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Logic, Language and Reality in Wittgenstein's Philosophy

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Abstract

The early 20th century philosophy withstood what is known as “linguistic turn”, a concept espoused by Gustav Bergmann in his review of Peter’s Strawson’s *Individuals* in 1960, under the name of analytic philosophy. This turn was quite panoramic, fastening on all aspects of language such as the nature of language, the nature of meaning, the nature of reference, semantic theory, linguistic phenomena, varieties of speech act, the epistemology and metaphysics of language, not forgetting the theory of truth, the relation between language and reality, and must especially the logical analysis of this one. This turn greatly captured the interest of a huge number of philosophers, logicians and mathematicians amongst which the Austrian Philosopher and Logician Ludwig Wittgenstein. The question of the relationship between language and reality is one of his fundamental concerns. Language to him is essentially descriptive, isomorphic to the world. In fact, it is the ultimate reality. This work therefore seeks to examine the bond that exists between these notions. With that being said, the Wittgensteinian conception of language as correlative to reality, is it perfectly consistent when we know that language has a dimension other than reality?

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Introduction

The name of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) is deeply tied to the extraordinary attention given to language issues in the 20th century. This haunting linguistic memory was a universal phenomenon: one of the first and important ways of philosophizing centered on language was logical empiricism (in Austria and Germany precisely through the Vienna Circle activities); American pragmatism was also concerned with the role of language; in France and other Western countries, issues about language were tackled through the philosophical phenomenology and hermeneutics (Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricœur), structuralism (Lévi-Strauss and Lacan) and critics of communication by Frankfurt School (Appel and Habermas). Wittgenstein is an illustration of this transnational complexity: he is a continental philosopher who expresses himself in Great Britain and whose influence was also remarkable in the Anglo-American zone. Wittgenstein is a pivotal thinker insofar as the philosophy of language is concerned. A disciple of Frege and Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein is a logician who has consecrated a large part of his works on language questions. His philosophy is generally divided into two great orientations, respectively sustained by the publication of fundamental works. His first main book, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*¹, can be considered as a treatise of logic and philosophy on what can be said and on what cannot be said in any domain. The book is centered on meaning and significance. In the book, Wittgenstein gives the scope and the limits of human thought. In his second main book, *Philosophical Investigations*² Wittgenstein has tried to specify a new way of philosophizing. In fact, to him, everything cannot be said in a meaningful manner. Language, defined as a tool of conveying ideas or feelings by using agreed

signs, sounds, gestures or signs that contain understandable meanings³, is taken by Wittgenstein as the image of reality. Reality here is the proper character of things or events. Hence, controversies in philosophy are caused by the misunderstanding of the logical structure of language. It is from this that comes to the idea of the relationship between language and reality: Can reality be out of language? In other words, which kind of relationship exists between language and reality? Furthermore, beyond Wittgenstein's neo-positivist views on language as correlative to reality, is it consistent to say that language *perfectly* fits reality?

1. Logic, Language, World, Facts and Things

Wittgenstein's study of the relationship between language and reality is deeply linked to the concepts of *world*, *facts* and *things*. "By showing the application of modern logic to metaphysics, via language, he provided new insights into the relations between world, thought and language and thereby into the nature of philosophy."⁴ Language is used to express the world, facts and things. The world, facts and things are only known through language. To sustain this idea, Wittgenstein begins by finding the basis of discourse. According to him, this element is the *proposition*. It is the passage from a form of pluralism to a monism that can be taken as the basis of his understanding of language.

1.1. Wittgenstein Propositional Monism

The analysis of propositions done by Wittgenstein lays down his consideration of the link that exists between language and reality. It is what explains perhaps the way he has written

¹ L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London, Edinburgh Press, 1922.

² L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1958.

³ Oviogun, P.V., & Veerdee, P.S., "Definition of Language and Linguistics: Basic Competence. *Macrolinguistics and Microlinguistics*, 1 (1), 1-12, 2020, p. 2.

⁴ "Ludwig Wittgenstein", in <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/wittgenstein/>, First published Fri Nov 8, 2002; substantive revision Mon Mar 3, 2014, consulted on the 9th April 2017.

the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. The book is written in an aphoristic form. The author used only precise and concise statements, seven principal aphorisms notably from which secondary aphorisms are derived. In his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Wittgenstein upholds determinately a propositional monism. As we have seen, propositional monism refers, at least, to the idea according to which the proposition is the lone base of a system of thought, that of any study in logic in this case. Also, it signifies that every proposition has only one fundamental essence, a unique structure, one general form and a unique constituent called “propositional variable”. The proposition considered as an atomic one is, according to Wittgenstein, the expression of a precise reality, be it an element of the world, a fact or a thing. Consequently, Wittgenstein will admit only one type of authentic proposition: the atomic or elementary proposition, all molecular or compound propositions being analyzable in terms of elementary propositions. It is this conception of the proposition that is at the base of Wittgenstein’s *philosophy of logical atomism*. This philosophy states that each fact in the world can be expressed through an elementary proposition, that is, any atom of fact is meaningful through a precise atomic proposition. Wittgenstein affirms in this effect:

“We must now answer a priori the question as to all possible forms of the elementary propositions. The elementary proposition consists of names. Since we cannot give the number of names with different meanings, we cannot give the composition of the elementary proposition”⁵.

This is what is called the “propositional monism”. The notion of sense and meaning (that of reference according to Frege and denotation according to Russell) of propositions are criticized by Wittgenstein. According to him, the

meaning is not contained in the proposition, even if one affirms that the proposition has a meaning. Thus “True” and “False” are not the meaning of the proposition, but possibilities of truth or truth conditions of the proposition. No proposition can say of itself that it is true or that it is false. Hence, bringing forth the problematic of the self-reference of the proposition. Wittgenstein is clear about it: “The expression of the agreement and disagreement with the truth-possibilities of the elementary propositions expresses the truth-conditions of the proposition. [...] Theories which make a proposition of logic appear substantial are always false.”⁶ The nature and the structure of the proposition show that the formal aspect of propositions is sustained by an ontology: language is therefore playing a role of image for reality. It is in this sense that Wittgenstein talks of “Bild”.

1.2. Wittgenstein’s Logical “Bild” Theory

Wittgenstein justifies the reality of simple things through the postulation of the determined character of meaning. Meaning through language is a semantic correlate of the postulation of the determined character of reality. The first aphorism of the *Tractatus* gives a clear definition of the world: “The world is everything that is the case”⁷. However, to Wittgenstein, “what arrives” does not constitute things but “fact”. The world is not a particular fact, neither an aggregate of fact, but the whole is a set of facts and the totality of facts: “The world is the totality of facts, not of things”⁸. This is why there is a difference between facts and things. The thing is from the sensible order. There is a demarcation between the thing and “state of things”. The thing refers to what arrives, to the real, while the “state of things” refers to what renders possible what arrives. From that distinction, Wittgenstein deduces that the state of things is a relation between things;

“An atomic fact is a combination of objects (entities, things).

⁵ L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *op. cit.*, 5.55.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.431 and 6.111.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.1.

It is essential to a thing that it can be a constituent part of an atomic fact.

In logic nothing is accidental: if a thing *can* occur in an atomic fact the possibility of that atomic fact must already be prejudged in the thing”⁹.

As we can notice, nothing is possible out of the *a priori* frame of the state of things. But which kind of link exists between the state of things and facts? Are they the same thing or must one distinguish them? The answer to that question is clear in the second aphorism: “What is the case, the fact, is the existence of atomic facts”¹⁰. The fact is a relation, a connection of things. Consequently, the essence of the world is given by a network of simple and complex relations constructed by the perceiver. This means that things do not exist by themselves but just through the being by whom facts are facts. “The world divides into facts”¹¹, things constitute the substance of the world, while facts are the form of the world. However, the form of the world is not identical to the form of the substance: the form of the world is a logical one.

“The consequence of all those deviations done by Wittgenstein is just to state that the world takes its meaning from the logical form that defines it. Reality in itself does not have an intrinsic meaning. ‘The total reality is the world’¹² and we make to ourselves pictures of facts. The picture presents the facts in logical space, the existence and non-existence of atomic facts. The picture is a model of reality. To the objects correspond in the picture to the elements of the picture”¹³.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.01, 2.011 and 2.012.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1.2.

¹² *Ibid.*, 2.063.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2.11, 2.12 and 2.13.

Language is then a picture of reality. The logical picture of facts is considered by Wittgenstein as thought and, for him, an atomic fact is thinkable. One can imagine atomic fact. The totality of true thoughts is a picture of the world¹⁴. The principle on which is based on the Bild¹⁵ theory. Language is a picture of reality. Insofar as the world is a reality, the totality of true thoughts, according to Wittgenstein, constitutes a picture of the world. Thought is the significant proposition while the totality of propositions constitutes language¹⁶. This is why he will restrict the functions of language to its descriptive and representational function.

1.3. The Function of Language and its Relationship to Reality

According to Wittgenstein, the function of language is essentially descriptive¹⁷. He accepts as legitimate only statements which describe a fact and which can be declared true or false¹⁸. All statements should be verified or refuted. Truth is defined as the appropriateness between fact and its representation, through thought expressed in the proposition. Language is then globally considered as serving as a faithful *image* or *mirror* of reality. This conception excludes any use of language in other fields like scientific, descriptive or informative.

Even if this conception is partial, one has to acknowledge that this conception is dominant in the history and the general project of Western philosophy. As ontology or metaphysics, this philosophy has, from its origin, as ambition to produce through words the true and definitive table of the most fundamental reality. It has privileged the language of true representation.

¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 3.001 and 3.01.

¹⁵ In German, *Bild* refers to *image* or *picture*.

¹⁶ Cf. L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, op. cit., 4 and 4.001.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 6 and all its secondary aphorisms.

¹⁸ Cf. Gary A. Philips, “Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Philosophical Theory of Language Acquisition and Use”, in *Word*, 27:1-3, p. 141.

Furthermore, at the foundation of language there is nomenclature: a series of nouns which point out elementary objects. They represent the components of any possible reality. There is, to Wittgenstein, a limitation to the expression of reality through thoughts and language. He does not defend the idea that thoughts in themselves lack meaning, but that there are thoughts that cannot be expressed. The *Tractatus* is therefore a book of delimitation. The author exposes the criteria of meaning. In his analyses of language as being a picture of the world, Wittgenstein notices that this world is divided into small units known as names and refers to atomic unities of language. Anything that is not pictured by language is found outside the scope of language. The world we live in is also analyzed in the same way. To him, the world is a totality of facts and not things and language at this level plays a great role in picturing and interpreting these facts for us.

To finish and as we can see, the establishment by Wittgenstein of the function of language as essentially descriptive, made him bring out a certain distinction between propositions, even if he later changed his ideas on that issue.

2. Language and the Problem of the Expression of Reality

The place of language in the expression of reality in Wittgenstein's philosophy has two main orientations: a logical one which is linked to his *Tractatus* and which leads to a *geometrical* classification of propositions, and that of his *Philosophical Investigations* which refers to his idea of *language games*. Both orientations permit to say that, for him, language seems to be the expression of concrete and pragmatic realities of human life.

2.1. Wittgenstein's Discrimination of Propositions

As all discussions are to be found within the scope of language, any attempt of discussing things which are not found within these results refers to meaningless utterances. "In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein's logical construction of

a philosophical system has a purpose – to find the limits of the world, thought and language; in other words, to distinguish between sense and nonsense."¹⁹ For that, Wittgenstein has distinguished meaningful propositions from empty meaning propositions and meaningless propositions.

Meaningful propositions (*Sinwoll*), used in experimental or natural sciences, physics notably, which describe the world²⁰. Those sciences give delimitation, through empirical verification and legitimate discourse (provided of meaning) to the set of true statements. The meaningful propositions can be verified through experience or experimentation. They are statements that are needed for the description of the universe²¹. For instance, "Mechanics is an attempt to construct according to a single plan all *true* propositions which we need for the description of the world"²². To Wittgenstein, meaningful propositions can be true or false, respectively when verified or refuted.

"Empty meaning propositions (*Sinlos*) are those found in logic and mathematics. They are composed of functions and equations which do not really say something objective. Empty meaning propositions are tautological but this does not mean that they cause problems. They belong to logical and mathematical symbolism like "0" to arithmetical symbolism.²³ They do not express thought²⁴. For Wittgenstein, Mathematics is a logical method. The propositions of mathematics

¹⁹ "Ludwig Wittgenstein", in <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/wittgenstein/>, *op. cit.*

²⁰ L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *op. cit.*, 6.341.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 6.343.

²² *Ibid.*, 6.343.

²³ *Ibid.*, 4.4611.

²⁴ *Cf. Ibid.*, 6.21.

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are equations, and therefore pseudo-propositions. Mathematical propositions express no thoughts”²⁵.

The importance of empty meaning propositions is to see in the demonstrative coherence and rigor that they provide. Logic expresses the combinative (the syntax and the semantics) of the class of nouns and of possible propositions. It is the formal grammar of language. It is the police of legitimate discourse.

The meaningless propositions, the last category of propositions that Wittgenstein distinguishes, are “nonsense”. These kinds of propositions are generally found in philosophical discourses, in metaphysics precisely. “Philosophy is not one of the natural sciences. (The word ‘philosophy’ must mean something which stands above or below, but not beside the natural sciences.)”²⁶ In this perspective, Wittgenstein argues:

“Most propositions and questions that have been written about philosophical matters are not false, but senseless. We cannot, therefore, answer questions of this kind at all, but only state their senselessness. Most questions and propositions of the philosophers result from the fact that we do not understand the logic of our language. [...] And so it is not to be wondered at that the deepest problems are really *no* problems”²⁷.

According to Wittgenstein, only meaningful propositions and empty meaning propositions can be said to be full of meaning and qualified to be scientific ones. They serve the elaboration of scientific knowledge. “We cannot think anything illogical, for otherwise we should have to think illogically”²⁸. Better still, “To present in

language anything which ‘contradicts logic’, affirms Wittgenstein, is as impossible as in geometry to present by its co-ordinates a figure which contradicts the laws of space; or to give the co-ordinates of a point which does not exist”²⁹. One must not say what is not logical.

It is this Wittgenstein’s *tripartition* or discrimination of propositions that prepares the bases of verificationism proper to logical positivism of the Vienna Circle³⁰. Philosophy can be therefore considered as “critic of language”³¹ because of the meaningless metaphysical debates. All the book, as we have said, is about what can be said and what cannot be said, be it ethical, esthetical or epistemic discourse. This is done to avoid paradoxical and illusory discourse proper to metaphysics. The finality of philosophy is the logical clarification of thought. The conclusion of the book is very explicit: “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent”³².

Something has, however, to be noticed, insofar as Wittgenstein’s conception of the relationship between language and reality is concerned: he will change the ideas he had developed in his first main philosophy through a second one, that of his *Philosophical investigations*. The new orientation is sustained by his idea of a language *game*.

2.2. Language Games

In his *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein renounces his first conception of language, that of the *Tractatus* notably. He returns in the book to the concept of *language games* to make clear his lines of thought concerning language. The main idea he wanted to modify is that of his propositional theory in which he conceived

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.2. and 6.21.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.111.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.003.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.03.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.032.

³⁰ For more details, cf. R. Mondoué et P. Nguemeta, *Vérificationnisme et Falsificationnisme. Wittgenstein vainqueur de Popper?* Paris, L’Harmatan, 2014, p. 13 *et sq.*

³¹ L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, *op. cit.*, 4.0031.

³² *Ibid.*, 7.

language as the image of facts, language as the picture of the world and reality and as a logical calculation. He comes up with a novelty: his new approach which is more grammatical is founded on the consideration of the uses of language and the rules which are governing our language. Thought is not anterior nor different to language. The concept which sustains this new approach is that of *language game*. The expression defines the different experiences of the thought which are expressed through language. It is a form of life of language. It also points at the rule that governs the character of language. There is therefore a pragmatic dimension of language to be established. Robert Wesley Angelo gives precision on how Wittgenstein considers the functioning of meaning in his concept of language game:

“In Wittgenstein’s case this was a method for making *an objective distinction* in the context of philosophy by extending our concept ‘grammar’ to include *any description of the use of language*. In Wittgenstein’s account, meaning is not a matter of form, but of use in the language. And in this way Wittgenstein identifies logic with grammar, for logic *describes the rules of sense and nonsense* (or, the meaning of language) rather than form only”³³.

In fact, Wittgenstein criticized two ways of defining. The definition of a word through other words in order to understand the word, if one goes regressively, it cannot lead to the understanding of that word. One must understand the word used to define and so on, infinitely. Also, an ostensive definition which consists in explaining words by referring to the object it corresponds to is limited. If one should define "word" like "and", "or", "because", etc. he or she will be limited. Wittgenstein will then

propose to identify a word to its usage. The meaning of language is to be taken in its usage in reality³⁴: the meaning of a word is its use in the language. This expresses consequently the necessary link between language and human actions and life. The meaning of a word will be that of its usage in a particular context, its place in a calculation. In mathematics as in ordinary language, one needs just to apply these rules. Games and calculations are similar. The usage of language can change only when the rules of the game of its usage change. There are varied uses of language

“Forming and testing a hypothesis

–
Presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams

–
Making up a story; and reading it –
Play-acting –

Singing catches –

Guessing riddles –

Making a joke; telling it –

Solving a problem in practical arithmetic –

Translating from one language into another –

Asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying. –

It is interesting to compare the multiplicity of the tools in language and of the ways they are used, the multiplicity of kinds of word and sentence, with what logicians have said about the structure of language”³⁵.

Language games appear clear as the different ways through which we really use language in daily life. These usages are linked to practical activities and are executed in particular contexts, in particular natural, cultural or technical environments. Conclusively, each language

³³ R. Wesley Angelo, “Wittgenstein’s Logic of Language”, in <<https://www.roangelo.net/logwitt/>>, consulted on the 9th April 2017.

³⁴ Cf. L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-10, §§ 10-22.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

game stands by a form of life³⁶. Language is not therefore something which is unique, like a gift of gods or a transcendent faculty which makes man participate in an immaterial and immutable world. Language is empirical and complex. It is a part of the natural and cultural history of humans. Because of that, there is no hierarchy between language games. The heterogeneity of language games is radical. For instance, words used for *sensations*, those used to represent *material things*, the names of *numbers*, the expressions of *pain*, terms of *quality*, etc. are all different *tools* which function following some different rules and ends.

2.3. Of the non-Expressivity through Language of Metaphysical Realities

According to Wittgenstein, metaphysics should be ruled out from the scope of knowledge. He justifies his argumentation by the fact that nothing good can come from metaphysics. Metaphysical propositions picture no fact in the empirical world and as such, metaphysical language and its propositions convey no meaning. The structure of language is like that of the world and all statements made must reflect the state of affairs in the world³⁷. His conception of metaphysics is not different from that of Ayer, a logical positivist. Just like Wittgenstein, Ayer believed that a metaphysical sentence is a sentence which purports to express a genuine proposition, but does, in fact, express neither a tautology nor an empirical hypothesis from the entire class of significant propositions, we are justified in concluding that all metaphysical assertions are nonsensical.³⁸ These words of Ayer strongly meet that of Wittgenstein and show us the dangers of metaphysics in the field of science and knowledge.

Philosophy should be described by its function.

³⁶ Cf. G. Hottot, *De la Renaissance à la Postmodernité. Une histoire de la philosophie moderne et contemporaine*, Paris et Bruxelles, De Boeck & Larcier s.a., 1997, p. 293.

³⁷ *Supra*.

³⁸ A.J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, England, Pelican Books Ltd, 1971, p. 15.

It should be a description and an analysis of language. He will distinguish metaphysics from logic and other sciences. To him, Philosophy is having problems because of linguistic mystification. Logic is superior to philosophy because it is the science which permits us to structurally and semantically express the set of possible nouns and propositions. Logic is at the same time the formal grammar of language and the police of legitimate discourse. It is at this level that the *Tractatus* is completed by a second important book of Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, a book which constitutes his main second philosophy. Wittgenstein notices that metaphysics leads to a triple linguistic confusion: natural language is not perfect, philosophers to him wrongly employ language and philosophical problems are meaningless, they are pseudo-problems. A question remains, by delimiting the scope of language, is Wittgenstein not falling in a certain linguistic reductionism?

3. Wittgenstein's Reductionism on the Relationships between Logic, Language and Reality

Wittgenstein's conception of language, to its relationship to reality, is a reductionist one: language is seen as the ultimate reality, and the most valorized type of language is that of sciences, despite the consideration of the place of the games of language.

3.1. The Paradoxes of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*

The aphorisms which compose the *Tractatus* are not formal logical statements neither empirical scientific propositions. They are philosophical, talk of the essence of the world and of the essence of language as a mirror of the world. According to Wittgenstein himself, those aphorisms are not legitimate because they pretend to describe, not facts, but the essential form of any fact and any possible representation. However, Wittgenstein talks of language in the *Tractatus* as if it was possible to globally consider, from the outside (from an external point of view), facts that language represents. Well, it is a global metaphysical or

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metalinguistic point of view that Wittgenstein himself contradictorily rejected³⁹.

Wittgenstein acknowledges the fundamental contradictory character of his book in some last aphorisms which give information against the book, although he gives to it a pedagogical justification. It is just about what language is and what its scopes and its limitations are. It is also about to define the good usage of language in reference to *reality*, the good usage of philosophy as a critical activity of any transgression of those limitations.

“My propositions are elucidatory in this way: he who understands me finally recognizes them as senseless, when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it)”⁴⁰.

As Alfred Nordmann establishes it, “Within the critical tradition this amounts to a perfectly sensible determination of the limits of language and knowledge”⁴¹.

3.2. Wittgenstein’s Excessive Valorization of Language and the “Incompleteness” of Ideal Language

“One of the fundamental thesis of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* is the following one:

The simplest proposition, the elementary proposition, asserts the existence of an atomic fact.

It is a sign of an elementary proposition, that no elementary proposition can contradict it.

The elementary proposition consists of names. It is a connection

[*sic.*], a concatenation, of names.
[...]

Propositions which have no truth-arguments in common with one another we call independent”⁴².

It is like this that the elementary proposition is defined in an atomistic perspective. But are atomic propositions really independent? As we can see, Wittgenstein’s atomism leads to a positivist approach to language. By doing this, he falls in the trap of an excessive valorization of the idea of a perfect language: “Logical research means the investigation of *all regularity*. And outside logic all is accident”⁴³.

Well understood, philosophy is only, according to Wittgenstein, an activity that the result is to clarify problematic statements. The question of rigor by our author is just a deviation for the defence of a certain philosophy: a reductionist one. Wittgenstein finished by denying some aspects of languages, those which do not refer to concrete reality. Therefore, does it mean that there are some realities that cannot be expressed by language?

Even if he appears as valorizing reality, Wittgenstein, through his emphasis on language and human behavior and practices, falls in anti-realism. This is because of his linguistic idealism. He considers language as the ultimate reality. The laws of sciences are just laws of language, the rules of the language games of these sciences. For instance, it is his denial of the existence of metaphysical propositions that will be criticized by Karl Popper.

Finally, we can notice that Wittgenstein’s consideration of language to its relationship to reality is really a reductionist one. The author of the *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigation* valorizes scientific language and sees language as the ultimate reality, what makes his philosophy of language to be problematic.

⁴² L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *op. cit.*, 4.21, 4.211 and 5.152.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 6.3.

³⁹ Cf. G. Hottois, *De la Renaissance à la Postmodernité. Une histoire de la philosophie moderne et contemporaine*, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

⁴⁰ Cf. L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *op. cit.*, 6.54.

⁴¹ A. Nordmann, *Wittgenstein’s Tractatus. An Introduction*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 47.

Conclusion

Issues about the relationship between language and reality are fundamental in Wittgenstein's philosophy. As we have seen in this work, to him, language is isomorphic to the world. Language itself is the ultimate reality. The structure of the true proposition is analogous to that of the fact it describes. The significance of a statement is its syntactical usage. Different forms of life define the types of human activities which are structured by different rules such as games of the society. Also, the forms of life define the types of human activities which are structured by rules so that at each time a particular form of life corresponds to a language use, the way language is used in a certain perspective and according to the rules which determine the meaning of words. All philosophical problems are caused by the confusions and interferences of different language games. Even if he attempted to give a rigorous conception of the link between language and reality, Wittgenstein remained reductionist in his approach. However, we can conclude with Alfred Nordmann that "The *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* [for instance] clarifies the business of logic, proposes the picture theory of language, details the internal relation between representation and reality..."⁴⁴

⁴⁴ A. Nordmann, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus. An Introduction*, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

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Supplementary Details

1. Supplementary Materials & Data Availability Statement:

We hereby admit to have no additional information in the form of figures, tables, videos, or datasets serving as supplementary files for this work.

2. Authors' contribution:

- i) Dr. Christian Toumba Patale is the main author. So, he participated in the entire exercise of writing the manuscript in terms of formulating the research title, finding relevant sources, objectives, data collection process, analysing and writing.
- ii) Marthe Nono Njipmou is a co-author. She participated in the entire process of checking the

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