here is true of Wittgenstein’s position then Wittgenstein has given secondary status to nonfactual states of affairs. They are assigned a strange kind of subsistence in a strange realm of non-existence. It is a mere possibility. The point that Wittgenstein intends to drive home here is that states of affairs are all positive. It implies that they belong to both the realm of existence and non-existence. By belonging to the realm of existence they belong to the world of facts. By belonging to the realm of non-existence they are not part of the world but parts of reality in general. Such an interpretation makes a wedge between world and reality. In such a case there is a need to show how world and reality are different from each other. But the following statement of Wittgenstein does not really treat the world as something different from the reality. “The sum-total of reality is the world.”103 But Wittgenstein says that the world is the totality of existing states of affairs, and our account interprets this to mean that the world is the totality of positive atomic facts. This interpretation of the relation between the world and reality, and between facts and states of affairs seems to be the one that makes best sense of the statements stated above. But in his letter to Russell in 1919 Wittgenstein writes as follows:

What is the difference between tatsache and sachverhalt?" sachverhalt

is what corresponds to an elementarsatz if it is true. Tatsache is what

103 Ibid., 2.063.
corresponds to the logical product of elementary propositions when this product is true.\textsuperscript{104}

The above account of Wittgenstein indicates that even the world is a combination of positive and negative facts. If this statement is taken for granted then there is not difference between the world and reality. The interpretation of James Griffin may work out well here. Wittgenstein says: “Totality of existing states of affairs also determines which state of affairs does not exist.”\textsuperscript{105}

This statement clearly vindicates that if all the existing states of affairs are known then it would follow from such statement that the non-existing ones are also known. Thus the positive and negative facts co-exist. In a way they are inseparable from each other. Griffin’s interpretation appears to be more convincing in this case. A positive fact negates its negation. Thus it derives its sense from its opposite. According to Griffin, when Wittgenstein speaks of the world as comprising of both positive and negative facts, what he means is that positive and negative facts are inseparable from each other. To invoke polar concept argument here a positive fact derives its meaning from the existence of a negative fact and vice versa. Negative facts, after all, do not even exist: a negative fact is merely the nonexistence of a possible state of affairs, according to 2.062. A state of affairs, as we know, is composed of objects. This is evident from 2.01 and 2.0272. Both the existent and non-existent states of affairs must result in the various combinations, arrangements, and configurations. Each of these configurations would result in a positive fact. A

\textsuperscript{104} Op. cit., p. 129.
\textsuperscript{105} Op. cit., \textit{Tractatus}, 2.05.
nonexistent state of affairs is neither actual nor nonfactual arrangement of nonexistent objects. Although there cannot be actual arrangement of nonexistent objects, but it might be thought that once nonexistent states of affairs are allowed, it is possible that some of them might be nonfactual arrangement of nonexistent objects. But the view that the meaning of a name is the object that it denotes preempts the existence of nonexistent objects. Hence any proposition that tries to mention about the nonexistent objects is termed nonsensical. For instance, if x and y are nonexistent objects then the names ‘x’ and ‘y’ would be bereft of meaning. Therefore, they are not treated as names. As a consequence, any proposition purporting to say something about ‘x’ and ‘y’ would be termed meaningless since they are constituted by meaningless names. Our talk about nonexistent objects and nonexistent state of affairs becomes nonsensical. If this were the case, all states of affairs, both existent and nonexistent, are arrangement of existent objects only.

What follows from the above analysis is that objects being eternal, they constitute both form and content of the world (reality). Not only that, all other conceivable worlds must consist of same objects which our actually world consists of. Therefore, the only difference between the conceivable world and our world is the way in which these objects are arranged in the various states of affairs. Different configurations of states of affairs result in different facts, and different facts result in different worlds. Every possible or imaginary world consists of states of affairs with some configuration. Thus they are all possible states of affairs. But the world in which we live is composed of those actual states of affairs. This is a reality, according to Wittgenstein. “It is obvious that an imagined world, however different it may be
from the real one, must have something—a form—in common with it.”

“Objects are just what constitute this unalterable form.” The situation which a proposition describes is the sense of that proposition. The sense of a proposition, we said is the situation which it describes and asserts to exist. If we keep this use of the term ‘sense’ in mind, several passages in the Tractatus, which seem at first glance to be obscure or absurd, are seen to be perfectly intelligence.

“Thus one proposition ‘fa’ shows that the object occurs in its sense.”

The expression ‘fa; or ‘Fa’ are to be read: object a has the property f (F). “object a is an f(F).” or simply “a is f (F),”

It is paradoxical to speak of an object’s actually occurring in the sense of a proposition. We normally do not think of actual physical water drops occurring in the sense of the proposition “There is water in the pond”. Why we do not normally distinguish between a sense of a proposition, what Wittgenstein calls meaning, and the fact, if any that is describes, much as Frege did. But when Wittgenstein identifies the sense of a proposition with the fact that it depicts, it is not really odd to speak of object occurring in the sense of a proposition. Another otherwise interesting passage is the following: “A proposition does not actually contain its sense, but does contain the possibility of expressing it.”

The above statement is a bit puzzling, because one does not ordinarily understand what it means to deny that a proposition does not contain its sense. It

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106 Ibid., 2.022.
107 Ibid., 2.023.
108 Ibid., 4.1211.
109 Ibid., 3.13(3).
means that the proposition does not include the situation that it describes but only expresses the situation that it depicts. The expression ‘contain’ is an odd expression. For instance, consider a proposition about some complex thing—let us say, about one’s spectacles. Suppose I assert that ‘my spectacles are lying on the table’. I have said something not about just a certain feature of the spectacles, but about the whole spectacles. We have agreed that the sense of a proposition is the situation that it describes. Now the sense of this proposition includes in it the spectacles.

The following statement of Wittgenstein clarifies it. “Every statement about complexes can be resolved into a statement about their constituents and into the propositions that describe the complexes completely.”\textsuperscript{110}

The analysis of proposition includes propositions about the constituent parts of whatever the proposition is about. As already examined, the analysis of proposition about the broom included propositions of the analysis are themselves further analyzable, and their analysis must contain propositions about the constituent parts of whatever they are about – for example, about the constituent parts of the brush and the handle, and so on. In this way, one can think that in analyzing the proposition about my spectacles, one must eventually reach propositions which mention all the parts of the spectacles. After all, the proposition as whole is expressed through these simple components. Thus we find him saying in the \textit{Notebooks} (1914-1916) as follows:

\textsuperscript{110}Ibid., 2.0201.
When I say this watch is shiny, and what I mean by “this watch” alters its composition in the smallest particulars, then this means not merely that the sense of the sentence alters in its content, but also what I am saying about an object one is always saying something about all its parts; I say that my watch is shiny, it is no part of my meaning that there is jewel inside the watch. Evidence about their such being such a jewel is completely irreverent to the truth is falsity of the proposition I assert, and the proposition has exactly the same sense whether or not there is any such jewel. Wittgenstein was far too shrewd to be duped for very long; two days after making the above-quoted entry in his notebooks; he made another, far more sensible one, which completely cancels it. . . . if . . . I say that this watch is nor in the drawer, there is absolutely no need for it to FOLLOW LOGICALLY that a wheel which is in the watch is not in the drawer, for perhaps I had not the least knowledge that the wheel was in the watch, and hence could not have meant by “this watch” the complex in which the wheel occurs.”

It is obvious from the above passage that the sense of a proposition is the situation that it describes, but it does not say that when I say my spectacles is on the table, the complex situation in which all the parts of my spectacles occur. But this would lead to complications. Therefore what Wittgenstein tries to explain here is that the

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situation only includes what is essential to that thing’s being a pair of spectacles and it’s lying on the table in question. However, it must be noticed that whenever situations are constructed in this way there arise new difficulties. One of the difficulties is that whenever we conceive of a proposition depicting a situation we take only complexes into account for otherwise our analysis of complexes into simples would be an unending process. If one deliberately wants to analyze these complexes into simples for any specific reason, it is totally a different thing altogether. The early Wittgenstein only indicates that every complex situation is made up of several simples. His method of analysis demands for such simples which constitute the complex. It is not his intention that we need to analyze the complexes into simples before we understand the sense of any proposition which depicts the said situation. If one is asked to go for such process before attaching sense to any proposition then the whole exercise remains inconclusive and meaningless.

One need not be too rigid and harsh here with the view that the sense of a proposition is the situation it describes. The view that the analysis of a complex proposition into its simples describes the situation in question is completely misconceived. This conception of analysis is the major villain of the piece. Wittgenstein uses the expression ‘sense of a proposition’ in another way in the Tractatus, and this second way must now be explained. Consider the elementary proposition “aRb” and its negation “~ (aRb).” Wittgenstein tells us, employing ‘sense’ now in a new way that these two propositions have opposite sense.112 Also, he writes in his Notebooks (1914-16) as follows: “Every proposition is essentially true-

112 Ibid., 4.0621(3).
false. Thus a proposition has two poles (corresponding to case of its truth and case of its falsity). We call this the sense of a proposition.”\textsuperscript{113} Further Wittgenstein holds: “A proposition is a standard with reference to which facts behave, but with names it is otherwise. Just as one arrow behaves to another arrow but being in the same sense of the opposite, so a fact behaves to a proposition: it is thus bi-polarity and sense comes in.”\textsuperscript{114}

The above statements of Wittgenstein must be taken in their right spirit. We normally would say that a proposition is true when it depicts the situation in question as it is, when it does not then it is a false proposition. Let us discuss this more elaborately in his Picture theory of meaning.

**Significance of Picture Theory**

It is one of the novel theories of meaning introduced by Wittgenstein. The reason we call it novel is that a thought does not express itself in the absence of language. First of all, the question arises: Can there be thought without language? We always think in language (concepts). Thought finds its expression only in language. This is one of the most significant features of this theory. Wittgenstein tries to bring out the significance of a thought as well as a proposition in his theory of meaning. “A proposition is a picture of reality: for if I understand A proposition, I know the situation that it represents. And I understand the proposition without having had its sense explained to me.”\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{113} Op. cit., p. 94.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., p. 97.
\textsuperscript{115} Op. cit., Tractatus, 4.021.
The above statement of Wittgenstein should not be taken in its literal sense. A proposition mirrors the reality. In other words, the proposition in question represents a situation beyond itself. By seeing the proposition we know what it depicts. A picture has just the features which we noted a proposition has. One can read it without anyone’s saying what it depicts. “A proposition shows its sense.”\(^{116}\)

The sense of any given proposition is determined from what it mirrors or represents. It is true that a proposition does not at once appear to be a picture of a situation. Wittgenstein uses the expression ‘picture’ only in its extended sense, but not in its ordinary sense. We know that pictures represent something in question. A picture of Mahatma Gandhi tells us about the existence of a person. Or a group picture of classmates shows that the individuals in this picture studied together. But Wittgenstein uses the expression’ picture’ in a technical sense. He is talking about a logical picture. \((Tractatus, 4.03(3))\). In order for \(X\), to be a logical picture of another, of \(Y\), the following conditions have to be met. They are: (1) there must be a one-to-one correspondence between the components of \(X\) and those of \(Y\); (2) to every feature of the structure or form of \(X\) there must correspond a feature of the structure or form of \(Y\); and (3) there must be rules of projection connecting the components of \(X\) and those of \(Y\). Rules of projection are rules whereby given \(X\) (or \(Y\) , \(B\) (or \(X\)) can be reconstructed from it. A convincing example is the rules connecting a musical score and an actual performance of it. From one the other can be constructed. The following illustration of Wittgenstein explains this point. To quote Wittgenstein In this context:

\(^{116}\) Ibid., 4.022(1).
There is a general rule by means of which the musician can obtain the symphony from the score, and which makes it possible to derive the symphony from the groove on the gramophone record, and, using the first rule, to derive the score again. That is what constitutes the inner similarity between these things which seem to be constructed in such entirely different ways. and that rule is the law of projection which projects the symphony into the language of musical notation. it is the rule for translating this language of gramophone records. \[117\]

The above illustration neatly brings out the picture theory. When a musical score depicts the actual performance of it, it amounts to saying that they share the same logical form. He was apparently influenced by Hertz’s *Principle of Mechanics*. He refers to them in the following manner:

> In a propositions there must be exactly as many distinguishable parts as in the situation that it represents. The two must possess the same logical (mathematical) multiplicity. (Compare Hertz’s Mechanics on dynamical models.) \[118\]

What Wittgenstein intends to show here is that there is a sharing of elements by a proposition and the situation that it depicts. Just as a mechanical model is the representation of a system to which is it is regarded as a model, a proposition is the representation of a situation to which it is regarded as a picture. Our mind is capable

\[117\] Ibid., 4.0141.
\[118\] Ibid., 4.04.
of imagining such a relation between them. In other words, the agreement between a proposition and situation can be equated with a picture and the what it depicts. In this sense a proposition and the situation that it depicts share the same logical form. To put it in the words of Wittgenstein, a proposition is a model of a situation which it represents. “A proposition is a model of reality as we imagine it.”\textsuperscript{119} Even the statement in \textit{Tractatus} 4.03(1) suggests the analogy of a model. “In a proposition a situation is, as it were, constructed by way of experiment.”\textsuperscript{120}

In fact, a proposition is also seen as a projection of the world (reality). This is best way to state Wittgenstein’s position. This term ‘projection’ is used in projective geometry. Wittgenstein used the term as well, but is usually the propositional sign that he speaks of as being a projection of the situation.

We use the perceptible sign of a proposition (spoken or written, etc) as a projection of a possible situation.\textsuperscript{121}

In fact, it should be noted that a proposition is articulated. It cannot be written. Only a sentence can be written, and what a sentence expresses is a statement or a proposition. In any case, the example of a musical score is particularly instructive; most people are familiar with at least the general principle involved in it and it serves as a good analogy. But we must not stretch the analogy beyond a limit. Just as individual words mean some objects, so also individual note marks mean something. Just as piece of note does not perform, so also a proposition is said to be

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 4.01(2)
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 4.031(1).
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 3.11(1).
false when it fails to represent the situation that it depicts. One who knows the
general rules of projection of music knows how to read a new score without any
explanation. Similarly one can understand a new proposition without its sense being
explained since he knows the general rules of projection of language. However, it
might be objected that the theory is incompatible with certain situations. Suppose a
proposition has to pick up a unique situation wherein the elements of a situation is
composed of the words like ‘courage’, what do they really represent. The social
reality consists of several such situations which cannot be represented by picture
theory. Then it amounts to saying that the picture theory of Wittgenstein is
exclusively used to depict only the physical situations. It rejects any non-physical
(social) situation which cannot be represented by a proposition. Suppose we say that
‘the action performed by x is a courageous one’. The proposition may refer this
situation but not the quality of the situation. If a proposition is a picture of a fact,
then every word or phrase in it is must directly stand for something, as every note in
the musical score directly stand for a particular sound; and so in the proposition
“The author of Waverly is Scotch,” the phrase ‘the author of Waverley’ must directly
represent some object. But according to the theory of definite descriptions, accepted
by Wittgenstein, this is not the case, furthermore, it is absurd to suggest that in the
proposition “The average American male like baseball,” the subject phrase directly
name an object, as the picture theory would require it to. These and other objections
to the picture theory are at once swept away by Wittgenstein’s insistence that
propositions as ordinarily expressed are not, in that form, pictures of the situations
they describe. In the strictest sense, it is only elementary propositions which are
composed of names alone represent the fact in question. As Wittgenstein puts it: First and foremost the elementary propositional form must portray; all portrayal takes place through it. In order to maintain one-to-one correspondence between the elements of a picture and the elements of a fact in question there must be exactly the same number of elements on both sides. But this requirement is met only by elementary propositions, for they alone consist entirely of names which denote objects directly. “One name stands for one thing, another for another thing, and they are combined with one another. In this way the whole group-like a tableau vivant-present a state of affairs.”\textsuperscript{122}

Every elementary proposition is a series of names, and how can a series of names state a situation or fact, how can it say anything true or false? To find an answer to this question, let us try to answer first the preliminary question: How can a series of names represent (picture) a state of affairs? It is difficult to see how a list of names can be a picture. First of all we must know the essence of an ordinary picture. What is it about a picture that makes it a representation of a situation? Wittgenstein answers this question by saying: “What constitutes a picture is that its elements are related to one another in determinate way.”\textsuperscript{123} “A picture is a fact.”\textsuperscript{124}

There appears to be a conflict here between Wittgenstein and commonsense. Commonsense would say that the things in a picture which do the representing are the strokes or patches of paint or ink or whatever, and that what they represent are the several objects of the scene depicted. Wittgenstein, however, disagrees with this

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 4.0311.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 2.14.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 2.141.
way of describing the matter. What really represents the scene, he maintains, is certain facts (situations). For instance, the scene depicted is a room with furniture. It is not simply the individual patches of paint in themselves that represent the arrangement of the furniture in the room. Suppose those same patches of paint were placed differently on the canvas, they would not represent the actual arrangement of furniture at all. To quote Wittgenstein in this context: “The fact that the elements of a picture are related to one another in a determine way represents that things are related one another in the same way.” A fact is represented by a picture, and it represents certain features of the reality depicted only because it is a fact. “In a picture objects have the elements of the picture corresponding to them.” “In a picture the elements of the picture are the representative of objects.”

We may say then that, for Wittgenstein, a picture is a fact composed of elements (patches and paints). The elements represent the objects, and the fact that the elements are arranged in the way they are represents the fact that the objects are so arranged in reality. This provides us with a better understanding of Wittgenstein’s position. *Prima facie*, it appears that the elementary proposition are mere series, or lists of names. But in fact, Wittgenstein never spoke of an elementary proposition as being a mere series of names; on the contrary, he says it is a “nexus, a concatenation, of names. Wittgenstein makes it clear in the following passage: “A proposition is not a medley of words.— (just as a theme in music is not a medley of

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125 Ibid., 2.15(1).
126 Ibid., 2.13.
127 Ibid., 2.131.
notes.)” \(^{128}\) The above way of explaining the matter is meant to stress the fact that there is a definite relationship among the component names, that they are arranged in a certain way that is significant, just as the patches of paint in the picture are arranged in a certain way that is significant. In \(aRb\), the object \(a\) is related to object \(b\) in a special way. Further Wittgenstein distinguishes between a propositional sign and a proposition. The propositional sign is composed of actual ink marks and is thus much more like an ordinary picture than is the proposition itself. In fact a propositional sign is a sentence which expresses a proposition. Let us, then, concentrate on the propositional sign for the moment. A proposition sign, like a picture, is a fact. What constitutes a propositional sign is that in its elements (the words) stand in a determinate relation to one another. “A propositional sign is a fact.” \(^{129}\) The propositional sign represents anything because it is a fact. It can be used to describe a state of affairs. “Only facts can express a sense, a set of names cannot.” \(^{130}\)

Wittgenstein maintains that misunderstanding of this view is based on a false assumption which vitiates its conclusion that the propositional sign, and not the proposition, is a picture of reality. The relevant assumption is that the ink marks labeled ‘picture A’ constitute in themselves a picture. This assumption is false. Wittgenstein would say that the marks themselves cannot be a picture. What these ink marks express is a picture. Hence it is not certain ink marks in themselves which make something a picture rather the marks must be made by some conscious agent.

\(^{128}\) Ibid., 3.141(1).
\(^{129}\) Ibid., 3.14.
\(^{130}\) Ibid., 3.142.
In addition, it must not be the case that the agent makes them wholly unintentionally or accidentally. The ink marks are created consciously with a view to picture something. What, then, is a picture? We need to answer this question without any confusion. First of all, a group of marks does not make any picture of any fact. A group of consciously made marks alone can depict a picture. If certain marks M are deliberately made to represent an object then those marks serve as a picture. For example, if a camera drops on the floor and the shutter clicks, thus producing an image of a chair on the film, the developed print is without doubt a picture of that chair. But a picture is not an accident but a deliberate attempt to represent something in reality. An unintentional exercise of producing a group of marks does not really count as a picture. Propositional signs deliberately made represent a proposition and a proposition is a picture of a fact. So we must say that in order for marks M to constitute a picture, they must either be produced by a direct casual process like P or not wholly unintentionally by a conscious agent. By and large, all propositions are the truth-functions of the elementary propositions with which they are constituted.

Wittgenstein did not really establish that all propositions are truth-functions of elementary ones. Such a view results from his notes on logic. But he has not provided us with any good reason to suppose so. Wittgenstein himself remarks in “Notes on Logic” (1913): Observe the following statement. “It may be doubted whether, if we formed all possible atomic propositions, ‘the world would be completely described if we declared the truth or falsehood of each’ . . ..”\textsuperscript{131} (But the doubt expressed here may only have been whether some such statement as “And

\textsuperscript{131} Op. cit., p. 98.
these are all the atomic propositions” might not also be required, in addition to the atomic propositions themselves. This is, in fact, quite likely the case, for two pages later Wittgenstein says:

Whatever corresponds in reality to compound propositions must not be more than what corresponds to their several atomic propositions. Molecular propositions contain nothing beyond what is contained in their atoms: they add no material information above that contained in their atoms. 132

The above statement clearly brings out the crux of Wittgenstein’s argument. Whatever is represented by compound propositions must be same as what is represented by the truth-functional propositions of those compound propositions. There is no other alternative view expressed by Wittgenstein in this regard. The upshot of the argument is that if what is represented by compound propositions is more or less of what is represented by their truth-functional propositions then his entire exercise becomes otiose. But this is not the case. The following statement of Wittgenstein equates a proposition with its truth-functions. “A proposition is a truth-function of elementary propositions.”133

The natural consequence of Wittgenstein’s doctrine that all propositions are analyzable into elementary propositions, and are in fact truth-functions of them, are of the highest importance. But before these consequences can be fully explained, we must know more about elementary propositions. In order to know more about these

132 Ibid., p.100
elementary propositions we must know the nature of names with which these elementary propositions are composed, and also about objects which are denoted by these names. If objects represent physical space, names represent logical space. Objects, thus, are physical atoms, and names logical atoms.

The Nature of Objects and Names

What are these objects? How does Wittgenstein explain the nature of these objects? We have already examined his view that the objects constitute states of affairs. The objects cannot exist independent of states of affairs. They are supposed to be physical atoms for Wittgenstein. In fact, objects constitute form and content of the world. The following statements of Wittgenstein explain the nature of objects.

A state of affairs (a state of things) is a combination of objects (things).\(^{134}\)

The configuration of objects produces states of affairs.\(^{135}\)

In a state of affairs objects fit into one another like the links of a chain.\(^{136}\)

The determinate way in which objects are connected in a state of affairs is the structure of the state of affairs.\(^{137}\)

The above statements of Wittgenstein suggest that a proper arrangement of objects results in a state of affairs. The arrangement of objects in a state of affairs may change from time to time. Every new arrangement results in a new states of affairs. What remains constant is the objects which constitute a state of affairs. The objects provide a determinate structure to a state of affairs. These ways of talking about the

\(^{134}\) Ibid., 2.01.
\(^{135}\) Ibid., 2.0272.
\(^{136}\) Ibid., 2.03.
\(^{137}\) Ibid., 2.032.
nature of objects are appropriate only to particulars but not to particulars and universals together. It is perfectly natural to speak of combining two particulars. But how come the combination of various particulars gives rise to a universal. A state of affairs is also particular simple fact. Therefore, it is not wrong to say that a state of affairs is constituted by several particulars.

Further Wittgenstein talks about names. The following are the statements made by him as regards the nature of names: "Name are the simple symbols: I indicate them by single letters (‘x,’ ‘y,’ ‘z’) But ‘x’, ‘y,’ and ‘z’ are individual variables, not relation or property ones; their values are ‘a,’ ‘b,’ ‘c,’ and so on – i.e., the names of particulars, not of universals."^{138}

According to Wittgenstein, every name is a simple symbol and the propositions are not the concatenations of these simple symbols, rather they are functions of names. This issue would be taken up shortly. The functions of names are different from the connotations of names. According to Irving M. Copi, the objects of Wittgenstein are only particulars, but not universals. As a logical atomist he is only concerned with particulars but not with universals. The following statement of Wittgenstein justifies it. “... It is only by means of propositions that material properties are represented-only by the configuration of objects that they are produced.”^{139}

The expression ‘material properties’ is clearly meant as a contrast to ‘formal properties.’ Copi proceeds to show that objects can be neither formal nor material

^{138} Ibid., 4.24(1).
^{139} Ibid., 2.0231.
properties, and hence cannot be properties at all. As rightly held by Copi, objects are the very essence of the world for Wittgenstein. Therefore, they cannot be treated as properties. In the *Tractatus*, formal properties are identified with logical properties, as in the following passage:

The fact that the propositions of logic are tautologies shows the formal-logical-properties of language and the world.\textsuperscript{140}

Formal properties are not objects, because whereas objects can be represented (3.22, 3.221, 4.0312 [1]), logical properties cannot.

In order to be able to represent logical form, we should have to be able to station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say outside the world.\textsuperscript{141}

Propositions cannot represent logical form: it is mirrored in them.\textsuperscript{142}

The states of affairs produced by the various combinations of objects possess material properties but not the objects. There are still other considerations which support the view that only particulars are objects. For example, consider a passage with which we are already familiar:

Instead of, “The complex sign ‘aRb’ says that a stands to b in the relation R,” we ought to put, “That ‘a’ stands to ‘b’ in a certain relation says that aRb.”\textsuperscript{143}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 6.12(1).
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 4.12(2).
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 4.121(1).
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 3.1432.
\end{flushright}
Symbols are not what they seem to be. In “aRb” “R” looks like a substantive but it is not one. What symbolizes in “aRb” is that “R” occurs between “a” and “b.” Hence “R” is not the indefinable in “aRb.”

‘R’ signifies the relation between ‘a’ and ‘b’. It relates two particulars. If relations were objects, then when two or more particulars were configured so as to form a state of affairs, the configuration—i.e., the relation amongst the particulars—would be another object, over and above the particulars. Therefore a relation is not treated as a particular for it results in an infinite regress. The regress could be stopped only when we treat relation as a special category but not as an object.

There is little doubt from the above considerations that Wittgenstein treated all objects as simple particulars. He argues that since a state of affairs is a combination of objects, in the state of affairs an object a’s being red, redness must be counted as an object—for there is no other object for ‘a’ to be combined with. And since redness is a universal, some objects must be universals. But there is no need to make this assumption. Wittgenstein could perfectly well have held that an object’s having a property is not a matter of its being configured with a universal, but rather of its being configured with other simple particulars. He could have maintained, for instance, that to say that a is red is not to say that a is configured with the universal “redness,” but rather to say that a is configured with b, c, and d, all simple particulars, in a certain way. And since there is a lot of additional independent evidence that Wittgenstein thought that objects include only particulars, one is justified in supposing that he actually viewed the matter in this way. The different

ways that objects can be configured are the forms of the objects. Two objects that can occur in the same kind of configuration are said to be of the same form. The following statement of Wittgenstein talks about the form of the objects. “Space, time, and colour (being coloured) are forms of objects.”145 “Objects are what is unalterable and subsistent: their configuration is what is changing and unstable.”146

Every object is a simple particular of a particular form. They are arranged in different ways to give rise to different states of affairs. It follows from this that objects are everlasting or eternal. As the configurations change, some states of affairs go out of existence, and new ones come into existence. But objects remain forever.

The eternality of objects makes Wittgenstein’s ontology akin to that of physics. The objects being simple cannot be further simplified or analyzed. The eternal nature of objects suggest that they neither be created nor destroyed. Also, there is a reason why objects need to be absolutely permanent. It must always be logically possible to describe the destruction of everything destructible, i.e., of the world as we know it. But this description will, of course, contain names, and what the names denote cannot be destructible, for what the names denote constitutes their meaning. If the objects are destructible then names do not refer to anything. Then no description is possible. Therefore, there is a need to maintain the eternality of objects. In fact Wittgenstein states this in his Philosophical Investigations. See the following statement:

What the names in language signify must be indestructible; for it must be possible to describe the state of affairs in which everything destructible is destroyed.

146 Ibid., 2.0271.
And this description will contain words; and what corresponds to these cannot then be destroyed, for otherwise the words would have no meaning.” I must not saw off the branch on which I am sitting.\textsuperscript{147} Wittgenstein also gives a slightly different version of this argument in the \textit{Investigations}. This one deals with the destruction of a single thing, rather than with the destruction of everything.

Every name signifies something simple. And for this one might perhaps give the following reasons: the word “Excalibur,” say, is a proper name in the ordinary sense. The sword Excalibur consists of parts combined in a particular way. If they are combined differently Excalibur does not exist. But it is clear that the sentence “Excalibur has a sharp blade” makes sense whether Excalibur is still whole or is broken up. But if “Excalibur” is the name of an object, this object no longer exists when Excalibur is broken into pieces; and as no object would then correspond to the name it would have no meaning. But then the sentence “Excalibur has a sharp blade” would contain a word that had no meaning, and hence the sentence would be nonsense. But it does make sense; so there must always be something corresponding to the words of which it consists. So the word “Excalibur” must which name simples. It will be reasonable to call these words the real names.\textsuperscript{148}

The above analysis of Wittgenstein’s views suggests that the \textit{Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus} is primarily a text which is confined to what can be said. But there are several statements which indirectly refer to what cannot be said also. As a matter of

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., Sec. 39.
fact, the sense of a proposition is shown or exhibited. It cannot be said. This we would take up in the succeeding chapter.