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INHALTSVERZEICHNIS

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ON THE METAPHOR THEORY IN THE LATE PHILOSOPHY OF WITTGENSTEIN

> *"Language is a labyrinth of paths. You approach from one side and know your way about; you approach the same place from another side and no longer know your way about."*
> (Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Investigations*)[1]

The philosophical work of Wittgenstein can be divided into two clearly distinguishable phases. Views of his early period are included in his *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* written between 1914 and 1918. Thoughts from his later period are in his *Philosophical Investigations* published in 1953, after his death. There are continuities in his thinking, from his early period to his late philosophy. The most widely discussed and described by the majority of critics is the pronounced interest in distinguishing the speakable from the unspeakable, that is, in the ethical teaching concerning the unspeakable. This distinction calls for a thorough and detailed analysis of language, the context of speaking. It is for this reason that the motive of the attempt to discover the possibilities of language and its borders is to describe the characteristics of the linguistic sign. His views in his early and late works, however, show important differences as far as the *essence* of the linguistic sign is concerned.

In his *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* Wittgenstein uses the strong power of logic to draw the line between the speakable and the unspeakable, the sensible and the unintelligible. The description of lingual utterances is also based on the axioms of logic. Language is the perfect mirroring of the world, a possibility of which is supported by the fact that the logic-structure of these two are identical. Every word signs the thing it refers to and the logical pattern of sentences is a manifestation of the logical relations of phenomena in the world. An utterance is the actualisation of a possible state of affairs, in short „a picture

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[1] Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Investigations*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1967. 82. (203)

of the world"[2]. It is clear that the semantics behind this approach may be called referential in this respect.

Wittgenstein's later works give a very different account on lingual meanings. In his *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein characterises language as a set of indefinable language games. The bases of a language game determined by a world view, a form of belief, and, to a set of language rules governing the use of any given lingual sentence. "The term 'language-*game*' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that speaking of language is part of an activity, or a form of life."[3] There are countless forms of the use of what is called a linguistic sign depending on which language game we play. The meaning of any given word is derived from the situations it is used in. That is, "its meaning lies in its use"[4], as if all these different uses built up an atmosphere of meanings, which the word carries with itself into every kind of application. Wittgenstein identifies the idea of *meaning* with the idea of *use*: "the word 'meaning' can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language."[5] From a semantic point of view the difference between Wittgenstein's early and late period can be defined as follows. Wittgenstein in his late works second-guesses the idea of a referentiality-based description of lingual meanings detailed in *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* and employs the use-value analysis of meanings. He disregards his earlier attempt to create a grammatically see-through and perfect language based on logic and sets—as the new goal—the description of the truly everyday language. "We see that what we call 'sentence' and 'language' has not the formal unit that I imagined, but is the family of structures more or less related to one another. — But what becomes of logic now? Its rigour seems to be giving way here."[6] Breaking through the logical borders forced on him, he widens his research to different uses of language including the description of the metaphoric activity of language.

In assessing the implications of this latter argument, the following questions arise: what relation—if any—may be discovered between Wittgenstein's early thoughts and the metaphoric language use, and what makes him change his ideas later, and also, what is the pattern of these changes?

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[2] Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Logikai-filozófiai értekezés (Tractatus logiko-philosophicus)*. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest 1989. 28. (4.021)
[3] Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Investigations*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1967. 11. (23)
[4] p. 80. (197)
[5] p. 20. (43)
[6] p. 46. (108)

Early and late phases of Wittgenstein's work can be clearly distinguished concerning their relation to metaphoricity. The search for an ideal, logically see-through language is the central motive of the philosopher's intentions, thus lingual elements with multiple meanings, such as metaphors are excluded from his analysis and are exiled to the territory of meaningless utterances. Let me rephrase this with the help of the terms of metaphor theories. One might say that Wittgenstein separates literal use of language from its metaphoric use, and finds only the former one worthy of philosophical analysis. This approach can be associated with the so-called classic theories, which may be traced back to Aristotle's poetics. These theories consider figurativity—in general—and metaphors—in particular—as elements of illustrative purpose. These elements differ from everyday language and their content is not as evident as those of literal language. The aim of figural language is to provide utterances with rhetoric affectivity (persuasion, entertainment), which literal language is incapable of[7]. In order to achieve the idea of logically see-through language built on literal meanings Wittgenstein intended to eliminate those lingual functions that lead to confusion in meanings.

In his later work, however, Wittgenstein sets aside the idea of any clear divide between literal and metaphoric uses. With the help of the idea of use-value Wittgenstein describes literal and metaphoric uses of language as different but equal functions of social activities (language games). In other words he considered the use of metaphors as language games just as the use of literal utterances. As an example we read about the uses of the words 'fat' and 'lean'. „Given the two ideas 'fat' and 'lean' would you be rather inclined to say the Wednesday was fat and Tuesday lean, or the other way round? (I incline to choose the former.) Now have 'fat' and 'lean' some different meaning here from their usual one? – They have a different use."[8] The literal meaning of the word does not conflict with its metaphoric use; their difference may be described as two different uses of the same word. Connecting metaphoric and literal, or, rather eliminating the criteria of their distinction brings the so-called romantic theory of metaphor into the context of Wittgenstein's later work. In short, romantic approach dates back to the 18th and 19th century idea that metaphor is not a derivative, marginal form of language, rather the fundamental feature of language thus no strict divide can be drawn between literal and metaphoric uses.

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[7] Arisztotelész. *Poétika*. Budapest, Magyar Helikon, 1963. 58.
[8] Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Investigations*. 216.

Wittgenstein's early and later work could perhaps be summed up from the aspects of their relation to the metaphoric use of language as a transition between classic theory and romantic approaches. Or, more simply: there is no room for metaphors only for evident, literal meanings in *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* while *Philosophical Investigations* offers an implicit metaphor theory subverted to the use-value idea. What are the characteristics of the metaphor theory of Wittgenstein's late philosophy?

It is through the analysis of the idea of 'aspect' that the metaphor theory—outlined in the second chapter of *Philosophical Investigations*—seems to be best understood. Wittgenstein uses the idea of aspect when characterising the process of seeing and refers to the event when the same object is seen as a set of different things, for example, on account of differing light conditions. „I see that it has not changed; and yet I see it differently. I call this experience 'noticing an aspect'."[9] The ability to 'see as' enables the realisation of the aspect. This ability lets us see something as something else, to consider it as if it was something else. Wittgenstein applies the term „aspect-blind" to those unable to 'see as'.

The potential to see the aspects shows an essential relation to experiencing the meaning of a word, realising its different meaning aspects that is "I can see it in various aspects according to the fiction I surround it with. And here there is a close kinship with 'experiencing the meaning of a word'."[10] If you are able to notice meaning aspects you are able to see the variety of a word's possible uses in the physiognomy of a word[11]. Metaphoric use is nevertheless among these uses which allow metaphors to be understood as a specific meaning attached to the word. What are then the characteristics of the emergence and modus operandi of the metaphoric aspect?

To put it simply a metaphor is a rhetorical figure based on name transference, which builds a similarity relation between its components. The more unprecedented, the more unforeseeable the similarity relation the metaphor refers to, the more innovative it is. According to Wittgenstein unexpectedness, novelty are related to the realisation of a new aspect. We notice similarities previously unknown to us when a new aspect is noticed. On this basis one might conclude that a good metaphor shows a new aspect of the meanings constituting it. Understanding new aspects of word meanings, however, does not destroy the

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[9] p. 193.
[10] p. 210.
[11] Those unable to do this can be called—like aspect-blind—meaning-blind.

original meaning of the word, since the "expression of a change of aspect is the expression of a new perception at the same time of the perception's being unchanged"[12]. Showing a new aspect is, obviously characteristic of poetic or fresh metaphors and not that of fossilised metaphors.[13]

New, metaphoric aspects emerge on the border of, or, in the interaction between language games. In this structure the most general lingual unit of metaphors, word structure metaphors can be described as follows.

The uses of words in interaction set in previous language games predestine the kinds of language games the same words can be used in. In each other's context, however, certain new meaning aspects unforeseen from their previous uses and incompatible with any known language games are highlighted. If this lingual unit is considered meaningful, the birth of a new language game is legitimated[14]. The border of this language game in the case of poetic metaphors may coincide with the border of the imagery the form is inscribed into. Which language games are in interaction with each other here? In theory, all those in which words from metaphors have ever occurred.

Another way of how a new metaphoric meaning aspect might be formed is when a word is transferred from one language game to another. In this case the word may belong to two different language games at the same time, bringing together two different but interacting meaning aspects[15]. For example, in Gyula Krúdy's *A geszterédi agarak* the word greyhound may posses a duality of meanings[16]. In the location of the plot Geszteréd, a cult of greyhounds is of utmost importance thus the word greyhound implies the meaning which is „the most valuable" in that language game. When Sámuel Gaál the most famous greyhound trader calls his daughter „my favourite greyhound" he refers to how his daughter Veronka is the most important thing for him. Sámuel Gaál does not use the word in any metaphoric sense, as his use does not exceed the lingual limits of the citizens of Geszteréd and the meaning „that which is the most important" is evident. The word becomes a metaphor when it enters the reader's

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[12] p. 196.
[13] cf. „I must distinguish between the 'continuos seeing' of an aspect and the 'dawning' of an aspect." (p. 194.)
[14] „Somethig new (spontaneous, 'specific' is always a language-game." (p. 224.)
[15] These structures show similarity with the hibrid structures described by Bakhtin since in these two languages embedded within a language intersect each other. The hibrid word standing in the intersection of the two languages belongs to both.
[16] Bezecky Gábor's example. (*Metafora és elbeszélés*. In: Literatura 1992/1. 20-21.)

world since that is where both the meaning aspects already existing, and those attached to it in the language game of Geszteréd work together.

The third mode of the emergence of a new aspect may be called the „organising aspect". In here previously unrelated parts of texts become connected with this change of aspect or emergence of a new aspect.[17] This mode of emergence of a new aspect characterises sentence and text metaphors. In the case of a sentence metaphor the missing constituents of the similarity relation (features of the tenor) are to be understood from the text or its context. Wittgenstein finds these reconstructive procedures similar to the method of completing a „puzzle-picture": "I suddenly see the solution of a puzzle-picture. Before, there were branches there; now there is a human shape. My visual has changed and now I recognise that it has not only shape and colour but also a quite particular 'organisation'."[18] During the interpretation of the text elements that seemed isolated before gain meaning in a structural whole. Understanding a text metaphor requires similar organising insights. If we accept that the interpretation of a text metaphor takes place in the metaphoric relation of the text-world then it becomes clear that the text signs one side of the relation only and it is the reader's task to find the other side, that is, to maintain the similarities of the text and the world. This activity is as important as noticing and constructing an „organising aspect".

To sum up: the possibility of the emergence of metaphoric aspects is located in the crossroads and interaction of language games. Language games are not metaphoric on their own only in their relation to other language games. The formation of a new metaphor implies the possibility of the birth of a new language game, since a new aspect may lead to the creation of a new language game, while, at the same time other language games may age and fade away.[19] Thus, a metaphor might be an important tool in the creation of both everyday and literally language games.

There is one more question that needs to be addressed here: what is the use of attempting to define metaphors in the indefinable and interfering structure of language games. Not much, I'm afraid. It would be useful if we could pinpoint the rules governing the development of metaphors and the language

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[17] „One kind of aspect might be called 'aspect of organisation'. When the aspect changes parts of the picture go together which before did not." (*Philosophical Investigations*. 208.)

[18] p. 196.

[19] „new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and other become obsolete and get forgotten" (*Philosophical Investigations*. 11. (23))

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games producing metaphors. The main point of Wittgenstein's ethical teaching is, however, that we are unable to analyse or define the rules governing our lingual behaviour as they are constituents of a deeper, hidden knowledge; and Wittgenstein puts a great emphasis on this argument. The essence of our language avoids all attempts of classification. These rules are acquired to be unspeakable, we are trained to respect them, since the reasons behind the rules are not part of the process of learning the rules, they are simply forced on us. There are two important conclusions to draw here from Wittgenstein's thoughts with respect to the characteristics of metaphores: (1) The construction and comprehension of metaphores is governed by similar principles as those of the units of ordinary language. (2) The rules of the construction and comprehension of metaphores are hidden from us just like the shared and wordless knowledge on the fundamentals of our ordinary language.