Summary

Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein was an Austrian philosopher who worked primarily in logic, the philosophy of mathematics, the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of language. His most notable work, the book called "Philosophical Investigations" is a collection of manuscripts published after his death, and is considered as one of the most important works of philosophy in the twentieth century. [1] Living a life full of family tragedies, of search for knowledge and of travel in search for peace and creativity resulted in a very profound and realistic view on life, science, language and mathematics. This paper deals with Wittgenstein's views and works about creativity and its problematics in the field of languages.

Key words: Ludwig Wittgenstein, Creativity, Language

1. Life and education

Born to a numerous and rich Wittgenstein family of Jewish heritage on 26 April 1889 in Vienna, Ludwig was the youngest of nine children. His father, Karl Ludwigstein was an industrial tycoon and one of the richest men in Europe with an effective monopoly on Austria-Hungary's steel production and trade. Because of this, Wittgenstein household enjoyed a life of high quality which secured a childhood with access to art, music and books for young Ludwig, but also a life of strict discipline and high expectations. Living in a very strict family resulted in a very good relationship with siblings that carried the same weight of obligations and expectations. Unfortunately not all of his 4 brothers could cope with family pressure and certain life problems of the young people specific for that time, which resulted with two of his brothers committing suicide in a very young age before the First World War. Third brother also committed suicide at the end of the war, as well as some of his acquaintances during his lifetime, and all of that had huge impact on Ludwig who was in constant endless search for an interest that could fill a hole in his life. Though luckily thanks to his father's enormous wealth he never fell into financial problems and he always kept close contact with his siblings. Constant search for ideas and interests, combined with conservative and strict years of growing up resulted in a very diverse views on life, values and religion. Regardless, he once said that he always felt that his ideas were generally misunderstood and distorted, and that he doubted that he would ever be better understood in the future. He also added that he felt as if he was writing only for people who would think in a different way and breathe in a different way of life.
Until the age of fourteen Ludwig was taught by private tutors. After the suicide of his brothers his father decided to send Ludwig to a technically oriented school in Linz. After that he went to Berlin where he attended three semesters at Technische Hochschule, and it is there that he developed his first professional love for aeronautics. He decided to continue his education in Manchester where he studied for a doctorate which revolved about aeronautical projects, designing and flying planes. The field of interest proved to be very frustrating and underdeveloped for Ludwig's idea and he fell in a great depression and doubt about his professional life choices. He decided to turn towards more theoretical work which led him to read Bertrand Russell's "The Principles of Mathematics". He became obsessed with mathematics as a result and lost interest in aeronautics, which led him to describe his mental state as a "constant, indescribable and almost pathological state of agitation". The new path led him to Cambridge where he met Mr. Russell himself, who worked there as a professor. Bertrand and Ludwig started the ideal professor-student relationship, going as far as Bertrand considering him as the perfect successor and the person that will continue the development of his own ideas. Ludwig himself said that Bertrand's encouragement was his salvation that ended his years of loneliness and suffering. Though regardless of the positive experience, signs of depression were evident in Ludwig's future life and works. He also told Russel several times that he felt the "curse of those who have half the talent", being of the mediocre spirit, and it was evident that he lived his life of logic in every step and breath, but each temporary lack of inspiration sent him into despair.
During his education at Cambridge Ludwig participated in many science clubs, student associations and influential discussion groups where he developed his skill in dominating conversations. He also met several friends who had a strong impact on his life, especially Mr. David Pinsent who travelled with Ludwig in search for creative peace, and also the person whose death in the First World War had strong impact on Ludwig who also participated in the war on the opposing side. Ludwig's father died in 1913 and Ludwig inherited a huge wealth which he decided to use supporting Austrian artists and writers, but also to finance his work and research which he was carrying out in remote locations in Norway. Ludwig considered that time spent in Norway as the most creatively invested time in his entire life.

![Ludwig's military identity card from World War 1](image.jpg)

**Figure 3.** Ludwig's military identity card from World War 1 [1]

After the war (and after the suicide of his 3rd brother) Ludwig decided to get rid of his wealth and to drastically change his way of living. He developed his gardening hobby and started working as the mathematics teacher in several schools in Austria. Very strict and temperament in nature he had to switch jobs and towns quite often. After few years he returned to London and started working as a professor on Cambridge. He also received the British citizenship which proved quite useful after "Anschluss", a.k.a. annexation of his homeland of Austria to Nazi Germany. During the toughest months of World War II in Britain (Battle over Britain) he worked very actively in helping civilians and patients along his friend professor John Ryle.

With time Ludwig's philosophical views changed dramatically. All of this and some personal relationships led him to resign from the professorship at Cambridge few years before his death. Until the end of his life he spent some time in Ireland, United States and ultimately in Austria, until he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Unlike many philosophers of the time and especially before him, he didn't succumb to the metaphysical. Even though he always expressed belief in the resurrection of Jesus, he never considered himself as a Catholic, but considered Catholicism as more of a way of life than as a set of beliefs he personally held. [1]
2. Philosophy and Works

Wittgenstein's philosophy and works have always been criticized as too complex, too specific or limiting. In fact his views had always been influenced by harsh realism and argumented criticism of the metaphysical. The main center of his works on philosophy and logic is the language and how it is used as a tool in practically every field of the human interests. To get the best first glimpse in his mind certain quotes by Wittgenstein himself are listed [6]:

"Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of a language. The meaning of a word is its use in the language."

"Like everything metaphysical, the harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammar of the language."

Ludwig Wittgenstein

To get a feeling about Wittgenstein's philosophy one must first ask himself what does the scientist do (as opposed to the philosopher) and what does he accomplish. The answer is simple. The scientist reasons and experiments his way to very definite discoveries and he does it because these discoveries are matter, unlike mind or a concept like the good. The matter is subject to things such as observation, controlled manipulation, modeling in space and time, and especially public verification. Scientists always know that something is something. They know that human body consists of cells and that those cells consist of atoms. For Wittgenstein that is the problem with the traditional philosopher. The usual approach is to get to the truth of the problem by reduction (analysis) or generalization (synthesis), but according to Wittgenstein those methods are not usable for things for which there is no material and no objective or a property. [7]

Wittgenstein would have us think of nonscientific languages as games, such as learning the movement of chess pieces without being concerned about their ultimate sense. Likewise with a word in a language game: its usage is driven by the game it is being deployed in; it is context specific. Usage is very important because Wittgenstein takes words and languages to function as tools for getting very particular things done (describe an idea, declare a couple "husband and wife", write a poem, get someone out of jail). He thinks that we should be happy with how our words historically developed and that we should not force them to do work that they really can't (such as tell us what the ultimate truth is about time or the relation of mind to matter). Here is how Wittgenstein describes it in his famous book Tractatus:

"The inexpressible indeed exists. This shows itself. It is the mystical. The right method in philosophy would be to say nothing except what can be said using sentences such as those of natural science - which of course has nothing to do with philosophy - and then, to show those wishing to say something metaphysical that they failed to give any meaning to certain signs in their sentences. [...] Of what we cannot speak we must be silent. [4]
What Wittgenstein is suggesting here is that the ultimate truth and nature of free will, knowledge, consciousness, determinism, happiness, justice and the inward heart cannot be reduced in language to simpler elements or derived from more general principles because languages are not consistently empirical in that way. Languages are logic and rule based games, historically affectable. They can't step out of their usages in specific contexts and do things they aren't designed to do. And so the philosopher's wisest chess move, on being confronted with a metaphysical provocation ("What is truth?" "What is time?" "What is equality in relation to liberty?") is silence, to not move at al.

In another Wittgenstein's great work titled *The Blue Book* he is a little gentler. He concedes that the philosopher still has something to do. But it is not to unify, generalize, simplify, reduce or explain:

"Our craving for generality has a source ... our preoccupation with the method of science. I mean the method of reducing the explanation of natural phenomena to the smallest possible number of primitive natural laws; and, in mathematics, of unifying the treatment of different topics by using a generalization. Philosophers constantly see the method of science before their eyes, and are irresistibly tempted to ask and answer in the way science does. This tendency is the real source of metaphysics, and leads the philosopher into complete darkness. I want to say here that it can never be our job to reduce anything to nothing, or to explain anything." [5]

Regarding all of that Wittgenstein would replace ambitious philosophical explanation of the world with *Description*. But description of what? Of how words are actually used as tools in particular sentences and contexts. That should be the philosopher's work. Wittgenstein once wrote the following in one of his notebooks: "My whole task consists in explaining the nature of sentences". Philosopher A.C. Grayling sums up Wittgenstein's position in his *Tractatus* this way: "The proper task of philosophy, according to Wittgenstein, is to make the nature of our thought and talk clear, for then the traditional problems of philosophy will be recognized as spurious and will accordingly vanish". [Wittgenstein: A Very Short Introduction, 2001, 18].

*Figure 4. The Blue and Brown Books [5]*
3. The Creativity of Language

The real question that we can ask ourselves is how does a mathematician go about conducting mathematics research? Do the questions appear out of nowhere, or is there a way of thinking or inquiry that leads to meaningful questions and to the methodology for tackling these questions? It is highly possible that the types of questions asked are determined to a large extent by the culture and environment in which the mathematician lives and works. In other words, it is impossible for an individual to acquire knowledge of the external world without social interaction. Therefore, placing yourself in a linguistic interaction and dialogue results in developing skills to ask new questions. In the words of Wittgenstein, Language is the shaper, as well as the "summative" product of individual minds. [6]

When talking about the creativity of language Wittgenstein usually perceives how language can be used as a tool in defining art, philosophy and logic. His works in general had been written to provoke critic and doubt from the reader. A book titled "Wittgenstein and the Creativity of Language" was published in 2016 and it focuses on a particular complex of questions that have troubled Wittgenstein scholarship since its very beginings. It deals with the workings of human linguistic behaviour, its creative extensions and its philosophical capabilities, as well as creative use of language (for example poetry). [9]

The above mentioned book does a good job in neglecting the popular belief that Wittgenstein was commited to some sort of "linguistic conservatism". Wittgenstein is taken to hold that utterances are meaningful because of (comunally endorsed) rules that govern language use. This suggests a puzzle about how linguistic inovation is possible. In other words, if meaningful utterances must conform to pre-given rules, it seems that new forms of linguistic expression are impossible. [9] Phrases and literary devices that Wittgenstein generally uses in his works support the fact that he does not endorse linguistic conservativism. Though regardless of paying much attention on the language, Wittgenstein didn't concentrate much on it while writing his most famous work Tractacus, a book where he attempted to identify the relationship between language and reality and to define the limits of science. [9]

![Figure 5. Wittgenstein's most notable work - Tractacus](image)
Wittgenstein had stated on many occasions that language is fundamentally dynamical system and that it is not a fixed unity but something more like an ancient city, "a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods". [8] It is interesting that all of grammar cannot be completely suspended, but particular bits of it can be recast. The problem lies in envisioning rules as necessarily being in all cases fixed, exact and predictable. [8] Garry Hagberg believes that the communications "opens an interpretive space between the giver and the follower of the rule" [8], where the rule's implications can be negotiated in a context in which the criteria are often vague. In comparison to art, certain artistic styles develop by disregarding certain artistic conventions which results in the production of new and innovative ways of seeing.

Daniele Moyal-Sharrock wrote an essay titled "Wittgenstein: No Linguistic Idealist". In it she makes a distinction between "constituted" and "constitutive" language. Constituted language is everyday "conventional language" which contains already sedimented meanings. In other words it makes communication with one another possible. In contrast, constitute language is literary language which brings meanings into existence. It is through constitute language and expressive acts that new meanings, necessary for expanding philosophical borders, become possible. It is a fact in linguistic creativity that one cannot create something from nothing. Some background of established use must be already given in order for artistic creation to unfold. [10] Though it is true that creativity unfolds precisely through a complex interaction with what is already there. The best living example is L. L. Zamenhof, the inventor of Esperanto language, who already spoke several languages.

Certain aesthetic values such as austerity and practicality are necessary for a creative mind. It is also very important to have a good skill in dividing the essential (the logical structure, in Wittgenstein's terms) from the inessential (the "ornament", in Alfred Loos' terms). Wittgenstein had come to the conclusion because of his own creative involvement in architecture while working on the construction of his sister's house.

4. Summary

Ludwig Wittgenstein was a philosopher with great knowledge in both social and technical fields of studies. His conception of classic philosophical problems viewed from the aspects of different worlds came to be unique in history to the extent that even he himself doubted that anyone would ever understand his words. Language is an important part which makes us humans what we are, a part which determines our development, or our downfall. In the end, certain quotes which summarize Wittgenstein's views are listed [8]:

"If we spoke a different language, we would perceive a somewhat different world."

"The limits of my language are the limits of my mind. All I know is what I have words for."

"The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language."

Ludwig Wittgenstein
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