

Topic I

For a large classes of cases - though not for all - in which we employ the word "meaning" it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language.

(Ludwig Wittgenstein)

Was Wittgenstein fighting against himself?

Introduction

None of philosophers like to be criticized for his thoughts and all of them have equal right to develop in their own way. The quotation above is very good imprint of the criticism which were imposed on Wittgenstein for his breakpoint in philosophy. He went the different way then his supporters and thinkers who had had the same beliefs as he. Personally, I believe that the whole system of his is coherent and I will show that the quotation is the mature point of his philosophy. The development of his mind was gradually approaching the totally contrary state then he had had at the beginning. I agree with that though in opposite to the earlier one.

Round first

'Tractatus...' - the flag symbol of first Wittgenstein

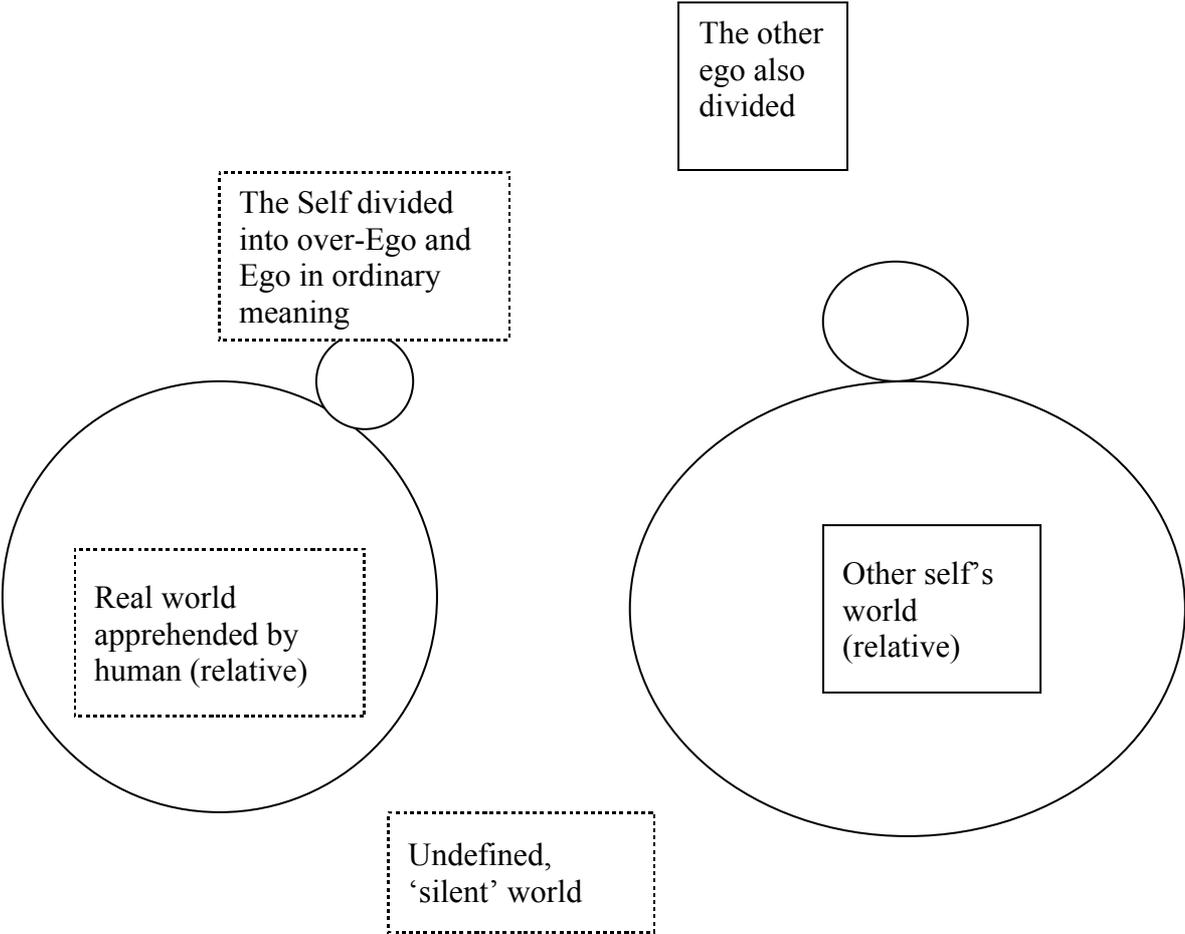
Essentially Wittgenstein's philosophical system contains 2 parts: earlier, which basic book was 'Tractatus Logico – Philosophicus': afterward one, which centers in 'Inquiries concerning the philosophy. In the first part there are seen the connections with Bertrand Russell and the whole philosophy of mathematics and language, the analytic point of view and empirical thoughts. The second one is the changing his course towards relativism and pure philosophy of language in the contemporary meaning. The main issue in Tractatus was how to use language in proper way and what kind of words are we supposed to utter. The crucial sentence was: 'What you can't say anything about, you are allowed to be silence' It was the elimination of metaphysics from the language because of the relativity which is involved in uttering these notions. Moreover, Wittgenstein claimed not to speak about ethics and to clean the language from these absurds – ethic and metaphysic notions. Apart from that, he formulated the criterions of uttering words, which would have any meaning. 'Meaning' in earlier philosophy of his was said to be a verification with experience and thing which we could find in our experience. These were the sentences about mathematics (of course with care put on the Russell's remarks about descriptions). Every word should have its equivalent in real world. The basic thing for human is uttering then. When something has its name, it exists, and the words are determining our view and the apprehension to the world, which should be empirical reasoned and plainly pointed out in the world we are living in. Aside from that, the general notions weren't devaluated; they came into the correlates of singular words. Then, Wittgenstein philosophy developed towards atomic logicism, which were accepted by him as the basis of human's uttering (so called atomic propositions) and his comprehending. When we juxtapose that with his quotation: 'The borders of my language are also the borders of my world, we can claim that he relied whole human knowledge on speaking and finally on meaning of the words. In spite of this there are no word in Tractatus about the nonexistence of metaphysics and ethics. Paradoxally, they are just meaningless, but they really can exist or influence our life.

Second Round

Signs of breakthrough in 'Tractatus...'

That was the first step of breakthrough in Wittgenstein's system. Plainly speaking, the metaphysical and mystical dimension of it. In the book thinker divide the world implicit in

two spheres: the things which can be utter, which are setting the borders of the world as we see it and the second one, the unsaid world which in fact exist, but man cant say about it because of its relativity in the material words. He didn't tend to think that one of them is material and the other isn't. He just mentioned implicit the existence of the world of ethical ideas and generally the ideas. It points out that there is something behind the curtain of the silence. The contemporary question is whether he thought about some kind of noosphere or just it was about the intrinsic world which inevitably is a part of self. Thus he achieved the point where he divides the self into two areas: the ego, which was connected with real word by speaking and meaning and the ego which was dealing with the other, 'silent' world (scheme).



It shows that not only the empirical verification is important but also, the mystical comprehension is included and grasped. It's just a small step from the view expressed by the quotation about meaning. Aside from that interpretation, Wittgenstein kept his beliefs on uttering meaningless words about our ethical problems, values etc. In my opinion he has made a room for the second part of his philosophy which will be described afterwards. I believe, it's worth telling that many of neopositivists from Vienna Association were asking Wittgenstein to join them and to create a great system which will ultimately eliminate metaphysics and ethics from the area of philosophy, according to their metaphor of philosophy as a king Lear who had given all his money to his daughters and then he became a poor man. Wittgenstein referred distantly to their plans. He was concerned about his views and he wouldn't like to eliminate the 'soft' philosophy (notion of analysts), but he saw an importance of it in human's thinking. It was the prospect of the new stage of his thought which became such divisive.

Third Round

The full-fledged, philosophical system contained in 'Inquires...'

Late Wittgenstein included his thoughts in already mentioned book called "Inquiries considering philosophy." He reversed from the atomic logicism and became a pragmatic philosopher, who considered meaning, the central notion of his as a usage. That's the meaning of the quotation. Whatever you utter it depends on the situation, the person who you are talking to, context and the place and the time where it is taking place. It's obvious for Wittgenstein to notice that the word gets its meaning while saying. Let's consider the sentence:

1) There is a hammer.

When you are in mechanical workshop and you are asked to bring it to the mechanic, the hammer means – the device used to stick a nail into the piece of some material. The meaning is easy to understand and commonly used. According to the first stage in Wittgenstein's philosophy, it would be named as a ordinary entity to cause some action which is properly measured, has its weight, length and it's made of the material known as wood and iron. To plainly see the difference in approach of first philosophy and the second we have to consider another sentence:

2) Give me a hammer.

To interpret that sentence properly we have to imagine that we had made a mistake in some obvious action; we are so blamed by ourselves. The sentence becomes metaphorical owing to those specific conditions, I have described. The word 'hammer' has totally different meaning than the first one. It is not any type of device than. It is a fixed phrase created by us, on the field of our language to express our feelings. Consequently it becomes some kind of symbol and is changing his meaning. The situations I have just presented, in the terminology of the second Wittgenstein, are called the language-games. This notion is worth explaining closer.

Language-games were apprehended by Wittgenstein as situations in which we are using words. They have their rules, which are set by the 'players', their time extension and they are determined by the place where they are played. They are the moments, when words are gaining their meaning. Above we had two language-games: in the mechanic's workshop, and somewhere in space with described conditions. Wittgenstein wrote that they have also the characters of play (from German word 'das Spiel'). It means that there is an amusing factor involved in them. The players are actually free in their game as far as they don't surpass the border between one game and the other. They are like children on the seesaw-they can decide whether they want to dangle faster or slower until they really are at the seesaw. Wittgenstein noticed some difficulties among the language-games:

1. The rules are not pre-established by any transcendental entity. They are setting while playing. They can change momentarily or stay still during playing. It depends on players. In fact, Wittgenstein didn't say anything about the qualifications of people to set the rules. I think, this faculty is innate to our minds. Actually, we are born in some game, living in many of them, and staying in some of them until death.
2. The problem of changing the game is the basic one. Wittgenstein saw the task of philosophy as a therapy. It means that philosophy is able to help us to change the game gradually and foremost, not to mix the language-games; I mean not to attend to the other game rooted in the primary. We have to get use to new games. Often, it becomes easily but when we are impatient, we can make a big damage to our communication with other people. The role of philosophy is then to teach the proper vocabulary

resources and help to mark the borders of games out. It teaches the flexibility. One of the interpretations of Wittgenstein's 'Inquiries...' is that philosophy helps to omit, so called, 'fly-trap syndrome'. The traps for the flies are not quite visible in order to catch the fly which has a good sight. Therefore the language-games has the borders either invisible, or very fluctuating. Philosophy should teach to make the trap visible enabling us to be taken in. The only way is to teach logics and show other points of view for the same thing.

The consequences

As I have described, the dependence of words upon their usage are also mentioned by Wittgenstein as an important problem of philosophy. It is worth considering, that his prior apprehension of philosophy from the logical point of view, has been dwindled to the methodological usage. I believe, that is the right place for that. We cannot forget that logic is only the instrument of thinking which can't influence our world view. The gradual development of his mind is based on that point. Wittgenstein was approaching step by step, from completely logical (but not exactly analytic and positivistic!) point of view, to the idea of total plurality of instants in which the meaning can change. I think the views from 'Tractatus...' became full-fledged in the 'Inquiries...' Stress was removed from the real consequences of meaning to more intrinsic ones (I mean the human's condition in the world). From antipodes of human's thought Wittgenstein converged with hermeneutical philosophers. He had heralded the linguistic apprehension before Hans Georg Gadamer matured. Consequently, his philosophy is anticipation for the language strand in philosophy which has been the leading one in the contemporary philosophy.

Some remarks for the end

I find symptomatic, that he rejected logical apprehension and approached closer to the human's life. He didn't let himself being locked in a cage of logic, in which he could settle down, but he referred to practical philosophy in spite of making theories with no connections to the real human's life. The importance of language in his system was surely the most influential. The term 'meaning' of the word, which was included in the quotation, should have been important for him if he had pointed out so many consequences of it in ordinary life. It is empirically proved that his term of meaning is correct what I have shown above. I agree with his belief from the quotations. I evaluate Wittgenstein's development as very important and good. I'm not surprised that he was commonly criticized for betray of logic traditions by 'Inquires...' I think it is basic right of philosopher to develop his thoughts. They are not right that he made an unexpected and violent leap between his views. I daresay that they have omitted the symptoms of that change in the 'bible' of analytics – 'Tractatus...' - or they didn't want to see it for a very obvious reason.