AN INQUIRY ON WITTGENSTEIN'S CONCEPTION OF MEANING

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DİRENÇ ERŞAHİN

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Prof. Dr. Sencer Ayata
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam
Head of the Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Halil Ş. Turan
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Halil Ş. Turan (METU, PHIL)   _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. David Grünberg (METU, PHIL)   _____

Dr. Adnan Akçay (METU, SOC)   _____

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Name, Last Name: Direnç Erşahin

Signature   :

ABSTRACT

AN INQUIRY ON WITTGENSTEIN'S CONCEPTION OF MEANING

Erşahin, Direnç

M.A., Department of Philosopy

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Halil Ş. Turan

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This study aims at investigating Wittgenstein's conception of meaning. In this sense, philosopher's early and later periods will be examined. Key notions of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, picture theory of meaning, language-game, rule following, Private Language Argument and his assertion that 'meaning is use' will be analyzed. Out of this analysis, Wittgenstein's answer to the following basic question will be sought: How is meaning derived in a language? The outcome of this query will be comparatively read with four linguistic theories so as to position Wittgenstein's conception of meaning with regard to the linguistic turn. As a result of this, it will be argued that Wittgensteinian meaning can be regarded as the very first step of post-structural understanding of meaning and discourse theory.

Keywords: Meaning, Wittgenstein, Philosophy of Language, Language-game, Contextualism, Linguistic Turn, Discourse

ÖZ

WITTGENSTEIN'IN ANLAM KAVRAMI ÜZERİNE BİR SORGULAMA

Erşahin, Direnç

Yüksek Lisans, Felsefe Anabilim Dalı

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Bu çalışma Wittgenstein'ın anlam kavramını soruşturmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, filozofun erken ve geç dönemleri incelenecektir. Wittgenstein'ın dil felsefesinin anahtar kavramları resim anlam teorisi, dil oyunu, kurallara uyma, Özel Dil Tartışması ve "Anlam kullanımdır" savı analiz edilecektir. Bu analizin sonucu olarak Wittgenstein'ın şu temel soruya cevabı aranacaktır: Bir dilde anlam nasıl türer? Bu sorgunun neticesi dört farklı dil kuramıyla karşılaştırmalı okunarak Wittgenstein'ın anlam kavramı dilsel dönüşüme göre konumlandırılacaktır. Bunun sonucunda, Wittgensteincı anlamın post-yapısal anlam anlayışının ve söylem kuramının erken bir ilk adımı olduğu iddia edilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Anlam, Wittgenstein, Dil Felsefesi, Dil Oyunu, Bağlamsallık, Dilsel Dönüşüm, Söylem

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TLP   *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (London: Routledge, 1974).

PG   *Philosophical Grammar*, ed. by R. Rhees, trans. by A. Kenny (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974).

PI   *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe (Cornwall: Blackwell, 2001).

OC   *On Certainty*, ed. by G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, trans. by D. Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972).

BLBK   *The Blue Book*, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965).

WL   *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge, 1932-1935*, from the notes of A. Ambrose and M. Macdonald, ed. by A. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> *Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of our language.*
> Ludwig Wittgenstein

Ludwig Wittgenstein is one of the most controversial figures of 20th century philosophy. Not only his thoughts but also his extraordinary life made him a popular philosopher since 1920s. However, despite the large volume of discussions, it is not possible to say that the scholars ended up with a common interpretation of the philosophy of Wittgenstein. In fact, discussions on his philosophy are far from being finalized. By the 1990s, philosophy of Wittgenstein has started to be revisited by many scholars with a different perspective. This new approach, which can be roughly defined as post-structuralist, engendered debates on this controversial philosopher's works as it was responded by analytic counter-arguments. As a result, the last two decades testified to a struggle of discovering the 'new Wittgenstein'.

Inspired by these discussions, this study aims at investigating Wittgenstein's conception of meaning. In this sense, the initial question to which answer will be

sought in Wittgenstein's philosophy will be the following: How is meaning derived in a language? The answer will be given as in a hypothesis where the hypothesis can be defined as follows: Wittgensteinian meaning can be regarded as the very first step of post-structural understanding of meaning and discourse theory.

To test this claim, Wittgenstein's philosophy of language will be put under investigation. Moreover, four linguistic theories will also be addressed. By means of putting forward the affinities and differences between these theories and Wittgenstein's approach, the latter will be tried to be better positioned. So, this study treats Wittgensteinian meaning as an early first step to linguistic turn and discourse theory. What is aimed at is to draw a path that clearly shows the connection.

The study consists of three chapters. The next chapter puts forth the foundation of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language with an emphasis on meaning. In order to expose Wittgenstein's conception of meaning, both periods of his philosophy – early and later – will be investigated. First, the influential work of early Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, will be analyzed and his picture theory of meaning will be explicated. Next, later Wittgenstein will be put under scope. Though the main emphasis will be on *Philosophical Investigations*, other later works, such as *Philosophical Grammar*, *On Certainty*, *Blue Book*, will also be referred to in this section. The discussion of later Wittgenstein's conception of meaning will be based on key notions: language-game, rule following, Private Language Argument, and his

assertion that 'meaning is use'. The chapter will conclude with the argument that both early and later periods of Wittgenstein's philosophy are anti-essentialist and against metaphysics.

The third chapter will be an attempt towards scrutinizing the linguistic turn. In this regard, four linguistic theories which are supposed to mark the development of the turn will be addressed. First, Saussure's semiology will be considered a breakthrough theory of language. Then, contextualist perspective will be analyzed through the works of Voloshinov and Bakhtin. The next section will address Austin's 'speech act' theory. Finally, the focus will be on Quine's notion of 'indeterminacy of translation'.

By means of employing these four linguistic theories, Wittgenstein's conception of meaning will be discussed in the fourth chapter. The relation between several '-isms' – holism, scepticism, contextualism – and Wittgenstein's philosophy of language will be discussed. After these discussions, Wittgenstein's influence on the emergence of post-structuralist understanding of meaning and discourse theory will be highlighted. Finally, a conclusion chapter will sum up the study.

Before concluding the introduction chapter, one last remark should be put on the origin of this discussion. The entire discussion that will be issued in this study was

initiated with Gottlob Frege's 'three fundamental principles' which he states in the introduction pages of *The Foundations of Arithmetic*. He puts them as:

> (i)   always to separate sharply the psychological from the logical, the subjective from the objective;
> (ii) never to ask for the meaning of a word in isolation, but only in the context of a proposition;
> (iii) never to lose sight of the distinction between concept and object. (1960a, XXII)

By means of the second one of these 'three fundamental principles',[1] which is referred to as the *context principle*, Frege notifies that meaning of a word is not a single-dimensioned issue. That is to say, a word does not acquire its meaning independent from all the other words it is in relation with. Rather, according to Frege, a word acquires its meaning in the context of a sentence. Moreover, as the sentences are the elements of a language, the question of meaning turns out to a question concerning the whole – the language.

In order to figure out the meaning of a word, Frege holds that it is necessary to find out its contribution to the sentence in which it takes place. Basically, he makes a distinction between the sense of a sign and its reference. Via his breakthrough paper,

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[1] James Conant explicates how these three principles are intrinsically connected by means of showing that "to deny any of these principles is to deny the others […] If we disobey the second principle and ask for the meaning of a word in isolation, we shall look for an answer in the realms of the psychological – we shall explain what it is for a term to have a meaning in terms of mental accompaniments (such as the psychological associations the word carries with it), or in terms of mental acts (such as the linguistic intention with which we utter it); and *that* will constitute a violation of the first principle" (1998, 231).

"On Sense and Reference",[2] Frege argues that to find out the meaning of a sign, its sense and reference should be taken into account. According to him, the reference of a term is what it indicates, whereas the sense of it puts out the way employed to represent the thing. In his words:

> A proper name (word, sign, sign combination, expression) *expresses* its sense, *stands for* or *designates* its reference. By means of a sign we express its sense and designate its reference. (1960b, 61)

Distinguishing between the sense and the reference of a word, Frege shows that the same object can be referred in different ways. Referring to his example, 'The Evening Star' and 'The Morning Star' refers to the same entity in different senses. The reference is independent of the expression employed. On the other hand, the sense is intersubjective as it depends upon the expression chosen by the speaker and its perception by the perceivers. For this reason, the expression's sense "may be the common property of many and therefore is not a part or a mode of the individual mind" (Frege 1960b, 59). Different senses, such as the evening star and the morning star, point out different modes of presentation of the same reference.

To Frege, in addition to the objective reference and the intersubjective sense, a third level of a word/sign is 'the associated idea' (*Vorstellung*). He depicts the associated

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[2] In addition to "On Sense and Reference", Frege's *Über Sinn und Bedeutung* is also translated as "On Sense and Meaning" or "On Sense and Denotation".

idea as the internal image derived out of a sign and solely owned by one's self.[3] Correspondingly, though the associated idea is a semantic level it is not communicable as the other levels – the sense and the reference. Frege concludes his distinction as follows:

> The reference of a proper name is the object itself which we designate by its means; the idea, which we have in that case, is wholly subjective; in between lies the sense, which is indeed no longer subjective like the idea, but is yet not the object itself. (1960b, 60)

Frege argues that it is the sense and the reference of a word that constitute its meaning. However, referring back to the context principle, words acquire meaning only in a context; in relation with the other words. So, words have sense and reference if and only if they are employed in a sentence. The meaning of a sentence, in this way, is the product of the senses and the references of its elements – words. The reference of a word would be part of the *truth value* of the sentence whereas the sense of a word would work in terms of expressing the *thought* of the sentence. In Medina's words; "sentences have a double semantic life, like their semantic ingredients. Whole sentences also have *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*: their sense is the thought they express; their reference is their truth-value" (2005, 50).

To put this explicitly, let us consider following sentences: (i) 'The Evening Star is Venus', (ii) 'The Morning Star is Venus'. These two sentences have different

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[3] For this reason, "if two persons picture the same thing, each still has his own idea" (Frege 1960b, 60).

meanings; not the truth values of the sentences but the thoughts expressed by them are different. Since the expressions 'Evening Star' and 'Morning Star' have the same reference, the truth values of the sentences are the same. On the other hand, the thoughts expressed by means of these two expressions certainly differ: the former sentence identifies 'The Evening Star' as Venus whereas the latter does the same thing for 'The Morning Star'. So, "the thought […] cannot be the reference of the sentence, but must rather be considered as the sense" (Frege 1960b, 62). As the thoughts expressed by two sentences differ, their senses are different and so does their meanings.

So, the meaning of a sentence is a combination of its sense and reference. This bears the following question in mind: do all expressions have both sense and reference? Frege replies as follows:

> It may perhaps be granted that every grammatically well-formed expression representing a proper name always has a sense. But this is not to say that to the sense there also corresponds a reference. […] The expression 'the least rapidly convergent series' has a sense but demonstrably has no reference, since for every given convergent series, another convergent, but less rapidly convergent, series can be found. In grasping a sense, one is not certainly assured of a reference. (1960b, 58)

Correspondingly, Frege asserts that when we are speaking we occasionally "presuppose a reference" (1960b, 62). The ordinary language, he argues, includes the mistake-prone presuppositions that are outcome of our concern with the truth

7

value of the sentences. In order to satisfy this concern, Frege aims at developing a logical notation (*Begriffschrift*) that would consist of signs with both sense and reference.

This project of Frege is beyond the scope of this study. However, his approach that is tried to be elucidated up to this point is certainly groundbreaking. Basically, it can be argued that he puts forward the following arguments: (i) words are not equal to objects; (ii) meaning of a word is a derivative of the context of a proposition; (iii) meaning of a sentence is constituted by two components: sense and reference. Via these arguments, Frege not only pioneered a holistic approach to semantics but also played a significant inspirational role for Wittgenstein.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTION OF MEANING IN WITTGENSTEIN'S EARLY AND LATER PHILOSOPHY

> *The greatest danger that threatens the mind in philosophizing comes from the metaphysical tendency that takes over it and completely topples the grammatical.*
> Ludwig Wittgenstein

Any study on the philosophy of Wittgenstein inevitably addresses the distinction between the early and the later periods of the philsopher. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (henceforth *TLP*), the only book of Wittgenstein that is published during his lifetime, is his major early work. Having completed *TLP* by 1919, Wittgenstein decided that "he is done" with philosophy. Nevertheless, after a period of dormancy that lasted 10 years, Wittgenstein returned to Cambridge in 1929. His aim was to fix up certain difficulties remaining in *TLP* (Sluga 1999, 15). However, his stay took quite a long time and gave birth to a number of other breakthrough texts pioneered by *Philosophical Investigations*, *Philosophical Grammar, The Blue Book*, *The Brown Book*, *On Certainty*, and *Zettel*.

There is no agreement among Wittgenstein scholars concerning positioning these two periods with respect to each other. Saul Kripke, Crispin Wright, and many others argue that two periods of Wittgenstein are completely distinct. According to these scholars, it is even possible to talk about two separate philosophers since there are contradictions between these two periods. On the other extreme, some other scholars, including Stanley Cavell, Brian McGuinness, Cora Diamond, and James Conant, claim that philosophy of Wittgenstein possesses a unity. Apart from these two extremes, a third view is put forth by Jaakko Hintikka, who claimed that Wittgenstein's philosophy should not be pushed to neither of these poles; rather, certain differences between two periods are due to the Wittgenstein's philosophical *metamorphosis* yet a 'hidden unity' surely exists (1983).

This chapter will address these two periods with a particular emphasis on meaning and Wittgenstein's philosophy of language in general. In this context, key notions of Wittgenstein, such as picture theory of meaning, language-games, rule following, Private Language Argument, will be discussed. By this means, it will be argued that "Wittgenstein's turn" should be considered a methodological shift rather than a complete denial. Accordingly, it will be claimed that there is a unity among two periods against a *common enemy* where the common enemy means nothing but metaphysics.

2.1. Early Wittgenstein

Wittgenstein composed *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* from his wartime notebooks. This important work is a proof of the heavy influence of Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell over Wittgenstein's (early) philosophy. According to Sluga, "in large part it [*TLP*] can certainly be read as an attempt to reconcile Russellian atomism with Fregean apriorism" (1999, 9). Alternatively, *TLP* may also be considered as an *isomorphic* work with *Principia Mathematica*. What Russell and Whitehead tried to achieve by *Principia Mathematica* was the reduction of mathematics to logic; similarly, Wittgenstein's *TLP* was a projection of the entire world over logic. Nevertheless, it is not possible to say that early Wittgenstein was in full agreement with Russell and Frege. In fact, he accused both philosophers with misunderstanding his work. He wrote to Russell:

> The main point is the theory of what can be expressed by propositions – i.e. by language – (and, which comes to the same, what can be *thought*) and what cannot be expressed by propositions, but only shown; which I believe is the cardinal problem of philosophy. (1997, 124)

Additionally, in his "Notes on Logic", Wittgenstein says that the problematic is the following: "Philosophy consist of logic and metaphysics: logic is its basis" (1961, 106). So, regarding philosophy, though logic constitutes the basis, there is also a considerable metaphysical part that should be the main concern. By means of *TLP*, Wittgenstein aims at unfolding this opaque terrain.

2.1.1. Picture Theory of Meaning

TLP starts with a mapping of world onto logic. Wittgenstein puts it as:

> The world is all that is the case. (§1)
> The world is the totality of facts, not of things. (§1.1)
> Each item can be the case or not the case while everything
> else remains the same. (*TLP*, §1.21)

Corollary to §1.1 is, "the world divides into facts" (*TLP* §1.2). These facts – forming the state of affairs – are compounds that are made of atomic facts each of which in turn is "a combination of objects" (*TLP* §2.01). Out of this atomic structure, Wittgenstein claims that everyone makes to herself/himself pictures of facts (*TLP* §2.1). These pictures, which are nothing but "the models of reality" (*TLP* §2.12), constitutes all knowledge of a human being. So, for a sentence having meaning is nothing but "being a picture". Wittgenstein argues as follows:

> A picture is a fact. (§2.1.41)
> What constitutes a picture is that its elements are related to
> one another in a determinate way. (§2.14)
> The fact that the elements of a picture are related to one
> another in a determinate way represents that things are
> related to one another in the same way.
> Let us call this connexion of its elements the structure of the
> picture, and let us call the possibility of this structure the
> pictorial form of the picture. (§2.15)
> Pictorial form is the possibility that things are related to one
> another in the same way as the elements of the picture. (*TLP*
> §2.151)

So, according to Wittgenstein, the bridge between language and reality is constructed upon a structural similarity. That is, both reality and language are constituted by atomic facts; the former by objects and the latter by sentences. Any language should be regarded as an effort towards representing reality by means of picturing it. In this sense, sentences, atomic facts of a language, gain their truth status with regard to their representation of objects.[4] For this reason, "there are no pictures that are true a priori" (*TLP* §2.225). In fact, according to Wittgenstein:

> What a picture represents is its sense. (§2.221)
> The agreement or disagreement of its sense with reality constitutes its truth or falsity. (§2.222)
> In order to tell whether a picture is true or false we must compare it with reality. (*TLP* §2.223)

So, by *TLP*, Wittgenstein provides a picture theory of meaning that is based on correspondence between the state of affairs and the elements of a language - sentences. In order to unfold this theory, Wittgenstein's distinction between signs and symbols should be addressed. According to Wittgenstein, symbols are the combination of signs with their 'modes of signification'. He puts it as:

> A sign is what can be perceived of a symbol. (§3.32)
> So one and the same sign (written or spoken, etc.) can be common to two different symbols – in which case they will signify in different ways. (§3.321)
> Our use of the same sign to signify two different objects can never indicate a common characteristic of the two, if we use

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[4] In Livingston's words: "A proposition is said to share the logical form of a state of affairs when there is an isomorphism between the relational structure of the proposition and the relational structure of the state of affairs; the *fact* that the elements of the proposition are related in a particular way represents the *fact* that things are related, in the state of affairs, in the same way" (2004, 37).

> it with two different modes of signification. For the sign, of course, is arbitrary. So we could choose two different signs instead, and then what would be left in common on the signifying side? (*TLP* §3.322)

A sign – an orthographic unit – turns out to a symbol – a logical unit – only by means of its "logico-syntactical employment" (Conant 1998, 235-236). Without this employment, a sign is an arbitrary unit. What makes it able to correspond to an object is its logical employment. In other words, a sign embodies a meaning only in logical forms of use; otherwise, it stays meaningless:

> In order to recognize a symbol by its sign we must observe how it is used with a sense. (§3.326)
> A sign does not determine a logical form unless it is taken together with its logico-syntactical employment. (§3.327)
> If a sign is useless, it is meaningless. That is the point of Occam's maxim.
> (If everything behaves as if a sign had meaning, then it does have meaning.) (*TLP* §3.328)

Sentences are the atomic logical forms that can have meaning.[5] The sense – or meaning – of a sentence is determined by the relational structure of the signs that constitutes it. For this reason, as Livingston also argues, the correspondence between the sentences and the state of affairs is one not between signs and objects, but between symbols and objects (2004, 40). In Wittgenstein's own words:

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[5] "Only propositions have sense; only in the nexus of a proposition does a name have meaning" (*TLP* §3.3). At this point Wittgenstein certainly follows Frege's principles with one distinction. Remember Frege's second and third principles: "(ii) never to ask for the meaning of a word in isolation, but only in the context of a proposition, (iii) never lose the sight of the distinction between concept and object" (1960a, XXII). According to Wittgenstein, atomic facts of a language are propositions/sentences rather than words. Moreover, Wittgenstein's distinction between signs and symbols can be regarded as a tool for elucidating Frege's distinction between concept and object.

> In everyday language it very frequently happens that the same word has different modes of signification – and so belongs to different symbols – or that two words that have different modes of signification are employed in propositions in what is superficially the same way.
> Thus the word 'is' figures as the copula, as a sign for identity, and as an expression for existence; 'exist' figures as an intransitive verb like 'go', and 'identical' as an adjective; we speak of something but also of the fact of something happening.
> (In the proposition, 'Green is green' – where the first word is the proper name of a person and the last an adjective – these words do not merely have different meanings: they are different symbols.) (*TLP* §3.323)

In the example, a sign, 'green', assumes two different functions. In other words, two different symbols out of a sign are utilized in the sentence "Green is green". These two symbols get differentiated from each other by means of their utilization in the sentence. That is, just like the other words of the sentence, both symbols acquire their meanings in relation with the other members of the sentence.

Therefore, Wittgenstein, in his early philosophy, argues that understanding the meaning of a sentence is nothing but understanding the functions of every element of it. This would only be possible by means of knowing the symbols' truth values. (i.e. whether the adjective 'green' signifies a green object or not.) Consequently, Wittgenstein asserts that to understand a sentence means to know what is the case if it is true (*TLP* §4.024).

Up to now, I have tried to elucidate Tractarian picture theory of meaning. According to this theory, sentences are pictures of facts. Correspondingly, language, the totality

of sentences (*TLP* §4.001), should be regarded as a picturing effort aiming at representing reality. In this sense, sentences gain their truth values according to their correspondence with reality.

However, a certain group of sentences appears to stand independent in terms of their truth conditions. These are logical propositions comprised of tautologies and contradictions. Tautologies are logical propositions that are "true under all circumstances, regardless of the facts in the world" (Stiers 2000, 208). On the other hand, contradictions are permanently false no matter what the truth is. Hence, these two groups of propositions are not meaningful like other sentences. As Wittgenstein states:

> Tautologies and contradictions are not pictures of reality. They do not represent any possible situations. For the former admit *all* possible situations and the latter *none*.
> In a tautology the conditions of agreement with the world – the representational relations – cancel one another, so that it does not stand in any representational relation to reality. (§4.462)
> A tautology's truth is certain, a proposition's possible, a contradiction's impossible. (*TLP* §4.464)

Both tautologies and contradictions gain their truth-values from the truth tables. No matter what the reality is, tautologies are unconditionally true whereas contradictions are unconditionally false; consequently, to early Wittgenstein, both

16

lack sense – meaning (*TLP* §4.461).[6] In correspondence with their senselessness, both tautologies and contradictions are comprised of signs; not symbols.

In contrast with logical propositions, a meaningful sentence can either be true or false depending on what the truth is. Since, according to Wittgenstein, any meaningful sentence is a picture – a model of reality, it can "*show* the logical form of reality" (*TLP* §4.121). Hence, a meaningful sentence represents the truth – either truly or falsely. On the other hand, as its truth condition does not depend on the world of facts, a logical proposition cannot say what the truth is. For this reason, Wittgenstein claims that "what *can* be shown, *cannot* be said" (*TLP* §4.1212).

Differentiating meaningful sentences from logical propositions, Wittgenstein frees us from logical necessity and logical impossibility. Remaining are meaningful sentences deprived of necessities and impossibilities. Of this set, all meaningful sentences one can understand constitutes her/his own language that represents her/his own life. Since, according to Wittgenstein, "the world and life are one" (*TLP* §5.621), *the limits of one's language* mean the limits of her/his own world (*TLP* §5.6).

So far, meaningful sentences have been differentiated from senseless ones – logical propositions. Then, the question is this: are all *non*-senseless utterances

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[6] Both tautologies and contradictions are senseless rather than non-sensical. In Wittgenstein's words: "Tautologies and contradictions are not, however, non-sensical. They are part of the symbolism, much as '0' is part of the symbolism of arithmetic" (*TLP* §4.611).

meaningful/sensical? According to early Wittgenstein, the answer is 'no'. In fact, this will lead us to Wittgenstein's critique of traditional philosophy.

Consider the following question as an example: "What is the meaning of this world?" According to Wittgenstein, speaking of issues lying outside of this world – such as the sense of the world – would be an effort going far beyond the limits of the language. This would be nothing but metaphysics, which can be defined as non-verifiable.[7] However, any metaphysical utterance would include signs that do not have any meaning; that is, it is non-sensical.[8] For this reason, questioning the meaning of the world would be inevitably non-sensical. In Wittgenstein's words:

> When the answer cannot be put into words, neither can the question be put into words.
> The *riddle* does not exist.
> If a question can be framed at all, it is also *possible* to answer it. (*TLP* §6.5)

This is certainly the rejection of metaphysics. Wittgenstein argues that the only sayable things are propositions of the natural science, which are "empirically discoverable" (Anscombe 1971, 150). By means of questioning things that are not

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[7] Alternatively, concerning metaphysics, we can refer to *TLP* once again: "There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical" (*TLP* §6.522).

[8] In this context, *TLP* itself is a work full of nonsensical statements. Thence, Wittgenstein proposes the readers to *throw away the ladder* once they have climbed up: "My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them – as steps – to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.) He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright" (*TLP* §6.54).

empirically discoverable, traditional philosophy consistently penetrates to the metaphysical terrain. However, according to Wittgenstein, "the correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said; what we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" (*TLP* §6.53, §7).

To sum up, it may be appropriate to make use of a schematic represantation – depicting a Tractarian set of sentences/propositions – first, and then conclude with a couple of remarks. From a Tractarian perspective, every sentence can be placed in the following set.
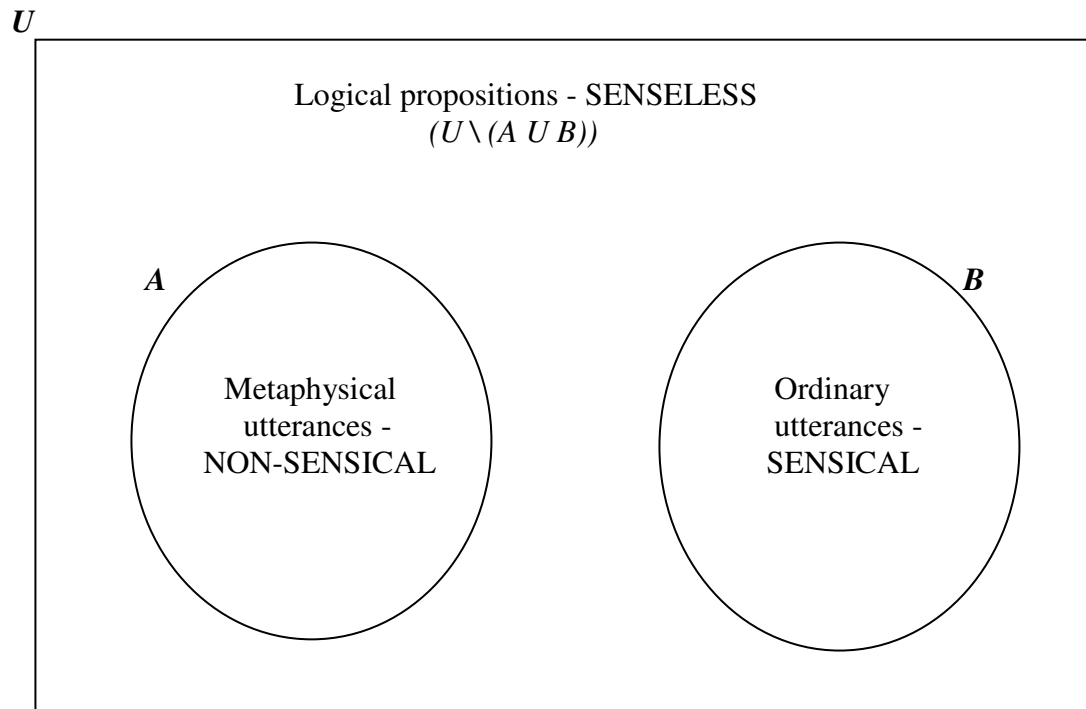
U

Logical propositions - SENSELESS
(U \ (A U B))

A

Metaphysical
utterances -
NON-SENSICAL

B

Ordinary
utterances -
SENSICAL

Figure 1 – Tractarian set of sentences

19

Basically, Wittgenstein argues that *A* is the domain of metaphysical philosophy. According to him, philosophy should be based on *B* in order to be in relation with the world of facts. In this sense, *TLP* was an effort towards investigating what can be shown rather than said. Moreover, it proposes the claim that philosophy should achieve this without intervening with metaphysics. In this context, Wittgenstein comes up with crucial remarks: (i) the world can be mapped onto logic; however, logical propositions, tautologies and contradictions, would be insufficient in terms of representing the truth, (ii) rather, language should be regarded as a picturing process; meaningful sentences are the atomic elements of a language; these sentences acquire their truth values in accordance with the state of affairs: the correspondence between what the sentence signifies and what the reality is will determine whether the sentence is true or false, (iii) for a sentence to be meaningful, its signification should be verified; otherwise, it would be a metaphysical utterance from which philosophy should refrain.

One last word concerning *TLP* can be the following: *TLP* itself is a metaphysical work (*TLP* §6.54) which is against metaphysics. When he turned back to Cambridge, in 1929, Wittgenstein aimed at overcoming this dilemma. In the next section, his later philosophy will be scrutinized from this perspective.

2.2. Later Wittgenstein: Post-*Tractatus*

The following statement seems to be the one most clearly depicting later Wittgenstein's position; what he tries to overcome and how: "the greatest danger that threatens the mind in philosophizing comes from the metaphysical tendency that takes over it and completely topples the grammatical" (2000).[9] So, according to later Wittgenstein, the problematic of philosophy is *still* that of metaphysics. However, this time, in order to overcome metaphysical philosophy, he imposes a grammatical approach rather than a logical one. Newton Garver depicts this methodological shift by means of modifying previously stated motto of early Wittgenstein: "Philosophy consists of grammar and metaphysics: grammar is its basis" (1999, 42).

The next question is then as follows: What does Wittgenstein mean by "grammar"? As he puts in *Philosophical Grammar* (henceforth *PG*): "Grammar is not accountable to any reality. It is grammatical rules that determine meaning (constitute it) and so they themselves are not answerable to any meaning and to that extent are arbitrary" (*PG* §133). So, all the rules, including the syntactical ones, build the grammar. Grammar, then, consists of the rules for the use of language and it is

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[9] The phrase originally appears in *Wittgenstein's Nachlass, The Bergen Electronic Edition*, yet it is cited from Oskari Kuusela's translation in his article "From Metaphysics and Philosophical Theses to Grammar: Wittgenstein's Turn" (2005, 95).

21

determined *in* the language on an arbitrary basis.[10] In order to figure out this, as Wittgenstein asserts in *Philosophical Investigations* (henceforth *PI*), the "tendency to sublime the logic of our language" (*PI* §38) should be given up;[11] instead, the actual language, and its arbitrariness, should be addressed:

> The more narrowly we examine actual language, the sharper becomes the conflict between it and our requirement. (For the crystalline purity of logic was, of course, not a *result of investigation*: it was a requirement.) The conflict becomes intolerable; the requirement is now in danger of becoming empty.— We have got on to slippery ice where there is no friction and so in a certain sense the conditions are ideal, but also, just because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need *friction*. Back to the rough ground! (*PI* §107)

By the very first sections of *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein clearly demonstrates how he will walk on the rough ground. Citing a passage from St. Augustine's *Confessions*, Wittgenstein objects to the act of considering a language just as a naming process. According to later Wittgenstein, use of language is not an ordinary process of naming objects; rather, it should be considered as a game – 'language-game'. Since every action related to the actual language is part of the game, any utterance is nothing other than a new move in the game. Nevertheless, any positioning out of a move can only be attainable with respect to others. That is, any utterance will certainly require the existence of others to mean something. This, however, would take away the meaning of any utterance from the mind. In other

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[10] The arbitrariness of language will be further discussed when we examine Saussure's semiology.

[11] According to Wittgenstein, only this way it will be possible to abstain from metaphysics.

words, Wittgenstein argues that meaning cannot be conceived as an entity in minds; rather meaning's property of being "public" should be realized (Baç 2001, 49). To do this, it is necessary to investigate the notion of language-games.

2.2.1. Language-games

As previously stated, Wittgenstein argues that language is not a naming process. Correspondingly, learning a language is more than just learning the words and the rules of it. In order to show this, Wittgenstein designs an example that is built upon Augustine's argumentation:[12]

> Let us imagine a language for which the description given by Augustine is right. The language is meant to serve for communication between a builder A and an assistant B. A is building with building-stones: there are blocks, pillars, and slabs and beams. B has to pass the stones, and that in the order in which A needs them. For this purpose, they use a language consisting of the words "block", "pillar", "slab", "beam". A calls them out; – B brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such-and-such a call. – Conceive this as a complete primitive language. (*PI* §2)

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[12] At this point, it seems necessary to put down the citation from Augustine's *Confessions*: "When they (my elders) named some object, and accordingly moved towards something, I saw this and I grasped that the thing was called by the sound they uttered when they meant to point it out. Their intention was shewn by their bodily movements, as it were the natural language of all peoples: the expression of the face, the play of the eyes, the movement of other parts of the body, and the tone of voice which expresses our state of mind in seeking, having, rejecting, or avoiding something. Thus, as I heard words repeatedly used in their proper places in various sentences, I gradually learnt to understand what objects they signified; and after I had trained my mouth to form these signs, I used them to express my own desires" (*PI* §1).

Wittgenstein describes this as a primitive language since, though the example shows a correct way of learning by training, it does not completely represent how the language functions. That is, the assistant learn the words 'slab' and 'beam' through the naming of objects. However, this method would not be applicable for names of people and demonstratives such as 'this' or 'that'. Therefore, considering language only as a naming process, and ascribing meaning to this process would lead to an incomplete – primitive – language. As Wittgenstein asserts:

> It is important to note that the word "meaning" is being used illicitly if it is used to signify the thing that 'corresponds' to the word. That is to confound the meaning of a name with the *bearer* of the name. When Mr. N. N. dies one says that the bearer of the name dies, not that the meaning dies. And it would be nonsensical to say that, for if the name ceased to have meaning it would make no sense to say "Mr. N. N. is dead." (*PI* §40)

So, learning and using a language is not a single-staged naming process. Rather, "we learn and teach words in certain contexts, and then we are expected, and expect others, to be able to project them into further contexts" (Cavell 1969, 52). This, Wittgenstein calls "the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, a 'language-game'" (*PI* §7). Only after comprehending this, one can realize that "speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a life-form" (*PI* §23). This can only be possible by means of an agreement – not in opinions but in form of life (*PI* §241). So, what is conceived as a form of life is comprised of a 'multiplicity of language-games'. The innumerable language-games form a fully connected network as they are based on an agreement.

24

In order to understand this fully connected, never closed system of language-games, it is appropriate to consider the case of an ostensive definition.[13] Wittgenstein argues that though it is believed to be the way of signifying an object uniquely, *even* "an ostensive definition can be variously interpreted in *every* case" (*PI* §28). In order to show this, he employs the following example:

> Perhaps you say: two can only be ostensively defined in *this* way: "This *number* is called 'two'". For the word "number" here shews what *place* in language, in grammar, we assign to the word. But this means that the word "number" must be explained before the ostensive definition can be understood. – The word "number" in the definition does indeed shew this place; does shew the post at which we station the word. And we can prevent misunderstandings by saying: "This *colour* is called so-and-so", "This *length* is called so-and-so", and so on. That is to say: misunderstandings are sometimes averted in this way. But is there only *one* way of taking the word "colour" or "length"? – Well, they just need defining. – Defining, then, by means of other words! (*PI* §29)

By means of introducing the notion of language-games, Wittgenstein notifies that language is a multiplicity that "is not something fixed, given once and for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and forgotten" (*PI* §23). So, with its 'countless different kinds of use', language is not – and will never be – a closed totality.[14] It is in this

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[13] An ostensive definition is "the gesture of pointing to the object meant while uttering the appropriate linguistic sign" (Summerfield 1999, 108).

[14] Referring to Stanley Cavell; "the 'routes of initiation' are never closed" (1979, 180).

flux, which is determined by nothing but contingent agreement, that the meaning is situated.[15]

Most basically, according to later Wittgenstein, "the meaning of a word is its use in the language" (*PI* §43).[16] More accurately, in *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein puts it as:

> …A meaning of a word is a kind of employment of it.
> For it is what we learn when the word is incorporated into our language. (§61)
> That is why there exists a correspondence between the concepts 'rule' and 'meaning'. (§62)
> Compare the meaning of a word with the 'function' of an official. And 'different meanings' with 'different functions'. (*OC* §64)

Hence, learning the meaning of a word is only possible by means of learning that particular word's 'use in the language'. More accurately, and in Wittgensteinian terms, in order to learn a language, it is the rule-following that should be learned.

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[15] What Wittgenstein alleges seems to be a *permanent disequilibrium* that was also argued by Nietzsche against the Western metaphysics. In his influential work *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche explicates the flux as follows: "If the world had a goal, it must have been reached. If there were for it some unintended final state, this also must have been reached. If it were in any way capable of a pausing and becoming fixed, of 'being', if in the whole course of its becoming it possessed even for a moment this capability of 'being', then all becoming would long since have come to an end, along with all thinking, all 'spirit'. The fact of 'spirit' as a form of becoming proves that the world has no goal, no final state, and is incapable of being" (1968, §1064). For a detailed discussion of common points between the philosophies of Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, see Aydan Turanlı's, "Nietzsche and the Later Wittgenstein: An Offense to the Quest for Another World", and Mick J. Bowles', "The Practice of Meaning in Nietzsche and Wittgenstein" both in *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, Issue 26, 2003.

[16] As Barry Stroud pinpoints "the meaning is use" has been interpreted in many different ways (1999, 300). This is also the case with the *Private Language Argument* which will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.2. Rule Following

Modifying *PI* §202[17] slightly, Peter Stiers states that "'following a rule' is a praxis" (2000, 202). Since language is an articulatory practice that is based on agreement (on a form of life), rule-following is correlated with the agreement. Consequently, Wittgenstein asserts that: "The word 'agreement' and the word 'rule' are *related* to one another, they are cousins. If I teach anyone the use of one word, he learns the use of the other with it" (*PI* §202).

So, human beings took part in language-games by means of following the rules that are based on an agreement. In this respect, language-games are not different from the other games. As any chess player is compelled to obey the rules of the game of chess, any person who wants to use – be able to speak and understand – a language should also follow the rules of that particular language.

Rule is not an abstract conception for Wittgenstein. In fact, any concrete item enabling the conventional learning of language should be regarded as a rule. Imitating basic human activities such as the noises that others make is kind of a rule following. In his words, "to obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are *customs* (uses, institutions)" (*PI* §206). That is to say, following/obeying a rule is a social practice, which is solely based on customs. For

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[17] "[…] obeying a rule is a practice" (*PI* §202).

this reason, there is no neat definition of a rule; accordingly, rule-following is not limited to a predetermined set of actions. These two, rather, are determined in social practice.

This brings us to the undefined nature of games. According to Wittgenstein, it is not possible to exactly define what a game is:

> How should we explain someone what a game is? I imagine that we should describe *games* to him, and we might add: "This *and similar things* are called 'games'". And do we know any more about it ourselves? Is it only other people whom we cannot tell exactly what a game is? – But this is not ignorance. We do not know the boundaries because none have been drawn. (*PI* §69)

It is crucial to note that "[we] are only playing [games] with words" and "the games form a family" (*PI* §67). Wittgenstein introduces the concept of 'family resemblances' in order to show that, like the similarities leading us to a conclusion that two persons are a father and a son, it is the similarities upon which we decide whether a particular conversation is a language-game or not. To do this, people intuitively *look* for – not *think* about – resemblances. Depending on a conversation's resemblance with the previous language-games one took part in, s/he would intuitively decide on whether it is a language-game or not. The criterion for checking this process is simple: only in a language-game parties would agree upon a common meaning. So, the orders "Bring me sugar" and "Bring me milk" make sense, but not the combination "Milk me sugar" (*PI* §498). As Wittgenstein argues

"to say 'this combination of words makes no sense' excludes it from the sphere of language and thereby bounds the domain of language" (*PI* §499).

To sum up, not only the rules but also the boundaries of language are socially, hence contingently, determined. According to Wittgenstein, "following a rule is analogous to obeying an order" (*PI* §206). However, it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately'; otherwise, thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it (*PI* §202). Then the question is the following: is it possible to form a language *privately*? In other words, is a language that can only be understood by the person speaking it possible? The next section concentrates on the *Private Language Argument* which is considered Wittgenstein's answer to this question.

2.2.3. Private Language Argument

Though Wittgenstein never employed the clause the Private Language Argument (henceforth PLA) himself, labeled as such has been one of the most controversial themes of his study. It is appropriate to start examining PLA with *PI*'s §243, which has been the origin of both the clause and the discussions:

> But could we also imagine a language in which a person could write down or give vocal expression to his inner experiences – his feelings, moods, and the rest – for his private use? — Well, can't we do so in our ordinary language? – But that is not what I mean. The individual words of this language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private

sensations. So another person cannot understand the language. (*PI* §243)

So, what Wittgenstein refers as *private* is a language that "another person cannot understand". However, Wittgenstein is far from any conclusion concerning private language; rather, he questions the possibility of it. For this reason, the PLA is a product of the scholars who worked on Wittgenstein's later philosophy and not that of Wittgenstein's §243. As David Stern states, many scholars believed and argued that "Wittgenstein must be giving some argument from theses that we can all accept to the conclusion that a private language is impossible" (1995, 175).

One of the major passages that led many scholars to this conclusion is §258. Here, Wittgenstein exemplifies a person who takes notes to a diary about her/his feelings:

> Let us imagine the following case. I want to keep a diary about the recurrence of a certain sensation. To this end I associate it with the sign "*S*" and write this sign in a calendar for every day on which I have the sensation. – I will remark first of all that a definition of the sign cannot be formulated. – But still I can give myself a kind of ostensive definition. – How? Can I point to the sensation? Not in the ordinary sense. But I speak, or write the sign down, and at the same time I concentrate my attention on the sensation – and so, as it were, point to it inwardly. – But what is this ceremony for? For that is all it seems to be! A definition surely serves to establish the meaning of a sign. – Well, that is done precisely by the concentration of my attention; for in this way I impress on myself the connexion between the sign and the sensation. – But "I impress it on myself" can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connexion *right* in future. But in the present case I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right'. (*PI* §258)

Here, Wittgenstein draws on the connection between the sensation and the sign ('S') that is constructed by the diary keeper. According to him, given that there is no 'criterion for correctness', it is not possible to talk about the *rightness* of the connection. What can be derived out of this? Among various widely-different arguments, two, which depicts the highly controversial nature of the discussion, are as follows: (i) Since, it is not possible to check whether the connection is right or wrong, the sign ('S') does not have a meaning at all; hence, there can be no private language, (ii) It is the *rightness* of the connection not the connection itself that is in question: since the connection between the sign and the sensation is uncheckable, it will not be possible to tell some other person the sensation by means of uttering 'S'; however, a private language is one "which describes my inner experiences and which only I myself can understand" (*PI* §256) is possible.

Among many interpretations of PLA,[18] two major ones – those of Saul Kripke's and

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[18] For an up to date coverage of PLA interpretations see Stephen Law's "Five Private Language Arguments", in *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 12-2, 2004. Briefly, Law argues that there are five widely-known interpretations of PLA, yet in none of these interpretations is the argument cogent (2004, 159). Law identifies these interpretations as The Strongly Verificationist No-Independent-Check Argument, The Weakly Verificationist No-Independent-Check Argument, The Circularity Argument, The Stage-Setting Argument, and Kenny's Private Language Argument (2004, 162).
Most popular of these interpretations are the two No-Independent-Check Arguments (NIC Arguments) both of which depends on the following idea: one does not have any 'criterion of correctness' for checking whether s/he is applying 'S' correctly or not. Hence, NIC Argument requires a verification principle. Depending on their choice between a general verification principle or a modest verification principle, a large number of scholars can be regarded as requiring either a strongly verificationist NIC Argument interpretator or a weakly verificationist NIC Argument interpretator.
Circulatory Argument, on the other hand, argues that 'criterion of correctness' fails through being viciously circular (2004, 170). That is, to apply 'S' correctly can only be attained through referencing to a past experience. Such an action generates a circular movement that is originated from correlating a word with a mental sample and does not necessitate any verificationist premise.

Stanley Cavell's – will be addressed here. Of many studies on PLA, without doubt, Kripke's effort has been the most influential one. His book, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, has been frequently referred to by all Wittgenstein scholars. In his work, Kripke ascribed a radically sceptic position to Wittgenstein and *PI*. According to him; "Wittgenstein is committed to the thesis that there is never any fact of the matter about what a speaker's utterance means" (Stern 1995, 176). Kripke argues that Wittgensteinian meaning was based on a *skeptical paradox* that is disclosed in *PI* §201.[19] In particular, via *PI* §202 – "it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately'" –Wittgenstein set out the impossibility of a private language; in this sense, *PI* §243 only serves as a proof by counterexample (Kripke 1982, 89). Since, according to Kripke's Wittgenstein, a private language is impossible, meaning can only be determined in context. However, according to Kripke, justification of a contextually determined meaning is untenable (1982, 66). This way, he concludes that Wittgensteinian meaning is radically sceptical.

Just like the Circulatory Argument, Stage-Setting Argument is also free from any verificationist premise. According to Marie McGinn, Wittgenstein brought forward the diary case because correction of 'S' initially requires the definition of 'S' that is only possible by means of a stage-setting in the language (2004, 172).

The last interpretation of the PLA is again a non-verificationist one, named as Kenny's Private Language Argument. According to Stephen Law, Anthony Kenny's Private Language Argument requires that any rule–follower be infallible about how their rule should be applied (2004, 173).

All these interpretations – and many other discussions on various other texts –clearly exhibit how controversial the PLA is. Moreover, it is also crucial to note that discussions around the PLA do not center on meaning at all. Rather, they mainly refer to either human learning as a psychological issue or to solipsism – the possibility of knowing the other minds.

[19] "This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because any course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if *any* action can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here" (*PI* §201).

Another crucial commentary on PLA is given by Stanley Cavell. In his highly influential work, *The Claim of Reason*, Cavell points out that "Wittgenstein does not say that there can be no private language" (1979, 344). Rather, Wittgenstein questions the possibility of 'imagining' such a language. According to Cavell:

> The upshot of this question turns out to be that we cannot really imagine this, or rather that there is nothing of the sort to imagine, or rather that when we as it were try to imagine this we are imagining something other than we think. (The upshot is not about the failure of imagination, and nor is it about the non-existence of a private language, for there may yet well be something rightly to be called a private language.)
> […] Evidently, the effort is to illuminate something about the publicness of language, something about the *depth* to which language is agreed in. (1979, 344)

So, a huge literature of discussions on PLA is available. This study is far from coming up with a conclusion on this highly debatable notion. In fact, PLA does not lie at the center of discussions on meaning; rather, it is more related with the problem of other minds. Therefore, as far as this study is concerned, it is adequate to conclude with one statement upon which almost all PLA interpretations agree: *Language is socially-constructed and meaning is situated in context.*

2.2.4. Meaning, Grammar, and Use

So far, by means of introducing the key notions, I have tried to argue that, according to Wittgenstein, language is not a naming process. More than that, it is a publicized,

social phenomenon that is based on contingencies. It is not in the human mind, but

in a state of flux – flow of life – that meaning is situated. At this point, the relation

between the assertion that 'meaning is use' and contextualism should be clarified.

For this purpose, it will be appropriate to refer to Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*

(henceforth *OC*). In §347 and §348, he argues that:

> As soon as I think of an everyday use of the sentence instead of a philosophical one, its meaning becomes clear and ordinary. (*OC* §347)
> Just as the words 'I am here' have a meaning only in certain contexts, and not when I say them to someone who is sitting in front of me and sees me clearly, – and not because they are superfluous, but because their meaning is not *determined* by the situation, yet stands in need of such determination. (*OC* §348)

So, the meaning of 'I am here' is not determined by the situation; rather, it is placed

in that situation, standing still in need of determination. Will it be ever finally

determined? Not really. Steven Shaviro explicates Wittgenstein's point clearly:

> Meaning is use, though a word's meaning is not *determined* by its use, not even by the sum of all possible or actual uses. Rather, the question of determination does not even arise. Meaning is *situated* in a given context, but not determined by it. A context is not an overarching structure (even a decentered one) that assigns or circumscribes a particular meaning or function, but a concrete social situation, a practice or group of practices, the circumstances in the course of which something like a meaning might be invoked. (1986, 224)

So, the meaning of a sentence is not a property of it (Conant 1998, 241). In other

words, sentences do not have meaning in themselves. They become meaningful only

34

within a context yet do not possess meaning. Consequently, meaning is not part of an entity but part of a being which is re-determined at ever single moment – through every particular language-game. As Peter Hacker argues; "to know the meaning of 'A', like to know the length of 'X' […] is not to be acquainted with an entity" (2005, 17). Turning back to Wittgenstein's example, the sentence 'I am here' has different meanings in different contexts. However, none of the meanings is a property of the sentence.

Wittgenstein thinks that the fundamental problem of Western metaphysics lies here. According to him, "one cannot guess how a word functions; one has to *look at* its use and learn from that" (*PI* §340). Learning is not a single-stage process. In fact, since meaning is subject to use, the function of a word should be *re-learned* in every single language-game. This, however, necessitates overcoming a great prejudice which Wittgenstein ascribes to traditional philosophers:

> A philosopher says that he understands the sentence 'I am here', that he means something by it, thinks something – as even when he doesn't think at all how, on what occasions, this sentence is used. (*PI* §514)

What Wittgenstein argues is that, philosophers should give up their prejudices which lead to the claim that 'philosophical language is different from the ordinary language'. Transferring words from their home of language-games (ordinary language) to a metaphysical domain would render them meaningless. It should not

be forgotten that "we are talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, non-temporal chimera" (*PI* §108). Keeping this in mind, what should be done "is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use" (*PI* §116).[20]

This certainly is a rejection of any kind of essentialism. In this regard, Wittgenstein repudiates all the theses of Idealists, Solipsists, and Realists (*PI* §402). According to him, "*essence* is expressed in grammar" (*PI* §371); where "grammar does not tell us how language must be constructed in order to fulfill its purpose; […] it only describes and in no way explains the use of signs" (*PI* §496). So, grammar, which is the rules of the use of language, is about what there *is* rather than what there *could* be. Accordingly, "the rules of grammar may be called 'arbitrary'" (*PI* §497).

To sum up, later Wittgenstein's assertion that 'meaning is use' is based on a view of language which concerns the actual life. In this sense, more than privileging ordinary language over a philosophical one, Wittgenstein tries to dissolve such a differentiation. According to – both the early and the later – Wittgenstein, philosophy should refrain from metaphysics. To do this, later Wittgenstein argues that the contingent nature of language-games and meaning should be realized. Only by this means, philosophical utterances/propositions can become meaningful.

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[20] First paragraph of *PI* §116 also reveals the *fundamental error* of Western metaphysics in different words: "When philosophers use a word – 'knowledge', 'being', 'object', 'I', 'proposition', 'name' – and try to grasp the *essence* of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language which is its original home?–" (*PI* §116)

So far, Wittgensteinian arguments on meaning have been analyzed. In order to link this analysis to the post-structural theory of meaning and discourse theory, however, the shift – i.e. the linguistic turn – should be examined. To this end, next chapter will address linguistic turn as the era of meaning. In this context, I will discuss four different linguistic theories, which are considered to be effective on the turn.

CHAPTER 3

LINGUISTIC TURN: THE ERA OF MEANING

> *All linguistic philosophers talk about the world by means of talking about a suitable language. This is the linguistic turn, the fundamental gambit as to method, on which ordinary and ideal language philosophers agree. Equally fundamentally, they disagree on what it is in this sense a "language" and what it makes "suitable".*
>
> Gustav Bergman

The phrase 'linguistic turn' was initially employed by Gustav Bergmann, yet it got popular only after Richard Rorty edited an anthology named as *The Linguistic Turn* in 1967. According to Bergmann, the phrase signifies a paradigm shift by which all linguistic philosophers started to talk about the world by means of talking about a suitable language (1964, 177). No matter whether it is the ordinary language or an ideal language that is referred to as the suitable language,[21] the turn completely changed the attitude towards the language. Language is not conceived as the basic tool used for labeling anymore; in fact, it is widely accepted that *it is the language*

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[21] Though it is possible to talk about a consensus concerning linguistic philosophers, general attitude towards the shift, there was also a great conflict emerging from defining the suitable language. Two opposite groups can be classified as the ordinary language philosophers and the ideal language philosophers.

that constitutes the social. As a consequence, what took place was not a substitution of 'discourse' for 'ideology'; more than that, the turn signified a new era in which the semiotics of the symbolic exchange would take over the role of explaining reality from the material concepts of economy and production. So, what was put forward by the linguistic turn is against the materialist and essentialist explanations of reality more than anything else. In this respect, the turn can be considered as an epistemological break and it was Wittgenstein who was one of the progenitors of it.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Wittgenstein argues that the whole process of using words is like making moves in a game, which he named as the 'language-games' (*PI* §7). So, according to him, all the discursive practices are nothing but language-games. In any language-game, the meaning of a word is determined by its use in the language (*PI* §43). What is crucial is that Wittgenstein argues that language-games are unique in terms of constituting reality: "It is only in a language that [we] can mean something by something" (*PI* 16). So, there is no way to get outside of the language; it is all in this system that the reality is constituted through discursive practices. Correspondingly, language was defined by Wittgenstein as a closed system but not a fixed one. In other words, language-games do not constitute a fixed totality. As Wittgenstein asserts:

> There are *countless* kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call "symbols", "words", "sentences". And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once and for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get

> forgotten. […] Here the term "language-game" is meant to
> bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language
> is part of an activity, or of a life-form. (*PI* §23)

Consequently, language, speech and writing, can never be fully referential (Purvis et. al. 1993, 485).[22] Reminding of Gödel's *Incompleteness Theorem*, this argument points out the permanently incomplete nature of meaning. Keeping this in mind, the basic question can be formulated as follows: How is meaning derived in any (social) network of communication? This chapter will be a preliminary effort in which four different linguistic theories will be investigated with reference to this question. I will examine the theories of Ferdinand de Saussure, Mikhail Bakhtin / Valentin Voloshinov, John L. Austin, and Willard Van Orman Quine before reconsidering Wittgensteinian meaning and its effect on the linguistic turn in the next chapter.

3.1. Saussure's Semiology

According to Saussure, language is a system of signs. It is not the unique system of conventions, yet the most important one for various reasons. In his own words:

> *A science that studies the life of signs within society* is
> conceivable; it would be a part of social psychology and
> consequently of general psychology; I shall call it *semiology*
> (from the Greek *sēmeîon* 'sign')…Linguistics is only a part

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[22] Though it is only about the act of writing, Gilles Deleuze's comment is also noteworthy in this respect: "Writing is a question of becoming, always incomplete, always in the midst of being formed, and goes beyond the matter of any liveable or lived experience. It is a process, that is, a passage of Life that traverses both the liveable and the lived. Writing is inseparable from becoming" (1997, 225).

of the general science of semiology; the laws discovered by semiology will be applicable to linguistics, and the latter will circumscribe a well-defined area within the mass of anthropological facts. (1974, 16)

The sign, the central fact of language, is a form that signifies. It is a union comprising the signifier and the signified. Saussure argues that both the signifier and the signified are non-material, psychological forms (1974, 113).[23] These two non-material forms are components of a sign, the value of which is derived from the relationship between the two.

At the outset, linguistic theory of Saussure is built upon the following principle: the linguistic sign is arbitrary and it is this arbitrariness that provides meaning to the sign. That is, any particular combination of a signifier and a signified is a completely arbitrary entity. Arbitrary nature of the sign implies that there is no natural or inevitable link – a causality relation – between the signifier and the signified.

In addition to the arbitrary relation between the signifier and the signified, Saussure pointed out a second level of arbitrariness which concerns the signifier only. Saussure argued that the signifier is arbitrary in the sense that it is not a label for either a pre-existing thought or a pre-existing external object. Hence, according to him, there is no causal relationship between language and the world of things. Consequently, he claimed that before the existence of language, nothing was structured. That is, "without language, thought is a vague and uncharted nebula;

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[23] According to Saussure, "language is a form not a substance" (1974, 122).

there are no pre-existing ideas, and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language" (1974, 112).

Dieter Freundlieb states that by means of denying the existence of pre-linguistic concepts, Saussure completely excluded the dimension of reference (1988, 811). As a result, this led to a point where meaning of a sign is solely determined with respect to other signs in the system. That is to say, meaning of a sign is determined by what it is not; e.g. it is tree since it is not spoon, book etc. In Saussure's own words: "Language is a system of interdependent terms in which the value of each term results solely from the simultaneous presence of the others" (1974, 114).

More than any other issue, this radical approach was a complete rejection of the nomenclature approach according to which a language is nothing but an assignment of names to a set of existing objects. Saussure argues that the sign 'tree' has nothing to do with the entity of a tree. Indeed, in terms of the determination of meaning, it is the difference of a sign from others that is crucial. Identity of a sign is a function of differences within the system. Hence, according to Saussure, a linguistic sign has a purely relational identity.

Saussure's non-materialistic theory of linguistic sign was widely discussed in 1920s. by the end of the decade, in 1929, Valentin Voloshinov directed a materialist critique to Saussure's psychological and idealist model of language. In his work,

Marxism and the Philosophy of Language,[24] Voloshinov described Saussure as an abstract objectivist where he described abstract objectivism as "the linguistic system as a system of the phonetic, grammatical, and lexical forms of language" (1973, 52). Rejecting Saussure's theory, Voloshinov argued that every sign "has some kind of material embodiment, whether in sound, physical mass, color, movements of the body or the like" (1973, 11). According to him, and also to the other members of the Bakhtin Circle, language has a concrete material reality and meaning is a function of the relationship between the signs – material things.

3.2. Contextuality of Meaning: Theories of Voloshinov and Bakhtin

Linguistic theory of Bakhtin Circle[25] can be described as a breakaway from two views, which are the individualistic subjectivism and the abstract objectivism. Individualistic subjectivists, pioneered by Karl Vossler and Wilhelm Dilthey, argued that language is composed of and evolves through unique speech-acts where the uniqueness is explained by the intentions of the individual mind – human psyche. According to Voloshinov, though they found the right origin – concrete and actual

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[24] Regarding the long-lasting dispute about the authorship of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, it will be Voloshinov rather than Bakhtin that will be referred as the author of this work. I will refer to both Bakhtin and Voloshinov in the discussion concerning the linguistic theory of Bakhtin Circle.

[25] The term 'Bakthin Circle' is used to refer to a group of Russian thinkers came together after the October Revolution. Though contributions of some other thinkers may also be included, core group consists of three thinkers that are Bakhtin, Voloshinov and Medvedev. Writings by these thinkers during 1920s include three major texts: Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoyevksy's Poetics*, Voloshinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, and Medvedev's *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*.

speech-acts – individualistic subjectivists followed the wrong path of human consciousness. On the other hand, it was Saussure, the founder of modern structuralism and semiotics, who introduced abstract objectivism. As recently discussed, Saussurean *langue* is a fixed, closed system with a certain structure. Meaning emerges arbitrarily in this closed system. Utilization of this system, *parole*, is not something more than efforts of amending that can and should not be studied.

In contrast, Bakhtin argued that the study of language as a signifying system could not be divorced from a consideration of the other aspects of the culture of which it formed a part. According to Bakhtin, language is shaped by the social stage of its utterance so that the word draws its meaning from its social function rather than from its location within a hermetic system. In other words, though meaning is arbitrary according to both Saussure and Bakhtin, Bakhtin attributes meaning to arbitrariness of the speech-act; not to an abstract, closed system of *langue*. He writes:

> […] the study of verbal art can and must overcome the divorce between an abstract "formal" approach and an equally abstract "ideological" approach. Form and content in discourse are one, once we understand that verbal discourse is a social phenomenon – social throughout its entire range and in each and every of its factors, from the sound image to the furthest reaches of abstract meaning. (1990, 259)

Similar to the theory of Saussure, differences also play a vital role in that of Voloshinov's yet in a completely different manner. According to Voloshinov,

ideology is only possible as a reflection and refraction of reality.[26] The refraction is completely apart from the material's own reality; it provides/generates the meaning. So, having meaning by itself is what being ideological is. The process of reflection and refraction of reality is only possible by means of utilizing signs. Hence, Voloshinov states that "without signs there is no ideology" (1973, 9). That is, "the domain of ideology coincides with the domain of signs" (Voloshinov 1973, 10).[27]

According to Voloshinov, the refraction of reality, ideology itself, does not possess a *unicity* – a unified totality. Rather, he suggests that each particular field of activity refracts reality in a different manner; this difference is due to the social function of the activity. Signs exist in this terrain of communication between organized individuals – socialized human beings. Correspondingly, ideology is located in the social environment – in the interindividual/shared territory. Therefore, Voloshinov argues that it is not possible to talk about human consciousness without socialized individuals who communicate by means of signs.

Among all other signs, Voloshinov attached a special importance to the "word". What makes word unique is a list of properties. First of all, a word can and would

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[26] He explains this as follows: "Any ideological product is not only itself a part of reality (natural or social), just as is any physical body, any instrument of production, or any product for consumption, it also, in contradistinction to these other phenomena, reflects and refracts another reality outside itself. Everything ideological possesses *meaning*: it represents, depicts, or stands for something lying outside itself. In other words, it is a sign. *Without signs there is no ideology*" (1973, 9).

[27] For this reason, according to Voloshinov, "wherever a sign is present, ideology is present, too. *Everything ideological possesses semiotic value*" (1973, 10).

carry out any ideological function and yet it is neutral by itself. Moreover, it can function as the sign of the inner employment. Mostly due to this, no other form of sign stays without interaction with the word. For this reason, "*the word is the ideological phenomenon par excellence*" (Voloshinov 1973, 13). It is the only 'neutral sign' to which any ideological function, hence any meaning, can be attributed.

A crucial difference between Voloshinov and Saussure is the following: Contrary to Saussure, who accepted an ideal language as 'the' language, Voloshinov – and the other members of the Bakhtin Circle – were ordinary language linguists. The emphasis of the latter was clearly on the actual use of language in social contexts; that is, the language of real life. According to Voloshinov, what should be studied is nothing other than the actual speech acts – utterances. Focusing on utterance enables one to detect differences, processes, and 'progresses' that determine a language. After all, "a word in the mouth of a particular individual person is a product of the living interaction of social forces" (Voloshinov 1973, 41). For this reason, any language-game is a polyphonic activity, a dialogue of multiple voices (Medina 2004b, 573).

Multiple voices are certainly linked with multiple social classes. Different social classes have different interests and needs. These different interests and needs give

birth to different speech genres all of which are located in the same language.[28]

However, these various speech genres are not direct products of the social classes.

Rather, they emerge in the context of a dialogue between different classes.

Correspondingly, speech genres are not static entities; in fact, they are products of

dialogues that are built upon conflicts. A change of a particular speech genre

perfectly mirrors a change of the particular social class and its position against the

other classes. On this point, regarding Voloshinov's thesis, Chik Collins says the

following:

> Language-use 'becomes an arena of class struggle'.
> Dominant groups seek to prevent and inhibit the
> development and dissemination of forms of speaking which
> might penetrate their claims to legitimacy. They seek, if not
> to eliminate social diversity in language-use, at least to
> contain it within manageable bounds, and to marginalize and
> invalidate the most offending variants. (2000, 44)

According to Voloshinov, language is shaped by the social stage of its utterance so

that the word draws its meaning from its social function rather than from its position

within an isolated hermetic system. In other words, meaning is arbitrary with respect

to the speech act, in contrast to Saussure's view that *langue* as a closed system is

arbitrary.

So, according to Bakhtin and Voloshinov, the word is placed in a constant struggle

in order to accomplish meaning. For this reason, ideological function is not

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[28] Speech genres are the multi-speech forms that generate Bakhtinian *heteroglossia* – "a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships" (1990, 263).

immanent to a word; rather, a word can be employed for any ideology. Meaning is a

function of the particular cultural and discursive field. In other words, meaning is

inherently polysemic and unstable (Gardiner 1992, 15). It is the unstable nature of

meaning that provides space to discourse to grow on a permanent basis.

Correspondingly, concerning meaning, ordinary language – *parole* – rather than an

ideal language – *langue* – should be studied. For this purpose, speech genres should

be addressed. As Bakhtin asserts:

> The wealth and diversity of speech genres are boundless
> because the various possibilities of human activity are
> inexhaustible, and because each sphere of activity contains
> an entire repertoire of speech genres that differentiate and
> grow as the particular sphere develops and becomes more
> complex. (1986, 60)

In addition to the members of Bakhtin Circle, J. L. Austin also addressed ordinary

language for the quest of meaning yet with a completely different perspective.

3.3. Austin's Speech Act Theory

According to Austin, words are used to do things. In his own words: "The issuing of

an utterance is the performing of an action" (1962, 6). That is to say, rather than

signifying an action, speech itself is an action. By this means, Austin tried to

overcome the reduction of utterances to the degree of reporting facts or describing

situations either truly or falsely (1979, 233). He argued that acts of speeches that do

not describe or constate something should be regarded as *speech acts*. Speech acts, which are performative utterances, are more than just *sayings*; they are themselves *doings*. Since they are not sole representations of reality, contrary to constatives, performative utterances are not truth-evaluable. In his own words:

> These [performative utterances] are not going to be utterances which contain curious verbs like 'could' or 'might', or curious words like 'good', which many philosophers regard nowadays simply as danger signals. They will be perfectly straightforward utterances, with ordinary verbs in the first person singular present indicative active, and yet we shall see at once that they couldn't possibly be true or false. Furthermore, if a person makes an utterance of this sort we should say that he is *doing* something rather than *saying* something. (1979, 235)

As an example of performative utterances, consider the following statement: "I name this ship the 'Queen Elizabeth'" (Austin 1962, 5). Certainly, this utterance is not truth-valuable. Moreover, it is a doing by itself; once it is performed, the particular ship will be named as 'Queen Elizabeth'.

In opposition with constatives, which are "declarative statements that are mere sayings or locutions whose function is to mirror the world" (Medina 2005, 14-15), performative utterances intervene with the world. Hence, by means of introducing performative utterances, Austin rejected philosophical descriptivism, which can be distinguished by its principal claim that *to say something is to state something*.

In order to explain the difference between constatives and performative utterances, Austin employed the difference between locutionary and illocutionary acts. A locutionary act, Austin explained, is "roughly equivalent to 'meaning' in the traditional sense" (1962, 109). Such linguistic acts own a truth-value: depending on whether they represent the reality or not, they will either get the value of true or false. On the other hand, illocutionary acts, such as informing, ordering, warning, or undertaking, "have a dimension of validity other than truth" (Medina 2005, 15). Austin labeled this dimension as "felicity". He argued that an illocutionary act, a performative utterance, can be performed either felicitously or infelicitously.

To put all these in more concrete terms, it would be suitable to follow an example. Let us consider the case of promising. Promising to do something is a performative utterance. The linguistic act of promising, uttering "I promise to do this" is by itself an action/a doing. Such an utterance is devoid of truth value; a promise cannot be evaluated as true or false. Rather, it can be regarded as felicitous or infelicitous. Promising for an action that is completely impossible would be an infelicitous act, not a false one. Felicity of an illocutionary act is determined by the felicity conditions which are social formations such as customs and traditions. That is, the felicity of a promise depends on many social conditions.

In addition to these two categories, locutionary and illocutionary acts, Austin mentions a third category; perlocutionary acts. A perlocutionary act is "what we

bring about or achieve by saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring, and even, say, surprising or misleading" (Austin 1962, 109). Like illocutions, perlocutions are performative utterances. The only difference between these two categories is the necessity of a third party for a perlocution to be performed. For example, the realization, thus the felicity of an utterance aiming at convincing an individual, depends on whether s/he is convinced by the statement or not. This type of utterances are the ones that make the force owned by language most visible.

At the end of his article "Performative Utterances", Austin concludes that language is made up of two components: content and force (1979, 251). According to him, content composes the locutionary part whereas the force of an element of a language is determined by its illocutionary aspect. Therefore, every utterance is comprised of a locutionary and illocutionary part. Among these two, it is the illocutionary part that determines meaning.[29] Similarly, in his article "The Meaning of a Word", he explicates having a meaning as follows:

> It may be justly be urged that, properly speaking, what alone has meaning is a *sentence*. Of course, we can speak quite properly of, for example, 'looking up the meaning of a word' in dictionary. Nevertheless, it appears that the sense in which a word or a phrase 'has a meaning' is derivative from the

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[29] So, it can be concluded that performative utterances and constatives are not two faculties that are mutually exclusive. In Medina's words: "Performatives do not constitute a distinctive class of utterances at all; all utterances are performative utterances! And thus Austin's original distinction between performatives and constatives turns out to be a distinction, not between different kinds of utterance, but rather, between two different components present in every utterance: *illocutionary force* and *locutionary content*" (2005, 24).

sense in which a sentence 'has a meaning': to say a word or a phrase 'has a meaning' is to say that there are sentences in which it occurs which 'have meanings': and to know the meanings which the word or phrase has, is to know the meanings of sentences in which it occurs. All the dictionary can do when we 'look up the meaning of a word' is to suggest aids to the understanding of sentences in which it occurs. Hence it appears correct to say that what 'has meaning' in the primary sense is the sentence. (1979, 36)

In order to figure out the meaning of a sentence, "what we have to study is not the sentence but the issuing of an utterance in a speech situation" (1962, 139). So, Austin, who privileged ordinary language, in a sense, redeemed meaning from the truth-condition. In this manner, he rejected absolute determinacy according to which the meaning of a term is fixed by a unique interpretation. Alternatively, he proposed a kind of contextualism attributing meaning to the particular situation – the context of an utterance.

So, though their theories are not much the same, both Bakhtin/Voloshinov and Austin argued that meaning is contextually determined. On the other hand, another philosopher, W. V. Quine, also rejected absolute determinacy yet in a more radical manner.

3.4. Quinean Indeterminacy

Quine's theory, which he called *semantic ascent*, was based on a "shift from talk of objects to talk of words" (1960, 271). What he proposed was a shift from the

material mode to a formal mode. He argued that, the discussion should be carried into a domain where an agreement would be possible. More explicitly, according to Quine, by means of subjecting words rather than material objects, it would become possible for individuals to agree on (Quine 196, 272).

To do this, one of the 'two dogmas of empiricism' should be overcome. According to Quine, the distinction between analytic and synthetic statements is a dogmatic one. That is to say, "a bachelor is an unmarried man" is an analytic statement since "it is true by virtue of meanings and independently of fact" (Quine 1951). On the other hand, a synthetic statement, "John is a bachelor", is true or false by virtue of facts (Quine 1951). Rejecting the logical positivist approach, Quine argued that domains of language and the real world are not mutually exclusive. For this reason, separating statements as analytic and synthetic would not serve to determine the truth-value of them, for the truth-value is a function of both domains. That is, a statement will acquire either a true or a false value referring both to the language and the empirical world. Referring to Quine's own example, what the word 'rabbit' means is not independent from the rabbit itself, knowledge of which can be only obtained from the empirical world. On the other hand, without knowing the meaning of the word 'rabbit', it would not be possible to gain knowledge of rabbits.

In order to understand the complex relation of meaning between the language and the world, Quine argued that it is necessary to consider the case of a *radical*

translation. A radical translation is one "of the language of a hitherto untouched people" (1960, 28). As Quine asserted, in a situation where a linguist tries to decipher a completely new language, s/he has only two sources of information: native utterances and observations. For this reason, when the linguist hears the native utter 'gavagai' in an occasion a rabbit runs away, s/he would note that 'gavagai' means something of the rabbit (Quine 1960, 29). In this manner, a relation between 'gavagai' and 'rabbit' would be constructed. The type of relation, whether 'gavagai' means an organ of the rabbit or its color or the rabbit itself, will be determined through observing other instances. In this respect, the linguist would solely depend on the assent or dissent of the native speaker: in order to check whether 'gavagai' signifies the rabbit itself or not, the next time they encounter with a rabbit, the linguist would utter 'gavagai?' and examine the gesture of the native speaker. By means of interpreting gestures of the native speaker as an assent or a dissent, the linguist would create a complete translation scheme between the two languages. However, such a work would not depend on empirical facts but rather on the gestures of the native speaker and their interpretations by the linguist. Alternatively, another linguist could accomplish another study and s/he can come up with a completely different translation manual between the two languages. (The utterance 'gagavai' would probably be linked with rabbit again yet it might have translated as to signify another property of the rabbit.) According to Quine, these two works of translation are equally justifiable as they are *underdetermined* by empirical data; rather, both are determined with the beliefs of the linguists.

This brings Quine to a point of ontological relativism where he found no difference between the existence of Homeric gods and that of physical objects:

> As an empiricist, I continue to think of the conceptual scheme of science as a tool, ultimately, for predicting future experience in the light of past experience. Physical objects are conceptually imported into the situation as convenient intermediaries – not by definition in terms of experience, but simply as irreducible posits comparable, epistemologically, to the gods of Homer. Let me interject that for my part I do, qua lay physicist, believe in physical objects and not in Homer's gods; and I consider it a scientific error to believe otherwise. But in the point of epistemological footing the physical object and the gods differ only in degree not in kind. Both sorts of entities enter our conception only as cultural posits. (1951)

According to Quine, meanings of sentences are not determined by empirical facts but by interpretation. For this reason, it is vital to note the unavoidable *indeterminacy of translation*. In Quine's own words:

> The thesis is then this: manuals for translating one language into another can be set up in divergent ways, all compatible with the totality of speech dispositions yet incompatible with one another. (1960, 27)

It is important to notice that, according to Quine, indeterminacy is not only a property of radical translations. All forms of translations, more generally all interpretations, have some degree of indeterminacy. So, similar to Austin yet in a different manner, Quine rejects the thesis of semantic uniqueness. Referring to Dewey, he argues that:

> Language is a social art which we all acquire on the evidence solely of other people's overt behavior under publicly recognizable circumstances. Meanings, therefore, those very models of mental entities, end up as grist for the behaviorist's mill. Dewey was explicit on the point: "Meaning … is not a psychic existence; it is primarily a property of behavior." (1969, 26-27)

So, according to Quine, meanings are not entities as there is no criterion of identity for them;[30] rather, they are *ontologically relative* to speakers' subjective interpretations that are determined by the speakers' beliefs. Every speaker utilizes her/his own *web of beliefs* in order to assign meaning to utterances.[31]

Yet, how can a consensus be established among subjective beliefs? According to Quine, this is not possible. That is, using the same words, even when uttering the very same sentences, we do not mean exactly the same thing. So, rejecting semantic uniqueness, Quine argues for a complete indeterminacy, an infinite multiplicity of meaning.

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[30] In his own terms: "no entity without identity" (1969, 23).

[31] In Quine's own words: "The totality of our so-called knowledge or beliefs, from the most casual matters of geography and history to the profoundest laws of atomic physics or even of pure mathematics and logic, is a man-made fabric which impinges on experience only along the edges. Or, to change the figure, total science is like a field of force whose boundary conditions are experience. A conflict with experience at the periphery occasions readjustments in the interior of the field. Truth values have to be redistributed over some of our statements. Re-evaluation of some statements entails re-evaluation of others, because of their logical interconnections – the logical laws being in turn simply certain further statements of the system, certain further elements of the field. Having re-evaluated one statement we must re-evaluate some others, whether they be statements logically connected with the first or whether they be the statements of logical connections themselves. But the total field is so undetermined by its boundary conditions, experience, that there is much latitude of choice as to what statements to re-evaluate in the light of any single contrary experience. No particular experiences are linked with any particular statements in the interior of the field, except indirectly through considerations of equilibrium affecting the field as a whole" (1951). In this context, Quine-Duhem thesis will be discussed in the next chapter.

Where does this discussion lead us to? Before considering Wittgenstein's conception of meaning and its relation with discourse, it is necessary to say that his approach does not completely overlap with any of the theories disclosed in this chapter. However, Wittgensteinian meaning, if it is possible to talk about a unique one, shows both similarities and dissimilarities with all these theories. For this reason, all the four theories we have seen will be employed for better positioning Wittgenstein's understanding of meaning. In the next chapter I will try to seek relations between these theories and Wittgensteinian meaning and linguistic turn and the discourse theory.

CHAPTER 4

WITTGENSTEINIAN MEANING

> *Words have meaning only in the stream of life.*
> Ludwig Wittgenstein

In this chapter, I will try to show Wittgenstein's influence on the linguistic turn and the emergence of discourse theory. For this purpose, first, a comparative reading of Wittgensteinian meaning and the linguistic theories in question seems to be necessary. However, this will not be an effort of labeling. In fact, I will try to point out what Wittgensteinian meaning is not. In this sense, the first step will be to investigate its anti-essentialist and anti-foundationist premises. To do so, first, the arbitrariness in language should be examined.

4.1. Arbitrariness in Language

Both Wittgenstein and Saussure conceive language as a system of signs. Concerning this system, Saussure argues that "everything is based on relations" (1974, 122) and the first principle is the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign (1974, 67). To him, not

only the relationship between the signifier and the signified but also the meaning of a sign is determined arbitrarily. Both the signifier (form of the sign) and the signified (the concept the sign represents) are relational entities. There is nothing essential or intrinsic to language that combines them as a sign. Moreover, the 'value' of a sign, the meaning of a word, depends on its relations with the other signs in the system. In other words, there is no 'absolute' value of a sign (Saussure 1974, 80); rather, its value is determined in relation with other signs. More precisely, it is the sign's difference from the other signs that determines its value:

> […] the concepts are purely differential and defined not by their positive content but negatively by their relations with the other terms of the system. Their most precise characteristic is in being what the others are not. (Saussure 1974, 117)

So, according to Saussure, two factors determining the meaning of a word are relationality and difference. He argues that in a closed system of signs, in language, a word gains its meaning within relation to the other words and just by differentiating itself from them. Just like Wittgenstein, Saussure employs an analogy between language and the game of chess. He states that "the respective value of the pieces depends on their position on the chessboard just as each linguistic term derives its value from its opposition to all other terms" (1974, 88).

Similar to Saussure, Wittgenstein stresses the arbitrariness of language: "the words are after all arbitrary signs" (*PI* §508). Hence, there are no 'superlative facts' that

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determine meaning (*PI* §192). Rather, there are 'philosophical superlatives', which "held us captive" by a picture of language (*PI* §115). To Wittgenstein, it is these 'philosophical superlatives' that should be overcome.

Hence, Wittgenstein rejects semantic foundationism (Medina 2005, 88). He argues that meaning cannot be fixed by an algebraic formula that creates, for example, a series by the order '+2'. This algebraic order of '+2' would only guarantee that 1002 will follow 1000 and 1868 will follow 1866 (*PI* §186). Both cases are nothing but interpretations in accord with the rule. Nevertheless, it is not possible to fix meaning this way as infinite number of interpretations none of which can be ascendant to the others. As Wittgenstein argues "any interpretation still hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support. Interpretations themselves do not determine meaning" (*PI* §198).

Arguing that language is arbitrary, Wittgenstein also opposes essentialism which can be defined as "a belief in the real, true essence of things, the invariable and fixed properties" that defines the "whatness of a given entity" (Fuss, 1989, xi). He opposes any essential principle concerning the construction of a language. According to Wittgenstein, as previously stated, "*essence* is expressed in grammar" (*PI* §371) where "the rules of grammar may be called 'arbitrary'" (*PI* §497). So,

bearing an anti-essentialist and anti-foundationist perspective, Wittgenstein rejects the existence of any essence or foundation that determines the meaning of a word.[32]

Both Wittgenstein and Saussure emphasize the significance of arbitrariness in language. Moreover, both thinkers envisage a language as a game (Harris 1990, 60). However, it is not possible to claim that these two thinkers are representatives of a unique philosophy. In fact, the philosophy of Wittgenstein and the linguistic theory of Saussure differ on major points although they have common points. Newton Garver puts these differences as follows:

> One is that Wittgenstein's grammar has to do with uses of language (discourse conditions and discourse continuation) rather than with forms and their combinations (morphology and syntax) […] Second point of difference is that Wittgenstein does not aim at a systematic description of language use, but only at as much as is required for philosophical perspicuity […] The third difference between Wittgenstein's grammar and linguistics results from his integration of language with activity and the consequent necessity for agreement in practical judgment. The language Saussure deals with is always sharply isolated from the stream of life; it is *langue* rather than *parole*. (1999, 150-151)

The basic difference between Wittgenstein's approach and Saussure's theory is between the subjects of their studies; that is, what they conceive as language. In

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[32] Against those who interpreted Wittgenstein's position foundationist, David Grünberg asserts the following: "[…] the basic beliefs for foundationist should be self-*justified* not only that they should have *this* or *that* feature. As Wittgenstein's certainties, fundamental propositions are 'beyond being justified or unjustified' (*OC*, §359, cf. also §253) one cannot claim that one's holding these beliefs as a part of one's system, would make the view foundationist" (1994, 77). Moreover, Grünberg adds that Wittgenstein cannot be considered a 'contextual foundationist' as he rejects not only self-justification but also justification in a context (1994, 78). In this sense, I think, Wittgenstein's 'meaning is use' cannot be regarded as foundationist as it is free from any form of justification.

contrast to Saussure who deals with ideal language, Wittgenstein argues that it is the actual use of language that should be taken into consideration. For this reason, Wittgenstein and Saussure attribute the arbitrariness in language to two completely different faculties. According to Wittgenstein, it is the arbitrariness of speech-acts rather than an ideal langue that should be considered. Correspondingly, he espouses a contextualist perspective that can be better understood in comparison with those of Bakhtin and Austin.

4.2. Contextualism

Contextualism insists that what is said depends on the context of utterance. In other words, it can be said that, according to this view, meaning is a function of the context. To examine this argument, it will be appropriate to address two notions of Bakhtin: *heteroglossia* and *dialogism*. According to Bakhtin, "the authentic environment of an utterance, the environment in which it lives and takes shape, is dialogized heteroglossia" (1990, 272). He argues that every utterance is a two-sided act. The meaning takes place in the territory shared through the contributions of both the addresser and the addressee. For this reason, every utterance should be considered a dialogic action rather than a monologic one. In this context, heteroglossia is described as "a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships" (Bakhtin 1990, 263). This way, placing utterance

and meaning in a dialogized multiplicity, Bakhtin emphasizes "the primacy of context over text" (1990, 428).

In a similar vein, the solid expression of Wittgensteinian contextualism is 'meaning is use'. What is common to Bakhtin and Wittgenstein is their consideration of the importance of context.[33] According to both, the context of a language is a shared practice. Hence, the realm of meaning is the actual use of language – utterances. Moreover, similar to Bakhtin, Wittgenstein also puts language on a social basis. He argues that a language is a form of life upon which a practical agreement is obtained by its users (*PI* §23 and §241).

Certainly, the 'practical agreement' Wittgenstein indicates is not a consensus on language as a unified totality.[34] In fact, the agreement refers to the multiplicity of language-games that is fed by contingency. So, it can be argued that language-games take place in a 'dialogized heteroglossia' – a dialogue of multiple voices.[35] In this terrain, neither fixity nor an upper limit concerning the number of kinds of utterances is possible. In Wittgenstein's words:

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[33] Though Wittgenstein's friendship with Mikhail Bakhtin's brother – Nicholas Baktin – is known, there is no evidence for his familiarity with Mikhail Bakhtin's work.

[34] Wittgenstein puts the 'illusion' of totality as: "Instead of producing something in 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'" (*PI* §65).

[35] Accordingly, Medina asserts that "a language-game is a polyphonic activity" (2004b, 573).

> But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say assertion, question, and command? – There are *countless* kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call "symbols", "words", "sentences". And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once and for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten. (*PI* §23)

Austin puts forward a categorization for the multiplicity of utterances argued by Wittgenstein. According to him, every utterance belongs to one of two categories; constatives and performative utterances. A constative utterance is a statement which can be valued as true or false depending on whether it accurately pictures a state of affairs or not. On the other hand, a performative utterance cannot be valued with respect to the state of affairs since it is not a saying that pictures something. Rather, a performative utterance by itself is the doing of an action, hence, a speech act (Austin 1962, 5).[36]

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[36] In their work, *A Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari state three consequences of Austin's speech act theory as follows: "(1) It has made it impossible to conceive of language as a code, since a code is the condition of possibility for all explanation. It has also made it impossible to conceive of speech as the communication of information: to order, question, promise, or affirm is not to inform someone about a command, doubt, engagement, or assertion but to effectuate these specific, immanent, and necessarily implicit acts. (2) It has made it impossible to define semantics, syntactics, or even phonematics as scientific zones of language independent of pragmatics. Pragmatics ceases to be a 'trash heap,' pragmatic determinations cease to be subject to the alternative: fall outside language, or answer to explicit conditions that syntacticize and semanticize pragmatic determinations. Instead, pragmatics becomes the presupposition behind all of the other dimensions and insinuates itself into everything. (3) It makes it impossible to maintain the distinction between language and speech because speech can no longer be defined simply as the extrinsic and individual use of a primary signification, or the variable application of a preexisting syntax. Quite the opposite, the meaning and syntax of language can no longer be defined independently of the speech acts they presuppose" (1987, 77-78).

According to Austin, an utterance gathers its meaning/sense from the environment in which it is used. For this reason, "the truth or falsity of a statement depends not merely on the meanings of the words but on what act you were performing in what circumstances" (Austin 1962, 145). Hence, similar to Wittgenstein, Austin argues that there is a relationship between language and the world which is far beyond a representation facility. In order to understand this relationship, ordinary language should be privileged.

To Austin, the perfect example of how traditional philosophical language is used is implicit in the phrase 'the meaning of a word' (1979, 56). In his essay, "The Meaning of a Word", he describes this phrase as spurious and makes a distinction between phrases of sense and nonsense:

> SPECIMENS OF SENSE
> I. I. What-is-the-meaning-of (the word) 'rat'?
> I. II. What-is-the-meaning-of (the word) 'word'?
> […]
> SPECIMENS OF NONSENSE
> I. I. What-is-the-meaning-of a word?
> I. II. What-is-the-meaning-of any word? (1979, 55)

So, a word or a phrase only has a meaning in a sentence, in relation with other words or phrases. It would be non-sensical to look for the meaning of a word that is deprived of its interaction with other words – with the context in which it is employed.

Similar to Austin, in the early sections of the *Blue Book* (henceforth *BLBK*), Wittgenstein also attacks the basic question; 'what is the meaning of a word?' In order to bring this question 'down to earth' he employs another one: "What's an explanation of meaning?" (*BLBK* 1) According to Wittgenstein, examining the answer to this latter question "will teach you something about the grammar of the word 'meaning' and will cure you of the temptation to look about you for some object which you might call 'the meaning'" (*BLBK* 1). Following this reasoning, Wittgenstein argues that explanation of meaning is nothing but the rules. In other words, to him, every meaning can be explained in terms of rules. Since the rules of a language constitute the grammar of that language, meaning will be placed in the grammar. In *Philosophical Grammar*, Wittgenstein puts his arguments as follows:

> I want to say: the place of a word in grammar is its meaning.
> But I might also say: the meaning of a word is what the explanation of its meaning explains
> […]
> The explanation of the meaning explains the use of the word.
> The use of a word in the language is its meaning.
> Grammar describes the use of words in the language. (*PG* §23)

So, the use of a word in language provides its meaning. It is crucial to remember that, to Wittgenstein, the use of a word can only be accomplished by means of rule-following where the rules are customs (*PI* §206).[37] This brings us back to Saul

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[37] Alternatively, Wittgenstein puts rules as conventions in *PG*: "We said that by 'meaning' we meant what an explanation of meaning explains. And an explanation of meaning is not an empirical proposition and not a causal explanation, but a rule, a convention" (*PG* §32).

Kripke's interpretation: meaning that is situated in context and subject to rules which are nothing but customs is unjustifiable.[38] Following Kripke's argument, the question would be formulated as follows: could and should Wittgenstein be considered a sceptic? For this question, evaluating Quine's thesis of indeterminacy of translation together with Wittgensteinian meaning will provide valuable insight.

4.3. Wittgensteinian Meaning and Scepticism

It is appropriate to start with the basic common point in Wittgenstein's and Quine's arguments: both thinkers oppose linguistic realism which "claims that there must be simple objects, bare particulars, devoid of any property, which combined in various ways constitute what we state, describe and speak about in the language we use" (Dilman 2004, 163). In other words, both philosophers reject the idea that the meaning of a word is predetermined. Rather, they both assign indeterminacy to meaning. In this context, to remember Quine's thesis of indeterminacy of translation, following passage quoted from *Word and Object* will be helpful:

> There can be no doubt that rival systems of analyses can fit
> the totality of speech behavior to perfection, and can fit the
> totality of dispositions to speech behavior as well, and still
> specify mutually incompatible translations of countless
> sentences insusceptible of independent control. (1964, 72)

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[38] According to Kripke, what Wittgenstein proposes by rule-following leads to a substitution of contextual justification for self-justification. However, he argues that justification of the community is untenable. For this reason, Kripke claims that "ultimately we reach a level where we act without any reason in terms of which we can justify our action. We act unhesitatingly but *blindly*" (1982, 87).

It is quite clear that Quine assumes a completely sceptic position.[39] To a sceptic, as David Grünberg asserts, "the epistemic justification of any statement, generally of non-logical ones, and specifically those about objective particulars is impossible" (1994, 148). In this sense, Quine argues that no translation is more justifiable than the others and hence, "meaning is a property of behavior" (1969, 27). According to him, Wittgenstein also put forward a similar idea by means of rejecting the existence of a private language (1969, 27).

As previously discussed, Wittgenstein's comment concerning private language is highly dubious. Even if we accept that Wittgenstein rejected private language, it would not be possible to easily claim that he was a sceptic like Quine. Yet, a more obvious contrast between two thinkers emerges on their different holistic perspectives (Medina 2005, 89). Basically, Quine emphasizes an epistemological holism[40] that is based on Pierre Duhem's views on the philosophy of science. Robert Klee describes the Quine-Duhem thesis as follows: "any seemingly disconfirming observational evidence can always be accommodated to any theory" (1997, 65). This is because meaning of a statement cannot be determined individually; rather, it will only be possible in a theory. According to Quine, language is a fully connected network. Each individual has a certain degree of access to this network where the degree is determined by her/his own web of beliefs. So, one's web of beliefs is

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[39] In addition, Quine can be seen as the advocate of the *thesis of cognitive egalitarianism* – "the thesis that all rival interpretations are equally belief-worthy or equally rational to accept" (Medina 2005, 86).

[40] It is also referred to as confirmation holism.

her/his connection to the theories that would make it possible to make sense of a statement. In other words, meaning of a statement for an individual depends on the theories employed by him/her. However, Quine argues that as long as the theories employed are not scientific ones, meaning remains underdetermined. Accordingly, to Quine, there is no difference between the existence of Homeric gods and that of physical objects. In his view, in order to eliminate the underdetermination of meaning, a completely scientific approach that entails an ideal language is necessary.

In contrast, Wittgenstein's emphasis has been on ordinary language. To him, language has nothing to do with science. In this context, Quine's approach that not only refers to theories for meaning but also considers language a theory is certainly misleading. Epistemological holism would necessitate an ideal, or a philosophical, language that concerns things other than what ordinary people deal with. However, according to Wittgenstein, philosophical problems are the problems of daily life. Corollary, there is neither a philosophical language nor a philosophical discourse that are different from the ordinary ones. For this reason, Newton Garver asserts that "conceiving philosophy as grammar means that it is sometimes like pedagogy and sometimes like therapy, never like science" (1999, 151).

Arguing that philosophical problems overlap with the problems of the daily life, Wittgenstein repudiates a distinction between ordinary and philosophical language.

To him, to understand a sentence is to attain the knowledge of using it which can only be acquired by means of participating in daily practices of language-games. Consequently, it can be said that Wittgenstein proposes a "contextualist holism" instead of an epistemological one (Medina 2005, 91). Via *PI* §79, Wittgenstein provides a clear example of his view:

> Consider this example. If one says "Moses did not exist", this may mean various things. It may mean: the Israelites did not have a *single* leader when they withdrew from Egypt – or: their leader was not called Moses – or: there cannot have been anyone who accomplished all that the Bible relates of Moses – or: etc. etc. – We may say, following Russell: the name "Moses" may be defined by means of various descriptions. For example, as "the man who led the Israelites through the wilderness", "the man who lived at that time and place and was then called 'Moses'", "the man who as a child was taken out of the Nile by Pharaoh's daughter" and so on. And according as proposition we assume one definition or another the proposition "Moses did exist" acquires a different sense and so does every other proposition about Moses. – And if we are told "N did not exist", we do ask: "What do you mean? Do you want to say …… or ….. etc.?" (*PI* §79)

So, the name "Moses" may have different meanings. However, this does not mean that the name is completely underdetermined. Rather, a set of descriptions are available for the name "Moses" and to which it will refer to is context-dependent. Therefore, according to Wittgenstein, the problem is not about questioning the justifiability of any interpretations. In fact, such an attempt would be detachment of language from the shared practice and its contextual nature as justification of an interpretation bears the claim of fixing the meaning. This way, meaning is tried to be isolated from context – the permanently incomplete terrain continuously re-

generated by language-games – and be rendered *knowable*. As a matter of fact, Quinean indeterminacy holds this claim. According to Quine, at the last resort, indeterminacy is a 'problem' of ordinary language: should a philosophical, hence scientific, language be developed, the problem would be overcome. For this reason, Quinean indeterminacy is not only sceptical but also metaphysical. On the other hand, as Stanley Cavell asserts, Wittgenstein conceived "scepticism and metaphysics as forms of intellectual tragedy" (1995, 61).

To look at Wittgenstein's rejection of scepticism[41] it will be appropriate to refer to the early sections of *On Certainty*. In *OC* §2, he addresses the main problem concerning scepticism as follows:

> From its *seeming* to me – or to everyone – to be so, it doesn't
> follow it *is* so.
> What we can ask is whether it can make sense to doubt it.
> (*OC* §2)

According to Wittgenstein, it is not the act of doubting but the sense of doubting that should be questioned. Simply, "if someone says 'I don't know if there's a hand here' he might be told 'Look closer'" (*OC* §3). So, some doubts can be resolved as part of a language-game. Moreover, at some instances, it is not possible to legitimize a doubt: "What about such a proposition as 'I know I have a brain'? Can I doubt it?

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[41] Here, I will only be able to present a simplified discussion that addresses one general form of scepticism. For detailed discussions that issue different types of scepticism see Michael Williams' "Wittgenstein's Refutation of Idealism" and James Conant's "Varieties of Scepticism" both *in Wittgenstein and Scepticism*, Denis McManus (ed.), 2004.

Grounds for *doubt* are lacking!" (*OC* §4) So, a doubt is in need of a ground (Williams 2004, 81). That is to say, a doubt, which is put against a statement starting with 'I know', should be able to provide some evidence concerning the falsity of the statement.[42] Hence, Michael Williams states that doubting and knowledge claiming has the same intelligibility requirements (2004, 81). To understand these requirements, it is necessary to scrutinize the meaning of the phrase 'I know'. Wittgenstein writes:

> "I know" often means: I have the proper grounds for my
> statement. So if the other person is acquainted with the
> language-game, he would admit that I know. The other, if he
> is acquainted with the language-game, must be able to
> imagine *how* one may know something of the kind. (*OC*
> §18)
> The statement "I know that here is a hand" may then be
> continued: "for it's *my* hand that I'm looking at". Then a
> reasonable man will not doubt that I know. – Nor will the
> idealist; rather he will say that he was not dealing with the
> practical doubt which is being dismissed, but there is a
> further doubt *behind* that one. – That this is an *illusion* has to
> be shewn in a different way. (*OC* §19)

So, there is a second-order, philosophical doubt that should be considered. Correspondingly, according to Wittgenstein, the principal doubt to be questioned is not that of sceptics but the philosophical doubt of linguistic idealists. Referring to İlham Dilman's description, linguistic idealism basically holds that "there is no reality outside language and apart from its grammar – or logical concepts" (2004, 163). Considering this description together with that of realism, it can be said that

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[42] Wittgenstein points out the key character of the phrase 'I know' as follows: "– For 'I know' seems to describe a state of affairs which guarantees what is known, guarantees it as a fact. One always forgets the expression 'I thought I knew'" (*OC* §12).

the fundamental hostility between idealism and realism rests upon "the problem of the existence or non-existence of a world of objects external to thought" (Laclau et. al. 1990, 86). For idealists there is no world external to our thought; from a linguistic perspective, there is no world external to our language. In fact, the claim of linguistic idealism is the determination of world, hence reality, by language. Wittgenstein posits this argument with an example:

> If I don't know whether someone has two hands (say, whether they have been amputated or not) I shall believe his assurance that he has two hands, if he is trustworthy. And if he says he *knows* it, that can only signify to me that he has been able to make sure, and hence his arms are e.g. not still concealed by coverings and bandages, etc. etc. My believing the trustworthy man stems from my admitting that it is possible for him to make sure. But someone who says that perhaps there are no physical objects makes no such admission. (*OC* §23)
>
> The idealist's question would be something like: "What right have I not to doubt the existence of my hands?" (And to that the answer can't be: I *know* that they exist.) But someone who asks such a question is overlooking the fact that a doubt about existence only works in a language-game. (*OC* §24)

According to Wittgenstein, a philosophical doubt concerning the existence of one's own hands is legitimate as the reality of the hands is internal to language. However, an idealist having such a doubt certainly overlooks the domain of her/his doubt that is nothing but language. As language is a part of the shared practice, in other words, it is an ordinary one; the doubt can only be part of a language-game.

To sum up, according to Wittgenstein, neither the meaning of a word is predetermined nor is the world completely internal to our language. Corollary, Wittgenstein's philosophy can be regarded as a breakaway from two maxims; it lies at a point between realism and idealism (Turanlı 2003).

So far, I have tried to understand Wittgenstein's conception of language by means of pointing out what it simply is not. In this respect, it has been argued that Wittgenstein was neither an idealist nor a realist. Moreover, he certainly rejected scepticism and epistemological holism. Against all these, what he proposed can be described as a form of contextualist holism. In this sense, in the next section I will try to posit Wittgensteinian meaning as the engendering step of discourse theory.

4.4. From 'Meaning is Use' to Discourse

What is a discourse? It seems appropriate to start with quoting Peter Ives' etymological account:

> 'Discourse' is derived from the Latin *discursus*, 'running to and fro'. It can mean the process of reasoning, most narrowly from premise to consequence, but also a discussion or conversation. Today, in common language it is most often used to mean a treatise or systematic written document about a given topic, such as Descartes' *Discourse on Method*. (2004, 139)

Though this definition is not completely false, it certainly falls short. After the linguistic turn, such an exclusively epistemological definition misses the ontological dimension of the notion. Rather than serving as treatises only, as Stuart Hall asserts, discourses appeared to become the "sets of ready-made and preconstituted 'experiencings' displayed and arranged through language" (1977, 322). The next question is then: what makes this 'experiencings' possible?

In order to answer this question, it may be useful to reconsider Wittgenstein's philosophy of language. As previously discussed, according to Wittgenstein language is not a naming process. The relationship between language and reality is beyond referentialism. That is to say, when we speak a language, in Wittgenstein's terms, we become a part of a language-game; we do not simply reflect reality. More than that, parties of a language-game are being circumscribed and being constituted by the language. In Wittgenstein's words "there is no outside; outside you cannot breathe" (*PI* §103).[43] I argue that Wittgenstein stressed that the field of discursivity is boundless; in this regard, every single practice becomes discursive as "it is only in a language that I can mean something by something" (*PI* 16). Every action, either linguistic or non-linguistic, has a discursive meaning. Corollary, the field of discursivity cannot be circumscribed. Referring back to Wittgenstein's analogy, every action can – and should – be considered a move in the game of chess. Speaking for the domain of language, every utterance is a move in the game;

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[43] Alternatively, he stresses his argument by a footnote as follows: "It is only in a language that I can mean something by something" (*PI* 16).

whether it is a valid move or not will be determined with respect to grammar – the rules for the use of language – that is based on nothing but convention.

So, it can be argued that Wittgenstein's later philosophy of language is an attempt to dissolve the frontier between the discursive and the non-discursive fields. He claimed that all is discursive where the rules of the field are driven by grammar that has an arbitrary nature. Hence, repudiating essentialist and structuralist arguments, Wittgenstein came close to the post-structural understanding of reality as a system of dispersion.[44]

The basic character of dispersion is the fluidity of meanings. At the outset, meaning is never fully referential (thereof language-games are infinite).[45] In his lectures,[46] Wittgenstein stresses this fluidity as follows: "[…] in discussing understanding, meaning etc. our greatest difficulty is with the entirely fluid use of words" (*WL* 48). In this context, he explains his conception of 'use of a word':

> […] I have suggested substituting for "meaning of a word,"
> "use of a word," because use of a word comprises a large

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[44] According to Michel Foucault, only when it is possible to define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations) out of the dispersion, there is a discursive formation (1989, 38).

[45] Referring *OC* §348 once again: "[…] meaning is not *determined* by the situation, yet stands in need of such determination" (*OC* §348). It is in this sense, the permanent fluiditiy of meaning, that Steven Shaviro claims the following: "Meaning is *situated* in a given context, but not determined by it" (1989, 224).

[46] Notes from the lectures that he held at Cambridge between 1932 and 1935, will be quoted from Alice Ambroce's *Wittgenstein's Lectures* (henceforth *WL*).

> part of what is meant by "the meaning of a word" […] The
> use of a word is what is defined by the rules, just as the use
> of the king of chess is defined by the rules. (*WL* 49)

Referring back to Hall, every discourse is a "set of preconstituted experiencings" (1977, 322) that aims at fixing as more meanings as possible. For this purpose, every discursive practice tries to render its particular 'use of words' dominant. Only if a discourse achieves this, it would become a dominant one in which case not only it would fix meanings but also would set the rules. To this end, a discourse utilizes its ready-made practices that can be regarded as its set of language-games.[47]

To put all these in concrete terms, let us employ Wittgenstein's analogy and consider the game of chess. In the domain of the game of chess, ready-made practices of a discourse can be made to correspond with certain sets of moves such as an opening – *Queen's Gambit*. Consider a player employing this gambit: s/he wants to win the game. For this purpose, s/he utilizes a set of moves in order to put the game in her/his order. These ready-made, preconstituted moves are not completely fixed; they are apt to variations depending on the counter-moves of the opponent. Similarly, discourses are made up of flexible language-games[48] which targets fixing meanings of words/winning the game. In other words, a language-

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[47] For a detailed coverage of post-structuralist/post-Marxist discourse theory, see works of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe.

[48] Wittgenstein puts the flexibility of language-games as follows: "Our clear and simple language-games are not prepatory studies for a future regimentation of language – as it were first approximations, ignoring friction and air-resistance. The language-games are rather set up as *objects of comparison* which are meant to throw light on the facts of our language by way not only of similarities, but also of dissimilarities" (*PI* §130).

game is employed in order to "provide us something concrete, which is under our control, to be set against the manifoldness and blurredness of language use so as to bring order to linguistic relations" (Kuusela 2006, 319). Wittgenstein explains this effort as follows:

> If we look at the actual use of a word, what we see is something constantly fluctuating.
> In our investigations we set over against this fluctuation something more fixed, just as one paints a stationary picture of a constantly altering landscape.
> When we study language we envisage it as a game with fixed rules. We compare it with, and measure it against, a game of that kind.
> If for our purposes we wish to regulate the use of a word by definite rules, then alongside its fluctuating use we set up a different one by codifying one of its characteristic aspects. (*PG* §36)

Yet, according to Wittgenstein, this should not be done in "the way physics gives a simplified description of a natural phenomenon" (*PG* §36). Rather, the use of the word "good" should be constructed as a combination of "very large number of inter-related games, each of them as it were a facet of the use" (*PG* §36). In fact, the meaning of the word "good" lies in the relationship, the connection between these facets.[49] This inter-relatedness brings us back to Wittgenstein's idea of family resemblance:

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[49] In terms of Laclau and Mouffe, this is why any discourse cannot render its hegemony perpetual. A hegemony can only be kept abiding by means of fixing meaning of all the words. To do so, boundaries in the use of words should be established (*PG* §35). However, this will break the connection between different facets – different uses – of words. As a result, a permanent hegemony can only be possible through "constructing an ideal language that contrasts with the ordinary language" (*PG* §36). Yet, this would be generating preconceived ideas to which reality *is supposed to* correspond: "The dogmatism into which we fall so easily in doing philosophy" (*PI* §131). As

> What a concept-word indicates is certainly a kinship between objects, but this kinship need not be the sharing of a common property or a constituent. It may connect the objects like the links of a chain, so that one is linked to another *by intermediary links*. Two neighboring members may have common features and be *similar* to each other, while distant ones belong to the same family without any longer having anything in common. Indeed even if a feature is common to all members of the family it need not be that feature that defines the concept.
> The relationship between the members of a concept may be set up by the sharing of features which show up in the family of the concept, crossing and overlapping in very complicated ways. (*PG* §35)

Thus, to Wittgenstein, language is a fully connected network. In this network, it is the relationships between different uses rather than the common features that constitute meaning. Since grammar is made up of the rules of the use of language, Wittgenstein asserts the following: "the place of a word in grammar is its meaning" (*PG* §23).

So, meaning is generated through different uses. Meaning of a word is not predetermined; nor is it a property of it. Consequently, meaning is not part of an entity; rather, it is part of a being which is re-constructed every single moment. Different meanings are ascribed to a word in different contexts. In this sense, Wittgenstein's assertion that 'meaning is use' becomes more valuable. I argue that his contextualist holism paved the way for the never-fixed meaning conception of the post-structuralist era. In this regard, conceptualization of discourse as an

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discussed earlier, Wittgenstein argues that this assumption will be falsified by reality at all moments; therefore, the *state of flux* cannot be terminated/overcome. Hence, no discourse can stay hegemonic perpetually.

articulatory practice that is in search of fixing meanings has its roots in the philosophy of this momentous philosopher. Accordingly, the post-structuralist era that we are experiencing can be considered the era of the "new Wittgenstein".

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

> *For we can avoid the injustice or emptiness of our assertions only by presenting the model as what it is, as an object of comparison – as, so to speak, a measuring-rod; not as a preconceived idea to which reality must correspond.*
>
> Ludwig Wittgenstein
>
> *There are no eternal facts, just as there are no absolute truths.*
>
> Friedrich Nietzsche

It can be said that the philosophy of Wittgenstein has been re-discovered in the last two decades. In this period, his investigations have been widely examined with ontological, epistemological, and ethical concerns. Roughly speaking, this study can be regarded as an effort of showing that the re-discovery of Wittgenstein's philosophy is not groundless; in fact, his later conception of philosophy can be considered one of the first steps of the post-structuralist thought.

This study basically focused on Wittgenstein's conception of meaning, which is a significant part of his effort towards bringing philosophy down to earth. What lies

beneath his conception is not an essence but avoiding any form of contradiction with the world of facts. In this sense, later Wittgenstein did not develop a theory of meaning as a theory belongs to the domain of metaphysics. Rather, via the conception of meaning as use, he rejected all forms of metaphysics. This way, it can be argued that he engendered the path that today reached to the claim of the death of 'metanarratives'.[50]

In order to trace the path from Wittgenstein's philosophy to the post-structuralist thought, first, I examined Wittgenstein's early and later philosophy with the aim of figuring out his conceptions of meaning in these two periods. Scrutinizing Wittgenstein's key notions, picture theory of meaning, language-game, rule following, and private language, I tried to show that between the early and the later periods of the philosopher, a unity, which is formed against metaphysics, exists.

After examining Wittgenstein's conception of meaning, the next step was to position it in the philosophy of language. For this purpose, I discussed four different theories

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[50] In the introduction section of his controversial work, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Jean François Lyotard puts the postmodern condition against the totality/fixity claim of metanarratives: "Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives. This incredulity is undoubtedly a product of progress in the sciences: but that progress in turn presupposes it. To the obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimation corresponds, most notably, the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of the university institution which in the past relied on it. The narrative function is losing its functors, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal. It is being dispersed in clouds of narrative language elements--narrative, but also denotative, prescriptive, descriptive, and so on. Conveyed within each cloud are pragmatic valencies specific to its kind. Each of us lives at the inter section of many of these. However, we do not necessarily establish stable language combinations, and the properties of the ones we do establish are not necessarily communicable. [...] Where, after the metanarratives, can legitimacy reside?" (1984, xxiv-xxv)

all of which played significant roles in the linguistic turn – the major epistemological break of the 20th century thought. Saussure's semiology, Voloshinov and Bakhtin's contextualism, Austin's speech act theory, and Quine's indeterminacy arguments were employed in order to depict the change in attitude towards language.

The final step of the study was to put out a comparative reading of Wittgensteinian meaning and these four theories. I started the discussion with arbitrariness in language which is argued both by Wittgenstein and Saussure. Alleging an anti-essentialist nature of language in this way, Wittgenstein and Saussure differ in terms of their conceptions of language. Contrary to Saussure's privileging of *langue*, ideal language, Wittgenstein posits arbitrariness in the actual use – speech-acts. At this point, Wittgensteinian meaning is compared to those of Voloshinov/Bakhtin and Austin on the basis of contextualism. Discussing the affinities and differences, it is argued that Wittgensteinian meaning is a certain rejection of absolute determinacy. Then, the next question concerned the degree and type of indeterminacy Wittgenstein ascribes to meaning. In this context, Quinean indeterminacy is utilized in order to argue that Wittgenstein's conception of meaning can be described as contextualist holism rather than as scepticism. Accordingly, Wittgenstein's rejection of both idealism and realism were put under scope. As a result of all the discussion, I tried to explicate my conception of Wittgenstein's 'meaning is use' as the preliminary step of post-structuralist understanding of meaning and discourse theory.

To sum up, I can say that Wittgenstein's conception of meaning as use is against all forms of determinacy arguments. He asserts that meaning is constituted by grammatical rules where these rules are nothing but customs. By this means, Wittgenstein puts forward the arbitrariness in language. According to him, language is not a fixed totality as infinite number of language-games re-construct it at every single moment. So, language is not a closed system but a state of flux where meanings are situated. For this reason, it is possible to claim that there is no essence of meaning but actual uses constituting it.

This study aimed at tracing this state of flux in a Wittgensteinian sense. As Wittgenstein's later conception of philosophy is devoid of any theories what I tried to do is to follow his philosophical track on a path. As a matter of fact, I consider this as a slightest first step on his path.

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