WITTGENSTEIN'S LOGIC OF LANGUAGE*

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L udwig Wittgenstein is, without doubt, a decisive figure and the most original philosophical thinker of the last century.

"He bestrides fifty years of twentieth-century analytic philosophy somewhat as Picasso bestrides fifty years of twentieth-century painting."[1]. He is famous far beyond the boundaries of philosophy. One of most important tasks of his Philosophy is stated in the preface of Tractatus. It is to show that the problems of philosophy cannot be understood and solved properly unless we determine logically how our language works. It means that we need to know more about

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* ملخص: أين تكمن قيمة المنهج التحليلي المنطقي في نظر فيتجنشتين؟ و كيف يمكنه أن يساعد في إظهار البنية المنطقية للغة؟ هل ثمة قوانين منطقية ثابتة وشمولية أم أنَّ للغة منطقها المتغير حسب السياقات؟

هذا ما تتضمنه هذه المقالة باختصار وتبسيط، مع الإشارة إلى التطور الذي عرفته فلسفة فيتجنشتين اللغوية، وذلك تبعًا لشروط حضارية وتاريخية وجهت أفكاره خاصة في مؤلفيه الشهيرين "رسالة منطقية فلسفية" و"تحقيقات فلسفية".

[1] *P.M.S. Hacker, Wittgenstein Place in Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy, Blackwell Publishers,1st published,1996, p.1*

the deep logical structure of the language. That is the necessary way to clarify our ideas and to make them intelligible. He put this by saying that we shall solve the problems of philosophy when we understand "The logic of our language"[1].

This, indeed, is the dominating through in all Wittgenstein's philosophy, and it represents what is continuous between its earlier and later phases. Wittgenstein's views about "the logic of language" differ from the first stage to the second one.

He describes philosophy as an attempt to make language clear, and since the problems of philosophy are conceptual and logical, therefore it requires conceptual and logical investigation or a logical method. The logical analysis in philosophy was developed by logicians, mathematicians and philosophers during the second half of 19th century and the early years of the 20th one. This new approach of language is required to be the philosophy itself. We knew that many philosophers and researchers contributed to the establishment of this method such as; Leibniz, Morgan, Brentano, Meinong, Kantor, Piano, Fregee and Russell. This method is required to clarify the meaning of words and statements. This can be done through reconstruction of statements in a simple symbolized one. By applying a clear logical arrangement of statements, we can discover their validity, it means whether a given statement is true or false. In other words whether

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[1] *L. Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logio-Philosophicus, trans. D. F. Pears and B. McGuinness, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, p-p.3.4*

they have meaning or they are meaningless. We can answer philosophical questions by clarify the language of these questions.[1] The aim of analysing is not to discover new realities or to enlarge our knowledge but is to clarify what we know and to avoid linguistic ambiguity. The target of our knowledge is not to add something new but is to correct the logical geography of this knowledge.[2] In order to fulfill this task, the representatives of logical analysis find that the modern logic, as a symbolic language, is the perfect and suitable means for that purpose. The philosophy is the analysis of language[3] and his task is to determine and clarify ideas with exactitude otherwise they still be ambiguous.[4]

The Wittgenstein's method in his first philosophy is to some extent like Russell's method. In this position, the language has a unique discoverable essence, a single underlying logic, which can be explained by means of a structure-revealing analysis of language and the world and a description of the picturing relation between names and objects; names mean objects. That his form of analysis was to be linguistic had already been made clear in the Tractatus where he had written: "In a proposition a

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[1] *A.C. Grayling Wittgenstein, A Very Short Introduction, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, p. 78*

[2] *Franz-Peter Burkard , Franz Wiedmann , Peter Kunzmann , Axel Weiß dtv-Atlas Philosophie , La Bibliothèque Orientale , Beyrouth ,1st ed.,p. 219*

[3] *L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and R. Rhees, Blackwell, 1953, §4.0031*

[4] *Wittgenstein,Tractatus Logio-Philosophicus, trans. D. F. Pears and B. McGuinness, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, §4.112*

thought can be so expressed that to the objects of the thought correspond the elements in the propositional sign. These elements I call 'simple signs' and the proposition completely analyzed".[1]

The argument of the Investigations is based on an explicit rejection of this view. Here Wittgenstein says that there is not one logic of language, but many; language has no single essence. And instead of a single logical structure, we have a collection of different practices each with its own logic. Meaning does not consist in the denoting relation between words and things or in a picturing relation between propositions and facts; rather, the meaning of an expression is its use in the multiplicity of practices which go to make up language.

Moreover, language is not something complete and autonomous which can be investigated independently of other considerations, for language is woven into all human activities and behaviour, and accordingly our many different uses of it are given content and significance by our practical affairs, our work, our dealings with one another and with the world we inhabit a language, in short, is part of the fabric of an inclusive form of life.

It is important to notice that in his transitional period Wittgenstein had come to a view of the nature of philosophical method which, while retaining central features of his Tractatus view of philosophy, differs from it in a crucial respect. Understanding Wittgenstein's position

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[1] *L. Wittgenstein,Tractatus Logio-Philosophicus, trans. . D. F. Pears and B. McGuinness, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, §3.2 – 3.201*

on this matter does much to illuminate his later philosophical commitments.

In the later philosophy, Wittgenstein had come to think that the problems which arise because of our misunderstandings of language cannot be solved by constructing a systematic philosophical theory, as he had tried to do in the Tractatus. Instead of devising theories to deal with philosophical problems, he says, we should dissolve those problems by removing the misunderstandings which cause them in the first place. We are thus to conceive of philosophy as a therapeutic enterprise in a quite literal sense: The philosopher's treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness.

In the transitional and later works, accordingly, Wittgenstein abandons the rigorously systematic method of the Tractatus and adopts instead a piecemeal approach explicitly designed not to result in a structured theory. It is this which gives the later works their curiously disjointed and rambling appearance in contrast to the Tractatus's austere architecture.

Wittgenstein's later view of the proper method and aims of philosophy is set out in the Investigations. Puzzles arise, Wittgenstein says, because of misuse of language or misconceptions about its nature. If we have an incorrect view of the way language works we shall be liable to confusions; for example, we shall assimilate the use of one kind of expression to that of quite a different kind, or we shall mistakenly try to understand an expression in isolation from the contexts in which it normally does its

work. The confusions which occupy us, Wittgenstein says, arise when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work.[1]

Philosophical problems are, of course, not empirical problems; they are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: in despite of an urge to misunderstand them.

As a result philosophical problems arise because we misunderstand the logic of our language. This conviction remained with Wittgenstein throughout his philosophical work. What changed is his view about what is meant by the logic of language. But the important is the conditions and the circumstances which led to such way of thinking. It is firstly the great change in scientific field: The tendency to be more exact and accurate in dealing with a given subject. We cannot understand this way of thinking without taking in consideration the crisis of science at that time and the attempt to establish a new scientific method. This later was the central subject to deal with by scientists and philosophers such as Piano, Fregee, Whitehead, Russell and Wittgenstein in the field of logic and mathematics. So it is clear to notice that Wittgenstein's philosophy, mainly in its first stage reveals the state of scientific development and reflects well its problems, obstacles and ambitions. The same thing can be said about his new tendency in the second philosophy. New scientific discoveries mainly in

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[1] *L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and R. Rhees Blackwell, 1953, §132, p. 51.*

physics and also the political, social, and economic radical changes have a great deep effect upon him. These factors can help us to give a complete comprehensive interpretation of Wittgenstein's thought.

Both Wittgenstein's aim and the way he attempts to attain cannot be understood without taking in consideration the philosophical and historical background to his work.

In examining Wittgenstein ' s ideas and concepts we can ask also how they are related to the historical and political context in which they arose and how they might be used in understanding that context. The development of philosophy in the twentieth century would, certainly, have taken another course without Wittgenstein s work. The movement of thought in his philosophizing should be discernible in the history of his mind, its moral concepts, and in the understanding of his situation.[1]

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[1] *Hans Sluga, Wittgenstein, Wileay-Blackwell, 1st ed., 2011, p.1*

References:

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5. ————————, *Philosophical Investigations, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and R. Rhees Blackwell, 1953, §132, p. 51.*

6. P.M.S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein Place in Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy, Blackwell Publishers,1st published,1996.*

7. A.C. Grayling *Wittgenstein, A Very Short Introduction, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001.*

8. Franz-Peter Burkard , Franz Wiedmann , Peter Kunzmann , Axel Weiß *dtv-Atlas Philosophie , La Bibliothèque Orientale , Beyrouth ,1st ed.*

9. Hans Sluga, *Wittgenstein, Wileay-Blackwell, 1st ed., 2011.*