

A Warm Heartfelt Welcome !!!

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Language, Logic, Philosophy, and Wittgenstein

“The limits of my language mean the limits of my world”

Early Life (1889–1913)

- ▶ Born on April 26, 1889 in Vienna, Austria-Hungary.
- ▶ Youngest child in a wealthy industrial family; father Karl Wittgenstein was a steel magnate.
- ▶ Home was both intellectually rich (visits from Brahms, Mahler, Klimt) and emotionally troubled (several siblings died by suicide).
- ▶ Studied mechanical engineering in Berlin, then aeronautics in Manchester (1908).
- ▶ Exposure to Frege and Russell led him toward philosophy of logic and mathematics.

Early Language Theory

- ▶ Picture theory of language and meaning.
- ▶ Language mirrors logical structure of reality.
- ▶ Each meaningful proposition pictures a possible fact.
- ▶ Names directly correspond to simple objects.
- ▶ Only factual propositions have sense.

The Tractatus (1918)

- ▶ Revolutionary work on logic and language.
- ▶ Language as logical picturing of reality.
- ▶ “What can be said at all can be said clearly.”
- ▶ Limits of language = limits of thought.
- ▶ The mystical: “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.”

Transition Period (1919–1929)

- ▶ Believing he had solved philosophy, he left academia.
- ▶ Gave away his inheritance to siblings and lived modestly.
- ▶ Worked as a rural schoolteacher in Austria, later as a gardener's assistant at a monastery.
- ▶ Designed a house for his sister Margarete with architectural precision.
- ▶ Vienna Circle admired him, though he disliked their positivist interpretation of the *Tractatus*.

Critical Dialogue with Ramsey

- ▶ Frank P. Ramsey (1903–1930), mathematician and philosopher at Cambridge.
- ▶ Translated and clarified the *Tractatus* for English readers.
- ▶ Engaged Wittgenstein in critiques of logical atomism.
- ▶ Shifted focus from pure logic to meaning in practice.
- ▶ Planted seeds of Wittgenstein's later concept of language-games.

Later Language Theory

- ▶ Language-games: meaning emerges from use.
- ▶ No single fixed essence of language.
- ▶ Words gain meaning within social practices.
- ▶ Private language argument: meaning must be public.
- ▶ Context shapes understanding of rules and speech.

Philosophical Investigations (1953)

- ▶ Rejection of earlier logical perfectionism.
- ▶ Language as part of a “form of life.”
- ▶ Philosophy as therapy: dissolving confusions.
- ▶ Rule-following paradox.
- ▶ Family resemblance: concepts without strict boundaries.

Abstract / Summary

Wittgenstein revolutionized philosophy of language twice: first through the logical atomism of the *Tractatus*, then through the contextual approach of the *Philosophical Investigations*. His journey from picture theory to language-games represents one of philosophy's most dramatic intellectual transformations. Through both phases, his work fundamentally changed our understanding of meaning, language, and thought.

Key Concepts

- ▶ Language as a tool for communication.
- ▶ Meaning is use-based, not fixed.
- ▶ Importance of context in understanding.

Q & A

Fin...