Understanding the dynamics of Analytical Philosophy

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Abstract

Analytical philosophy which is characterized by the philosophical objective of clarity, the insistence on explicit argumentation in philosophy, and the demand that any view expressed be exposed to the rigours of critical evaluation and discussion by peers. For Frege, he devices aspect of conclusive–verifiability as a criterion of eminence.

What does these fabrics of apriori confabulations hint towards, how these trends in philosophical outlook which started guiding the whole of Vienna circle? In this paper, we seek to trace the roots and critically reflect upon the history of Analytical Philosophy and thereby attempting to understand the boundaries of knowledge.

Keywords: Truth, Analysis, Symbolism, Meaningfulness, Conclusive, verifiability

1.0 Introduction:

Majority of analytical philosophy revolves around *"logical analysis as an instrument, of philosophy of language"*. We will be dealing with the following philosophers: Ludwig Wittgenstein, Bertrand Russell, Gottlob Frege, Charles E. Moore and Sir Alfred Ayer respectively. Wittgenstein came in the contact of Frege and Russell influenced this aeronautical engineer who was in Cambridge to advance his passion in philosophy. His famous book: *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (TLP)* is divided into 7 propositions wherein he gives a brief idea to end the speculations on baseless airy abstractions by contending: *"whereof one is not aware of the fact, thereof one must remain silent"* and *"combination of all the*

propositions make up language". It is to "Passover in silence" than to indulge in humdrum of verbal confabulation devoid of meaning.

1.1 Main–Body

Before contemplating about the scope and boundary of human mind we must, firstly, try to understand that what exactly the world comprises within itself- what is real and unreal- what it intelligential and sensible to have a mindful relation and thereby grasp its essence and call it knowledge and what is falling out of this category. Bertrand Russell curiously stated a fierce thunderbolt that: *"A major question is, can human being know anything, and, if so, then what and how?"* this forms the corner-stone of my thesis, whose answer we will try to find by giving examples of three major philosophical thinkers of the infamous *"Vienna circle"* which composed stalwarts, who can be rightly assessed as either *"Scientifically minded philosophers or philosophically minded scientists"*. Russell, had done renowned work in logic and mathematics are the backdrop of this whole scene. It surely is an undisputed fact that this is a renowned name in the field of Philosophy and like all the analytic philosophers, Dr. Russell mainly focused formulation of his treatise of Logical Atomism

which substantially influenced the whole of Vienna circle in general and tractatus of Wittgenstein in particular.

What is this idea all about and how will this help us to achieve our reverend objective of finding answer to the cardinal question of around which this paper revolves? Russellian answer to this could be formulated in the following fashion that, world is made-up of facts called as atomic facts which follows that there are no material objects but logical propositions. *Atomic facts* can be fairly described as facts having being the simplest in kind and cannot be further analyzed into simpler components- you will find the same idea being highlighted by Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus; the level of decomposing where further analysis cannot be possible and can be exclaimed as the indestructible element of logical analysis. In the world of physics, we reduce everything to elements such as atoms, ions or photons, out of which, atom is the smallest particle which is devoid of taste, color and cannot be seen or observed through naked eyes- his intention was to find the atom similar to this manifestation in language, however, Russell argues that he calls his postulation *as logical atomism* primarily due to the fact that *they are logical atoms, not physical ones.* For example, in "Analytic Realism", Russell wrote:

"… the postulate, I vociferously put forward is analytic, under the reason that one must explore simple elements of which complexes are corroborated, and that complexes presuppose simples, whereas it is not vice versa…

Presumably, every entity possesses a connection under the header umbrella of which, complex beings are encompassed.

Any time < A > has the relation C to Z, there is a complex "A in relation C to Z" … It is noteworthy to exclaim that this is known as Logical atomistic theory. *Every simple entity is an atom.*

In the cornerstone of the idea, there lies series of pivotal aspects which are as follows: - (1) The aspect of *object, relation, fact and quality* are the main pillars to explain the world, it becomes to clear the air from the definition of a *"fact"* as per Russell, primarily because it will act as linchpin for further elaborations; *a fact is an arrangement of the object* as to how Russell sufficiently view this concept, now let us proceed from where we halted and elucidate upon the aspect which could be further analyzed by the two characteristics as

1.1(1) *Factual aspect* which deals with the aspect that things that are directly known to us are called as atomic facts and the simple entities correspond to simple names or words. It may be the case that, there could be plethora of objects such as pen, pencil, table and mobile for example but (a side-note to be inserted here is that, Russell treats property and relation as objects only) there has to be only one property and relation of these objects.

1.1(2) Highlighting the linguistic or logical aspect of logical atomism; in this portion we surface through the edges of the fact that when we analyze the language, we derive what are colloquially considered as simple propositions called as the atomic propositions which cannot be condensed or broken down further as the simplest in nature and spirit. The ultimate constituent of the world are atomic facts which independent of other facts and they can be explained by the help of these atomic proposition in a fashion that they are used to build upon these atomic facts.

A question that could trigger in the mind of a seeker is that why are we stressing on the simplest atomic fact- why Russell keeps on banting around this when everything around us- in the practical world is replete with complex riddle-like assertions which are far from being simple in nature? Dr. Russell answers this profound question by saying that all those complex statements are built by using those same- simple propositions and atomic facts only when many of the atomic facts are related to us

in a given manner, it gives birth to complex statements, but at times, contends Russell that, these complex statements cannot be analyzed, cannot be condensed further into smaller particles by its various dimensions. These elements cannot be decomposed into smaller components and at times, they could have more than one meaning- they are not clear and comprehensible at times. Simple statements are in complete possession of whatever laxities complex propositions contain within themselves. In the spirit of this, he highlights the horrendous uses of the misguided words in the parlance of English, i.e. "And", "Or" additionally his works on the word "It" act as welcome relief in this regard. To conclude this portion, I highlight what Russell had to say: *"We cannot know the world without knowing the facts that makes up the truth of the world"* so, since atomic facts and not those complex error-laden jumbled pieces of languages ultimately explain the universe, studying the atomic facts (that makes up the basis for logical atomism) is highly essential and important task for a seeker of knowledge.

In Wittgenstein's treatise also, we find the same expression being highlighted wherein he asserts that facts are the ultimate constituent of the world and they are independent of other facts[1].

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[1] Wittgenstein believes that we need to compare the logical picture (via senses) with the reality to determine its truth or falsity.

In a deep differentiating sense, he makes a fine discrimination between Elementary propositions which are formed by single atomic fact as they are unanalysable and on the other side, we have complex propositions which are formed when many simple propositions are combined together holistically to form a single propositional statement. Russell elaborates that there are *knowledge of things and knowledge of truth* from which the former manifestation deals with sense-datum and the latter surfaces around the judgements. Knowledge of things are then divided into two more aspects that are:

(i) knowledge by acquaintance

(ii) knowledge by description.

Let us build upon this aspect significantly as they form the basis of what can be learned and known at all by rational beings. The knowledge by acquaintance explains that when there is a *direct cognitive relation* of the subject with the object of in the sense when the observer is having a *direct contact* with the content of consciousness in a way, that, which is *not mediated by the faculties of inference and complex logical postulations*. It must be in a such a way that the subject is having a personal contact with the object or a given particular intelligible entity; this procedure can only happen with the help of our sense organs and when we observe a particular material- the

perceptive data gets stored within our mind and even memory, is a part within it. The sense data, i.e. *the sensible logical picture of the reality* stored and refreshed by our memory wherein the 5 sense organs play the active receptor role- the sense datum which is accumulated is apprehended by Dr. Russell as without any error, confusion and not clouded with any sort of discombobulation whatsoever, it is without any doubt and dilemma that is why he calls it as *hard-data* type. This process is pre-requisite to have an *unmediated knowledge of some propositional truths*. He asserts that we can gain an immediate knowledge through the sense datum with which we are acquainted without having any knowledge about the truth of the sense datum at all, to explicate in Russellian manner, we can know the colour of the table without knowing any truth about the colour at all. The role of self-consciousness is playing a very vital role here as you are aware of being in the *"state of awareness"*.

Then comes the approach of acquisition of knowledge-aspects through the mechanism of description, wherein we depend upon the *pure-description* of a particular entity in question. He divides this part in two categories wherein the:

(i) *Ambiguous description* means it is vaguely described with uncertainty over the clear meaning. This is problematic and is not essential to be gathered for knowledge acquisition.

(ii) And then comes the (ii) *Definite description* on the other hand could be described with clarity, certainty and without any sort of anomalous fragments, this is serving a pivotal role in describing the entity in question with precise meaning. It is so, primarily because, when we say or describe something we want to make sense and not just spout baseless sounds and meaningless babbling for which a definite description is essentially required. Russell says to this effect: *"To know some thing or entity through definite description is to know that it is so-and-so or that so-and-so exists or that there is only one object and that is so-and-so"* he, further breakdowns the difference by *using "a so-and-so"* for ambiguous description and *"the so-and-so"* for the definite description. He gives a clear blow to the fact, in his book *"The problems of philosophy" in chapter 5*, wherein he believes that Bismark, for example, if made any statement in

first person about his own self he was trying to use his name to make a self-referential point. If some close ally of Bismarck would have called out his name and made a statement, it was to identify with some bodily constitution of the empirical object with the name of *"Bismark"* and then declare whatsoever the personnel meant to. If we have said, for example, that, "Bismark was a very adept diplomat" we again need to hear- basically use sense organs to observe some statements about the him having successfully succeeded in using his diplomacy acumen to be called as an adept diplomat- in short, we need to rely on acquaintance with these data to declare anything further; this is how he attempted to formulate a series of structured knowledge labels through the help of knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description.

If we talk about Wittgenstein, his share of ideas could be evidently expressed in the form that- *"A name means object, object is its meaning"* here we can assert that for a proposition to express reality there must be a logical form which can be explained as the combination of words in a sentence which makes it a picture of reality is called as <u>logical form of sentence</u> which is a form of reality. The possible facts which are used for a status-of-affair are known to be logically possible. We find an a-priori assertion in Wittgenstein's conclusion of elementary facts which called as *"logical picture of an atomic fact"*. He says that names cannot be further dissected into simpler elementary aspects as they are already simple otherwise, they would have been condensed further and significantly divided by their features or fragments. He adds that, *"objects are simple"*, additionally, he says that the everyday propositions can be further dissected and discern in elementary proposition and believes that there must exist simple entities that correspond well to the simple names. Thus, by purely a-priori consideration, Wittgenstein, as per Kegan Paul, comes to the ontology. As per Frank P. Ramsey, the language becomes isomorphic to reality in Tractatus therapeutic model.

1.3 Study on Gottlob Frege:

Frege believes that, *a sentence is a series of sound that makes sense* and the sense of a sentence is basically expressed by the thought behind it, thought maybe true or false, and it is a mental entity. When we say whether a sentence

as to determine its truth or falsity, we are basically referring to the point that whether the sense it makes is true or false. The primary focus of this philosophical endeavour is guided towards interrogative sentence type questions, wherein we have to visit truth and falsity and yes or no type manifestation of answers. He also believes that the emotive statements the propositions that are quintessentially originated through our personal feelings and subjectico-emotive exhortations and impulsion do not bear any significant influence over the assertions, and is not a part of the scientific excavation or experiment. Going further in this direction, he makes a point that thoughts or undisturbed and typically not perturbed through transformations in language such as in the case when from narrative, there is a verb change- It remains unaffected by such changes. Lastly, he also as search that there are times when: *"the content of sentence goes beyond the thought it tries to represent"*

Ideas are subjective, they are private and cannot be shared. It requires mind to be felt and the convergence of ideas is impossible. They are not object of sense perception but belong to the category of the content of consciousness. Ideas are personal and they can neither be seen nor be felt. *"Each idea is having only 1 bearer"* and

this cannot be the case that single idea has 2 bearer which will require ideas to be independent of the subject but this is not the case simply because they are subject-dependent even though the object (like: tall tree) be observed by many and is essentially independent of the subject. He puts "I and other people" in outer world and accepts the existing of this world, the reason for his former point could be supplied by this fact that if I, being the idea, needs a bearer makes a person as a bearer, so how can an individual who is already a bearer be a bearer?

This does not inspire much sense so it justifies his conclusion by avoiding any discrepancy. The truth has a simple work of representing the reality as it is. Thoughts could be seen as having been possessed with the central qualities of both the ideas, i.e. *to be immaterial* and from object they gain the quality i.e. *not to be dependent on any individual personal consciousness.* Thoughts are different from both ideas and things and it is a common medium- same conduit through which we can express ideas and objects. We recognise or acknowledge the truth of a thought by calling it as a fact i.e. when a thought is true it is called as a *fact*.

1.4 Analysis by A.J Ayer:

Are the theories of metaphysics something that

should be abandoned? Ayer responds that, *"a statement is logically relevant only if the statement which it purports to express could be either analytically or synthetically verifiable"* in this he introduces the criteria of Verification principle of logical analysis. In this, he conceptualises that, a statement is only having some factual significance for a person if he knows how to verify that particular proposition and for the questions, he contends that: *"we will make each and every observation which could possibly answer the question, but if we can retrieve none, then we can conclude that the statement under consideration does not expresses a genuine question, no matter how much its grammatical appearance may suggest otherwise."*. He makes a firm difference between (i) Verify in principle wherein, there may arise some circumstances, in which we do not have the essential apparatus and required products to efficiently draw some observations for a given proposition as he explains by the example: "there are mountains on the other side of the moon" here, I might not be in possession to adequately verify this as "there is no spacecraft that has been built yet which can excavate the truth behind this assertion" but I know which situation could help me to make observations, as this is theocratically possible. Practical verifiability means that the given

proposition is there to be observed by the readily available sense-data, for example, "x is a rock" then it is available to be verified by our sense-datum.

He gives another set of important classification wherein, he clarifies meaning between the "verified in *strong sense*" and "in *weak sense*"; for the former aspect, when the truth of the proposition could be verified, more appropriately, be established in our experience and for the latter, when there arises a possibility in our sense-experiences to render as probable. He gives the reference of *general propositions of law* such as "body expands when we heat it", in such scenarios, we cannot conclusively determine the truth of such statements through *"finite series of observations"* and even if we agree that such general propositions are manufactured as to cover infinite series of cases, we cannot, even in principle, verify these statements. In the case of metaphysical arguments, he believes that these metaphysicians use emotive language- spouted through personal feelings in some cases, although he already makes them as "pseudo-statements" which are baseless and meaningless as in the example of classic Ayer thought, "god exists" it has no literal meaning as we can never conclude it's observations or determine its truth

through our sense-experiences and whatever that we cannot test through our sense-datum is not knowledge for Ayer. Frege, at this crucial juncture, seems to be in line with Ayer as he too, believes that, emotive language or appeals cannot adequately be a part of scientific clan of experimentation or thought.

1.4 Critical Appreciation

We can legitimately infer that for Wittgenstein, if we understand a proposition, we understand the situation it represents and its senses as well. Pictures can be understood without having them being explained to us and this fundamental character is being shared by propositions which makes them as pictures. To be a model of reality it must correctly or incorrectly show up the logical form which we have discussed above. Propositions must adequately represent a state-of-affair accurately or a possible state-of-affair to be a *"meaningful proposition"* and, if it fails to do this, then we can conclude them as *"meaningless proposition",* this is what Wittgenstein means by *law of projection* and accurate exactness of his idea on *symbolism.* In the case of Frege, he stands in non-affirmative of *correspondence theory of truth[2]* which could be repudiated as truth not being a matter of correspondence or relation and looking back-

and-forth over the empirical entities would push us towards an infinite vicious circle at best, because, we all know that actual real entity and world is always already dynamically evolving every nano-second in context to our fixed ideas about those material objects.

For Russell, it has introduced a *"truism"* wherein he believes that facts are something which makes a statement either true or false- these facts are not partly constructed by some private individual consciousness or when he says *"Socrates is dead"* which is a fact, here, "Socrates" does not assume the supreme-head of being the fact, so he is not equalising fact with a single entity but fact is a whole sentence for him. Additionally, he believes that, it would be a fallacy to assume that we can singularly explain the whole working mechanism of this universe just by the use of individual particular facts. Ayer on the other hand believes that empirical premises cannot contain any property or exclaim about the existence of anything super-empirical which cannot profusely be determined through it. We can infer that, for him, metaphysicians are sharing a type of knowledge which transcends the boundary of practical world, scientific rigor and common-sense.

Conclusion

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[2] When we correspond, build a relation with the empirical sense-datum to investigate the truth-value of a particular proposition

We can conclude that, empiricism becomes the fundamental backbone of *logical positivism* which believes that all philosophical problems are linguistic problems which when all the ambiguities on uncertain use of words are removed, it leaves behind no philosophical discrepancy. They also espouse that no type of knowledge can exceed above the scope of sensible experiences, the feud, he says, between idealist and realist over, let's say a picture wherein one agrees that picture is a objectively present in this world and other proliferates it as set of idea in mind of, let's say, the god, they both can sense the sense of painting but when these metaphysicians try to delve deep into roots of ontology of an entity- then it is a problematic task because it's a complex procedure which cannot be grasped by an ordinary mind- so how come these *"cheaters, self-deluders"* as per Fredrick Nietzsche exclusively avail this right? The task of understanding how the laws of nature works is the task best suited for a natural scientist whereas for a philosopher, one must be an unbiased observer and try to analyse the language that makes up the truth of the world through logic, *principle of mathematics* in the case of Russell. Frege concludes that, the *"truth"* which we must look for is the truth around and on which scientists are directed towards.

The case of Russell is to find an *unanalysable aspect and undeniable entity* existing concurrently with his endeavour to uncover *irreducible entity of logical analysis* and a *single indivisible reality*. Just the way a painting of a man seeks to resemble the man it attempts to represent the same is in the case of propositions which tries to express the reality it attempts to represent and this is being done by the propositions mirroring the reality.

"Language becomes isomorphic to reality" in Russellian logic and in the therapeutic model of Wittgenstein as well- they seek to formulate an *ideal language*. For Ayer, Metaphysicians are single-handedly committing errors in Grammer, not motivated by attempts to show some reality but to commit fallacy as in the case of observing this empirical world present in front of our eyes as something of being an unreal entity and the reality is beyond the reach of our senses, knowledge beyond our senses is downright being mired in deception, delusion and illusion which we as responsible citizens, in 21st century, must overcome.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1.7 Declaration of funding

No fund to declare.

1.8 Conflict of interest

The authors hereby declare that there is no conflict of interest.

1.9 Data availability statement

No data from outside sources has been used in this research work.

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