CHAPTER – 6

THE ROLE OF PROPOSITIONS IN PROPOSITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The doxological concepts of belief and justification are conceptually distinct from propositional knowledge, although truth is inseparably attached to it. To know is to know the truth of a proposition. In the history of epistemology, as we have seen in earlier chapters, much emphasis has been laid on the discussion of these constituent elements. In an analysis of propositional knowledge, the role of propositions, if not relegated, has been kept aside.

This research work primarily aims to concentrate on the topic of propositional knowledge. We have found Plato's proposal as not being viable especially in the context of propositional knowledge. Gettier's critique of propositional knowledge paved the way to one or more than one additional conditions in the definition in order to be sufficient enough to include all possible cases of knowledge. The plausibility of another condition is not cogent as is shown by the unsuccessful endeavour of philosophers in the post-Gettier period.

In the present chapter, first of all, let us make clear what we understand by a 'proposition'. The term 'proposition' is hardly used as a part of colloquial language. Rather it is used in a technical sense in logic and epistemology. The concept of propositional knowledge discussed so
far, however, despite its complexities, remains unsatisfactorily discussed without throwing light on the concept of propositions.

Propositions, as we understand, represent the states of affairs or situations of the world. The situation may be either factual or conceptual. ‘This pen is black’ is a situation which is a factual proposition for a knower. Similarly ‘Three fours equal twelve’ is another situation, mathematical in nature and conceptual for a knower. It is ‘that’ which is affirmed or denied in sentences. Propositional knowledge, accordingly, can be viewed as a relation between a knower and a proposition. A short survey of philosopher’s views on the concept would help us to elucidate our own view.

G.E. Moore divides everything in the universe in two classes, namely, propositions and things. We know the things through propositions.

“The fact is that absolutely all the elements of the universe, absolutely everything that is all, may be divided into two classes – namely, into propositions on the one hand, and into things which are not propositions the other.” ¹

In order to understand Moore’s notion of propositions, we can draw a sketch of his understanding of the universe.
Moore propounds that we know a material thing through sense data. In order to express the experience or the sense-data, we use another media and this media is a proposition. Moore defines a proposition as a collection of words which conveys a meaningful statement. Moore further argues that a proposition can be understood in two ways – by direct apprehension of the proposition and by the apprehension of its meaning. When I hear a sound or see a statement on the paper, I understand it; this is the direct apprehension. But if I do not know the meaning of the statement, I cannot apprehend it.

A proposition, for Moore, is not a mere collection of words. It is rather “something which a collection of words may mean or express, but which no word or collection of words can possibly be”\(^2\) He writes , “To say that an expression is true is simply to say that it expresses a true proposition.”\(^3\) For him, proposition is a name for ‘what’ is expressed or conveyed by a sentence, and therefore is utterly different from words.

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The meaning of a proposition can be understood in three ways, namely, belief, disbelief or understanding. In order to apprehend a proposition, we either believe the proposition, or disbelieve it. Besides these states, we may simply understand what the words mean, without either believing or disbelieving it. In the case of belief, we take the proposition to be true and in the case of disbelief we take it as false. But in this case of understanding, we cannot decide the truth or falsity of the proposition.

Unlike Moore, who strictly observed the distinction between proposition and sentence, Russell regarded a proposition as a kind of ‘linguistic entity’. It is a sentence which is considered factually and is a vehicle of truth and falsity. To say that p is a proposition is equivalent to say that p is true or p is false.

Paul Edwards finds it troublesome to combine the views of propositions as meanings as well as bearers of truth value. Two sentences that express the same proposition are assumed to have the same truth value. But sentences with indexical elements are not absorbed in this explanation. ‘I am pale’ has a single meaning but the two utterances of it at different places make their truth value different. In such a situation, proposition is understood as the shared meaning of a particular sentence and all its synonyms.

Here, we wish to comment that the expression ‘I am pale’, for two different persons, or at two different places or uttered at different times does not let the proposition remain the same. One of the most important feature of a proposition is the concept of a context. The contextual factor cannot be ignored in the composition of a proposition for it cannot be
separated from its context. Utterance of the same sentence in two different contexts makes it represent two different propositions. Even the same referent 'Venus' which is named as 'Morning Star' and 'Evening Star' at different times, when used in different assertions may mean differently and make different propositions. For example, in the two sentences:

(1) The Morning Star is shining in the sky, and
(2) The Evening Star is shining in the sky,

the referent is the same, yet both the sentences have different meanings as in the (1) the Venus is shining in the west in the morning and in (2) it is shining in the east in the evening. Here, connotation is changed though denotation remains the same.

In this manner, the same sentence can be used to express two (or more) different propositions. Apart from expression, they (sentences) are true or false in virtue of the propositions they express. But it should not be taken to mean that behind every sentence, there has to be a proposition. Susan Haack\(^6\) distinguishes a sentence from a proposition and explains a sentence as 'any grammatically correct and complete string of expression of a natural language.'\(^7\) She holds that sentences, being linguistic have grammatical structure; statements and propositions do not have grammatical structure because they are extra-linguistic. She understands a proposition as 'that what is common to a set of synonymous declarative sentences.' So two sentences with same meaning express the same proposition. In fact, she offers the possibility of various combinations of sentences, statements and propositions.\(^8\) ‘Shut the door’ is a sentence, whereas ‘Sat by in’ is not. A statement, for Haack, is the content of a declarative sentence\(^9\).
The view that a proposition is that entity which is not fundamentally linguistic in nature is held by Armstrong. According to him, the mental proposition is logically and psychologically prior to the proposition which is expressed in a language. Perhaps he had in his mind the entity which is unexpressed, but becomes a statement belonging to a particular language, when expressed.

D.J. O'Conor defines a proposition as 'a term capable of signifying a state of affairs.' A proposition is not the same as its assertion. It is the content of the assertion. Nor is a proposition identical with a statement, because in the latter, the content of stating is external to the proposition asserted. On this account also, the distinction between propositions, statements and sentences seems to be definite. The proposition behind the sentence, 'Punjab Mail leaves New Delhi at 9 P.M.' is the fact about the train named Punjab Mail that it leaves New Delhi Station at 9 P.M. This fact is asserted by the statement. It can well be denied and argued by many statements and through many sentences.

A.J. Ayer congenially converged the notion of propositions as meanings and also as bearers of truth value. It is a proposition which is true or false. He also emphasized the significance of meaning in the notion of a proposition. He scarcely used the term 'proposition' throughout his The Problem of Knowledge, but in his Foundations of Empirical Knowledge he prefers the use of 'proposition' rather than 'sentence' because of the concern with its meaning.

"We use the word 'proposition' rather than 'sentence' whenever we are concerned, not with the precise form of our expression, or the fact that it belongs to a particular language, but with its meaning. Consequently, we speak of propositions and not sentences as being true or false."
He tried to clear the confusion by insisting that not every sentence expresses what is true or false. Sentences may be used for other purposes as well, namely, making requests, apologizing, asking, giving orders, etc. At the same time, what is true or false may be expressed in symbols of the kinds other than sentences. The point is that truth or falsity belongs to propositions and not to sentences.

A discussion of the definition, meaning and nature of propositions remains incomplete without a reference to Quine's rejection of the concept. Quine planned to oppose the concept of proposition as abstract extra-linguistic items, which are bearers of truth value. In the opening of his *Philosophy of Logic*, Quine writes

"When someone speaks truly, what makes his statement true? We tend to feel that there are two factors: meaning and fact.... (regarding the sentence 'Snow is white' to be true)....happy occurrences of two circumstances. This sentence means that snow is white and in point of fact snow 'is' white."\(^{14}\)

Furthermore, he finds a part of the problem to be caused by the ambiguity of the term 'proposition'. He presents an alternative scheme of eternal sentences, sentences which are free of referential variation. These sentences are true or false independently of time, place and utterance. They can be alternative to propositions for they have clear identity conditions. We would only allude to the topic by saying that the concept of a proposition is not seriously threatened by Quine's rejection of propositions. Quine's objections apply to his own theory of truth bears and undermine it.\(^{15}\)

Whether the proposition is an extra-linguistic entity, as conceived by Armstrong, or it is the content of an assertion, bearers of truth value
and the like, the fact remains that the knower undergoes an experience of cognition of the world around him. The reality presents itself to the knower. Undeniably the experiences of persons are private, so are also the mental propositions. All rational experiences of normal human beings are propositionalized. The proposition which is extra-linguistic is asserted and is expressed through a sentence. As a result, the expressed proposition is no more a private affair. The sentences belong to a particular language and are formed in accordance with the grammatical rules, though not necessarily in an explicit manner.¹⁶

The experiences of one subject may be different from those of the other. In other words, the same reality may present itself differently to two persons in accordance with their cognitive capabilities, surrounding atmosphere and many other factors. A yellow stick, for instance, will be perceived as yellow if placed in white light, but in the blue light, it will appear to be green. We do find many instances of different cognitions of the same object in our everyday experience. This reminds us of the phenomenalistic notion of knowledge. But the phenomenalism must be confined to experience. The theory cannot be applied to knowledge in the totality because knowledge, though we agree with Kant, begins with experience, yet is much more than it.

The proposition is also influenced by the knower’s attitude towards the object of knowledge. For example, the night sky is perceived at the same time by many persons. A poet composes a poem in the praise of moon and its neighbouring stars. An astrologer’s object of concern is the tenth planet and he concentrates on finding its exact location as well as its features. A student finds the position of pole star in the north direction. Similarly, many other viewers may have different perceptions of the same
sky. The same thing is applied in the knowledge of a simple object, for example, a plain paper. It is white, flat and rectangular. Different agents may know its different qualities and the propositions may be different accordingly.

This phenomenon, however, does not seem to be applicable in the case of conceptual problems. The proposition ‘two plus three equals five’ remains the same for all knowers. Such a proposition is context independent and is not affected by individual perception and understanding. Still, we find that the calculation $1 + 1 = 2$ in mathematics is correct, but in human biology, one plus one in the case of one male and one female can make three, the third individual created as a result of reproduction. After all, the epistemic activities of human beings can be constrained by biological factors such as reproduction and growth.

The above discussion must not be mistaken as psychologizing the epistemology. It is, rather, an endeavour to explore the subjective aspect of a proposition. As we posit, there can not be a dispute on the view that our experiences are private. The fact of propositions being known by human beings with difference in their attitudes and capacities leads to the multitude of propositions resulting in the multifarious nature of knowledge.

Wuketitus\textsuperscript{17} describes a human being as a combination of biopsychosocial factors. For him, “an epistemologist who fails to see this will not be able to contribute anything to an understanding of human knowledge, but rather will build castles in the air.”\textsuperscript{18} Man as a biological animal has certain limitations in the epistemological field. The reality is not a bundle of sense-datum\textsuperscript{19}. Nor can we accept the existence of a
substratum independent of all its secondary qualities. During an epistemological inquiry, we are presupposing the existence of the reality and bracketing out the questions regarding its nature.

By any means, however, we don’t intend to deny the objectivity of knowledge which has been described as the ‘stock of knowledge’ by the Popperian school of thought. Our intention is to stress that only the subjective aspect of reality is the object of knowledge and it is in this sense, knowledge has an independent and unique status.

By this time, we can innocuously hold the view that propositions are presentations of the states of affairs or facts. To be more specific, they serve as a link between a state of affairs, a fact and its linguistic counterpart. Knowledge at this stage can roughly be described as a cognitive attitude of a knower for the attainment of truth and the attainment of truth as a result of this attitude. This description, as its obvious, is recursive in nature, for it depends upon the conception of truth. We do not want to ascribe the propositions, the status of being truth-makers in a logician’s manner. The epistemic object is the proposition of fact. It cannot be untrue, that is, a false proposition of fact is self-refuting.20

The epistemic agent, in knowing a proposition, is influenced by his own capacities, his faculty of reason, his presuppositions, prejudices and his surroundings. All these factors and many other like the temporal and spatial factors in totality constitute the contextual factor. Conditioned by these contextual factors, knowledge becomes a complex phenomenon resulting in many types of propositions.
The multiplicity of propositions can be conglomerated by classifying propositions in a variety of ways. For example, the concept of time plays a very important role in the formation of the context of a proposition. From this perspective, the propositions can be divided on the basis of their formation, i.e., on the basis of the time when the state of affairs took place, which is described by the proposition$^{21}$. On this basis, there can be firstly, propositions regarding past facts, truth of which is determined either by the human (fallible) memory or by reference to the authority.

The propositions about past are not propositions known in the past, but remembered now that something happened in the past. It is generally believed that a person’s memory of past event is reliable. But it is also true that in remembering one event, people generally confuse it with some other event. Some people cannot rely on what they remember, though reliability seems to be the only test for recollection of past events. E.J. Furlong$^{22}$ in ‘Memory’ argues that the reliability of a person’s memory cannot be shown without assuming it.

Our knowledge of present depends upon our knowledge of the past which is supplied by memory. So if knowledge of past is vitiated, the entire course of knowledge is disturbed. B. Russell also admits the fallibility of memory. While discussing memory propositions in his ‘Basic Propositions’$^{23}$, he points out three characteristics of propositions of past. These are: (1) It is difficult to feel the same degree of certainty in past propositions as in perception, (2) No memory proposition is verifiable since nothing in present and future could make it necessary, and (3) there may be factual premises about the past. Russell contends that we do not have a ground to reject memory as one of the sources of
knowledge concerning the course of past events. Russell takes knowledge to be a sub-class of beliefs and admits that:

"factual premises need not be indubitable. What characterizes a factual premise is not indubitability, but the fact that it commands a greater or less degree of belief on its own account, independently of its relation to other propositions." \(^{24}\)

John O’ Nelson,\(^ {25}\) however, does not want to delimit memory to an isolated first person context and instead takes an interpersonal or social context. But it remains true that in spite of all favours for the viability of past propositions, such ‘claims’ about past are open to question.

Secondly, there are propositions regarding present facts in the sense of coming to know. Although knowing cannot be equated with coming to know which is fresh knowledge acquisition, yet contains the latter. The present facts, which are known later become propositions regarding past. Fresh knowledge acquisition can also be pertaining to past events.

Thirdly, there can be propositions about future. It is questionable whether these can really be called as propositions. But we do make statements about future. This category of statements needs a little more attention, because of its vague status.

Tenseless propositions like ‘Twice two is four’ where they cannot be temporally specified, contain the element of future truth and ‘knowledge’ of it. The truth involved in these sentences is called ‘plain truth’ \(^ {26}\). Inductive statements, based on the principle of the uniformity of nature can roughly be kept under this category, since they are inferred from the tenseless law of uniformity of nature. Ryle also holds that we
can know future only through generalization. Determinism of a certain kind persists in such statements.

Propositions about a person's schedule or plans of the future can also be an object of our knowledge. It is not nonsense to say that this type of propositions are knowable in the colloquial sense because the statement is of the form 'It is true that so & so will be the case' and not 'It will be true that so & so is the case'. We commonly speak number of such sentences in our everyday life. Many philosophers, most notably Wittgenstein have called attention to the fact that we do have knowledge of the future of such kind. The class of events such as concerts, weddings, lectures, sports events, departures and arrivals of planes and trains or any other programme which is scheduled, is included in this class. It is mainly in connection with these statements that we talk about knowledge of future propositions. We can harmlessly comment on such 'future propositions' that what we know of them as 'It is fixed that.....'. We know only 'that' we have a plan or 'programme is fixed' and not 'that the schedule is going to take place in future'. These propositions are subject to falsification and contain a fair chance of being fallible. The openness of the future gives substance to the possibility of being wrong about contingent matters. Gettier's Smith, in the first counterexample fails to see the openness of future and thinks that he knows that Jones will get the job.

According to Aristotle, the future contingent propositions are neither true nor false and the law of excluded middle does not apply to them. Philosophers rejecting the bivalence theory also hold the same view. To A.J. Ayer, one can claim knowledge about future only of a particular “This flower will bloom next month.”
There is still one more kind of 'proposition' where the future truth is claimed to be known by the agent. Mystical sentences claimed to be known by prophets fall under this special category. These propositions are 'known' by saints or by the people who are endowed with supernatural powers. These people claim to know the future propositions in an ultra rational manner. But since the study and discussion of such propositions takes us beyond the scope of this research work, we shall not entertain the subject. A.J. Ayer, however, has approved knowledge of such propositions on the basis of the success gained. We, at best, can place them in the category of hypothetical propositions where the truth of the consequent is parasitic on the truth of the antecedent.

In the history of philosophy, propositions have been classified on the basis of their logical, epistemological and ontological outlook. In his De Interpretatione Aristotle considers the three types of propositions:

1. Non-temporal or Timeless propositions as already discussed in the present chapter, ex. : ‘2 + 2 = 4’.
2. Sempiternal or Omnitemporal propositions. ex. : ‘The moon goes round the Earth’, and
3. Tensed propositions of three kinds:
   a. about the present (There is a match today),
   b. about the past (There was a match yesterday), and
   c. about the future (There will be a match tomorrow).

In the realm of logic, we find a systematic classification of propositions on the basis of their quality and quantity. These are Universal Positive (A) Propositions, Universal Negative (E) Propositions, Particular Positive (I) Propositions and Particular Negative (O)
Propositions. In the modern philosophical rationalist trend, Descartes also classified propositions into necessary and contingent categories. For him, only the necessarily true propositions can be known. The propositions of mathematics and logic are of this type, i.e., they are true in all possible worlds. Natural Sciences establish propositions which are true as a part of the system. There is always a probability of their turning out false. Most of the scientific propositions represent contingency. There is the relation of consistency among them, i.e., the new proposition has to be in consonance with the already approved propositions.

A proposition is supposed to be known by experiencing it. But it can be known prior to experience also or a-priori. A truth which is known a-priori is beyond experience. A-posteriori truths, on the other hand, are based on some, particular sensory experience. We gain a-posteriori knowledge only after experience. In the history of philosophy, the rationalist trend has been associated with the a priori truths whereas the empiricist tradition believe the nature of truth and its knowledge to be a-posteriori.

Till Kant, philosophers had been linking the logical classification between synthetic and analytic propositions with the way truth is grasped; the a-priori truths were said to be analytic. Synthetic propositions had to be known only after experience, i.e., a-posteriori. Analytic propositions cannot add to our knowledge whereas synthetic ones do. As a result of the difference, analytic propositions cannot be denied without contradiction but synthetic propositions can be denied so.

Kant holds that an analytic judgement is called ‘analytic’ because its truth can be known by analysing the terms, the predicate merely
explicates the subject. Hence analytic judgements are based on logical truths which cannot be denied without contradiction. Kant compares the judgement (1) A body is extended with (2) A body is heavy. (1) is an analytic judgement while (2) is a synthetic one. A better example of the analytic truth is ‘A brother is male’. The predicate in an analytic proposition is contained in the subject.

Kant further argues that the analytic propositions are undoubtedly known a-priori, but some of the so-called analytic judgements are really synthetic, yet these are known in an a-priori manner only. Mathematical propositions, for example, ‘7 + 5 = 12’ is thought to be analytic, but it can easily be shown to be synthetic. The concept of the number 12 is not contained in the concept of the addition of 7 and 5, for it is an independent number and can be attained by many other additions and multiplications.

Kant rejected the distinction between synthetic and analytic propositions on the basis of the way they are known and contended that though analytic propositions can be known a priori, synthetic ones can be known a-priori as well as a-posteriori. In this manner, Kant combined the synthesis and analysis. His way of argumentation is quite effective and appeals to reason.

Our next focus is on the mistaken assumption of earlier philosophers. Although philosophers had drawn certain distinctions among propositions on various bases, yet these were all put under one head only in so far as they become an object of knowledge. They did not realize that there may be many different types of propositions covered by the variable ‘p’ for the case of ‘S knows the p’. The necessary and
sufficient conditions of knowing them, if there are any, cannot be the exactly the same even if the type of proposition in question is different.

Wittgenstein\(^{30}\) and his followers have also objected to the attempt to formulate such a set of necessary and sufficient conditions, but on the ground that the meaning of ‘known’ and other such terms have certain semantic peculiarities ensuring that no set of conditions is necessary and sufficient for application of the term. The cases to which the term applies, according to them, have only a family resemblance to each other. Owing to this reason, it is practically impossible to present a definition of the desired kind. This view reminds us of B. Russell who writes in his *Human Knowledge : Its Scope and Limits*.

> “The question what do we mean by ‘knowledge’ is not one to which there is a definite and unambiguous answer, any more than to the question ‘what do we mean by baldness’?”\(^{31}\)

Our concern is with the multiplicity of propositions. The notion of knowledge is a complex one. A single definition of knowledge cannot do justice to the complexity of the notion of knowledge. Since ‘p’ is always not the same in nature, knowing that p also has different conditions which make it true or false. For example, it is reasonably clear that the knowing conditions of the propositions about proximate past are quite different from those about history. In the latter case, one has to depend upon the history books or authority while in the former, memory plays an important role. Similarly, perceptual knowledge is certainly different from deductive knowledge not only because of the difference in their way of being known, but also because their objects – the propositions are of entirely different types. As a result, a classification of propositions on the basis of their typology is sought in such a way that their knowing
conditions also vary with the difference in the type of proposition in question.

In order to understand and investigate into various types of propositions which make a difference to the knowing conditions of these propositions, we can, for instance, refer to two types of propositions in two ways – firstly, an epistemological distinction on the basis of the way we meet them, as basic and non-basic and secondly, a logical distinction based on their form, as analytic and non-analytic. The epistemological distinction is made independently of the logical distinction. The idea of classification of propositions is borrowed by earlier philosophers like Kant, Ayer and Russell. By blending two types of classifications together, we suppose, we cover almost all possible types of propositions. So, at least prima-facie, there can be basic analytic, basic non-analytic, non-basic analytic and non-basic non-analytic propositions.

All of ordinary human knowledge is either of the directly evident propositions which can be called epistemically basic, or the propositions which are based upon such basic propositions. The process of acquiring knowledge, which begins with the basic propositions, leads from simplicity to complexity. The concept of basic propositions is not very complicated to apprehend. Kant begins his *Critique of Pure Reason* by saying that all our knowledge begins with experience. The raw material is supplied to us from empirical experience. Our faculty of reason is also involved in the process of knowing. Further, the idea implicit in his works is that knowledge depends on the co-operation of sense, understanding and reason; but while sense and understanding enter into the constitution of our knowledge, reason prescribes the limits of our knowledge within
which sense and understanding operate. In *Critique of Pure Reason*, he states:

“Our faculty of knowledge...affecting our senses partly of themselves produce representatives, partly arouse the activity of an understanding to compare these representations, and, by combining or separating them work up the raw material of the sensible impressions into that of knowledge of objects...”

Bertrand Russell, borrowing the term ‘basic propositions’ from Ayer, delimits it to the class of propositions caused by perceptive experience only. From any occurrence, that a man notices, he can obtain knowledge, and as a matter of linguistic habits, he expresses it in sentences. When such is the case, what he is asserting is a ‘basic proposition’. The two properties of these propositions, according to Russell, are, firstly it must be caused by a perceptive occurrence and secondly, from a logical point of view, basic propositions should not contradict each other. He presents a formal definition of basic propositions as follows:

“It is a proposition which arises an occasion of perception, which is the evidence for its truth, and it has a form such that no two propositions having this form can be mutually inconsistent if derived from different percepts.”

The proposition that there is a piece of white chalk on the table, is a basic proposition. Our knowledge of this proposition depends upon perception, but basic proposition need not necessarily be perceptual as held by Russell. ‘If one more piece of chalk is kept here, there would be two pieces of chalks’ (1 + 1 = 2) is another basic proposition.

There is a person who has consumed poison and is dead as a result of it. He is lying on the floor with a bottle of poison in his hands. My
knowledge of the proposition that he has consumed poison is basic whereas the proposition that he is dead because of it is non-basic. Thus many times, the distinction between basic and non-basic propositions may be explained with the help of causal connections. There has also been a tendency to regard the proposition based on first person experience to be basic and the rest to be non-basic. In the context of beliefs, the statements taken as requiring initial justification are taken as basic and are used to justify other statements.

Propositions can not be confined to this typology in an airtight manner. In different contexts, they may play different roles. The same proposition may be non-basic or derivative in one context, but in another context, one can start by assuming it as basic. Human reason is the best judge to understand and specify its type.

Analytic propositions are those the truth of which can be determined without any observation, i.e., irrespective of the actual states of affairs. The meaning of the term 'analytic' originates in the fact that one has only to analyze the statement in order to know whether or not it is true. For instance,

'My mother is a female'

seems to be trivially true. It is an example of analytic proposition which is of considerable interest to philosophers.

Some propositions are explicitly analytic, e.g.

'All brothers and brothers'
or

'A is equal to A'

There are other analytic propositions which are not so, e.g.:
because we define the term 'yard' in such a way that it is equal to 36 inches. An analytic proposition in general is one whose negation is self-contradictory. It implies that an analytic proposition has to be true. A false analytic proposition is a self-contradiction. Kant, as we have discussed in the earlier chapters, has defined an analytic proposition as one where the predicate repeats the subject in whole or part. Its truth is determined solely by an analysis of the meaning of the words in the sentence expressing it.

Later philosophers (especially the contemporary ones) point out that by accepting Kant's criterion of analyticity, many other propositions that fulfill the criterion do not turn out to be analytic at all. Moreover there may be certain conditions which obscure the identity of analytic propositions. A few of them, as mentioned by J. Hospers\(^3\) are as follows:

1. When a sentence is ambiguous, for example, 'bar' may mean 'a place, where alcoholic beverages are served' as well as in 'chocolate bar'. So, 'all bars serve alcoholic beverages' is analytic with the first meaning of the term but not with the second one.

2. When two persons, in different positions or contexts use the same proposition, for one it may be analytic, for another, it may not.

3. A proposition may seem to be analytic at one time, but not at another. The definition of 'mammal', for instance, is widened today to include the creature named 'whale'. So 'whale is a mammal' is analytic today, but formerly it was thought to be a false proposition.
At times, the sentence may appear to represent an analytic proposition but is not so. For example: 'Business is business' looks like 'p = p', but it means, 'In business, anything goes.' Similarly 'Blackbirds are black birds' appears to be analytic but is not so because being black is not a defining characteristic of the birds called 'blackbirds'. Another example can be 'White is white', where 'White' is the name of the person who is white in colour. We wish to make clear that a proposition, which is not analytic, is not synthetic in our scheme. It is, rather, non-analytic.

The priority of the term 'non-analytic' over 'synthetic' has been to avoid the controversy associated with the usage of the term 'synthetic' and also to include all propositions which are not analytic.

The basic analytic propositions include, among others, a few laws of logic. The apprehension that if an object is present at a place A, it cannot be at the same time at the place B is not inferred or depends upon any other proposition. So it is basic and also analytic. The non-basic analytic propositions are, for instance, the Pythagorean theorem. The tautologies are also analytic in this sense, for their negation results in self-contradiction. Under the basic non-analytic category of propositions, the propositions based on direct experience or perception can be the best example. The propositions based on immediate experience like 'I see this ball' is epistemically basic and is logically non-analytic. Non-analytic propositions based on memory, the propositions of history, the propositions of science and the like are classified as epistemically non-basic propositions. An empirical truth is contingent hence non-analytic. So are the propositions based on the law of uniformity of nature. The universal propositions based on this law are hypothetical in nature. They
convey the idea that if the nature remains uniform, then so & so will happen.

Thus the concept of knowledge contains many concepts under one head only. We have to stop generalizing about knowledge and it no more needs to be treated as a single concept. It demands a classification rather than a definition. By classifying and counting a particular type of knowledge (related to a particular type of proposition), the complexity of the concept of knowledge can be conglomerated.

The goal of epistemological inquiry is mainly analytical rather than lexical. Our encounter with the world around us takes place in various forms. We must realize the difference in the structure of these forms. The philosophers’ concern must no longer be with the concept of propositional knowledge in general, but with a special concept of a particular sort. He needs to engage himself with identifying different forms of the presentations of reality and react accordingly rather than getting busy in finding a definition or repairing definitions laid down by others for the most generalized concepts.

In this chapter, we described knowledge as an attitude for the attainment of truth and attainment of truth as a result of this attitude. This is not a new definition for the concept of knowledge. It is rather, a rough description of the term. The attitude is, by no means, to be taken in terms of the second condition, i.e., a belief, acceptance or being sure. It is an attitude because a knowing subject ‘S’ is involved in the knowledge of the term ‘S knows that p’, who is the subjective counterpart of the knowledge situation.
The analysis of knowledge, as it is roughly laid by us, seems to be recursive and needs a successive interpretation of the concept of truth. The problem of knowledge is thus shifted to the problem of truth. A combined theory of truth, pluralistic in nature and accommodating various existing theories pertaining to partial spheres, seems to solve the problem to some extent. Without a classification and identification of what kind of proposition is it, regarding the truth of which the knowledge seeker is concerned with, one cannot even think of getting an answer. The account of one type of propositions meshed with that of another makes us to commit a category mistake. For example, we cannot claim logical certainty for the truth of any proposition relating to our experience. Knowledge of a contingent fact depends upon the cognitive facilities and abilities of the knower and the surrounding conditions like light, atmospheric pressure etc. of the object known.

Yet, it does not follow that we cannot know such propositions. The misunderstanding is caused by mistaken inference from ‘necessarily true’ to ‘necessary truth’ in the traditional epistemology. In the following sentences:

1. If I know that \((p)\), \((p)\) is necessarily true.
2. If I know that \((p)\), \((p)\) is a necessary truth.

The truth of \((p)\) in (1) necessarily follows from the knowledge of \((p)\), this truth may be necessary or contingent; but in (2) as a result of logical relation between knowledge of \((p)\) and its truth, \((p)\) is made a necessary truth. We can clearly see the oddity in the above sentences.
The traditional epistemology had focused their attention on the individual as the knower and overlooked interpersonal contexts in the social pursuit of knowledge. Popper, however, thinks about knowledge in an objective rather than a subjective sense. He explains this as:

"Knowledge or thought in an objective sense consists of problems, theories or arguments as such. Knowledge in this objective sense is totally independent of anybody's claim to know. It is also independent of anybody's belief, or disposition to assent; or to assert or to act. Knowledge in this objective sense is knowledge without a knower: 'It is knowledge without a knowing subject'"\(^40\).

Knowledge in an objective sense can be there in the forms of stock of already known propositions, as record or books. The question of 'truth' is not very relevant in this sense, for the proposition in question has to be consistent with the earlier ones such that a coherent system is built. Information collected by several people is combined and recorded in the form of stock of knowledge in the social aspect of knowledge. It is an organized collection of justified beliefs.

Epistemic agents as individuals take part in the objective knowledge possession as knowers. The significant feature in the process is the inter-subjective sharing. Inter subjective sharing of knowing is possible only with the help of knowledge claims. 'The mysterious gap' between knowledge and knowledge claim does not lead to skepticism; it merely depicts human limitations. We are not merely human beings as knowing subjects but also social human beings. Human communication is possible only through interaction with other agents. As a result, an exchange of knowledge claims is a part of our epistemological inquiry. Epistemology is reflected as a socially testable enterprise. Belief and justification which are components of a knowledge claim can easily and
separately be put in one compartment which is essentially distinct from a knowledge situation. It is in the social context that justified beliefs have been talked about a lot, i.e., the claims are subject to be tested against a criterion. In the realm of epistemology, such an effort has always been confronted with circularity.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


2. Ibid, p. 72.


4. In *Principles of Mathematics* and *Principia Mathematica*, Russell regarded propositions as a linguistic entity, but in a paper ‘On Propositions: What are they and how they mean’, Russell refers to a distinction between ‘word-proposition’ and ‘image-proposition’. A word-proposition ‘refers’ to the objective fact which make it true or false and ‘means’ a corresponding image proposition. See footnote in the chapter titled ‘Demystifying Propositions’ in *Truth, Knowledge and Modality* by George H.V. Wright, p. 16.


7. Ibid, p. 75.

8. One statement / different sentences / different propositions, same sentence / different statements / different propositions; same proposition / different statement / different sentences, and the like, Ibid, p.77.

9. Haack further classifies sentences into sentence-type and sentence tokens. A sentence-token, for her is a physical object – a mark on paper or a sound-wave. Two identical sentences are tokens of the same sentence-type. A sentence type is a class of similar tokens, or it is a pattern which similar tokens exemplify. W.V. Quine also has
a similar conception of sentences types and tokens which he
borrows from Peirce. Quine utilizes the notion of a token in his
scheme of eternal sentences. Eternal sentences, for him, is a
sentence whose tokens have all the same truth value.


11. The traditional view on the objects of belief suggested by Aristotle,
Descartes, and a few modern thinkers. Present philosophers like
Chomsky takes the object of belief to be ‘mental propositions’. For
these philosophers, mental propositions are ‘thoughts’ we think
as we go about our daily affairs or even when we do nothing at all.
On occasions we expresses these thoughts in words and at times
our thoughts remain unexpressed. The feasibility of these mental
propositions raise the same question as was raised by Wittgenstein
for his private language argument. If mental propositions are
private thoughts, how we account for the fact that different people
believe the same thing? See P.K. Moser & A.V. Nat: *Human


15. P.K. Moser: ‘Types, Tokens and Propositions – Quine’s
Alternative to Propositions.’

16. H.H. Price explains how it is possible to entertain a proposition
even in a non-verbal way: “by means of mental images, or again
by means of pictures or diagrams or gestures or dumb show –
whether one produces the pictures, gestures etc. oneself, or observes those produced by other people.” H.H. Price: Belief, p. 192.


19. The term ‘sense-datum’ has been questioned by A.J. Ayer in ‘Phenomenalism’ for the reason that it has not been satisfactorily defined.

20. In the second chapter of this thesis we have mentioned a distinction between a factual proposition and a proposition of fact drawn by N.R. Hanson.

21. This classification applies to the propositions describing worldly events.


23. B. Russell: ‘Basic Propositions’ in Empirical Knowledge: Readings From Contemporary Sources, by Chisholm & Swartz (ed.).


25. J.O. Nelson: ‘Our Validation of Memory and our conception of past’.

27. A.J. Ayer: 'Fatalism' in *The Concept of a Person*.

28. Aristotle: *De Interpretatione*, translated by E.M. Edghill, Chapter IX.

29. I. Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason*.


32. By the form of the proposition, it is not, by any meant the grammatical form, since we take propositions to be extra linguistic.

33. I. Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason* translated by N. Kempsmith, p. 25.

34. B. Russell: 'Basic Propositions' from *Empirical Knowledge: Readings from Contemporary Sources*, by Chisholm and Swartz (ed.).


36. David Annis in his 'Epistemic Foundationalism' talks of basic statement as the foundation of epistemic and social context of inquiry. Foundationalist theories in general assert that there is a class of belief called basic belief, which do not require any evidence. A person is justified in holding a basic belief just by having and understanding it.


38. Ibid, p. 163.
39. From a technical point of view, there may be, and in fact there is a distinction between a tautology and an analytic proposition, if we take an analytic proposition in a strict Kantian sense; but for general philosophical discussion, the tautologies can be granted the status of analytic propositions.