

Wittgenstein's World-Picture

by

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Abstract

In this paper, I discuss the position and meaning of Wittgenstein's notion of "world-picture" in comparison with the central doctrines of *Tractatus*—the "picture-theory of meaning"—and *Philosophical Investigations*—"language-game" and "form of life." This notion appears in his book *On Certainty*, which he wrote in the last couple years of his life; it prompts a few questions concerning the degree to which Wittgenstein distances himself from his previous philosophical stands, leading to the very interpretation of the "third-Wittgenstein." Early Wittgenstein is mostly engaged in picturing the logical structure of language and its relation to the world. Later Wittgenstein, with a revolutionary step, criticizes his old thoughts and proposes new ideas. The crucial question here is whether Wittgenstein's attention to the epistemological debates in the last few years of his life is a new approach to his way of doing philosophy.

We can study the notion of the world-picture concerning both strands. On the one hand, what we can find in *Tractatus* is sort of a metaphysical subject who is a limit of the world, whereas the world-picture discusses the beliefs of an empirical subject about the world—a subject who lives in the world. On the other hand, the world-picture preconditions the language-game presented in *Philosophical Investigations*. Before participating in any language-games or forms of life, a language user needs to have a worldview constituted of beliefs without reason.

How I intend to develop this topic is by looking at Wittgenstein's early and later philosophy to tackle this possible question: Does the notion of a world-picture necessitate the recognition of a "third Wittgenstein" in philosophy?

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to my wife, my better half,
and my mother

infinite thanks to Dr. Arthur Sullivan for his constant and helpful guidance and supervision

List of Abbreviations and Symbols

TT.....*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

PI.....*Philosophical Investigations*

OC.....*On Certainty*

W1.....Wittgenstein's early period

W2.....Wittgenstein's later period

W3.....Wittgenstein's possible third period

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Introduction

Thoughts can change over time, and the intellectual orientations of a thinker can evolve depending on variations in life. Moreover, the level of knowledge can change, in either a few details or entirely in terms of main principles. However, every change is not necessarily a transformation or an evolution to a higher level, and a thinker's trajectory of thoughts is not necessarily an ascending chart of progress or development. Expectedly, the terms "progress" and "evolution" are not concepts that cannot easily be defined in philosophy since this will require, first, determining rational criteria and foundations. When it comes to evaluating the changes in a philosopher's thought, it would be better to find critical points for understating their new approach rather than merely judging whether their new ideas are correct. The importance of the last point lies in the fact that it helps clarify my research methodology in this paper. I am not seeking a basis for interpretation; instead, I have attempted to represent the changes of a thinker's thoughts in a structured manner to provide a criterion for comparison. The philosopher whose course of transition I am going to discuss here is Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein, and the topic of discussion pertains to the very possibility of interpreting a 'third Wittgenstein' from *On Certainty* (*OC*), his last work. There are two established periods associated with Wittgenstein's philosophy: the first represents his early works and is mostly known as the "early Wittgenstein." I use the symbol of W1 as the representation of the early period, and my focus will be on *Tractatus* (*TT*), an important book from this period. The second-period introduces *Philosophical Investigation* (*PI*), known as the "later Wittgenstein," where we can see a major shift in Wittgenstein's philosophical thoughts and methods. I have used W2 as the symbol for the later period to increase the readability of the text. At the end of W2, Wittgenstein's book—*OC*—appeared, which is composed of his notes during the last few months of his life. The ideas and

the method of processing concepts presented in this book raise the question of the “possibility of a third period” in his philosophical thoughts; I use W3 as a sign for referring to the possible third period. However, since we are talking about the possibility of the existence of such a period, this sign is used only to distinguish it from the other two known periods. Therefore, this is the question I want to tackle in this paper: Given the difference between Wittgenstein’s early and later periods and the potential of *OC* to be considered as W3, how close can we get to the idea of the “third Wittgenstein”? My plan to approach this question will be the following:

1. Drawing a general schematic of the main principles of W1 and W2 and the possible W3
2. Comparing and contrasting each period
3. Devising a possible answer to the question of the possibility of the “third Wittgenstein” according to dissimilarities among these periods

It must be noted that I am not looking for a definite response to the above question in this paper. My focus will be more on trying to study the differences since I believe the first step in addressing this issue is to have a general schema of Wittgenstein’s different periods in mind. I will also focus on the categorization of periods to W1 and W2 and possible W3, which may invite the misreading that these periods are entirely separate from one another. However, the truth is that when it comes to analyzing a thinker’s intellectual evolution over time, we cannot draw a particular distinctive line to distinguish his thoughts because any idea can have roots in previous thoughts. Nonetheless, in my opinion, this classification will help us better understand the differences.

In the following paragraph, I will offer a quick look at the concepts and topics that will be covered in each chapter:

The first chapter deals with a young Wittgenstein's ideas, the successor of philosophers and logicians such as Russell and Frege. Since Wittgenstein's research methodology in this period follows their ideas and is, in some aspects, the development of these thinkers' opinions on logic, we can arrive at the idea that Wittgenstein is a logician-philosopher. For this reason, *TT* has been chosen, a book that mostly deals with logic. I purport to sketch the philosophy of early Wittgenstein by first looking at the structure and main concerns presented in *TT*. Next, I discover and explain the crucial points sketched in *TT*, which, in my opinion, could be broken down into three parts: First, Wittgenstein's unique approach to language; he assumes that language is not just a matter of communication but rather a context in which we can find responses regarding major philosophical questions and determine the limits to our thoughts. His approach toward language is to establish an ideal logical language that could prevent the ambiguity caused by the propositions of metaphysics and by misunderstanding the logic of language. The second step is analyzing *TT*'s central thesis, which is "the picture-theory of meaning." To deal with this, I will try to describe the theory from the perspective of its constituent parts. Lastly, in our journey to picture Wittgenstein's early thoughts, I will present a critique of the issues arising out of the picture-theory, which is crucial to the first chapter from different angles: first, it shows us how successful the theory is in defending its assumptions. Second, it helps us answer why there is a need for a new approach after *TT* and, third, it provides a basis for evaluating Wittgenstein's later thought.

The second chapter deals with the later thoughts of Wittgenstein. In this period, Wittgenstein transitions to a new manner of philosophizing, and the period opposes the views in

the previous period; he returns to philosophy with a new theory to present more reliable responses to the questions that were already assumed to be solved. The central notion in W2 is the concept of the language-game and the commitment to being in touch with people's real lives. The former theory—picture-theory—was unable to establish a link between theory and life. One distinct point regarding the philosophy of W2 is Wittgenstein's emphasis on language yet again, but this time, not on the theoretical aspect but instead on the practical one. Therefore, he chooses ordinary language as the basis of building his philosophy. Ordinary language does not follow the pre-determined rules and is filled with unpredicted patterns. In this period, the turn in Wittgenstein's philosophy is evident, both in terms of the philosophical basis, which, in W1, is the theoretical language and, in W2, is the practical language, and scopes, which, in W1, remains at the level of ideal theory and, in W2, moves forward to practice.

To better illustrate W2, I describe some of the fundamental changes in Wittgenstein's philosophy after this transition and will try to elaborate on the main distinctions in the later thoughts from the earlier ones. For our approach to picture W2, discussing the structure of the language-game in detail will be helpful in terms of distinguishing between the ideas of the two periods. As in the previous one, in this chapter, I discuss some consequences of the language-game and criticize some of its aspects. This will help us examine the similar questions of the previous chapter; however, this time, it is regarding the language-game—whether the theory is successful in responding to the questions that arise out of the inefficiency of the picture-theory, whether there is a need for a new theory after *PI*, and whether it will lead us to the very notion of the “third Wittgenstein.”

Finally, in the third and last chapter, I discuss Wittgenstein's philosophy in the last few months of his life with a focus on *OC*, where some unprecedented conceptions such as “hinge

propositions” and “world-picture” appear. Investigating these notions is crucial to this paper since they could be a sign and a reason for approaching the possibility of W3 in the context of Wittgenstein’s philosophy.

Chapter 1-Tractarian Pictures

- **1.1 On Tractatus**

When you open *TT* for the first time, you will see that it is a small book with several short propositions, which, for the reader, seems to be a collection of informative and scattered propositions about the philosophy of language. This book is honored by Russell's lengthy introduction, which gives a general schema of the content in hand. The opening is somewhat illuminating for first-time readers, but, in my opinion, it might distract you from finding the real purpose in Wittgenstein's text. As we move on to the latter part of *W2*, we can find that Russell is not very welcoming of the later Wittgenstein's philosophy. There are seven basic propositions in the book, numbered by the natural numbers 1–7, and each includes a sub-level, stating a proposition, indicated through decimal expansions, such as 1.1, 1.2, 1.21. In total, there are 526 propositions.

These propositions are usually short, and some extremely so—"a picture is a fact" (2.141). To address Wittgenstein's writing style, the aspects of his succinctness in writing, selectiveness in choosing words, and the use of logical elements in arguments must be emphasized. The short logical propositions aim to illustrate the relation between language and the world and help us better understand the limits of the world. Moreover, this book addresses the traditional central questions in philosophy and attempts to present a solution; insofar after the book's publication in 1921, Wittgenstein had claimed that he had solved all the problems of philosophy. An interpretation of the book's origin is that it is a continuation and evolution of the former philosopher's conception of language and logic. However, overall, this interpretation

seems to lack real knowledge of Wittgenstein's personality, as a few pieces of evidence have shown that Wittgenstein is reluctant to form his philosophy on the history of philosophy and philosophers. One excellent indication of this is that we do not see any source cited by the author in *TT*, which could prove that Wittgenstein's thoughts are original, though some of his views might be similar to others' work.

I do not want to exaggerate the book's significance, but the revolutionary *TT* is comparable to the work of Descartes in the seventeenth century as it provides new insights into western philosophical thought. We can see how our scientific conception changed due to the discoveries of Galileo and Copernicus in physics. Descartes' philosophy is an attempt to send the message to the new generations as to how understanding the impact of the scientific revolution can change our worldview. Wittgenstein's philosophy is also a reaction to the discoveries of Frege, Russell, and Whitehead, all of whom considered modern logic as the next big scientific revolution. This new finding not only changed our conception of the nature of logic but also paved the way for the development of devices and computers using mathematical and logical algorithms. Wittgenstein has investigated the achievements of the former philosophers, but this cannot necessarily lead to the conclusion that his work is merely the development of his predecessors' work. His idea made him unique, and I do not hesitate to share it here: The discoveries in logic are useful if only we believe that simple objects are the ultimate constituents of the world. Accepting this claim is the first step in understanding the project of picture-theory.

In *TT*, the main questions Wittgenstein has dealt with are the following: How can we distinguish between what is meaningful and what is meaningless? What will be our proper tool to accomplish this end? In this book, Wittgenstein aims to draw the boundaries of our thinkable world and show us our philosophical limits. Wittgenstein's reaction to these questions is the

development of a kind of scientific view of language while giving a great amount of attention to the rules governing our logic of language. He aims to highlight our limits and find a criterion to respond to our metaphysical questions. Therefore, the final goal Wittgenstein seeks in *TT* is to solve the problems of philosophy through a deep investigation of our logic of language.

In addition, there is a view regarding the underlying aims in Wittgenstein's project of *TT* I would like to point out along with discussing some of its aspects: Wittgenstein follows two main distinctly connected aims, which I will present following Gilbert Ryle's series of essays on Wittgenstein's *TT* (Copi 2007: 6). According to Ryle, one aim that is followed in *TT* is to look closely at philosophy and try to recount what philosophy is not, i.e., some sort of scientific field, and what philosophy is, i.e., an activity of exploring the internal logic of what is said. The first aim is presupposed to give a logical description of philosophy. Before we make any judgments about world facts, a clear position on what philosophy really is needs to be taken. Next, we may proceed with theorizing the concepts. The first aim is coherent with what we find in *TT* because, to commence the process of determining the facts, Wittgenstein uses logic to come with the required conditions to ensure the meaningfulness of the propositions. Thus, taking a clear position will help us choose the proper tool in our philosophizing, which, in the case of Wittgenstein, is logic and mathematics.

After gaining a clear notion of philosophy, we will focus on investigating our tool and logic and find out the nature of formal logic. The necessity of looking into logic lies in the fact that it will help build a theory on the ground of pre-determined philosophy with more accurate rules.

Regarding this reading of *TT*, which is somewhat illuminating with regard to having a general idea of the book's purpose, what strikes me the most is that we cannot bound its project

only to these two aims. Because Wittgenstein's final purpose was to create a mechanism for producing compelling answers to our long-historic questions—a more significant goal. With this in mind, we will realize later that the book's purpose goes beyond describing true philosophy and its tools. Even though these two aims are definitely related to *TT*, they should be looked at from the perspective of Wittgenstein's main concern. His plan to tackle this concern is to first look for the source of the problem, which, as already mentioned, is regarding our general view on philosophy, and then to present a proper method that could help us find answers to these questions. In the first step, his general view of philosophy helps him see language as an origin from which all difficulties emerge. Language is misleading, and what we assert is not precise. This problem arises from the misuse and misunderstanding of the logic of language. In the next step, he intends to find a proper tool with which we can correct language. The tool offers to dig into the principles of symbolism, which is supposed to better clarify the relationship between words and things in the language. Lastly, the outcome of Wittgenstein's view of language and logic is in establishing his new approach, which has been mentioned as his main concern.

In confirmation of the above-mentioned statements, Russell has also properly mentioned these points and highlighted them in the book's introduction. According to him, in *TT*, Wittgenstein is concerned with determining the conditions of accurate symbolism according to which a sentence's meaning is definite. This concern also leads to another clarification regarding what problems logic has to deal with regarding symbolism. He has also added that we look for sense in combinations of symbols and the conditions with the help of which we can distinguish sense from nonsense. Moreover, regarding symbols, we need to look for the requirements to ascertain the uniqueness of meaning. We must consider these before we step out to form a

“logically perfect language,” which predicts the rules of syntax (to prevent nonsense), and single symbols with a definite and unique meaning.

Concentrating on and developing the “logically perfect language,” which can be already seen in the works of former philosophers Frege and Russell, is Wittgenstein’s solution to the fly stuck in the bottle trying to find a way out. In this respect, he aims to describe the conditions of a logically perfect language, which is far from the ambiguity of ordinary language. In simple words, in an ideal language, there is only one name for every simple thing, and there are never two different simple things with the same name. A name in itself is a simple symbol without any divided parts. The combination of all simple things is “the whole.” The symbol of “the whole” is “complex” and includes the symbols of simple parts.

Thus, Wittgenstein’s idea is to solve all the problems of philosophy at once by developing the concept of a “perfectly logical language,” and his way of developing such language is by scrutinizing symbolism. This idea seemed too ambitious to me in the beginning and, later, while criticizing the problems arising from the picture-theory, the central theory of the book, we can see how Wittgenstein fails in this endeavor.

We believe in *TT*’s importance, and this is true for several reasons: First, it claims to respond to the significant problems of philosophy with logical answers. Second, it presents a system of thoughts and provides a core motive for logical positivism.¹ Third, Russell’s “logical

¹ This is a philosophical movement that arose around the 1920s and 30s in Vienna and several centers in Europe, famous for believing that the only pure knowledge is the scientific knowledge, in which the statements are valid under empirical verification. Statements made in the scope of science are authentic and meaningful; on the contrary, those are deemed invalid under empirical verification are meaningless. This view will lead to a kind of reductionism of human knowledge of the world to only those statements of science and, more importantly, to push away all metaphysical propositions from the center of our attention and research.

atomism” has been developed from some of Wittgenstein’s ideas. Finally, it is a crucial step in understanding Wittgenstein’s next period/periods.

- **1.2 Approach to Language**

I believe that Wittgenstein’s orientation toward forming an ideal language is rooted in his background as a philosopher of language. In fact, for a philosopher like him, language has great importance, but the temptation to put all the burdens of the problems of philosophy on the shoulder of language is something that has much room for discussion. Besides, we need to adjust our expectations from language and determine how far it can address our problems. However, for Wittgenstein, language is everything. His idea of the nature of language changes over time; yet, he still believes that language is fertile ground with the potential for exciting discoveries.

Regarding this, I would first like to briefly discuss the role and importance of language in Wittgenstein’s philosophy and then proceed to elaborate on the changes that happened in his approach toward language. For Wittgenstein, language lies at the center of his philosophical attention. Language is essential for knowing and communicating in the world. It is through language that we understand the limits of our world. “The limits of my language mean the limits of my world” (5.6), which means that one’s understanding of the world is limited to the knowledge of one’s language. Language sets a boundary between what is meaningful and what is meaningless. It allows us to speak of facts and to picture these facts. Wittgenstein designed an isomorphism² between the realities of the world and the language. Given that language helps

² “Isomorphism” refers to the identity of form, i.e., two facts can be isomorphic, and this allows one to be used as a propositional sign for the other.

assert or deny facts, we understand the meaning of a sentence, while the definitions of the component words are known to us. The only way a sentence states truth in the world lies in its structure; namely, there should be something in common between the formation of a sentence and the formation of a fact.

Wittgenstein also goes on to further state that “all philosophy is a critique of language” (4.0031). For me, this statement is more likely a dogmatic claim, and what is exciting here is that he finds a companion for himself—“it was Russell who performed the service of showing that the apparent logical form of a proposition need not be its real one” (Ibid.). However, this claim has consequences for Wittgenstein, some of which appeared shortly after the evaluation of the picture-theory.

I am supposed to talk about a change in Wittgenstein’s approach toward language, which more or less comes from a change in his conception of philosophy in general. This change, in my opinion, brings new insights for Wittgenstein and has far-more-than-expected advantages, as we can later see that the theory of language-game works better than the picture-theory in terms of durability and expansion of his philosophy to other scopes. Meanwhile, it puts all his later philosophy at risk of contradicting his early philosophy. What happened in the first period is that he assumed language to be a tool which pictures facts. The task of language, as he claims, is to indicate the boundaries of the world. The immediate conclusion we may draw from this statement is that the metaphysical subject lies outside Wittgenstein’s Tractarian world. In *TT*, he writes:

Thus the book aims to bring a limit to thought, or rather—not to thought, but the expression of thoughts: for to be able to draw a limit to thought, we should have to find both sides of the limit thinkable (i.e., we should have to

be able to think what cannot be thought). It will, therefore, only be in the language that the limits are conceivable, and what lies on the other side will simply be nonsense (Wittgenstein 1961: 3).

Scholars such as John Hyman and Hans Johann Glock have interpreted the way Wittgenstein does philosophy. They believe that Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy changed radically over time (Glock & Hyman 2017: 36). Moreover, Wittgenstein's philosophy involved a sharp distinction between philosophy and science, and the change has always been relevant to his notion of language. One outcome of the change in Wittgenstein's conception of language is the abandonment of the ideas that a sentence sketches a logical picture composed of names, the meaning of a name refers to the object it stands for, and the sensible use of language describes facts. Language is not just a set of grammatical sentences composed of simple names, and the purpose of philosophy is not to clarify the logical form of propositions. The emphasis of new conception lies mostly on the "use of language" rather than going deeper into the structure of language. According to this new understanding, Wittgenstein came to believe that propositions do not have a uniform logical structure, and more importantly, the meaning of a word does not refer to the object it stands for, but they rather refer to their use in the language. Language comprises several "language-games"³ that can be used for various human purposes. However, regardless of Wittgenstein's change in his views on the nature of language, he believed that the purpose of philosophy is clarifying the use of language (a view that considers philosophy as an activity rather than a set of doctrines). Then, he argued that the clarification task of philosophy is neither achievable through the logical analysis of propositions nor by avoiding the

³ I will thoroughly describe the concept of language-game in the second chapter. In concise words, language-games refer to human activities such as speech or writing where we use different ideas. The term 'game' here also reminds us that the use of language is restrained to rules and happens in the context of human life.

misuse of language, instead, it is possible by describing language-games that involve various linguistic, logical, and psychological concepts.

These scholars' interpretations help us gain a clearer image of Wittgenstein's gradual changes in philosophy, and that is why I have mentioned their opinions in this section. Furthermore, I think it is necessary to add that a significant amount of changes happened both in Wittgenstein's view of the philosophy of language, in specific, and in his philosophy, in general. His primary system of thought failed to provide the answers he had expected it would. Thus, there is no way for him but to leave behind his old axioms and think of a new approach, which we have already defined as W2.

- **1.3 Picture-Theory of Meaning**

The first era of Wittgenstein's philosophical thought is mostly characterized by his famous theory about the philosophy of language—"the picture-theory of meaning." Briefly, the picture-theory discusses the conditions required for statements to be meaningful, such as the possibility of defining or picturing real-world facts. Before I begin with providing a detailed description of the theory, it is necessary to first clarify what the term "Bild" or picture means in Wittgenstein's terminology. Contrary to the scholar, David Shawayder (Copi 2017: 305-6), who believes in a single independent meaning of "picture" that is close to something like a *thought*, I think that the only way we can find a definition of a picture is by looking at it in the context. For example, as we know, a proposition is constituted of words but its meaning does not always necessarily reflect the meaning of its constituent parts. Although each word may have a definite

meaning, in the process of making a meaningful proposition using a few words, words may find different meanings, perhaps something completely different from the recognized meaning.

To this end, in my opinion, Shawayder's interpretation of "picture" is good enough in giving a new sense to the term in hand; however, it still requires a broader view to look only for a single definite meaning of a picture. He intends to clarify that a picture, in the context of Wittgenstein, is not something decorative that we can put into a frame and hang it somewhere on the wall to make a room in the apartment more pleasant. A picture is a "thought which may be expressed by hanging the picture upon the wall." Moreover, the picture-theory could be an alternative to theories claiming that when we express a statement, what we do is refer to or name something. Therefore, one achievement of the theory is enabling Wittgenstein to resolve the traditional problems arising from the "name theory of propositional meaning"—the "problems over falsehood and negation and the unity of the proposition and how we understand new senses without new convention" (Copi 2017: 305). Hence, the term "picture" for Wittgenstein is unlike what we have known in the ordinary language.

From my understanding, a picture illustrates a common logical form between a proposition and its referent. A proposition could have a picture if it is formulated in a way that refers to a state of affairs. A common logical relation between a proposition and a state of affairs is the necessary condition of the meaningfulness of the proposition. If this condition is not met, the proposition and its referent will not be of the same type, as a word/name from which a proposition derived is linguistic in nature; however, a state of affairs has a physical nature. Inevitably, the picture represents an isomorphism between the logical structure of a proposition and its referent. This conformity is related to the logical structure of the state of affairs. Therefore, to distinguish between what might be the state of affairs and what is the state of

affairs is very important since, in *TT*, only those propositions that refer to an existing state of affairs are meaningful. For instance, let us consider this proposition: “There is a dog on the table.” This proposition is meaningful only if it can paint a picture of the relationship between what we consider “being a dog” and “being a table” in the outer world. In other words, there should be a possible state of affairs in which we can talk about a dog and a table.

Now, it is time to focus on my previous claim that we need to understand the meaning occurring in a particular context. For this, I will take a look at *TT*'s second basic proposition, where Wittgenstein compares a proposition with a picture. He writes:

- We picture facts to ourselves. (2.1)
- A picture presents a situation in logical space, the existence, and non-existence of states of affairs. (2.11)
- A picture is a model of reality. (2.12)
- In a picture, objects have the elements of the picture corresponding to them. (2.13)
- In a picture, the elements of the picture are the representatives of objects. (2.131)

Picturing facts to ourselves is a mental state (remember Shwayder), but since a picture represents reality and reality consists of objects, the elements of picture correspond to objects and consequently, express them. We know objects can have uncommon combinations and relations—this inevitably leads to the creation of various pictures— and as a result, the context in which the objects exist matters.

To clarify the role of context and how a change in elements could create differentiation in terms of meaning, I consider another example: “The book is on the table.” Here, both “book” and “table” refer to an object, and the phrase “on the” indicates the relationship between the objects, as when we put all these words on a piece of paper, they represent a particular order of

corresponding objects—they represent a specific state of affairs in the world. If we arrange the words differently, the resulting proposition will represent a different state of affairs, i.e. the state of affairs represented by “the book is on the table” is different from that of “the table is on the book.”⁴

According to my perspective, besides the role of context, there are other aspects of the theory that require more attention. The first aspect is that the picture-theory separates what is meaningful from what is meaningless. For this reason, in the following section, I will talk about the separation of sense from nonsense. In addition, there is no way of understanding how the mechanism of the theory works unless we know its structure. The theory includes two kinds of propositions—elementary and complex—and the conditions of meaningfulness of propositions; therefore, the description of both will be helpful for our end.

After that, I will discuss some deficiencies of the theory, which will help us develop the next chapter.

- **1.3.1 Sense and Nonsense**

As per our knowledge, this section chart the beginning of difficulties in Wittgenstein’s philosophy. I think Wittgenstein’s division of sense and nonsense is meant to draw a distinctive line between science and metaphysics, which helps him clarify the scope of his theory. Maybe he did not intend this, but I can see this division creates a radical gap between what is within our experience and what is not. One outcome is to inevitably put metaphysics aside. Let me first

⁴ For the discussion of this point, see Mounce. *Wittgenstein’s Tractatus an Introduction*. 35–38.

describe what is going on in terms of sense and nonsense, and in the last section of this chapter, I discuss the consequences.

In *TT*, Wittgenstein offers a criterion with the help of which one can determine the meaning of propositions. According to this criterion, to distinguish between what is meaningful and what is meaningless, we must set a boundary between the two. We shift our attention again to *TT*'s first propositions, according to which "the world is the totality of facts" and facts are the combinations of objects (which are simple in Tractarian sense) in the world. For example, we may find a number of things around us like a book on the table or a tree next to a flower or a butterfly in the garden. The user of a language can make unique propositions using words corresponding to the things in the world. If that proposition relates to a possible state of affairs a way that we can rephrase it in logic, that proposition is meaningful. Referring to *TT*, as the combination of objects together makes up the state of affairs, the combination of names makes up a proposition, which is the smallest unit of meaning. To describe the limits of meaning, Wittgenstein uses the conception of picturing. For example, from common sense, we can grasp the meaning of a painting—a boat trapped in the stormy sea—directly and non-deductively such that we do not need to refer to other images to understand its meaning, and since multiple components of a picture can be combined in a certain way; as a result, one can grasp its meaning quickly. The same thing is true for the elements of a proposition. The users of a language understand the meaning of a picture as they understand the meaning of a proposition made up of various components, provided the proposition relates to a possible state of affairs in the world. Accordingly, one can explain the truth and falsity of a proposition keeping in mind that if the structure of the proposition is consistent with the actual construction of objects (not the possible ones), the proposition is true; otherwise, it is false.

A real example of what I have stated above can be found in *Notebooks, 1914–1916* (Wittgenstein 1961: 5–26), where Wittgenstein emphasizes the actual and existent connexion between propositions and the components of a situation (objects). “The connexion must be possible” means that “The proposition and the components of the situation must stand in a particular relation” (26e) Then, he adds how a proposition can be meaningful: “Then for a proposition to present a situation, it is only necessary for its parts to represent those of situation and for the former to stand in a connexion which is possible for the latter” (27e).

I think this approach enables Wittgenstein to find a legitimate reason to discard the propositions of metaphysics and consider them as nonsense. Such propositions do not represent the real connexion with the state of affairs in the world, and they are inevitably neither true nor false. However, I do not see Wittgenstein’s division of sense and nonsense to be compelling enough; instead of providing a solution, it simply removes the possibility of further exploration regarding metaphysical propositions.

- **1.3.2 Elementary and Complex Propositions**

I have already talked about the importance and the function of the base of Wittgenstein’s theory. This base primarily consists of two types of propositions—elementary and complex propositions. Elementary and complex propositions have one thing in common; both of them are composed of an atomic part or parts, and the difference lies in the number. An elementary proposition, as the name suggests, is the most straightforward kind of propositions; so, it necessarily must be composed of one atomic part. Since it is composed of only one part, it is simple. On the other hand, complex propositions are composed of several atomic parts. Due to

the increase in the number of parts more combinations of constituents emerge. Thereupon, depending on the position of each part and whether the proposition consists of a single atomic or many parts, the truth conditions may vary.

According to my analysis, Wittgenstein's attention to elementary propositions derives from his investigation of Russell's logical atomism, where he, for the first time, conjectures that language in specific and the world, in general, is made of simple logical things. In language terminology, we call these simple things "names" and in the world "objects." A name is a simple symbol used in a proposition, and corresponding to any name, there is an object/subject. These objects/subjects are the elementary constituents of the world, which make up the essence and the truth of the world, such that they cannot be composite. For Wittgenstein, a name is not solely a picture of reality but rather a combination of names that represents reality. In *TT*, he searches for the foundations of language, which, in his opinion, is the proposition. He assumes that thinking is a kind of language since thought is a logical picture of a sentence, but actually, it is a proposition—"A thought is a proposition with a sense" (4). Therefore, it would be fair to say that one of the most essential missions to which Wittgenstein committed himself to accomplish in *TT* is to explore the nature of propositions, with the elementary proposition being the priority.

Regarding the last point, Hudson (1975: 22–44) has also shared some of his views, which could be illuminating for our purpose. In his opinion, Wittgenstein's condition for any meaningful language is that it must be, in the final analysis, reducible to elementary propositions. To understand this, let us consider this sentence: "The car is in the garage"; here, the car is general and could indicate various referents. Therefore, the meaning of this sentence would not be apparent unless we know what kind of car and in which garage the speaker is referring to. To understand the meaning of the speaker and avoid ambiguity, it is, thus, necessary to reduce

complex propositions into elementary ones. This reduction unveils the meaning of “elementary propositions are ‘concatenation of names’” (4.22). Also, the importance of elementary propositions is not limited to philosophy; it also contributes to the development of computers that operates based on the logic of mathematics, i.e., the binary numeral system.

On the other hand, in the final analysis, the world or reality must also be reducible to “simple objects.” These objects are simple in the sense that the only way we can use them is by naming them in language, which means that we cannot describe simple objects since the description of objects is only possible if they can be reducible to components. For example, molecules can break down into atoms and the intrinsic properties of things such as a table can be identified. In other words, if there is a meaning that is the same as the referent and that meaning is clear, then to have any meaning at all, there must be such simple objects that language can refer to. Thus, the language by itself must be ultimately reducible to propositions, which they describe nothing but name things. Moreover, the world that the language refers to must, in the final analysis, consist of things that can only be named, not described—it must be composed of simple objects.

However, I think Hudson missed one crucial point: Although Wittgenstein’s theory requires determining the conception of the elementary propositions in language and simple objects in the world, the definition of these conceptions is supposed to work out on the conditions of picture-theory, in which he looks to clarify the range where a proposition is meaningful. Like any other well-designed theory, which necessarily has a central core, Wittgenstein’s theory is also formed on the conception of an elementary proposition to proceed with building an argument on it.

- **1.3.3 The Conditions of Picture-Theory**

As explained in the preceding sections, there is a specific condition for Wittgenstein with the help of which he separates meaningful propositions from meaningless propositions. These conditions also enable him to circumscribe the scope of his theory.

According to Wittgenstein, for a proposition to be a logical representation of a fact, it must fulfill three conditions.

First, the components of the proposition must correspond to the elements of the state of affairs—“In a proposition, there must be exactly as many distinct parts as in the situation that it represents. The two must possess the same logical (mathematical) multiplicity” (4.04). As noted, to attain a meaningful proposition, the proposition, in the final analysis, must be reducible to components—it must be composed of names that refer to objects.

A proposition, which is composed of names, can picture a fact, which is composed of atomic facts, only if for every name in the proposition, there is a corresponding object and vice versa. For example, if we paint a glass and a jar on a tray in our painting, there should be the elements of shape and the pictures of the glass, the jar, and the tray (Hudson 1968: 9–18).

The second is the configuration of a proposition—“structure” and “form” must correspond to the state of affairs’ configuration, as he writes, “The configuration of objects in a situation corresponds to the configuration of simple signs in the propositional sign” (3.21). We should also note that just a list of names cannot represent a state of affairs—“only facts can express a sense, a list of names cannot” (3.142).

Third, the proposition must correlate with the situation it represents—“a proposition is a propositional sign in its projective relation to the world” (3.12). To better understand

Wittgenstein's point, we need to know the difference between a proposition and a propositional sign. A propositional sign is a written/spoken statement that describes a proposition; for instance, "there is a dog on the carpet" is a propositional sign composed of seven words. However, a proposition is not merely a combination of words but is composed of words that express the proposition. Therefore, Wittgenstein's third condition is about understanding reality, which only happens when the components of a propositional sign are connected to the elements of the fact they represent. These signs—while such a link is connected—become propositional signs.

So far, I have discussed the structure and the purpose of the picture-theory. After all, the following question might pop up in one's mind: To what extent can the picture-theory defend its claims? The best approach is to look at some actual issues of the theory. In the following section, I will provide a summary of several related critical issues.

- **1.4 The Limitations of Picture-Theory**

Although there are staunch criticisms regarding the picture-theory, the one made by Malcolm on the limited function of the picture-theory and its weakness in defending the basic premise—elementary proposition: "The real criticism of Wittgenstein's theory lies on what is called "disregarding metaphysics" (Malcom 1993: 34–35).

The first issue appears in dealing with descriptive propositions, which can hardly be imagined as the picture of a fact. For example, "Mr. X apologized for what he did" is mostly a description of what happened than picturing a fact in a Tractarian sense. We can find many of these propositions used by people in an ordinary language; thus, it would be fair to say that the picture-theory is not comprehensive.

The second issue is that the theory cannot defend the conception of “an elementary proposition.” In *TT*, Wittgenstein acknowledges that a sentence is a picture of a fact and the process of “analysis” can prove this. For example, if the statement—“He apologized for what he did”—is in itself not an elementary proposition, we can analyze it as a truth-function of elementary propositions, which consist of simple signs (names). The “complete analysis” of a proposition will then lead to a reciprocal relationship between the simple signs and the simple objects. Finally, the exact meaning of a proposition appears when the final analysis demonstrates its elementary propositions, which consist of a definite and exact number of simple signs. However, the picture-theory assumes that there is a criterion with the help of which the logical analysis determines whether a given proposition is an elementary proposition or a truth-function of elementary propositions, but is this analysis possible? Later, Wittgenstein acknowledges that he does not have any such systematic method in hand to recognize the elementary proposition. Therefore, in the absence of such a criterion, the underlying assumption of the picture-theory is undermined and the idea that every meaningful proposition is a picture has no clear meaning.

The last issue, which is my claim, also is about the fact that the picture-theory disregards metaphysics. Referring to two propositions in *TT*, we can form the following argument: The limit of our world is determined by the limits of our language (5.6). The logical limit of language lies in what is sayable or thinkable. Therefore, language cannot go beyond reality or cannot picture anything that might be beyond it. This assumption simply removes metaphysics and ethics from our discussion since the propositions related to these subjects stand outside the limits of language and become nonsense.

Due to the above-listed reasons, I think picture-theory is not only comprehensive and capable of solving significant problems but also disregards the propositions concerning

metaphysics, ethics, and similar areas that claim to appear by the misuse of the logic of language in philosophy. These issues, along with some others, made Wittgenstein think about transitioning from W1 to W2, which is a reaction and response to his early thoughts.

Chapter 2 – Investigating Language-Games

- **2.1 Transition from *TT***

In this section, I briefly compare and contrast *TT* and *PI* to demonstrate what changes happened in later Wittgenstein's way of doing philosophy and why his later philosophy deserves to be considered altogether a separate era. It seems that the reasons behind these changes mostly could derive from evaluating the results of his early philosophy on defending his claims during that period. Let us break down these changes into seven parts and describe each of them.

- 1) Wittgenstein leaves behind the idea that philosophy is a theoretical doctrine
- 2) The rejection of the “essence of language”: A common thing to all language-games
- 3) The realization that the theory of language is too abstract and disconnected from real life
- 4) Moving from the idea that language constructs of our knowledge of the world
- 5) Turn from assuming picturing as the most critical function of language
- 6) Attention to ordinary language.
- 7) Change in writing style.

In W2,

1) Wittgenstein leaves behind the idea that philosophy is a theoretical doctrine: This is the first and foremost reason that made Wittgenstein think of turning his view of philosophy in general. If the picture-theory does not adequately address our concerns regarding the main problems in philosophy, there must undoubtedly be a mistake in the theory. To find the source of

this mistake, Wittgenstein goes all the way back to the first point—evaluating his general view of philosophy. Subsequently, he came up with the idea that philosophy is not all about theoretical doctrines whose limits could be explored only by using the rules of logic and mathematic. This main change in Wittgenstein’s orientation toward philosophy leads to the emergence of more detailed changes in aspects such as method and philosophical assumptions, which have been described in the following section. In addition, the closed and limited realm of the picture-theory, which is formed based on the assumption that philosophy is a theoretical doctrine, will eliminate the chance of investigating what is not necessarily theoretical and could lead to a self-contradictory theory or system. Therefore, W1 has to end up saying that the whole *TT* is nonsense. From my perspective, every well-designed and complex system of ideas with a central core that authenticates the whole system and determines the ratio and relations of other constituent parts (which regarding W1 is the picture-theory) has the potential to create antithesis within itself since it anyhow is limited to a predictable range and inevitably overlooks some aspects.⁵

2) Rejection of a common factor for language: After a turn toward philosophy in general, the next step for Wittgenstein is to reconsider his opinion about language being the basis of theorizing. The kind of language that Wittgenstein has looked for in W1 is an ideal logical language that would reasonably clarify the things in the world. Since language is constituted of words and propositions, Wittgenstein’s early assumption relates to the use of the rules of logic for investigating the limits of language. We have already discussed how his logical view of language ends up not being comprehensive and also regarding the appearance of some new

⁵ The idea introduced here derives from a theory presented by Kurt Gödel on sets in mathematics and is further developed by Alfred Tarski in the field of logic.

problems. Hence, Wittgenstein's next reaction is to deny any source of the essence—we defined it here as a common factor for language—with which we can talk about a common rule or factor in language. According to my investigation, this denial first occurs in §65, where Wittgenstein reacts to a question regarding the essence of language-games:

“Here we come up against the great question that lies behind all these considerations.—for someone might object against me: ‘You take the easy way out! You talk about all sorts of language-games but have nowhere said what the essence of a language-game, and hence of language, is: what is common to all these activities, and what makes them into language or parts of the language. So you let yourself off the very part of the investigation that once gave you yourself the most headache, the part about the general form of propositions and language.’”

In response, he denies the essence of language with the following statements:

“And this is true—Instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all— but that they are related to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship or these relationships that we call them all ‘language’. I will try to explain this” (Ibid.).

Here, Wittgenstein states that we cannot imply any essence for both language and language-games. Moreover, we cannot assume a common thing for all language-games or define its limits since, in language, we do several unrelated activities; for example, we compare, we describe, we insult, we command, we say statements corresponding to truth, and so on. These activities have nothing in common, but the collection of all these is called a language. Language is like a tool, whose use, depending on the context, differs. Users of a language play a vital role in the genesis of the words' meanings; therefore, the use of words in the context matters.

3) The realization that picture-theory is not associated with people's real lives: This idea becomes more significant when Wittgenstein recognizes that *TT*'s attempt to look for a common determining factor in language has nothing to do with the existing linguistic facts (§107–§108). In fact, according to later Wittgenstein, language is a social fact available to all; it is not an

essence whose nature is achievable by mental reasoning. Language as a human activity in the social frame is complex and therefore, not explainable by means of a simple pattern.

Wittgenstein recommends that we move our attention from “explanation” to “description,” instead of looking for meaning at the very base of logical arguments; we should better consider their practical function in life. The picture-theory is more likely to be a simplification of language, and the nature of language is not as accessible and straightforward as it has been assumed in *TT*. In addition, to clarify the mechanism of our world knowledge, *TT* aimed to connect a link between our theoretical and experimental realms. In W1, Wittgenstein’s theory is too abstract to make such a connection with the outside world possible.

4) Leaving the idea that language is a tool that forms the structure of our knowledge of the world, and there is a mechanism to this knowledge: The logical analysis helps us understand the function and how this mechanism works. We can see that W2 denotes Wittgenstein’s move from logic as the center of his philosophical attention to a different realm of ordinary language. Like other transitions in philosophy, changes in W2 happen in principles that automatically lead to change both in cognitive tools and the system of thought. Therefore, in W2, we do not see a compact arrangement of views that aim to explain the things. I agree with Wittgenstein on the fact that the mission after W1 would be then to give a compelling description of facts. Similar to W1, language is at the center of the investigation in W2, but this time, it is an actual language that people use in their everyday conversations. Since ordinary language involves a bigger realm, Wittgenstein’s theory becomes more flexible and more associated with facts.

5) Turn in the view of the function and features of language: In W1, Wittgenstein pays too much attention to the picturing feature. Since the picture-theory is formed only based on this feature, it fails to produce any acceptable answer as some other essential aspects have been

neglected. Later, he notices that besides the primary picturing function of language; there are other aspects, i.e., “use of language,” which may play a more critical role in shaping our knowledge of facts.

The introduction of the language-game in *W2* is meant to expand the scope of language. What we learn from this novel approach is that language includes various games; it has different uses, and the so-called task we know as a picturing fact is just one among all the other functions. Language-games and “forms of life” are related to each other, and understanding a language-game depends on understanding or participating in corresponding life form/forms.

6) Attention to ordinary language as a basis of finding responses regarding our philosophical inquiries: The emphasis of *W1* is on theoretical language that has the potentials to be investigated and evaluated by the principles of logic and mathematics, while in *W2*, the focus is on the ordinary language people use in their everyday conversations. It is evident that many common rules are not followed in ordinary language, and therefore, there will not be a mechanism anymore through which the process of logical analysis to find the elementary propositions can be followed. As a result, the emphasis on logic gives way to “ordinary language” being the center of Wittgenstein’s philosophical attention.

7) When it comes to writing style, we can see some apparent differences between *TT* and *PI*: For instance, *TT* is a compact logical book, containing several short propositions that are somehow related to one another for building a more extensive logical theory. On the contrary, the sections in *PI* are not arranged to constitute a unique theory. Moreover, in this book, we can see an epigrammatic style of writing with frequent paradoxical statements.

After taking all these changes into account, I think the best term to describe the move from early to later Wittgenstein is “transition” since the picture we can illustrate regarding later Wittgenstein is a kind of evolution into something completely different in nature. Considering the transformation of ideas, we could assume W2 as a move from early thoughts.

Overall, the outcome of the transition is a more flexible theory and a philosophy that is more associated with people’s actual life. The primary book used in this chapter is *PI*, and I have discussed the different aspects of language-game as the chief representative of this book to see whether W2 can be considered an anti-thesis of W1.

- **2.2 Language-Game**

From my understanding, language-game concentrates primarily on the use of language. As discussed in Chapter 1, the conventional meaning of language introduced in W1 is more like a collection of gathered symbols in linear sentences, and the rules governing this kind of language are those we know from logic. The concept of language-game, which is at the center of attention right from the few first lines of *PI*, considers language to be the foundation of understanding and emphasizes the use of language; language-game forms the core element of later Wittgenstein’s linguistic theory.⁶ In W2, Wittgenstein rejects the picture-theory, which is entirely based on scientific language and whose only task is limited to picturing world facts. Then, he perceives language as a social activity in that each of its use has a specific meaning and

⁶ The reason I am taking language-game here as the core element of later Wittgenstein is that the method developed in W2 also meets the criteria to be considered as a well-designed system with an adequate number of elements. A coherent system with a core element has the potential to produce intra-structural antithesis within itself.

purpose. Wittgenstein calls each particular function of language a language-game. Given the importance of the theory, from the second paragraph of *PI*, Wittgenstein, with a clear and detailed definition of game, language, and language-game, tries to elaborate his meaning of the use of language, and the practical aspect of words. In §3, he gives two definitions for the term “game”: The first one focuses on conventional interpretations, such as to move objects on a surface according to specific rules—“a game consists of moving objects about on a surface according to certain rules”—but immediately accepts that there are other games that require a different definition—“You seem to be thinking of board games, but there are others. You can make your definition correct by expressly restricting it to those games” (Ibid.). The second definition appears in §7 and §8, where he considers language-games as games used in training children. For example, the teacher points to an object and when the children’s attention is directed at the object, he (while pointing to that shape) utters the word “slap.” Other instances such as a word game between a builder and his assistant or handwriting indicate the practice and the use of words in the language.

Wittgenstein believed in the notion that there is just one kind of meaning for a word, disregarding the function of language; it actually, like a haze, blurs an accurate and clear understanding. When we turn our focus toward the functional usage of language, the fog disperses; then, we can study the phenomenon of language in primitive kinds of applications wherein one can clearly understand the use and the purpose of words (§5). Therefore, the importance of language-game in Wittgenstein’s account relates to the extent he believes philosophy involves examining the various uses of language-games, and by language-games, he means various uses of language.

Contrary to *TT* where Wittgenstein was looking for an absolute criterion of language, in *PI*, he first starts by denying his previous views and then defines multiple criteria. He believes there are various kinds and uses of games and language-games, so we cannot assume a general definition that applies to all games.

The importance of language-game lies in the extent to which, whenever a disorder or break happens in a language-game, it affects one's comprehension. That is why in §22 referring to Frege, he emphasizes the importance of language-game in understanding and assertion, and immediately after, in the next paragraph of §23, he confirms there are countless kinds of uses of "symbols," "words," and "sentences." Accordingly, when it comes to language-games, we can see unfamiliar types of language that represent a unique version of the use of language, and therefore, the previous logically perfect version of a language is rendered obsolete.

I think the "emergence of antithesis" in W2 will become more acceptable if we pay attention to this point that, contrary to *TT*, where Wittgenstein assumes language as a unified thing, in *PI*, he considers language not as united and coherent anymore, and the reason why he called all the various kinds of activities language-games is that each represents one aspect of life. Now, if we want to understand the concept of "world" according to various linguistic forms and their applications, we will encounter different language-games followed by many types of words and propositions. Hence, he asserts that the concept of "game" in a language is, in fact, a concept with blurred edges (§71).

To verify what is mentioned above in §69, Wittgenstein describes a challenge regarding the definition of "game." The problem lies in how we can explain to someone what the game really is. He responds by stating that we may describe *games* to him; for example, by saying

“this *and similar things* called ‘games’.” Next, he asks whether we can do or we know anything else. His response is that our lack of accurate knowledge of language-game is not due to our “ignorance” but since we are not aware of the boundaries. The boundaries have not even been drawn, and even if we could draw a boundary at all, other than a specific purpose, we cannot apply it to other activities. Therefore, we cannot set perfect criteria that apply to various kinds of language-games.

I am very much inclined to think that the point of Wittgenstein’s language-game is not to regulate and formulate language, it is an approach toward the natural function of language. Hence, in §130, he writes that language-games do not provide preparatory studies for the future regularization of language; instead, they shed light on the facts related to our language, not only through similarities but also through dissimilarities.

Besides, understanding the concept of language-game is not possible unless we investigate its meaning in a broader context by considering more existing factors. Since language is related to people and people are the leading players of language, it is reasonable to assume that an indefinite number of language-games are connected to people’s ”form of life.” Once again, according to Wittgenstein, the purpose of language-game is to explain, not to determine things. One should not ask whether these games are reasonable; instead, one should try to find a meticulous way to describe them. Moreover, we also need to bear in mind that introducing the human into our philosophical system will inevitably lead to the creation of unpredictable patterns. That is why we can argue that language-game is also not predictable, as it does not form on an abstract logical basis—it is just out there, like our lives.

In the next few sections, I will briefly explain other factors associated with the conception of language-game. I will first implement descriptive writing; then, I will present an evaluative position at the end of the chapter.

- **2.2.1 Meaning in Use**

This time, the method presented in language-game is broader in scope. To understand the meaning of a word, we do not look at its position in a proposition; the theory provides us with an alternative: The definition of a word is dependent on language-game. For this, we need to understand the role a word plays in people's communities of speech. Therefore, the meaning of a word is not something we search for regardless of the other existing factors; it becomes apparent when that word is used in a particular language. Accordingly, in §43, Wittgenstein confirms that the meaning of a word lies in its use in the language.

For Wittgenstein, the question—"What is a word really?"—is comparable to asking—"What is a piece in chess?" (§108). This analogy between a word and a piece in chess is meant to indicate that just knowing the name of a piece or even its characteristic features is not enough to tell what the piece is. We realize the role of that piece only during the game. Thus, the meaning of a word becomes apparent when it is used in a context. We can know a pawn or a rook through the rules governing the game of chess. What makes a knight a distinctive piece are the rules that determine its position and function in the game. Similarly, the meaning of words will also become apparent according to the rules that determine their role and use in a conversation.

We find another exemplary example in §11, where the words are compared to the tools in a toolbox. Knowing only the name of a particular tool will not make it a tool in our hands, it is the use of the tool will. This analogy reveals some of the neglected aspects of language.

To better illustrate the role of usage in forming the meaning of a word, Wittgenstein offers this fine example: What is the difference between the report—“Five slabs”—and the order—“Five slabs!”—in a language-game where A asks and B reports? One might think that the difference lies in the speaker’s tone of voice or the way words are uttered. What if both the tones are the same? Could we utter a report or an order in various tones of voice? Then how is it possible to distinguish the two? He suggests that the difference is only in their usage (§21). Considering this, we can tell, although “is” in “The rose is red” is the same as “is” in “Twice of two is four,” but each carries a different meaning: The former is used as a copula, and the latter as a sign of equality. We can understand this from the unique kind of usage of “is” in each sentence (§558, §561).

Thus far, I have discussed the definition and the importance of language-game, along with Wittgenstein’s new definition of the meaning in use. Now, it is time to discuss the link connecting language-game to various aspects of real-life—“form of life.” It is a concept that helps us see the function language in a broader context and is associated with people’s lifestyles and cultures. Moreover, it is a turning point where we can see how Wittgenstein’s new linguistic approach distances itself from W1, where the written form of language was at the center of attention.

- **2.2.2 Form of Life**

In W1, language has found a novel task—picturing facts. Language, which is only considered as the mirror of external facts, is now a part of human life. For Wittgenstein, the analogy of the function of language to a game does not make it seem insignificant; instead, it

connects a link between speaking a language and other non-linguistic activities. Language reflects the novel forms of life of individuals in society and is extremely social in nature, and speaking a language is the first step in entering communal activities. Language is a way of living in a society or even a way of life. When we imagine a language, we imagine a form of life (§19) since speaking a language is, in fact, a part of an activity or a form of life (§23).

Accordingly, it would be fair to say that diversity in language also indicates the difference in people's forms of life. Therefore, words find different meanings in various forms of life; common words will have different functions in different language-games, and only the people who have lived a particular form of life can grasp its real meaning. In Wittgenstein's opinion, even if a lion could talk, we would not be able to understand him (225). For example, imagine a lion without looking at the clock and saying, "It is 3 o'clock now." If the lion says this at precisely 3 o'clock, we interpret it as only the coincidence of two unrelated occurrences simultaneously. We would not be able to tell that the lion informed us that the time is 3 o'clock. Even if he points to something or advises us of something; we won't know what it said, as his form of life is entirely different from ours, and forms of life are interwoven with the use of words.

In my opinion, one advantage of a "form of life" is that it does not assume language as just an in-text fact. Wittgenstein believes that if we assume language to be internal, we close the doors on the opportunity to teach language to others. Since meaning lies in the mind, the theories of meaning are introverted. We refer a word to a mental concept, and that concept corresponds to a fact. What happens here is that we provide that concept with a mental existence, which means we suppose that meaning is internal.

On the contrary, Wittgenstein believes that if we assume meaning to be internal, not universally available, we will end up being caught in skepticism. Wittgenstein's claim could be presented as follows: If we suppose meaning as internal, we can neither learn language nor interact and understand each other; however, since we communicate and understand each other, it would be correct to assert that meaning is not just mental and internal, rather it is social. Wittgenstein uses the outcome of this argument to conclude that meaning lies in the use of words, and that the use requires a rule, and we learn that rule in our linguistic community.

- **2.2.3 Family Resemblance**

The unconventional kinds of language-games raise the following questions: What is common to all games? What are the criteria of a language-game? Wittgenstein's response to these questions is quite simple and clear: There is no one particular necessary condition, and the only way we can call them language-games is through "family resemblance." For example, among the family members, one cannot point to one common thing and consider that a factor of similarity. Brother A has a nose that is similar to brother B, and brother B's eyes are identical to brother C's. Each has something similar to another, but everyone does not have one common similarity. Thus, only by considering all the similarities, we can assume that they belong to the same family.

Wittgenstein believes that the best expression capture the characterization of similarities, such as the color of eyes, gait, build, features, temperament, etc., among family members, is known as "family resemblance." These similarities overlap and crisscross in the same way (§67).

Language-games are mostly the same, and since the borderline to determining a language-game is not distinct, they are an indefinite number of language-games. One cannot point to one factor in all games and consider it common to among all. For instance, between somebody stopping you by saying, “No admittance,” a board with printed words of “No admittance,” and a policeman warning you to stop by holding up his arm, there is only family resemblance (Hartnack 2006: 59).

Thus, according to family resemblance, there is not a single feature that is common to all language-games. So, we cannot say, for example, features, such as “amusing,” can be found just by being played by two players of board-game, ball-game, etc. What we see in different games is a complex network of overlapping and crisscrossing similarities, which are sometimes overall similarities and sometimes similarities in details (§66).

Likewise, there is no one necessary condition to be fulfilled for language-games. Moreover, the diversity of language-games does not necessarily mean that some games such as “no admittance” are homonyms and have independent meanings, the term “game” here is an expression used to define “family resemblance.”

I think Wittgenstein’s theory of family resemblance creates a tension here: If there is not anything common to games, then we cannot call them language-games. His only reaction is to emphasize the point that we will not find anything common among the games, and he leaves us with the task to find any. In §66, he writes the following:

“...don’t say: ‘There must be something common, or they would not be called “games”’—but look and see whether there is anything common to all.—for if you look at them, you will not see something common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that...”

- **2.2.4 Rules of the Game**

After the analogy relating language to a game, Wittgenstein moves on to discuss the rules of various games. He confirms that the rules of games are different from one another, and thus, it is not possible to apply the rule of one game to another; a game in itself is a family resemblance. For example, in football, players are not allowed to touch the ball by hand, but in volleyball, touching the ball by hand is the central part of the game. In the same way, there are no universal rules for language-games; each language-game has a particular rule that cannot be applied to others. Thus, as in the case of family resemblance, we do not see a common feature for language-game—no standard rule applies to all. Language-games, like games, are not dominated by general rules, as games do not necessarily need an external goal; they can be autonomous activities (Kenny 2006: 129). Therefore, there is no universal rule that governs all language-games, each game has its own particular set of rules.

Another question that may pop up in one's mind while reading Wittgenstein's theory is about the origin of rules. Do we know how rules formulated or if we could think of any source of origin at all? However, Wittgenstein's response to this question is disappointing and opens up room for criticism. I will discuss a few aspects of the theory in the next section. He says that there is not a rule outside a game; the agreement and the behavior of involving people in the game determine the rules. Precisely, the way of using rules clarifies their meaning.

The same thing goes for language-games: What gives a rule its meaning relates to what we say and do in real-life. The above-mentioned statement leads us to conclude that no universal rule governs all games. People outside the game do not, in prior, determine the rules; rules are posterior and are discovered by the way they are used. The behavior and the decision of

participants of a game regulate a rule. Hence, instead of saying we find an agreement in a language-game because we follow the rules, it is better to say that our agreement determines the meaning of rules. Rather than saying we are subjected to logical and mathematical rules, we must say our actions set the rules.

The ideas presented above prompt a few conclusions: First, each game has its own set of rules, and the rules of one game cannot be a basis for other games; second, the rules, as already mentioned, derive from the agreement of participants, so we could never go beyond a language-game to judge its correctness with a second-class meta-linguistic attitude of an outside perspective.

- **2.3 Consequences of Language-Game**

In this section, before I proceed with criticism of the concept of language-game, I would like to bring two significant consequences derived from the theory into focus:

- **2.3.1 Turn in the Nature of Philosophy**

As it is clear from the title, the first and foremost consequence is about the turn that happened in Wittgenstein's view of the nature of philosophy in W2. Reviewing some aspects of W1 and W2 might help gain a general understanding of the common and uncommon features in mind:

1. In the picture-theory, a meaningful word is the name of something, whereas, in language-game, the word is not a name. We can use a word in the sense that it is a name; we can also use it in many other permissible ways.
2. According to the picture-theory, the principal task of language is to picture facts, but language-game considers this task just as one of many functions of language.
3. There is only one type of language in W1 (picturing facts), but in W2, we have different kinds of language-games, along with a countless number of language-games.
4. A proposition in the picture-theory might be true or false, but in language-game, there is no specific standard to judge the correctness of a proposition; we either understand the meaning of a proposition, or we do not. The task of a philosopher is not to correct the propositions but to understand them.
5. Language in the picture-theory is more like a simple diagram to help us picture the world, but in language-game, it is a social activity that constitutes a “form of life.” All our activities formed while using language and learning a language entails taking part in a network of social activities that reflect the form of life. In this sense, learning a language means becoming acculturated (McGinn 1997:58–9).
6. In W1, the limits of language determine the limits of one’s world, but in W2, there is no limit to be set on language.

- **2.3.2 Rejection of General Criteria**

Regarding language-game, speaking of a universal rule that governs all games from a perspective beyond all languages is meaningless. As discussed in the previous section, we now know that the use of words determines their meanings, and each type of speech occurs in the

context of one language-game, which has its own rules. There are various kinds of language-games, and to judge a language in general, there is no point to look outside language-games. Therefore, thinking is only possible in the context of language-games, and outside the limits of language-games, no general or universal rule enables us to determine their truth or falsity, as what we know as the rule of a game is derived from the agreement and behavior of individuals, not anything else.

In addition, we think that everything within the boundaries of language and nothing beyond its limits is thinkable or imaginable for us. We see the world through the perspective of language, and the rules governing language determine the boundaries of this perception. So, our thoughts form according to our language, and thus, we cannot have a thought without language. In this interpretation, language comes before thought and acts as a priori condition of thinking. As a result, our thought structure is dependent on the structure of our language and its rules.

Besides, even the criteria for evaluating propositions—judging their truth or falsity—are dependent on individuals' agreement. This agreement depends on the forms of life. These rules are not a priori and are disconnected from our cultural lifestyles, but they are connected to our choices and lifestyles.

“So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?—It is what human beings *say* that is true and false, and they agree [with] the *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but the form of life” (§241).

- **2.4 Some Negotiable Aspects of Language-Game**

As per my analysis, the concept of a language-game generates some negotiable aspects. One key point in understanding these aspects of language-game is that it is too relativist and does not offer a precise and exact response to many of our concerns. On the one hand, W2 presents a more comprehensive theory of language; on the other hand, the excessive relativity of the theory raises a few challenging aspects that are presented in the following examples:

1. Wittgenstein considers the number of language-games to be unlimited, but he is not clear about what factor helps us distinguish between one language-game from another. In other words, the borderline between the end of one game and the beginning of another is not clear. A question comes to the mind: Is the difference between the language-game of romantic poetry and the language-game of prose not really distinguishable? Some statements prove his acknowledgment of the lack of boundaries in language-games: “We do not know the boundaries because none have been drawn” (§69).
2. According to language-games, no society or group has the right to criticize each other, as each game has its own set of rules, and each group or community set their own rules for using a language. Just as one cannot talk about or criticize the rules of one game based on the rules of another, no individual or group can criticize another based on their unique way of using language since the similarities in language are like the similarities in family resemblance—there is no common factor through which one can criticize the other.
3. Language-game reinforces the possibility that to a number of people, there is a specific world, and each person has their own world; thus, no one has the right to criticize the other (who is living in a different world) based on their own world. To properly critique

a world, one must be fully able to understand it, and to understand that world correctly, one must be present in that world. Similarly, if you want to understand the philosophical language correctly, you have to enter the world of philosophy, and to understand the language of art, you have to enter the world of art. If this condition is not met, most critiques would be considered as unauthorized and useless since they arise from a different world. Even in the realm of philosophy, it will not be possible to criticize all philosophers, as there will be a different world for different philosophers, and it is not possible to criticize an opinion from a single perspective.

4. According to language-game, there is no common understanding among different groups of people; an empirical scientist does not understand a philosopher, and a philosopher does not understand an empirical scientist. In this sense, humans are separated islands, and they will not be able to have meaningful communication with each other unless one learns and lives the other's language-game and form of life. So, for gaining a common understanding among these groups of people, there is a condition that must be met; otherwise, a group of people would not have any way of understanding another. This condition is also applicable to the next points.
5. Language-game is not very useful in understanding and criticizing a particular religion. For that, one must admit and practice that religion beforehand; so, before admittance and practicing a religion, one cannot evaluate it. As a result, the meaningful terms "guidance" and "misguidance" for religious people will become meaningless since it is not possible to understand and evaluate religious beliefs before accepting it. Accordingly, accepting a particular religion, in specific, and faith, in general, will not be based on prior investigation and understanding.

6. According to language-game, no empirical scientist, philosopher, poet, artist, and others can cite and use other's content and documents because their languages are different from one another, and they have no linguistic commonality. In fact, they do not have a common ground for understanding and accepting each other, and there is not any conceptual communication among these groups, so they cannot confirm or deny each other.
7. Wittgenstein's denial of general criteria is self-contradictory, as saying there is no universal rule for all language-games is a claim that presupposes such a rule to all games. How come Wittgenstein talks about a general feature while "family resemblance" clearly denies the possibility of the existence of such a feature? From where does this general feature originate? Does it originate from an inside perspective or an outside language? If it originates from an inside language-game and is in agreement with a specific form of life, then extending it to other games would be impossible. If it originates from a perspective beyond language since the rules of each game are different, the question arises as to how he could go beyond language-game and rule over all languages while he believes that thinking happens within a language-game and it is not possible to go outside language.

As we have seen here, Wittgenstein's later theory, despite having flexibility in form, is unsatisfactory, both in terms of being a firm rejection of his earlier thoughts and presenting concrete solutions. At this point, I am quite inclined to think of a third era in Wittgenstein's philosophical life; if we take W1 as thesis and W2 as antithesis, then the next era W3 will inevitably be the synthesis of the former two. Thus, in the last chapter, I will examine the very possibility of the existence of such an era.

Chapter 3 - World-Pictures

In Chapter 2, after investigating the concept of language-game, I have talked about the possibility of another era—besides W1 and W2—in Wittgenstein’s philosophical thought. Thus far, I have reviewed both periods, and this chapter deals with the possibility of there being a distinct third era, denoted by W3. There are pieces of evidence that lead us to think the following: If we take the first chapter as the “thesis” and the second chapter as the antithesis, a curious philosophical mind will look for reconciliation where both counterparts can come together—“synthesis.” The idea of synthesis strengthens when some conceptions appear that cannot be categorized in either the former two. Concerning the possible W3, we do not find a set of organized thoughts in a system or a principle doctrine that enables us to criticize the bodily structure of a comprehensive thesis. We could also probably find the footprints of some remarkable conceptions of W3 in W1 or W2, for example, the notion of “hinge propositions,” which Wittgenstein mentions a few times in *OC*, that belongs mostly to the end of W2. However, when it comes to analyzing the course of transition in a thinker’s development of ideas, an overlap of some notions does not seem to be unusual. From my perspective, thoughts are not radical and there is no distinctive borderline among the reflections of a philosopher—a brilliant brand new theory could have roots in the background. Even two contradictory notions might refer to the same aspect. Imagine a tree with underground roots, solid bole, and many branches. The roots penetrating deep into the soil have the responsibility to provide both the bole and the branches with essential nutrients and firm support. Branches, though separated and many, are connected to the same tree. This notion is somehow comparable to what we grasp from following the development of a philosopher’s ideas. There is a background that comprises of fundamental

principles, a general theory, and some secondary conceptions. General theory and secondary conceptions will benefit from the solidarity of the background. The secondary conceptions, though various in number, will rely on the unity of the general theory.

From the above-mentioned statements, I can point out that the new conceptions discussed in this chapter are not entirely separate from Wittgenstein's doctrines in W1 and W2. Although we rarely find them in Wittgenstein's published and unpublished books, they are meant to draw our attention to something genuinely important in understanding Wittgenstein's philosophical thought in his last years. We can also go further and consider the possibility of the existence of W3. In fact, the novelty we can find in this period is a reason for such an interpretation.

The two notions that I want to discuss in this chapter are "hinge propositions" and "world-picture." Moreover, I will discuss the consequences of W3. In the end, I discuss the very possibility of a "third Wittgenstein" in philosophy.

• 3.1 The Notion of World-Picture

OC is one of the most important and enduring works of Wittgenstein, which he wrote during the last year and a half of his life. Wittgenstein wrote this book in response to Moore's essays—"A defense of common sense" and "Proof of an external world." Some scholars such as Danièle Moyal-Sharrock believe that, in addition to early and later Wittgenstein, we can also talk about the third Wittgenstein (Moyal-Sharrock 2004: 20–26). According to her, the second section of *PI*, along with *OC*, supports the idea of third Wittgenstein. I also have the same opinion, which I will explain in this chapter as it would contribute to the part of Wittgenstein's philosophy that cannot be interpreted as belonging to W1 or W2.

The notion of world-picture is one of the central doctrines of *OC*. By considering the example of a tree, as given above, it can be said that it is related to early Wittgenstein's theories. On the one hand, it is related to W1 and the picture-theory of meaning; on the other hand, we can explore its relations with W2 and the theories of language-game and forms of life.

To clarify where the conception of word-picture stands in Wittgenstein's philosophy, I intend to compare it with both W1 and W2. As I discussed in W1, *TT* introduces a limited perspective. Wittgenstein (by illustrating different ontological determinations such as thing, fact, the possible state of affairs, and the existing state of affairs) considers proposition (same as Frege) as the smallest unit of meaning. He, assuming a metaphysical subject, speaks of isomorphism in the logical structure of a proposition, i.e., "There is a glass on the table" and the logical structure of its referent in the external world. He also considers this isomorphism as the necessary condition for meaningfulness. In other words, a proposition that refers to a possible state of affairs in the world can picture a fact, and we can show it in a logical space. The notion of "picture" in the picture-theory, more than anything else, is concerned with the standard logical structure of a well-formed proposition and its referent in the external world. Besides, there is a clear and distinct borderline between meaningful and meaningless propositions. The language user plays no significant role in the formation of the meaning of propositions. It does not matter how and in what context a language user uses words; what matters is the isomorphism between a proposition and its referent in the external world from the perspective of a metaphysical subject.

In W2—since 1933 and after the transition period—we can see that he dismisses his previous essentialist conceptions of language and meaning. The current reading of philosophy assumes language to be a tool that a language user uses in various contexts and thus, it plays a crucial role in constituting meaning. In *PI*, Wittgenstein, by articulating the concepts of

“practice,” “language-game,” “family-resemblance,” and “forms of life” reveals his new non-essentialist view of forming the meaning of the words. Contrary to what is assumed in *TT*, a metaphysical subject or picturing a proposition does not fully determine the constitution of meaning. However, how an empirical subject interacts with the world determines meaningfulness. In fact, the extent to which a language user engages in a language-game and tries, like other users, to use words in different contexts is a determining factor in clarifying the meaning of words. The reason behind this claim is that the meaning of words is not pre-determined, but depending on the participation level of language users, they change. For example, consider the following proposition: “It is a good job to help poor people facing challenges due to winter’s bone-chilling coldness.” According to *TT*, since features such as good and evil are not related to the world and cannot be found in the external world, the above proposition does not refer to an existing state of affairs. The outcome is that this proposition does not picture a fact, and therefore, is meaningless. However, according to *PI*, the word “good” in different contexts—or more precisely in different language-games—has different meanings. Consider the following propositions:

- a) I ate good food at the restaurant last night.
- b) I heard a piece of good music by the Quidi Vidi Lake last week.
- c) Adam is a good mathematician.

The proposition—“It is a good job to help poor people facing challenges due to winter’s bone-chilling coldness”—is used and has meaning in ethical language-games. The term “good” in these kinds of propositions conveys a moral meaning. Moreover, in proposition W1, the term “good” does not imply a moral meaning: It mostly shows a personal preference and interaction with temper. In proposition W2, the term “good” suggests an aesthetic sense. On the other hand,

in proposition W3, “good” is about mastery and perfection. Here, the term “good” has different meanings in various contexts and language-games. In this view, doing philosophy is the analysis of the maze castle that is language—the purification of language and the discovery of its distortions. In fact, various language-games such as religion, ethics, politics, art, and so on relate to unique aspects of language. They advise us about the interaction of language users with the world and together form our set of beliefs. Moreover, the concept of “participation” is important here in terms of consolidating the meaning of words and sets of beliefs. In fact, the extent to which a language user partakes in language-games of different contexts plays a unique role in developing the meaning of words.

After a quick review of the main features of W1 and W2, it is now time to look at W3. In this period, we see a crucial change in Wittgenstein’s orientation in relation to his earlier claims. Although the concepts that I want to briefly address here are only a few, they are so important that they need to be explored more. In W3, the philosophical project of *OC*, unlike those in W1 and W2, is concerned with epistemological discussions. Although this book appears to develop epistemological concerns, there are some ontological insights regarding it. *OC* deals with the grammar of “knowing” and what belongs to the knowledge of language users. It is not a book that theorizes around the meaning and the conditions of meaningfulness. Considering Moore’s essay the “proof of an external world,” in his critique, Wittgenstein says that the term “knowing” is not necessarily meaningful in every well-formed proposition. Consider the following propositions:

1. I have a hand.
2. I am in pain.
3. Napoleon was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo.

4. Plato was a disciple of Socrates.

And also the following propositions:

(1) I know that I have a hand.

(2) I know that I am in pain.

(3) I know that Napoleon was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo.

(4) I know Plato was a disciple of Socrates.

According to *OC* from propositions (3) and (4), we obtain specific knowledge that can be the objects of our consciousness. Since (3) and (4) are subject to doubt and a language user may not actually know about them, they are epistemological propositions in that they inform us of something. On the contrary, from (1) and (2), we do not get the same type of information as we receive from (3) and (4). In other words, (1) and (2) say nothing more than 1 and 2, while (3) and (4) differ from 3 and 4. In fact, since, in normal circumstance, we cannot assume a language user does not know that “he has a hand” or “he is in pain,” it is not possible to provide conditions wherein he knows that “he has a hand” or “he is in pain.” We cannot subject (1) and (2) to doubt, and so, they cannot be subjected to our knowledge. According to Wittgenstein, the propositions that can be subjected to doubt are informative. We can only talk about the truth or falsity of such propositions in which truth or falsity is justifiable. The informative propositions belong to this category.

Consider the following quotation from section 148 of *OC*: “Why do I not satisfy myself that I have two feet when I want to get up from a chair? There is no why. I simply don’t. This is how I act.” The following can be derived from the above proposition:

5. I have two feet.

(5) I know that I have two feet.

Generally, people do not look for a reason every morning as to why they have two feet, and they have accepted this as a normal circumstance. Proposition 5 cannot be subjected to doubt, because like (3) and (4), which belong to language users' knowledge, (5) cannot be informative for the language user.

To illustrate the above statement, Wittgenstein uses the notion of “world-picture” in *OC*. World-picture includes the beliefs a person has accepted without any reasoning; these beliefs go beyond conventional epistemological thoughts and form the grounds for the beliefs of language users—the beliefs that are accepted for no reason and are not justifiable and informative. For instance, in section 167, to clarify the notion of world-picture, Wittgenstein discusses the nature of empirical propositions, saying that all these propositions do not have the same status because one can lay down such a proposition to turn it into a norm of description. He uses the example of a chemist (Lavoisier) who works on the effects of burning. Lavoisier (after doing a few experiments with some substances in his lab) recognizes some of the effects. Although he has no clue regarding it, he knows that the effect might happen another time in the future. Here, Wittgenstein says that the chemist is somewhat certain that these effects will recur in the future. The striking point here is that the certainty does not derive from chemist's experiments; this is not a matter of discovery, but he learned it as a child. Therefore, Wittgenstein avoids the term “hypothesis” and uses the notion of world-picture instead.

The following is another example from section 262 on the importance of the beliefs we grow up with:

“I can imagine a man who had grown up in quite special circumstances and been taught that the earth came into being 50 years ago, and therefore, believed this. We might instruct him:

The earth has long, etc. — We should be trying to give him our picture of the world. This would happen through a kind of persuasion” (262).

I would say this section draws our attention to something different in Wittgenstein’s way of philosophizing. Contrary to W1, here, we do not see a systematic structure with which the use of logical analysis to shed light on the vague aspect of arguments is possible. In fact, there is not any obscure aspect at all. In W1, the propositions could be either false or true; however, the kind of propositions Wittgenstein describes here is certain, and we do not find any ground to doubt them—they are more like implanted ideas in our minds. The same thing is correct for W2 in that understanding the meaning of words comes after their use; in W3, we have immediate and transparent access to our mental conceptions, which for the above propositions are beliefs.

Furthermore, world-picture involves fundamental propositions that shape a language user’s attitude toward the surrounding world. The language user does not learn these propositions through trial and error or in the form of a hypothesis. At the same time, without accepting these reasonless beliefs, one cannot organize an epistemological interaction with the world and enrich the set of beliefs. Propositions such as “The earth existed for a long time before my birth,” “I cannot make it rain,” “I’ve spent my whole life living on earth, not on any other planets,” “I was born from a certain parent at a certain time,” and so on form a language user’s world-picture. Other propositions that a language user may grasp in various branches of knowledge are those that can either be true or false. A language user could make a mistake in recognizing the propositions they have already accepted, as they could be based on reasonless beliefs—the beliefs that they have learned as a child and from whose perspective others convinced them to look at the world. Yet, it is possible that the components and the principles of the world-picture of a language user change over time. For instance, consider this proposition: “I was born from a

certain parent at a certain time”; it seems that until the middle of the twentieth century, these propositions used to form a part of the language user’s world-picture. A person didn’t need to give a reason why they were born from a certain parent at a certain time. However, with recent changes in medical science, including “sperm bank,” “gamete donation to an infertile couple,” and “surrogate motherhood,” the proposition—“I was born from a certain parent at a certain time”—is no longer clear in our epistemological system. Do we need to give a reason why we accept this proposition? In the past, if somebody makes such a claim (he was born from a certain parent at a certain time), he would have no problem in accepting it; language users of that time used to take it so because it was otherwise inconceivable. However, today, due to the developments that have taken place in empirical sciences, this proposition no longer forms a part of our world-picture, as a person may biologically have an unknown father (through a sperm bank), while their legal father is his biological mother’s husband. From the above example, we can conclude that the proposition—“I was born from a certain parent at a certain time”—no longer has the former clarity. This is how the above proposition is gradually being removed from the world-picture of language users. Consider another proposition—“I love my kids.” This proposition forms a part of our world-picture; I do not think I need to give a reason why I love or should love my kids. If someone asks me whether I love my kids or not that would be a weird question since it is about something that we have already accepted without any reason and it forms a part of our world-picture. This question differs from the proposition—“The sum of the interior angles of a triangle in Euclidean geometry is 180 degrees.” There is no need to give a reason for justifying the first proposition.

In contrast, for the second one, we need to have a reason based on some introductions, and it should be derived from the process of deductive reasoning. In other words, if a language

user says, “I know that I love my kids,” then this proposition is not as informative as saying, “I know that the sum of the interior angles of a triangle in Euclidean geometry is 180 degrees.” It is not that the first proposition is not informative, but the way it informs about something entirely different from the second proposition since we cannot find grounds to doubt it. The former is a part of our world-picture, while the latter stands outside it.

World-picture comes before language-game. Language users involved in various language-games and forms of life and who take part in forming meanings of concepts are well-equipped with a worldview in Wittgenstein’s system. This worldview, which includes fundamental beliefs with no reason, shapes their world-picture. In fact, a language user who has a worldview, which from an epistemological perspective comprises beliefs without any reason, takes part in various language-games. It is just like how, in W3, the world-picture takes precedence over language-game and comes before the interaction of a language user (empirical subject) with the surrounding world as well as other language users.

Moreover, the concept of “picture” bears a different meaning in the world-picture than picture-theory due to the following reasons: First, picturing in *TT* takes place from the perspective of a metaphysical subject, a subject who is a limit of the world. At the same time, the world-picture refers to the beliefs of an empirical subject, who is in the world. Second, in *TT*, Wittgenstein believes in the essence of language, while later, after the transition and until the end of his philosophical life, he does not believe in such an essence of language anymore. Third, *TT* seeks to provide an all-encompassing theory about the relation between language and the world, while *OC* is regarding concepts such as “knowing,” “doubt,” etc., which have an epistemological background, although they can be used for a few ontological conclusions.

To sum up, drawing from sections 166 and 432 of *OC*, Wittgenstein points to the difficulty arising from realizing the groundlessness of our beliefs, for instance, the utterance—“I know” only in connection with other pieces of evidence of “my knowing” has meaning.

- **3.2 Hinge Propositions**

Besides the conception of world-picture, there is also another notion of “hinge propositions” that prompts us to think of a separate era of *W3*. Though Wittgenstein’s use of such a proposition is quite rare in *OC*, yet, due to its uniqueness, it is worth exploring. As per my investigation, the term “hinge” first emerges in section 341 of *OC*, where Wittgenstein analogizes the hinges of a door that makes it turn with the relation between the propositions that have grounds for distrust and those that are exempt from doubt. The truth is that the doubts raised about some questions depend on the propositions that are exempt from doubt. These doubtless propositions function as a hinge around which other doubts can form. In section 343, Wittgenstein speaks on the significance of these propositions; there are things we cannot investigate, but we need them for a firm basis to build other assumptions on. For the door to turn, the hinges must stay put, and the last occurrence of hinge propositions happens at the very end of the book, in sections 651–4, where Wittgenstein discusses the certainty of mathematical propositions in comparison with the relative uncertainty of empirical propositions. For example, I cannot be mistaken that $12 \times 12 = 144$. The certainty that lies in this proposition is that it stands as a mathematical proposition. Thus, with mathematical propositions, it would be better to turn our doubt toward other things, as mathematical propositions are immovable, and it is a hinge on which our argument could rely and turn (655).

One striking point in *OC* is the way Wittgenstein introduces a concept in the text. In my opinion, contrary to both W1, where there is a set of organized thoughts and a logical mechanism with which the truth-validity of propositions could be determined, and W2, where there are at least some norms to compare other propositions with, in the so-called W3, the appearance of such rare distinctive notions do not emerge followed up by pre-established notions. There could be several reasons as to why Wittgenstein's manner of philosophizing changes over and over with time. One possible answer might be that the transition to W2 proves that Wittgenstein has a dynamic mind. He never sticks with a single unchangeable axiom but constantly looks for updates. Since this "transition" has been a major turn, another change might not be quite unlikely. Another reason would be that he had the opportunity to compare and contrast how his ideas in W1 and W2 work on philosophical problems. If both abstract (the picture-theory) and practical (language-game) theories are not compelling enough to help us find the solutions, there has to be another way or method that takes help from both but is none of them. Such a method becomes more prominent when we identify signs in *OC*. However, the problem is that these signs are not significant in number that would enable us to derive an independent theory. They are merely the appearance of conceptions that still have much room for development.

However, although hinge propositions are only mentioned a few times in *OC*, it still requires much more extensive investigation. In this case, exemplary work has been made by Yaniv Iczkovits in his book *Wittgenstein's Ethical Thought*, where he provided a compact summary of a few commentaries on hinge propositions (Iczkovits 2012; 134–138). In his view, "hinges" in hinge propositions fall into three categories, which will be briefly discussed here, along with some relevant commentaries. The first view is to see hinge propositions as the basis

on which our language-game is grounded. According to Iczkovits, the three representatives of this idea are Norman Malcolm, Ilham Dilman, and Michael Williams.

In Malcolm's view (Iczkovits 2012; 134–5), hinge propositions are the foundations of entire functions of thought. While these propositions form the basis of our understanding, they are unshakable, and we have direct access to understand them. This immediate access will remove the possibility of doubting these propositions. Since hinge propositions form the basis of understanding, they must encompass all the activities of language, and due to the position and function of such propositions, we are not allowed to doubt them at all; any doubts concerning the “hinges” will remove the possibility of intelligible expression.

Dilman (Iczkovits 2012: 134–5) also takes a similar position; he assumes the necessity of such propositions for communication. In fact, in his opinion, “hinge propositions form an important part of common understanding” that justify how communication is possible. Therefore, in our system of knowledge, some things unshakably stand fast; we have immediate access to them, and what we know and accept as beliefs determine our future practices. One of my concerns regarding such a view regarding hinge propositions is seeing beliefs as concepts without any pre-structured base and reason; however, an enormous part of what we know as belief is made up of conscious reasonable decisions. So, if we form a reasonable and intellectual base of our construction of the knowledge, which we have already accepted for no reason, we will face a structural gap, and as a result, we need to clarify how the two intellectual and unintellectual parts can come together to form a unified system. Moreover, accepting the perfect certainty of a hinge proposition prevents us from trying to find out what kind of principles they really are.

Micheal Williams (Iczkovits 2012: 135) takes a more cautious step in defining hinge propositions. He suggests that although hinges in Wittgenstein's account is a framework for ordinary practices, Wittgenstein is reluctant in considering them as known or unknown. Perhaps, the kinds of propositions we need in ordinary practices of inquiry and justification to yield knowledge are those that are truly not *known* to be true. Thus, "hinges" must be true for our language-games to be meaningful and perhaps they form the foundations of our knowledge.

Therefore, the first category of scholars, as Iczkovits writes, considers hinge propositions as the foundation on which the other elements of our knowledge of the world could be built. Hinges form the framework of ordinary practices, they are stable, and we have a clear and immediate understanding of them. The perfect certainty of "hinges" makes us accept them as implicit entities that are simply out there; thus, we cannot refuse or even question them.

From the opinions of these scholars, I understand that all of them find the same element in *OC*. From my understanding, "hinges" in the context of Wittgenstein's philosophy is not to present a particular framework on which we can keep building the scaffolding of other theories. Rather, "hinges" inform us of a certainty that does not derive from the propositions in the experience. They do not lie under the dichotomy of truth-falsity of propositions and have more of a priori character. Furthermore, regardless of the epistemological approach, *OC* does not offer any theory regarding knowledge, contrary to *TT* and *PI*. Such a theory requires at least a little more development than just introducing a few propositions. However, from the bulk amount of comments on these propositions, we can quickly deduce their importance in terms of novelty and the change in Wittgenstein's method of describing a concept.

The second category of scholars, as Iczkovits writes, perceive hinges as mythological entities. The idea presented by the second-category scholars is that hinges are independent of any

justification; they have an unclear relationship with language-games. Even though hinges are not a part of our language, they are still an origin from which language has evolved (Iczkovits 2012: 136–7). The problem arising from this category is even more complicated than the previous one. Hinges represent the reason for the emergence and evolution of our language but in a ghostly manner in that the relation between hinges and language-game is unclear. We can see their impacts but are unable to describe them, as they do not fall under any category. There are no particular examples in which hinges can be determined, even for the kind of certainty we ascribe to, hinges are not a matter of explanation. They are just out there as entities with a significant influence in terms of forming our language. However, at the same time, they are not well-defined in our language. The characteristic of hinges here is somehow similar to what we know of “showable” facts in W1; although we are aware of their presence and influence, we are still perplexed about what kind of principle they have. Finally, the relationship between hinges and language-games and the reason for the dependence of language-games on hinges are still mythological questions to us.

The third category entails seeing hinges as pre-linguistic beliefs, which means that hinges come before language. Although they do not have any sense, they enable sense; what we cannot say with language is to be shown in our practice. As Danièle Moyal-Sharrock (Iczkovits 2012: 137) believes, hinges are expressed in our activities, i.e., in what we say or what we do, and they do not carry any epistemological meaning. Hinges do not form any system of knowledge but function as the practical basis of our knowledge. Therefore, in the third category too, hinges play a significant role in forming our knowledge of the world. Moyal-Sharrock’s idea of hinges presupposes the other two categories’ opinions, namely, the foundational role of hinges in

forming knowledge, them being unknown entities, and the unexplainable link connecting hinges to the facts in the world.

All in all, from various and somehow similar opinions on hinges, we may conclude that hinges are essential and play a key role in *OC*, providing an approach toward understanding how and on what basis the structure of knowledge has formed; however, they remain at the level of approach and do not form a comprehensive theory of knowledge. In fact, in my opinion, Wittgenstein does not go further to provide us with possible logical answers around the questions concerning an exciting conception like hinges. He leaves us alone to deal with so many challenges in finding out ways to interpret his unique approaches and conceptions.

• 3.3 Consequences of World-Picture

In this section, I will briefly describe some outcomes of Wittgenstein's new approach in *OC*:

The first one is the emergence of interpretations of a “third period” in Wittgenstein's philosophical thought. As I have discussed above, Wittgenstein's distinctive way of processing philosophical concepts and introducing notions such as world-picture and hinge propositions lead some scholars such as Moyal-Sharrock to consider the existence of a “third Wittgenstein” in philosophy. The answer to the question—“To what extent are these scholars right about the existence of such a period in Wittgenstein's philosophical life?”—requires more in-depth and comprehensive research. What I am trying to do here is to give a general schema of Wittgenstein's various theories to devise a more accurate criterion to compare the different periods of his life. In fact, after reviewing the theories in three of his main books, *TT*, *PI*, and

OC, we will be able to better identify the differences among them. What is evident regarding *OC* is the way Wittgenstein distances himself from the previous principles and his manner of philosophizing compared to the two other books. For example, in *OC*, we cannot find a comprehensive theory, and notions such as hinges and world-picture do not enter the text through a philosophical argument; instead, it is through something similar to what we know in mysticism, as we have no way to prove its correctness within the text.

The second consequence comes following up with the first one mentioned above; the conceptions of hinges and world-picture lead to more confusion in understanding Wittgenstein's philosophy. For instance, the certainty related to hinges comes before language; it means that it comes prior to any thought or rational controversy. This kind of reaching a certainty before the examination contradicts *TT*'s principle that the truth-validity of a proposition depends on specific conditions. Besides, we have no clue as to what entities these hinges are. Therefore, we may end up finding notions for which accuracy cannot be investigated.

I think this version of Wittgenstein's certainty introduces a way for metaphysical propositions. Note that metaphysical propositions are those that cannot be incorporated into language nor can judgments be made about their truth or falsity. The propositions of ethics and religion are of the same type; ethics, according to Wittgenstein, is transcendental and is a condition of the human form of life rather than a particular mindset. It might already be expressed in presenting a particular condition without using any ethical words. Thus, ethics does not come necessarily in the form of written questions or problems. It is implied in our way of talking and responding to people, in the kind of considerations we may admit or deny.

In this way, we can find a solution to understand why we believe in such propositions and why such beliefs are true. However, such a belief has more room for scrutiny.

• 3.4 Conclusion

After reviewing all the three chapters, it is time to compare and contrast Wittgenstein's fundamental ideas in each period. To clarify how I will conclude at the end, I consider W1 as the paper's thesis, W2 as the antithesis, and W3 as the possible synthesis, which according to one interpretation could be the combination of both W1 and W2 and the transformation into a new way of doing philosophy.

The key features of W1 are as follows:

- Publication of *TT*, a book on philosophy and logic
- The introduction of a new approach to language
- Presentation of the concept of language-game for picturing the relationship between language and the facts in the world
- The results that change Wittgenstein's philosophical approach

What is most striking about W1 is that, in this period, there is a detailed plan for our structure of knowledge. This plan or system, as we already know, first appeared in young Wittgenstein's *TT*. In W1, we see Wittgenstein as the successor and follower of influential philosophers such as Frege, Russell, and Moore; so, it would not be far-fetched for his philosophy to be majorly based on the principles of logic and mathematics. The early Wittgenstein's reliance on logic and mathematics in ideas and the philosophical system has both pros and cons: On the one hand, his theory has the accuracy and the basis for evaluating the truth and falsity of propositions; on the other hand, the theory reflects a limited pattern of reality and disregards some other essential aspects. However, *TT* is an abstract book that makes a big claim to present solutions for our philosophical problems through the science of logic, and thus,

Wittgenstein's approach toward seeking definitive answers in this period is scientific in nature. Given the structure of *TT*, it is right to state that this book is a predesigned model of reality—to deal with reality, we have a model that we have already investigated for accuracy and correctness. In my opinion, for such theories, which are in fact a (small) paradigm, to deal with new problems that cannot be solved within the theory two things might happen—the theory after some reformation changes will slightly or entirely transform into a wholly new paradigm. In the case of Wittgenstein, I do believe that the second scenario is correct.

In the first period, Wittgenstein's view and expectation of language, which has room for reflection and criticism, are crucial. Wittgenstein, in this period, sees language as a context in which not only philosophy but also all our knowledge happens, and among all types of language, the only kind he focuses on is the logically ideal language, which is the ultimate polished version developed by the logic of written language. The premise of this view is to limit human beings' knowledge of the world to the boundaries of language and is, in fact, an idea that conforms to science. Every understanding happens within the language, and there we can find clear responses to our questions. Thus, to get to that point, we have to clarify the language so as to prevent the creation of misleading statements and conclusions by the rules of logic as much as possible.

The result of such a view is the foundation of the picture-theory to create the mechanism of the relation of language with the world and to provide criteria in separating meaningful statements from meaningless statements. Separating sense from nonsense is the primary function of the picture-theory; in my opinion, when we set the required conditions for sense, we have gained criteria to distinguish it from nonsense. Distinguishing sense from nonsense is exactly the point in which Wittgenstein's theory focuses on since, in his opinion, if we could draw a boundary for sense, we will be able to avoid the meaningless and misleading propositions that

cause ambiguity and can be found in language. As already discussed, the structure of the picture-theory is based on the distinction between elementary and complex propositions, which is somehow similar to the division of atom and molecules we find in science. Elementary propositions are important since the true meaning of a proposition appears when we recognize the elementary propositions in the final analysis.

However, the picture-theory faces several problems—for example, the inability of the theory to work on descriptive propositions, its reliance on the concept of elementary propositions, incapability to provide a systematic method for recognizing such propositions and removing the possibility to discuss the propositions of metaphysics and ethics by simply assuming them as nonsense. Also, the picture-theory is heavily reliant on the logical atomism and the truth-function, which the former is dependent on discovering atomic facts and the latter, the truth-function of a set is dependent on determining the truth value of every proposition in a set, and both are limited to a specific range.

In the first period, Wittgenstein's philosophy has a few disputable features: First, his theory is so abstract that it loses contact with everyday actual life problems. Second, Wittgenstein's theory of knowledge is heavily based on logic and mathematics, while human beings' knowledge of the world has other aspects that require a deeper epistemology. Last, the fact that Wittgenstein's idea and expectation of language are considered a context for finding answers to all philosophical questions. However, the challenges that the picture-theory deals with in the first period provides a reason for Wittgenstein to think about transitioning from early thoughts.

In W2, which is supposed as the antithesis, we see a major turn in Wittgenstein's thoughts and way of doing philosophy. In this period, changes have happened both in

Wittgenstein's view of philosophy, in general, and method, in specific; the idea of philosophy as a theoretical doctrine is replaced by a view that is more associated with people's actual life, and his method is formed based on the principles that are not only not predetermined and limited to a specific realm, i.e., logic, but also can change and expand depending on people's (language-users) participation. In this period, the logical version of the language does not have the task of responding to all our questions anymore; instead, we can see an ordinary language with a different function and perspective. Since people use ordinary language in everyday conversations, it involves unpredictable patterns and is also more connected to people's actual life. The critical point in understanding Wittgenstein's new approach toward language is that ordinary language, contrary to the logically perfect language, is not, as a matter of fact, meant to form and illustrate the structure of our knowledge of the world. So, we can see that, in W2, Wittgenstein's philosophy and method correspond to a new context. In addition to the change regarding philosophy and language, later Wittgenstein's philosophy does not entail providing logical answers and presenting a mechanism for this purpose; it mostly seeks to describe facts.

From my understanding, the subject of knowledge in W1 is passive and does not play a role in forming and transforming meaning, but in W2, he plays a key role in the meaning of the word. Of course, this is my personal opinion considering the comparison of two periods, and it has room for development as well as criticism; however, one of the reasons Wittgenstein's later philosophy connects with existing facts is that here we can see a more substantial presence of the human essence in his philosophical theory.

From the achievement of all these changes emerges the concept of language-game, which provides a basis for comparison and our paper's antithesis. What happens regarding language-game is that Wittgenstein's focus shifts from the pre-established rules that govern language to

the use of language; the rules of logic do not determine the meaning of words, rather it is in use that the true meaning arises. For this purpose, the position of a word in a proposition is not a determining factor in explaining its meaning, instead, we look at the rule that word follows in people's conversations. Another factor contributing to the meaning of a word is the form of life since language is social in nature, and speaking a language is a part of an activity that reflects people's form of life in society. Since language-games are unlimited and the user's use is dependent on the rules of the game, we cannot find a core element to all language-games; thus, Wittgenstein uses the concept of family resemblance to explain how different language-games could relate to one another.

A noteworthy conclusion that can be drawn from the notions of the influence of use, the form of life, and the family resemblance is that Wittgenstein's concept of language-game is too relative, as all of the above-mentioned participant factors are subject to change. Unlike W1, in which Wittgenstein looks for definite foundations, in this period, the criteria are entirely relative. This relative perspective, in addition to advantages, also contains some serious problems that can be used as a basis for criticizing W2. For example, the lack of a common factor and the dependence of the true understanding of meaning on the participation of people in specific forms of life can even cause troubles in the real society; one trouble that has been discussed earlier is that it put the common understanding among different groups of people, namely, people from different languages or lifestyles, into serious skepticism. However, W2 is a reaction and a response to W1, and given the problems we deal within this period, one can also think of a possible third period—W3.

In W3, Wittgenstein distances himself much from both previous approaches. In this period, we do not see any abstract or concrete theories nor any criterion to help us measure the

correctness of concepts. Certainly, Wittgenstein's way of philosophizing in *OC*, a work from this period, could provide a basis for interpreting the emergence of a new period in his philosophical life, as the certainty we are dealing with in *OC* is no longer achievable by means of a rational method. We don't have a comprehensive theory any longer, but at the same time, we can talk about how our knowledge of the world has been formed. This change in his method could be the beginning of a new era, and if Wittgenstein had lived longer, he would have given more depth to this philosophical thought.

On comparing *OC* to the other two main books, *TT* and *PI*, we can see a different version of Wittgenstein, both in terms of the method and the concepts he discusses in the book. One striking thing regarding *OC* is that "certainty" is something that is missing in his previous approaches; even Wittgenstein's philosophy does not lead to a form of certainty. Concerning W1, we have rules to help us distinguish between meaningful and meaningless propositions, but a true or meaningful proposition does not necessarily include certainty. Thus, from the book's main subject, we can say that the topic has not been probably chosen haphazardly, there is a conscious reason behind this decision. Moreover, it appears that world-picture or hinge propositions, though only mentioned a few times in the book, are not just sudden appearances of two unexpected conceptions, but they have roots in Wittgenstein's thoughts. The reason behind this is that on exploring W1 and W2, we might find ourselves in an uncertain position—W1 is silent regarding the important propositions of metaphysics and ethics, and W2 is too relativist. Hence, W3 is where both W1 and W2 come together to make a certain kind of philosophy that is more comprehensive than either of the two.

Therefore, in *OC*, Wittgenstein's method is not to develop a systematic theory. Here, there is no reliance on logic and mathematics as the source of authenticating the truth-validity of

statements, and we do not see language at the center of philosophical attention anymore; on the contrary, we can see a step forward toward one of the most critical concerns—certainty.

All in all, after considering the matter presented in the previous three chapters, I want to conclude that though the amount of information we have right now regarding W3 is considerably less than that of W1 and W2, the kind of philosophy Wittgenstein presents in W3 is conspicuously distinctive enough to lead us to think of the existence of a “third Wittgenstein” in philosophy. My method is to establish the picture-theory as the thesis of the paper, language-game its antithesis, and the world-picture, as per our conclusion, the synthesis.

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