WITTGENSTEIN AND GOETHE: TRACING METHODOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINKS BETWEEN 19TH CENTURY GERMAN ROMANTICISM AND WITTGENSTEIN'S LANGUAGE GAMES

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While, at the very least, one could attribute an academic connection between Goethe and Wittgenstein to the existence of a common Germanic scientific, literary, and philosophical tradition, the following paper attempts to lay the foundation for the possible mapping of the methodological and philosophical connections between the two thinkers in hopes to better understand Wittgenstein's later philosophy. I focus on mapping explicit methodological connections between the two thinkers, using, on one hand Wittgenstein's writings and personal notes, and, on the other, Goethe's particular conception of organically-modeled explanations of phenomena. Specifically, I argue that Goethe's method and philosophy of science directly influenced Wittgenstein's work in epistemology and the philosophy of language. This paper, therefore, examines Wittgenstein's language games through a Goethian methodological framework, one which bares striking resemblance to the language games of the *Philosophical Investigations.* Goethe postulated all plants to be connected via a universal archetypical plant. To Goethe, this plant was the conceptual and developmental basis for all other plants, which, he argued, were all possible stages of an infinite field of developmentally-linked possible floral forms. Nature, to Goethe, was continuously changing, adapting and interconnected; the archetypical plant stood as Goethe's answer to the causally-focused models of the rapidly expanding Newtonian tradition of scientific explanation. Wittgenstein's work is often split between a more static conception of the first half of Wittgenstein's career, which was built upon explanations based upon strict, unchanging rules of logic and corresponding explanations, on one

hand, and a more mystical, use-centered approach to philosophical method. This later work is often understood to be a substantial revision to its earlier counterpart. My paper argues the later Wittgenstein was reacting to methods of philosophical explanation similar to the scientific ideology and method of Newton with which Goethe was also reacting, namely closed causal-focused systems of scientific and philosophical explanation. This argument is augmented by the argued methodological connection between Goethe's archetypical plant and Wittgenstein's language games. By focusing on this Goethian connection, believe scholarship on language games, and the later Wittgenstein in general, will be able to be understood from a new philosophical vantage point.
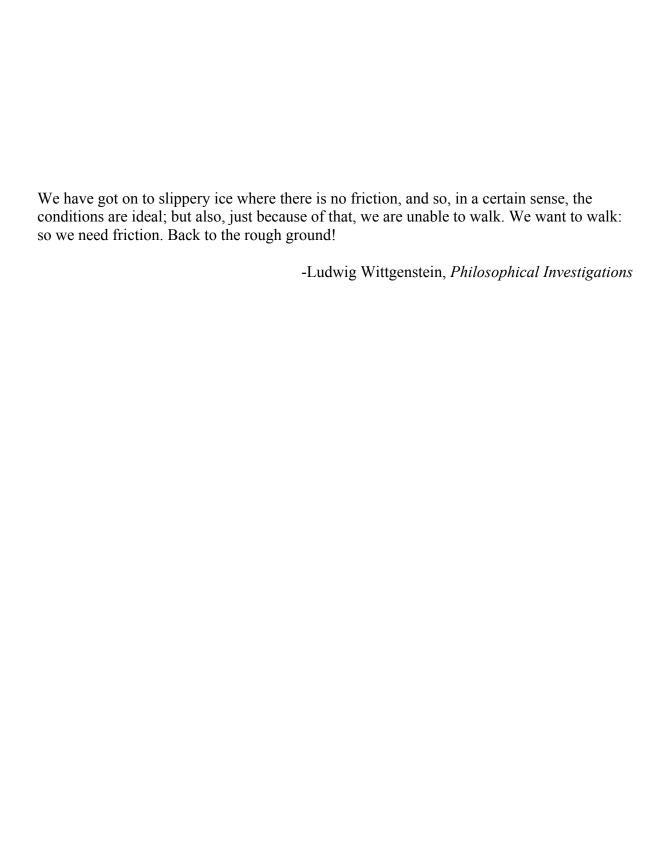
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cornstalk, WV to achieve the eventual provision of suburban comfort in which he rose his

children; though he is not alive to read these pages, he would, no doubt, be incredibly proud.

We have got on to slippery ice where there is no friction, and so, in a certain sense, the conditions are ideal; but also, just because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need friction. Back to the rough ground!

-Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Wittgenstein's intended function and proper definition of language-games is presented in a notoriously vague style. In the following paper, I will examine the ideas of Wittgenstein's later philosophy as a reaction to the ideas that Wittgenstein originally presented in his early work. Furthermore, I will argue that what Wittgenstein intends his language games to do, first and foremost, is to catalyze a radical shift in the perspective within the reader. This shift in perspective, I argue, is a shift from an attempt to define words and concepts based upon a strict rules of logic and analysis toward, instead, an attempt to understand instances of word usage in a variety of similar, but still distinct, ways. This method is, I argue, concerned with presenting language, and indeed, scientific understanding of phenomena, as best understood through investigation of organic development from a field of possibilities rather than in terms of an event's causal nexus. Examining language games in light of Wittgenstein's earlier ideas allows the reader to avoid traps that Wittgenstein himself fell victim to in his earlier work, while, at the same time, allowing the reader to understand language games in their overall context within the history of philosophy. While this context will place the reader in a better position to understand why Wittgenstein is employing language games in his later work, there still lie inherent issues in successfully determining what exactly constitutes a language game, as well as the proper role that language games play in Wittgenstein's overall philosophy.

To resolve these concerns, I argue that it is necessary for readers to shift their own focus from the mentioned attempt to isolate and characterize language games and their function, to, instead, understanding language games in terms of their methodology. To truly understand what language games are we must trace their underlying philosophical method back to their origins, namely, to the scientific and philosophical methods that influenced the later Wittgenstein's

philosophical approach. The reason for our discussion, then, would be the following; if it were possible, to trace methodological influence back in an attempt to find an investigative method analogous to Wittgenstein's, it would also be possible to better understand language games, providing even more perspective from which to attempt to resolve the ambiguities accompanying language games within the text.

To facilitate this shift in focus and methodological approach I will use the scientific methods and ideas of Goethe – namely Goethe's conception of understanding phenomena in terms of organic growth and variations - to shed light as to what, exactly, language games are meant to accomplish within Wittgenstein's work. Goethe, and the German Romantic movement as a whole, like Wittgenstein, sought to catalyze a fundamental shift of perspective within the reader in terms of scientific and philosophical thought by replacing a Newtonian, causally-focused method of investigating and understanding phenomena to a uniquely Romantic approach to science. This Romantic approach gave rise to explanations based on understanding phenomena in terms of possible organic growth rather than strict causal chains; chains able to be standardized, repeated, and quantified – not to mention strictly defined. Addressing the possibility of language games existing as a vital diagnostic tool intended to debunk linguistic difficulties - as well as demonstrating language as an organically developing structure of possible variations of similar but distinct case-specific rules of use - will work to dispel many in-vogue ideas portraying the later Wittgenstein to be engaging in a primarily therapeutic form of philosophy rather than a diagnostic project resulting in a positive philosophical agenda.

2.0   SCIENCE AS AN INFERTIAL FRAMEWORK: ALTERNATIVES TO CAUSALLY-FOCUSED EXPLANITORY MODELS

The link between Goethian science and the later Wittgenstein, on a general level, amounts to a rejection of the belief that causally-focused models are the explanatory means that best equip us to understand the world. While it could be argued that the author of the *Tractatus* developed a static conception of logical possibility, one which, if harnessed by means of continuous analysis, had the potential to explain the external world *vis a vis* language, this still does not necessarily justify the early Wittgenstein as the philosophical counterpart to the Newtonian scientific tradition. The early Wittgenstein advocated for a world of fixed propositions, true, but not one in which everyday experiences are explained by means of the creation of scientifically inspired ontological tools of philosophy (such as sense-data or Russellian universals and concepts). The early Wittgenstein, via the promotion of referentialism and logical perfectionism,[1] relied upon a *static system* in which words and sentences received their meaning based upon their posited correspondence to an underlying logical backbone of language and the world.[2] Thus, it should be said that, though the reactions of Goethe and the later Wittgenstein are united under similar scientific ideologies, the things against which they are reacting, while analogous in certain respects, should not be confused as representing precisely corresponding philosophical and scientific camps. Newton and the early Wittgenstein may be similar targets for Goethe and the

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[1] [1] By using the term "referential", I am relying on Robert Fogelin's particular reading of Wittgenstein's later criticism of philosophy. Fogelin classifies Augustine's quote above, as well as the work of the *Tractatus* as essentially referential. Fogelin writes, "Although Wittgenstein's criticisms of philosophy are multifaceted and complex, at least for convenience, I shall divide them into two broad categories: the first is an attack on what I will call referentialism, the second an attack on what I shall call, for lack of a better name, logical perfectionism."

[2] In section 108 of the Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein refers to this as the "crystalline structure of language." See Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), P.M.S. Hacker (ed.)

later Wittgenstein, respectively, but it should be noted early in this paper that I believe them to be related insomuch as they both represent methods of science on one hand, and philosophy on the other, that construct static, generalized systems claiming to explain the world by theories based upon predictive qualities focused on replicating outward imitation.

Rather than reconstruct or revise logical atomism, as Wittgenstein originally did when he adapted and revised the ideas of Russell and Frege with the publication of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, the *Philosophical Investigations* shifts from a project engaged in establishing fixed rules and definitions of language and propositions to, instead, understanding meaning by means of a type of relational classification of word usage. Wittgenstein's terms this primary method used to debunk *language games*. Language games, to be certain, are intentionally derived from the word "game." Wittgenstein uses the word "game" as an example to illustrate many of the difficulties with the ideas outlined above (logical perfectionism and referentialism). In the beginning of the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein provides a rather broad definition of a language game, "We can also think of the whole process of using words in [primitive languages] as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language. I will call these games 'language games' and will sometimes speak of a primitive language as a language game."[3] In the same section, Wittgenstein adds, "And the processes of naming the stones and of repeating words after someone might also be called language games… I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the activities into which it is woven, and 'language game'."[4] Surely, classifying the whole of language – and the activities into which it is woven – as a language game is incredibly broad, and - even more so - incredibly ambitious.

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[3] Ibid. Section 7

[4] Ibid. Section 7

Wittgenstein does, however, begin to explain language, albeit indirectly, in terms of the need for, and function of, language games. Thus, understanding the word "game" is key to understanding the later Wittgenstein's new perspective.

Attempting to understand words independently of their use – i.e. in terms of strict definitions supported by the strict rules of logic – provides only one particular component of a word's meaning.[5] The later Wittgenstein argues that, to truly understand language, it is imperative to view words in terms of the variety of potential uses, or, in other words, the field of possibilities relating to a word's use. To illustrate, Wittgenstein provides a discussion of the word "game". The Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* would surely argue that a rule of logic applies to the general form of the word "game." Indeed, if our language is supported by fixed rules of logic, then "game" could only be understood in terms of one particular, generalized, and universally applicable meaning. This, however, is not the case. The word "game", Wittgenstein points out, is disconcertingly difficult to universally define. Wittgenstein writes,

> Consider, for example, the activities that we call "games". I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, athletic-games, and so on. What is common to them all? Don't say: 'They must have something in common, or they would not be called games' – but look and see whether there is anything common to all. – For if you look at them, you won't see something that is common to all, but similarities, affinities, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don't think, but look! – Look, for example, at board games, with their various affinities. Now pass to card games; here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and other appear. When we pass next to ball games, much that is common is retained, but much is lost. – Are they all "entertaining"? Compare chess with noughts and crosses. Or is there always winning and losing, or competition between players? Think of patience. In ball games there is winning and losing; but when a child throws his ball at the wall and catches it again, this feature has disappeared… And we can go through the many, many other groups of

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[5] See Wittgenstein's attack on Augustinian referentialism in the beginning passages of the *Philosophical Investigations*. This is discussed further in greater detail in this paper.

> games in the same way, and can see how similarities crop up and
> disappear.
>
> And the upshot of these considerations is: we see a complicated network
> of similarities overlapping and crisscrossing: similarities in the large and
> in the small.[6]

Wittgenstein's intention here is to demonstrate the inherent issues that arise when relying

on only one set of rules or a single definition to understand concepts. Instead, the later

Wittgenstein prompts the reader to consider the development of definitions in different

contexts. Rather than containing one set of rules or definitions for a particular word, there

are, in fact, multiple variations on a single form.

> Augustine, we might say, does describe a system of
> communication; only not everything that we call language is this system.
> And one has to say this in several cases where the question arises "Will
> that description do or not?" The answer is: "Yes, it will, but only for this
> narrowly circumscribed area, not for the whole of what you are purporting
> to describe."
>
> It is as if someone were to say, "Playing a game consists in moving
> objects about on a surface according to certain rules…" – and we replied:
> You seem to be thinking of board games, but they are not all the games
> there are. You can rectify your explanation by expressly restricting it to
> those games.[7]

Language games themselves allow us to understand concepts in terms of communicative

interactions – interactions lending meaning to words through their specific use. In section

43 of the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein writes, "For a large class of cases of the

employment of the word 'meaning' – that not for all – this word can be explained in this

way: *the meaning of a word is its use in the language*."[8] The mistake often made by

philosophers (including the author of the *Tractatus*), the later Wittgenstein believes,

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[6] Ibid. Section 66.

[7] Ibid, Section 3.

[8] Ibid. Section 43.

comes about when a strict definition of a word is presumed to apply universally – that is, to all instances of use. For example, when it is assumed – as in the case of the word "game" above – that a strict rule of meaning can be applied to all instances of use, philosophers inevitably misattribute rules of use that might apply in certain cases, but, to use Wittgenstein's terminology, disappear in other related, but very different, instances. Thus Wittgenstein's association between the word "game" and the multiplicity of related rules of use governing a word is not only helpful in the course of understanding how Wittgenstein uses language games, but also in understanding language games themselves.

> I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than "family resemblances"; for the various resemblances between members of a family – build, features, colour of eyes, gait temperament, and so on and so forth – overlap and criss-cross in the same way. – And I shall say 'games' for family.
>
> And likewise the kinds of number, for example, form a family. Why do we call something a "number"? Well, perhaps because it has a direct – affinity with several things that have hitherto been called "number"; and this can be said to give it an indirect affinity with other things that we also call "numbers". And we extend our concept of number, as in spinning a thread we twist fibre on fibre. And the strength of the thread resides not in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres.[9]

The wide variety of activities that are classified as "games" is analogous to the multiplicity of language games that constitute a given language. While the early Wittgenstein attempted to expose an envisioned atomic logical architecture supporting a language, the later Wittgenstein's structure of language is based upon commonalities of association and usage linking concepts and situations in which words are used. Wittgenstein writes,

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[9] *Philosophical Investigations*. Section 67.

> For someone might object against me: "You make things easy for yourself! You talk about all sorts of language games, but have nowhere said what is essential to a language game, and so to language: what is common in all of these activities, and makes them into language or parts of language. So you let yourself off the very part of the investigation that once gave you the most headache, the part about the general form of the proposition and of language." And this is true. – Instead of pointing out something common to all that we call language, I'm saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common in virtue of which we use the same word for all – but there are many different kinds of affinity between them. And on account of this affinity, or these affinities, we call them all "languages".[10]

Thus it is by understanding language games – specifically the differences and affinities between similar games – that the later Wittgenstein believes we can avoid the problems of absolutist conceptions of meaning.

While the broad similarities between the conception and role of philosophy of Wittgenstein can be seen in Goethe's understanding of science in many of his scientific works, such as *Theory of Colours*, it is in *On the Metamorphosis of Plants* that we see a direct link between actual scientific and methodological concepts that are intellectually diffused from the science of Goethe to the philosophy of Wittgenstein. In much of Goethe's scientific work up to this point there is a steady development of the *Gestalt*, a concept that heavily influenced the 19th century German Romanticist notion of organic-scientific understanding as a possible alternative to explanatory frameworks focused on explaining an event through isolating the phenomenon's causal nexus and using a model to produce standardized outputs. I will trace the Romantic movements general development in later chapters, but it is important to at least make note of these matters before moving forward.

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[10] Ibid. Section 65

Gestalt, which has the literal translation of "shape" or "form"[11] means something much more specific when used in the Goethian context. It is, simply put, an observable pattern that is but one of a multiplicity of instances – a natural form from which all observable varieties of an object exist. This technique of isolating the *Gestalt* originally came to Goethe during time spent in Italy at the Garden at Padua, where he focused on the leaves of palm trees, and later in Sicily where he saw the uniformity of diversified plant structures in leaves of a fennel plant[12]. It was in Sicily where this "flash" of understanding came to Goethe that the multiplicity of floral structures share certain features of forms that make up an organized whole (*Gestalt*).

While the concept of the *Gestalt* appears throughout the German intellectual tradition, it should be noted that the link between the traditional use of the word by Goethe and its more recently developed psychological root (Wolfgang Köhler's Gestalt Psychology) can be found in Goethe, whose philosophy of science was a very important influence on Köhler's development of the Gestalt psychological approach.[13] According to Wittgenstein biographer Ray Monk, while the term usually means "shape" or "form," "Köhler, following Goethe, used [the word] to mean something quite different." Monk quotes Köhler as writing:

> In the German language – at least since the time of Goethe, and especially
> in his own papers on the natural science – the noun 'gestalt' has two
> meanings: besides the connotation of 'shape' or 'form' as a property of
> things, it has the meaning of a concrete individual and characteristic
> entity, existing as something detached and having a shape of form as one

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[11] See Monk, op. cit. 509.

[12] Gordon L. Miller, introduction to *On the Metamorphosis of Plants*, Goethe (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009) xvii.

[13] It should also be noted that Köhler is cited in Wittgenstein's *Philosophy of Psychology – A Fragment*. Section 180.

of its attributes. Following this tradition, in gestalttheorie the word
'gestalt' means any segregated whole. [14]

As Monk notes, what is important about this connection is its relationship to Goethe's

own project, namely, the creation and promotion of a school of psychological thought standing in

opposition to what Monk calls the "mechanism implicit in behavioralism."[15] Again there lies a

common theme of the creation of an organically-focused explanatory model in reaction to an

explanatory model concerned with causally-based understanding. Monk argues that

Wittgenstein's interest in Köhler's work was further cemented by both thinkers' "common

inheritance" of Goethian morphological methodology.[16] The concept of the *Gestalt*, when

applied to the morphology of plant life, brought Goethe to posit that there *could* exist a single

form or idea from which the multiplicity of related forms stem. In other words, just as the *Gestalt*

is the sum of all varieties of a particular thing, there could also exist a single form from which

the each point within a field of possible variations could be derived; Goethe termed this concept

the *Urphänomen*.[17] Plant life, Goethe theorized, could very well contain an *Urphänomen* uniting

the varieties occurring under the morphological framework overtime – this original form from

which all varieties of floral life morphed from was what Goethe termed the *Urpflanze*.[18] The

need to link similar forms of life to not only understand them, but also identify them is expressed

by Goethe when he writes "How could I recognize that this or that form was a plant if all were

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[14] See Monk pp. 323.

[15] Ibid. 323

[16] Ibid. 324

[17] Gordon Miller ibid., xix.

[18] Gordon Miller, ibid., xvii.

not built upon the same basic model?"[19] This basic model, however, should not be misconstrued as akin to a sort of biological universal concept. As Goethe is writing in order to avoid an overly mechanistic, Newtonian understanding of the world, it is clear that to construct a rigid way to categorize concepts (as is the case with a Russellian conception of a universal) would be highly problematic to Goethe. Goethe is instead constructing a dynamic understanding of nature, one that consists of interwoven similarities and differences, as well as the relationships that individual objects share via these similarities and differences.

3.0 LINKING GOETHE AND WITTGENSTEIN

3.1 LANGUAGE GAMES AND THE URPFLANZE

Although Goethe originally believed his *Urpflanze* to exist in the natural world, he eventually came to regard the idea of the this "Primal Plant" as an experimental tool to be used by the scientist when attempting to understand the relationship between plants - both developmentally as well as ecologically. If we hearken back to the later-Wittgenstein's explanation of primal languages and their relation to language games, we can see a very clear methodological analogy, one rooted in understanding phenomena in terms of organic development rather than causal chains. Along this line of reasoning, we could subscribe to the following: to better understand that which exists in the real world, it is often helpful to apply a hypothetical system to understand all logical possible extension. While this is nothing philosophically or scientifically groundbreaking – traditional science is, after all, an inferential framework concerned with producing consistent results through standardized methods and predicting future behavior – it is helpful in linking both Wittgenstein and Goethe's utilization of

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[19] Goethe, *Italian Journey*, 258-9. Quoted in Monk, ibid., 510.

the theoretical *Gestalt* to connect similar, but at the same time differing pieces of phenomena. It should be noted, however, that the difference between the Primal Plant – or primal language-language games – and traditional scientific modeling is the extent to which these hypothetical models correspond to both the external world, possible events, and shed light upon corresponding differences between them.[20] This modeling is not causal, but logical. Goethe writes, "The *Urpflanze* is going to be the strangest creature in the world, which nature herself shall envy men. With this model and the key to it, *it will be possible to go on forever inventing plants and know that their existence is logical* [my italics]; that is to say, if they do not actually exist, *they could*."[21] The Primal Plant is an archetype from which we can better understand the possible and actual variety of plants. Goethe is, in essence, assembling the basic set of ideas that would be examined in Wittgenstein's discussion of language games - the variations between certain interactions that can be classified under a broad title or description. Take, for example, Wittgenstein's examination of the concept "game" in section 66 of *Philosophical Investigations*:

> Consider, for example, the activities that we call "games". I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, athletic games, and so on. What is common to them all? — Don't say: They must have something in common, or they would not be called 'games'" — but look *and see* whether there is anything common to all. — For if you look at them, you won't see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, affinities, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don't think, but *look!*[22]

These language games are - if looked at in Goethian terms - the variety of possibilities of the concepts contained in *Urphenomenen*. The affinities between the different kinds of plants, as varied in appearance and ecological function as they may be, allows one to explain the individual

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[20] This will be explored further in subsequent discussion of Reuleaux.

[21] *On the Metamorphosis of Plants*. Pp. 310.

[22] My italics

in terms of not only other individual plants within the pattern, but also allows us to understand

these phenomena in terms of the one broad concept from which they are derived. They are a

demonstration of language's field of possibilities. It is appropriate to mention, however, that this

concept is not meant to explain the origin of the how we understand the term "plant," but is

instead meant to facilitate our understanding of the relationship between individual things that

fall categorization the term to provide a reasonable, multivariable definition of the term, a

definition that is appropriately used in different, albeit similar cases. This is an example of, as

Monk uses the term,[23] an *übersicht* or, in English, a "synoptic view." This synoptic view allows

us to clarify the relation between concepts. Wittgenstein, I will argue, instead intends this

particular recognition of shared similarities to allow us to understand the concept in relation to

the various routes that language is able to take in a real world linguistic environment, as well as

the relationship *between* these routes themselves.[24]

An attempt to trace to an actual common origin, - whether pseudo evolutionary or

cognitively by means of universals – would, Wittgenstein writes in *Logik, Sprache, Philosophie*,

"recognize only a single scheme for such similarities..."[25] Wittgenstein instead urges us to look

and see the various possible schemes for such similarities.

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[23] See Monk, op. cit. 510.

[24] See Monk, ibid., 303., where the connection is made between Spengler's conception of causality and Goethe's morphology. Indeed, as Monk notes, Wittgenstein is noted as saying in a lecture, "what I give is the morphology of the use of an expression."

[25] F. Waisman, *The Principles of Linguistic Philosophy*, (Macmillan, 1965). R. Harre (ed.). quoted in Monk, op. cit. 303.

3.2 CITIES AND SUBURBS: LANGUAGE GROWTH AND THE FIELD OF

LINGUISTIC POSSIBILITIES

> Our language can be regarded as an ancient city: a maze of little
> streets and squares, of old and new houses, of houses with
> extensions from various periods, and with all this surrounded by a
> multitude of new suburbs with straight and regular streets and
> uniform houses.[26]

Language, to Wittgenstein, is, much like his metaphorical city, a network of constantly

developing, and changing developments. Language is a constantly evolving phenomenon, one

unable to be strictly defined the way that the early-Wittgenstein attempted. Language games are

pictures of development that allow us to follow this theoretical progression of language (and its

underlying rules of correctness). Rather than providing some sort of causal chain within

language, piecing together words, object, and proper function, all hinging on sort of causal nexus

justifying correct usage, language games allow us, much like Goethe in his Italian garden, to

understand variations on a theme, debunking a phenomenon based upon a field of organically

developing possibilities. The beginning passages of the Philosophical Investigations list

numerous language games progressing is complexity, with Wittgenstein highlighting both the

interconnectedness of the games via their similarities, as well as the vital distinctions between

them with regards to differences in their underlying rules. Wittgenstein uses the following

interaction to paint this picture:

> Now think of the following language: I send someone shopping. I give him a slip
> of paper marked "five red apples." He takes the slip to the shopkeeper, who opens
> the drawer marked "apples"; then he looks up the word "red" in a chart and finds
> a color sample next to it; then he says the series of elementary number-words – I

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[26] PI Section 18.

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assume that he knows them by heart – up to the word "five", and for each number-word he takes an apple of the same color as the sample out of the drawer.[27]

Why take an interaction – one that many would execute with little thought, not to mention an incredibly streamlined method, and *intentionally* break it up into primitive, seemingly overly complicated, tasks? Even further, why engage in this sort of activity if simply *everything* happens to be a language game, relegated to the realm of therapeutic linguistic activity rather than diagnostic method?[28] Wittgenstein uses this language game to break down linguistic activity, demonstrating the possible intersections for logical development and variations – such as the color of the apple, the type of fruit, etc. Each small piece of action within this example is meant to highlight the actual subliminal occurrences implicit within the language being used, with each primitive snap-shot of language further illuminating how this organic development is thought to progress.

Goethe's idea of the *Urpflanze* was of a single leaf from which all varieties of plants *could* develop into a multiplicity of variations, the metamorphological process of which occurred due to progressive variations as it assumed the form of cotyledons, stem leaves, sepals, and various other parts of a plant. It is, so to speak, the common ancestor linking different plants together. Likewise, language games of situations, concepts, and words link one to another, much in the same way as common features link similar pieces of floral life to one another in the natural world. This linkage, it should be noted, is based upon *logic*, that is, what *could be* or *could develop*, based on a field of logical possibilities. Under this framework, logic is not viewed in

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[27] See *Philosophical Investigations*. Section 1.

[28] This seems to be the view of many New Wittgensteinians, who rarely do justice to where language games fit into a "therapeutic" reading of the Investigations.

terms of what *is* – as in the case of the *Tractatus*, but what *could be*. This should be viewed in contrasting terms to a conception of development (or taxonomy) rooted in a causal model. This understanding of logical outgrowth should also be distinguished from the notion of a crystalline logic set forth in the Tractatus; this logic is not concerned with restricting possibilities through strict definition, but rather in understanding possible variations on one theme. Evidence of this direct link between family resemblances and morphological similarities can be seen in section 73 of the *Philosophical Investigations*, where Wittgenstein writes: "One is now inclined to extend the comparison: to have understood the explanation means to have in one's mind an idea of the thing explained, and that is a sample or picture."[29] This sample or picture that Wittgenstein notes that we may be inclined to understand a concept in terms of seems to be none other than something categorized and understood by means of a universal. Wittgenstein, however, moves further when, in the same section, he continues, "So if I'm shown a various leaves and told 'this is a leaf', I get an idea of the shape of the leaf, *a picture in my mind* [my italics]. — But what does the picture of a leaf look like when it does not show us any particular shape, but rather '*what is common to all shapes of leaf*' [my italics]?"[30]

This common feature, that is, this each development of language games, showcases the variety of representations that the mental construction of a leaf could take. Wittgenstein argues that it is a "schema", one of many, each of which will vary from person to person. The point is that we understand the meaning of the word "leaf" in Goethe's terms, namely as a specific *Urphenomenon* that exists in the dynamic realm of the *Gestalt* – one in which we view a broad concept in terms of the whole series of specific examples, and recognize the multiplicity of

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[29] *Philosophical Investigations*. Section 73.

[30] Ibid. Section 73

variations that are not bound to a specific, abstract set of criteria, but rather to multiple varieties of association and organization.

"For Goethe, experiments work by being placed in a series of similar and otherwise interlinked cases, which do not issue a theory, but might result in a certain community of vision."[31] Both Wittgenstein and Goethe are telling us to *look*, to see how each case of phenomenon is related to another. This is the foundation of the influence of Goethe in Wittgenstein's work, and does not manifest itself anywhere more predominately than in the case of Wittgenstein's language-games. Here we see Goethe's experimental method applied not to explain the structural similarities and ecology of plants, but rather to the case of understanding how words retain meaning, and the relationship between the uses of those meanings in various situations. Language, Wittgenstein argues, can be ordered so that it may be "surveyable"[32] in much the way that the plants in Goethe's garden were. He uses language-games as a means to not only demonstrate the differences between different uses of language, but also to map these uses in surveyable form via the relations between games.[33] Language-games allow one to arrange data in a way that enables the reader to develop a comparison of the uses of a given word in different circumstances and the resulting differing, case-specific meanings.

> Our clear and simple language-games are not preliminary studies
> for a future regimentation of language — as it were first
> approximations, ignoring friction and air resistance. Rather, the
> language-games stand as *objects of comparison* which, through

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[31] See Rowe, pp. 286.

[32] *Philosophical Investigations*. Section 92.

[33] See Baker and Hacker, op. cit. 318.

similarities and dissimilarities, are meant to throw light on features
of our language.[34]

These are tools used by Wittgenstein allowing for language to be arranged for examination in a way that allows us to "look"[35] at words in a morphological manner - to see the affinity between the uses of a word - rather than one with concrete bounds and an idealized structure.

Contained within the dynamic and fluid bounds of the field of linguistic possibilities is Wittgenstein's equivalent of the *Urphenomenon*, which under Wittgenstein's project is the understanding and use of words (such as "game", "plant", etc). These words are, by most standards; impossible to define under a set of strict criteria -as would be the case in a referentialist model. Using Goethe's terminology, these words and concepts could be characterized as the linguistic equivalents of Primal Plants; they are not to be understood in terms of sentence by sentence notions of correct usage, but rather as general, archetypical ideas from which all specific objects can be traced back to. Language games, such as Wittgenstein's shopkeeper, are intended to shed light on the field of possible uses, as well as each uses inherent complexity.

We can trace board games, card games, athletic games, as well as any other games back to a certain linguistic archetype, in much the same way that we can theorize a common ancestor in relation to whom all plants relate to one another. This theory allows us to, as Goethe speculated, invent new variations – new games – that can be seen in as part of the overall pattern of similar instances. This parallel between Goethe and Wittgenstein can only exist, however, if we take Wittgenstein to agree with Goethe that the linguistic equivalents to the *Urpflanze* does

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[34] See *Philosophical Investigations*. Section130.

[35] Ibid. Section 65.

not actually exist, but are rather our creation; it is a tool that we have created to begin to make language surveyable.

4.0 STORM AND STRESS: MORPHOLOGY AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO LINNAEUS

The Romantic Movement echoed this feeling of reluctance to over-generalize the world in which they lived. Goethe, one of the German Romantic movement's most influential thinkers, labored to approach scientific study in a way that would explain the world in scientific terms that were not causal, but rather evolutionary. This tendency to understand what is overlooked by means of traditional scientific activity placed Goethe in a unique place among the thinkers of his day. Indeed, Goethe's poetry and scientific essays focused on a variety of scientific areas, beginning with physical anthropology and geology. Conscious of Kant's work in biology and Herder's work in History, among other, more Romantic leaning scientists of the Storm and Stress decade (roughly 1770-1780), Goethe first developed his own set of Romantic scientific methods and critique during his initial forays into commenting on these proto-anthropological advancements, which, while addressing a variety of concerns, focused on the relevance of race and the definition of various types of peoples. Goethe addressed these developments, particularly Kant's "teleology of judgment" and Blumenbach's "theory of epigenisis" in a series of short essays, titled "On Morphology" published between the years 1817 and 1822.[36] While, on the whole, Goethe accepted Blumenbach's organic theories of development, he maintained serious reservations about Blumenbach's concepts of "force" and "drive," proto-anthropological

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[36] Karl J. Fink. *Goethe's History of Science*. Cambridge University Press, 1991. Pp. 8.

mechanisms posited to facilitate physical variations among peoples. Goethe found these concepts "highly anthropomorphized"[37].

> In [Goethe's] view, these terms assume something "physical" (physich) and "mechanical" (mechanisch), and while they bring vitality to organized matter, they still leave us with a gap in the understanding of organic development, with "a dark incomprehensible point" (ein dunkler unbegreiflicher Punkt). Nor were terms like "evolution", epigenisis, and "preformation" any help. These, too, he argued, could not be understood without a concept of *forms in process, of metamorphosis*[38]…

The concept of forms in process – metamorphosis - would prove vital to Goethe's approach to scientific work, emphasizing an intimacy with nature that is characteristic of not only the Storm and Stress decade, but also German Romanticism as a whole. The common thread of an apprehensiveness to rely on one aspect of scientific explanation – the physical and mechanical – runs parallel to Herztian apprehensions targeted at the ability of science to explain the world in its totality.

Much in the same way that the later-Wittgenstein urges his readers to "turn their inquiry around", in effect repositioning the ways in which questions are answered and - perhaps most importantly for our purposes - addressed, Goethe, utilizing an alternative Romanticist scientific approach, also repositioned familiar studies by adjusting methodological and ideological approaches. The result of this repositioning was, crudely speaking, Goethe's production and execution of scientific studies that would become "basic" to the further evolutions of sciences, making it possible to trace entire lineages of scientific discoveries back to Goethe's scientific work. Indeed, Goethe's work in botany is characterized by the subtitle of his first major work in botany, 1817's *On Morphology: The Formation and Transformation of Organisms*, where we are

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[37] Ibid. pp. 13.

[38] My italics. Ibid. pp. 11-12.

given an indication of the notion of non-static, evolutionarily organic explanations of natural phenomena.

Simply put, Goethe used his morphological scientific model to provide an alternative to the biological work of Linnaeus. Linnaeus had brought botanical studies to a "standstill"[39], effectively putting an end to the work of the scientists and philosophers that had preceded him by constructing a system of classification to organize the entire plant kingdom. This system, however, is and was itself artificially constructed, not to mention composed of rigidly defined distinctions between species. After all, Linnaean taxonomy classifies plants based upon individual, outward characteristics - the arrangement and number of stamens and pistils, etc. Rudolf Magnus writes, "In the practical application of this system Linnaeus and his successors saw the main task of scientific botany. Linnaeus himself declared that the best botanist was he who had learned to know and distinguish the greatest number of species."[40] Thus the question of botany in Goethe's time boiled down to be a question of systems. *That is, what kinds of systems work best to describe and explain the natural world - closed, static systems tuned to outwardly mimic natural events by means of an inferential framework or an organic, morphological system allowing for the natural development and theoretical construction of phenomena based upon intricately balanced relationships between objects?*

Linnaeus and - his followers, by extension - agreed "various species in his systems had existed immutably since the beginning of creation, that they were sharply marked plant groups among which there were no transitions."[41] This should immediately conjure similarities between

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[39] Rudolf Magnus. *Goethe as a Scientist*. Trans. Heinz Norden. New York: H. Schuman, 1949. pp. 38.

[40] Ibid. pp. 39.

[41] Ibid. pp. 42.

this Linnaean classification system and the early Wittgenstein, essentially producing similarly constructed - and idealized - systems believed to organize and explain the world in terms of corresponding, rigidly defined groups and classifications. Like the later-Wittgenstein, Goethe's own observations led him different conclusions as to the best methods of understanding plant life, instead opting to expand classification beyond the outward characteristics of plants. Goethe agreed with Linnaeus that in certain genera, each individual plant persistently exhibited the same external characteristics, thus eliminating doubts arising around the plant's correct place among the Linnaean species. However, Goethe provides room for a more fluid system of floral variation (much like Wittgenstein's "multiplicity") when he acknowledges "...plant groups, such as roses, which [Goethe] describes as 'characterless,' since individual plants show extraordinarily wide variation, even in essential characteristics, making it difficult to determine to which species the individual belongs. Thus Goethe found even then that many transition forms between Linnaean species occur."[42] Goethe's conclusions, then, would make it very difficult for ideas of ideal fixed systems of plant classification to hold weight, resulting in diminishing faith in the existence of "fixed, immutable species."[43]

What contributed to this variation among plants within specific Linnaean species, Goethe believed, was related to environmental factors. Over the course of his botanical research, Goethe became increasingly convinced that outward plant form was conditioned by the plant's surrounding environment, leading him to conclude, "changes in the environment could give rise

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[42] Ibid. pp. 42.

[43] Ibid. pp. 42.

to varieties within a species."[44] The development of these beliefs lead Goethe to reject crucial

tenants of Linnaean classification, specifically the immutability of floral forms.

Goethe, in his notebooks from his stay in Palermo discussed above, writes:

I tried to find wherein these many and diverse forma [plants] were different, one from the other. And always I found them more like than unlike. Whenever I sought to apply my botanical nomenclature, I fared well enough, but it seemed idle and made me uneasy, availing me nothing. My fine poetic resolutions were frustrated... Why are we moderns so distraught? Why are we challenged to demands we can neither attain nor fulfill?

Goethe felt that the strict Linnaean nomenclature not only failed to take account of essential

differences and similarities between plant forms, but also, similarly to the later Wittgenstein,

restricted by the strictness in which the system classified and explained the relations between

similar groupings of plant subjects.

5.0   THE INFLUENCE OF GOETHE ON WITTGENSTEIN

"The influence of Goethe on Wittgenstein is just beginning to be appreciated. Hacker and

Baker, Westphal, Monk, and Haller have all drawn attention to the significant affinities between

the two men's work…"[45] Even still, while the similarities between the work of both men may

seem unremarkable, in Wittgenstein's collection of personal notes, published as *Culture and*

Value , Wittgenstein omits Goethe from a personal list of his primary influences that includes

Hertz, Frege, Schopenhauer, among others. A possible explanation for this exclusion could be

rooted in Wittgenstein's alleged acceptance of the ideas of Oswald Spengler – who, it should be

noted, was included in the list contained in Culture and Value. James Klagge, commenting on the

absence of Goethe on Wittgenstein's list of influences, argues that the omission could be based

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[44] Ibid. 43.

[45] See Rowe, op. cit., 283.

upon an apparent philosophically anachronistic conflict in citing a thinker from Goethe's

historical period in Wittgenstein's times. Working within the confines of Spengler's philosophy

of history, this - at least to Spengler - anachronistic incompatibility arises from an attempt to

reconcile what Spengler categorizes to be two different "life contexts" – Goethe's in the

transition from the 18th to the 19th century, and Wittgenstein's in the first half of the 20th century.

[46] As both Monk[47] and Klagge note: linking these life contexts would be historically incoherent

within Spengler's historical-philosophical framework. In Spengler's ideas, we find both a

framework to exclude Goethe from directly stated intellectual influence, while also finding a

possible intellectual surrogate put into place by Wittgenstein to justify the utilization of the ideas

of a previous historical stage.

> Each culture has its own new possibilities of self-expression which arise,
> ripen, decay and never return. There is not one sculpture, one painting, one
> mathematics, one physics, but many, each in its deepest essence, different
> from the others, each limited in duration and self-contained, just as each
> species of plant has its peculiar blossom or fruits, its special type of
> growth and decline. These Cultures, sublimated life-essences, grow with
> the same superb aimlessness as the flowers of the field. They belong, like
> the plants and the animals, to the living Nature of Goethe, and not to the
> dead Nature of Newton. I see world-history as a picture of endless
> formations and transformations of the marvelous waxing and waning of
> organic forms.[48]

History, according to Spengler, is a series of cultural growth, flourishing, and subsequent

deterioration.[49] This cyclical analysis and explanation of historical events, and the cultural and

intellectual development accompanying them, assuming Wittgenstein did, indeed subscribe to

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[46] See Klagge, op. cit., 9.

[47] See Monk, op. cit., 302-303.

[48] Oswald Spengler, The Decline of the West. Abridged edition. Oxford University Press. 1991. Pp. 17-18.

[49] See Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*

Spengler's ideas at the level attributed by Monk and Klagge, would have left Wittgenstein with a kind of metaphysical puzzle surrounding his list of intellectual influences. That is to say, if, under Spengler's assessment, the flowering period of the 18th and 19th centuries had been achieved, and the 20th century period is believed to be one of deterioration, how could Wittgenstein synthesize influence from a period of developmental climax with one that has been compromised by inevitable decay? The problem of Wittgenstein's notable exclusion, assuming he did, in fact subscribe to Spengler's understanding of historical stages, has its origins in difficulties of anachronism – "What problems are involved in someone from one stage of an era endorsing views from another stage?"[50] Also arising from Spengler's philosophy of history is an understanding of the study of history – and, indeed all intellectual fields – that places an emphasis on the organic growth of states of affairs, based upon an ever growing and changing field of possibilities from which we can organize and understand information in relation to both the development of certain phenomena between each instance of occurrence, as well as our ability to understand each occurrence by engaging in situational diagnostics that align very similarly to the language games in question.

While Klagge attempts to give an *explanation* for Wittgenstein's omission of Goethe from his list of influences, others have instead attempted to map the genealogy of this link within Wittgenstein's work by highlighting similarities in method, scientific ideology, and general similarities in the understanding of the workings of the external world that lie between them. To truly understand the link between Wittgenstein and Goethe, it is necessary to isolate and examine the parallels between the scientific method and ideology that exist between the works of both men. While Rowe does address Goethe's scientific method and ideology, it seems that his main

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[50] See Klagge, op. cit.,

interest resides in demonstrating the conjunction between the two men in an attempt to account for literary and stylistic similarities. After all, he is attempting to answer questions posed by Stanley Cavell, that is, "Why does [Wittgenstein] write this way? Why doesn't he just say what he means, and draw instead of insinuate conclusions?"[51] While these questions posed by Cavell are emphatically valid, and by all means some of the first questions that come to mind when first getting acquainted with Wittgenstein's work - both early as well as late – they do not generate the depth of understanding of Wittgenstein that we wish to attain. That is, these are questions that while important on a surface level – an initial comprehension of Wittgenstein's philosophy – they are only deeply important when examining Wittgenstein in light of his New Wittgenstein[52] form. Cavell's questions lead to an examination that is stylistic rather than methodological. Focusing on why Wittgenstein doesn't simply grant us his conclusion inevitably leads us to the understanding that Wittgenstein is providing us with this philosophical therapy; he is seen to be constructing a kind of philosophy that leaves the reader to decide exactly what Wittgenstein intends. After all, if what Wittgenstein intends is left open to subjective conclusions, that is, conclusions that vary from one reader to another, we have no choice but to appeal to a therapeutic reading.

If we begin by examining and analyzing the striking similarities between Goethe's conception of science and Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy, and proceed to synthesize the corresponding methodological explanations linking the two, it would seem, then, that Goethe and Wittgenstein could be intellectually linked. That is it, if both thinkers are in fact linked by

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[51] From Stanley Cavell, "The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy", in *Must We Mean What We Say?* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1976), 70. See Rowe op. cit., 284 for quote.

[52] Stanley Cavell is generally regarded as one of the pioneering figures of the "New Wittgenstein" reading.

both methodology as well as scientific and philosophical ideology, then we could use Goethe's

clarity with regard to results, intentions, and method as a useful means to attempt to understand

why Wittgenstein writes the way he does, as well as what philosophical, epistemological, and

linguistic conclusions he is advocating for. To speak in specifics, reaching an understanding of

Goethe's scientific goals brings Wittgenstein's philosophical intentions into much clearer focus.

It is mainly a question of method, rather than style, that brings us to a connection between

Wittgenstein's philosophy viewed in relation to Goethian science. Again, if we are to turn our

own inquiry around, as was mentioned earlier a Goethian lens, it seems, could be a particularly

promising place to begin.

If the point of Wittgenstein's later writings are subject to, and contain, a traceable goal,

one that is not left to one reader or another to interpret, but rather to understand why he uses the

philosophical tools that he does to appeal to readers universally, we will be better equipped to

answer the aforementioned questions arising from Wittgenstein's philosophy. Some scholars

have focused on Goethe's work the *Theory of Colours* to trace the proposed Wittgenstein-Goethe

parallel.[53] Goethe's work with light and color was a direct response to Newtonian theories of

light.[54] To Goethe, the Newtonian scientific method devalues the world in which one lives – it

condenses the world into one of sheer mechanism, explaining it in terms of mathematical

abstraction, leaving one with senses that proved to be not only doubtable, but also ultimately

deceptive. It is important to mention that Spengler's philosophy of history describes the period of

decay as being associated with mechanical structure and abstract detachment rather than the

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[53] See Rowe op. cit., 286

[54] I found Robert J. Richards' *The Romantic Conception of Life: Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe* particularly helpful in my attempts to understand the relationship between Romantic conceptions of scientific explanation and the Newtonian tradition.

organic nature associated with the multiplicity of the natural world.[55] Wittgenstein had extreme reservations when it came to granting scientific explanation and modeling[56] a position of unchecked power; both Wittgenstein and Goethe were vehemently opposed to scientism, at least in terms of believing that the causal explanations traditional of science should be taken as all encompassing explanations of the external world.[57] I will go into greater detail regarding the nature of the philosophy of science and its relation to Wittgenstein and Goethe in later sections, but it is important to our current discussion to at least briefly introduce this point here: treating phenomena as understandable only in terms of the ideal, abstract, and theoretical, and, most importantly, as a matter of explanation in sole terms of an event's causal nexus, fails to recognize the multiplicity of the number of possible outcomes that could result in a particular process according Wittgenstein.

To use Wittgenstein's analogy, it is the "rough ground" (PI 107) upon which we must tread if we are to walk.[58] To achieve the level of linguistic friction required to traverse this ground, we cannot rely solely upon the ideal for the totality of linguistic and epistemic explanation; the ideal is, after all, too vacuous, too slippery to be relied upon as the only terms of explanation.

6.0 SCIENCE, ABSOLUTISM, AND UNDERSTANDING

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[55] This is how Spengler is portrayed in Monk op. cit., 302.

[56] See Goethe, *Theory of Colours,* trans. C.L. Eastlake (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970) ii. Quoted in Rowe op. cit. 287.

[58] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), P.M.S. Hacker (ed.) §. 107. I will use PI as the abbreviation for this work for the duration of this paper, and will use section number unless otherwise indicated.

With the distinction having been drawn between the ideas against which Goethe and the later Wittgenstein are reacting, it is now appropriate to focus discussion on the overlapping methods and scientific ideologies binding these reactions together. After all, if those that Goethe and the later Wittgenstein are reacting against - Newton (and Linnaeus by extension)[59] and the early Wittgenstein - ought not to be thought of as ideologically interchangeable, then it would follow that, if there is to be any link between the ideas of Goethe and the later Wittgenstein, that their respective methodologies – and ideologies, for that matter – would be have to be linked by common understandings regarding the role of science and philosophy to be played in addressing themes relating to understanding the world. Consider the following methodological approach of classical mechanics to explain phenomena:[60]

a. The objects of physics – rigid rods, planes without friction, etc – are inherently idealized in the sense that no real objects can enjoy these purified traits.
b. That physics is free to set up any "inferential engine" for generating conclusions as long as the results are "formally adequate" for science's predictive ends.
c. Because of (a) and (b), a body of physical law merely provides a set of "regulative principles" to which all subsequent scientific description is required to conform.

This three-part method provides an outline of how, exactly, traditional science (or, at the very least, classical mechanics) operates with regard to explaining the everyday world, the products of which, while helpful in explaining certain phenomena, do not, under a Goethian scientific

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[59] Linnaeus will be discussed later in the paper. However, for my purposes, it is important to note that Linnaeus' taxonomical system will be discussed as being rooted in the Newtonian scientific tradition. That is, Linnaeus created a system of classification in which species are classified as being distinctly, and, I argue, idealistically separate from strikingly similar species. At the very least, Newton and Linnaeus both share "closed-system" or "static-system" tendencies, which will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

[60] This outline has been reprinted from Mark Wilson's article, "Wittgenstein: Physica Sunt, Non Leguntur", which will help to provide much of the groundwork for my discussion of the role of science in Wittgenstein's philosophy, as well as help to ground my discussion of the role of language games in Wittgenstein's philosophy of language in order to address the question of Language Games in a Geotheian light. Mark Wilson. " Wittgenstein: Physica Sunt, Non Leguntur". Philosophical Topics. Vol. 25, No. 2. Fall 1997. Pp. 294.

framework, provide *complete* explanation. By utilizing ideal objects and calculations under an

understood framework, scientists are able to provide inferential processes in order to predict a

standardized outcome, the standardization of which leads to the construction (or ontologizing) of

a set of laws under which future scientific engines are expected to conform. "Science is alleged

to achieve its predictive objectives by clamping rather artificial descriptions onto ordinary

sensory presentations and running the results through artificially constructed inferential

machinery."[61] This passage, printed in Mark Wilson's article "Wittgenstein: Physica Sunt, Non

Leguntur" to describe the methodology of "classical mechanics," is from the work of H. Hertz.[62]

Hertz, vis a vis Wilson, argues that "Science is dedicated solely to framing rules that develop a

shifting set of 'images' serving as '*adequate representations*' of real-life behavior; it does not,

however, care whether these representations move in the same way as the events they faithfully

shadow."[63] The early Wittgenstein addresses this problem as well:

> Newtonian mechanics, for example, brings the description of the universe
> to a unified form. Let us imagine a white surface with irregular black
> spots. We now say: Whatever kind of picture these make I can always get
> as near as I like to its description, if I cover the surface with a sufficiently
> fine square network and now say of every square that it is white or black.
> In this way I shall have brought the description of the surface to a unified
> form. This form is arbitrary, because I could have applied with equal
> success a net with a triangular or hexagonal mesh. It can happen that the
> description would have been simpler with the aid of a triangular mesh; that
> is to say we might have described the surface more accurately with a
> triangular, and coarser, than with the finer square mesh, or vice versa, and
> so on. To the different networks correspond different systems of
> describing the world. Mechanics determine a form of description by

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[61] Mark Wilson. " Wittgenstein: Physica Sunt, Non Leguntur". Philosophical Topics. Vol. 25, No. 2. Fall 1997. Pp. 294.

[62] Ibid. pp. 294.

[63] See Wilson, Ibid.

saying: All propositions in the description of the world must be obtained in a given way from a number of given propositions—the mechanical axioms. It thus provides the bricks for building the edifice of science, and says: Whatever building thou wouldst erect, thou not the form of one particular law, but of any law of a certain sort construct it in some manner with these bricks and these alone. (As with the system of numbers one must be able to write down any arbitrary number, so with the system of mechanics one must be able to write down any arbitrary physical proposition.)[64]

That is to say, the "adequate representations" that Wilson notes as being produced by traditional

(i.e. Newtonian, classical, or statically modeled) methods are not concerned with reproducing or

explaining underlying characteristics that reach beyond mere outward performance.

Wittgenstein writes:

> But wait! – if "Now I understand the system" does not mean the same as "The formula … occurs to me" (or "I utter the formula", "I write it down," etc.) – does it follow from this that I employ the sentence "Now I understand" or "Now I can go on" as a description of a process occurring behind or side by side that of uttering the formula?
>
> If something has to stand 'behind the utterance of the formula', it is particular circumstances which warrant my saying that I can go on – if the formula occurs to me.
>
> Just for once, don't think of understanding as a 'mental process' at all! – For *that* is the way of talking which confuses you. Instead, ask yourself: in what sort of case, in what kind of circumstances, do we say "Now I know how to go on"? I mean, if the formula has occurred to me. – In the sense in which there are processes (including mental processes) which are characteristic of understanding, understanding is not a mental process. (A pain's increasing, listening to a tune or a sentence – mental process.)[65]

6.1   PROBLEMS WITH CAUSALLY-FOCUSED EXPERIENTIAL MODELS

AS EXPLANATIONS OF PHENOMENA

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[64] Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus 6.341

[65] PI 154.

To borrow Wilson's example, consider a replication of yourself – a representation that, by all outward accounts, shares your appearance, one that can even mimic your personalized mannerisms and all other outward behavior through the use of some kind of strangely powerful algorithm. The replica, however, is supported and powered by means of hidden beams and connections that are blocked from your line sight by various odds and ends arising from your surroundings. The replication, while successfully mimicking your behavior and appearance, could not reasonably be thought to be an absolute replica of you without also replicating other, internal characteristics - however difficult to categorize, quantify, or define as they may be. The replica is, after all, an *imitation*; one created by utilizing standardized, predictive methods in hopes of replicating your behavior and appearance by means of a hidden mechanistic framework and the corresponding algorithm. In the verbiage of the romantics, to mistake the machine's imitation of your appearance and behavior for a full explanation of your being is to overlook essential characteristics that may not be able to be fully standardized, or even strictly classified. In the later Wittgenstein's terms, the machine may indeed have a limited vocabulary - we can even assume that it mirrors the "slab" vocabulary of Wittgenstein's builders. Not only would the replica's language be limited to an ostensibly-defined linkage between word and object, but, in Wittgenstein's terms, the attribution of the same rules from your, more complex language to the limited, imitative language of your replica would be to dangerously generalize a similar set of rules that supposedly govern the activity of both languages. Indeed, attributing the characteristics of the imitation – support beams, internal gears, etc – to yourself, or vice-versa would inevitably give rise to grave misunderstandings. That is to say, the replica is just a predictive model, one that uses its ability to replicate and predict to imitate outward

characteristics, not necessarily explain or fully replicate actual decision making processes

beyond simple mannerisms and outward appearances.

> So, what I wanted to say was: if he suddenly knew how to go on, if
> he understood the system, then he may have had a distinctive experience –
> and if he is asked: "What was it? What took place when you suddenly
> grasped the system?", perhaps he will describe it much as we described it
> [in the passage previously quoted] – but for us it is the *circumstances*
> under which he had such an experience that warrant him saying in such a
> case that he understands, that he knows how to go on.

Similarly, consider a blind man, one who has been tirelessly educated in physics, human

anatomy, and the history of Western art. He is familiar with manner in which Impressionist

painters were able to use small brush strokes to blend different colors together to be seen from

afar as an image or representation of a sunset or piece of fruit. Additionally, he has studied his

physics to the level that he is critically aware of the phenomenon of color; he understands

waves, their frequencies, and the way in which they are manipulated by the natural environment.

Furthermore, his training in human anatomy and biology has equipped him with the ability to

explain how and why our eyes are able to retrieve waves from the outside word, send electrical

signals to the brain for processing, and the manner in which our brain reacts to this external

stimuli. By all accounts we would understand this man to have an "understanding" of the way in

which the phenomenon of color appears to function. Problematic still, just as in the case of the

mechanical-mimic above, we would also, by most accounts, believe him to lack an actual

firsthand understanding of color. That is to say, the man can *explain* the colors of a sunrise, or

the way that a painting of this sunrise affects the human brain, but he lacks an intimate

understanding of color in its most basic sense. Wittgenstein's passages in the Philosophical

Investigations about the "reading-machine" are a similar example to the one I've listed above:

Consider the following case: we use human beings, or creatures of some kind, as reading-machines. They are trained for this purpose. The trainer says of some that they can already read, of others that they cannot yet do so. Take the case of a pupil who has so far not participated in the training: if he is shown a written word, he will sometime produce random sounds, and now and again the sounds will 'accidentally' come out roughly right. A third person hears this pupil on such occasions and says, "he is reading". But the teacher says, "No, he isn't reading; that was just an accident". – But let's supposed that this pupil continues to react correctly to further words that are put before him. After a while, the teacher says, "Now he can read!" – But what of that first word? Is the teacher to say, "I was wrong, he *did* read it after all" – or, "He only began really to read later on"? – When did he begin to read? Which was the first word that he *read*? This question makes no sense here. Unless, indeed we stipulate: "The first word that a person 'reads' us the first word of the first series of 50 words that he reads correctly" (or something of the sort)

If, on the other hand, we use "reading" to stand for a certain experience of transition from marks to spoken sounds, then it certainly makes sense to speak of the *first* word that he really read. He can then say, for example, "At this word, for the first time, I had the feeling: 'now I am reading'."

Or again, in the different case of a reading-machine which translated marks into sounds, perhaps as a pianola does, it would be possible to say: "The machine *read* only after such-and-such had happened to it – after such-and-such parts had been connected by wires; the first word that it read was …"

But in the case of the live reading-machine, "reading" meant: reacting to written signs in such-and-such ways. So this concept was quite independent of that of a mental or other mechanism. – Nor can the teacher here say of the trainee, "Perhaps he was already reading when he said that word". For there is no doubt about what he did. – The change when the pupil began to read was a change in his *behavior*; and it makes no sense here to speak of a 'first word in his new state'.[66]

Thus, it seems, that while replication does not necessarily correspond to understanding, likewise, the production of results through a scientifically established inferential framework does not necessarily provide for a full explanation of a phenomenon or even a fully encompassing replication beyond that of outward appearances and predictive behavior. What conclusion, then,

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[66] *Philosophical Investigations*. Section 157.

are we to take from scientific ontologizing (i.e. science's construction of laws and systems meant to replicate – and, indeed, explain – the world)? If we are to follow Hertz - and, by Wilson's account, both the early and later Wittgenstein - it appears that we must accept that science engages in creating generalizing frameworks that explain portions of the world, albeit not the world in its entirety; indeed, a potential critique of science is that it misses or overlooks very important pieces of the world in an attempt to fully explain it is its inherent activity of generalization.

If traditional science really is "engaged in a project of attaching generalizing barnacles onto the ship of ordinary life,"[67] and Wittgenstein, for all accounts, subscribes to this cautious approach towards scientific explanation, then it becomes apparent that the role of science to Wittgenstein is to create theoretical simulation models of real world events and practices to parallel occurrences within the world through a series of representations. The actual link between the real world and these models is, in Wilson's terms, "moot." That is to say, these models are constructed to run independently, and, often times, their correspondence with actual real life cases is placed second to their ability to run as independent, theoretical systems supported by rules derived from real world experiences.

6.2   LANGUAGE GAMES AS DIANGOSTIC TOOLS TO ISOLATE AND UNDERSTAND THE FIELD OF LINGUISTIC POSSIBILITIES

As Wilson notes, Swiss engineer Franz Reuleaux revolutionized machine design when he proposed a new dissection of machines into "component parts."[68] This dissection of machinery

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[67] See Wilson pp. 296

[68] Ibid. pp. 291.

into parts was Reuleaux's attempt to discover the "essence"[69] of machinery - i.e. the underlying characteristics that guided discoveries of inventors. To arrive at this "essence," Reuleaux proposed a "conceptual framework that extracts from real life machines a rather skeletal essence."[70] The implications of Reuleaux's framework, then, is to abstract one's understandings of certain machines to the point wherein mechanisms that may seem to lack noticeable similarities may actually be classified as the same mechanism. This essence, according to Reuleaux, is centered upon the question of whether or not two mechanisms have moving members that "trace a line or surface upon each other's surface."[71] If the two mechanisms share these similar movements or related movements, then, according to Reuleaux, they are related by this common "essence."

Using this notion of a shared - albeit idealized - "essence" at the core of different mechanisms as our foundation, Reuleaux then instructs his readers to calculate progressive stages of motion for a device, with each stage of a cycle being a variation of a central rule of motion that unites the devices. In a similar fashion, Wittgenstein seems to apply a similar methodological approach to linguistic function, as Wilson notes, when he discusses the "development of a rule" in sections 193-94 of the Philosophical Investigations.[72] It could be appropriate to ask, then, "How does this theorizing relate to the real world?" After all, while one could continue a Reuleaux sequence in theory far beyond the limits of the ability of a mechanism to function in the real world. To use Wilson's example, consider a student that,

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Reuleaux via Wilson

[72] Wilson 291.

when drafting this sequence, increasing the demands on the machine beyond what would be possible in the real world. The student, after reaching the point of calculations that exceed the possibilities of the real world simply draws the tangle of lines that would result from pushing the theoretical mechanism too far in real life. If judging the student by Reuleaux's standard, we would obviously consider the student to have made a mistake - the calculation could, after all, be calculated theoretically even if they far surpass real world possibilities. From Reuleaux's point of view, the student is wrong, even if he is, indeed, correct in "real world" terms. Which, then, is correct? Correctness, corresponding to Reuleaux's model lies in understanding the field of possibilities implicit in Wittgenstein and Goethe's organically based method. Goethe's Primal Plant and Wittgenstein's language games are tools that allow an investigator to methodically diagnose each variation in the development of a phenomenon.

Whereas the early Wittgenstein believed that these gaps in traditional scientific explanation could be overcome by incorporating logic into sorting out linguistic misunderstandings and inconsistencies, the later Wittgenstein instead moved to bridging scientific gaps through Reuleaux-like models of linguistic activity - language games. The Reuleaux models should be seen as a kind of language game corresponding to how to build a machine. That is to say, each variation of the model follows the "cities and suburbs" growth model of possibilities that seem to anchor our conception of language games in a Goethian, organic context and taxonomical tools for understanding the growth of language. These language games, it seems, are to act in a kind of linguistically focused Reuleaux-like models meant to account for different acting criteria in different situations of use. That is to say that the role of language games, it seems, is to account for the seeming inconsistency in terms of linguistic correctness in these Reuleaux-like cases, and demonstrate the possible variations of

each game in different circumstances. To break things down, the case of correctness outlined above, there would, in essence, be two standards of correctness that are specific to each similar, but still different case – in this case the ideal and the real world. What these pockets of different criteria seem to be leading us towards is a kind of differing normativity seemingly analogous to Wittgenstein's language games. Thus, we can see Reuleaux's essence and Goethe's notion of the Gestalt to be methodologically linked, at least in terms of both system's use of what seems to be common essence, and, perhaps most importantly, the emphasis that both place on development and variations of particular phenomena and the overlapping characteristics linking them together. The attention paid to these elements allows for an examination of phenomena outside of the traditional realm of traditional scientific methods. That is to say, if traditional science is engaged in anthologizing and creating systems that explain a narrow portion of the external world, the Reuleaxian-method's overlap with Wittgenstein could prove to be fertile grounds for additional, more holistic explanation of events. This explanation, however, can, as discussed above, should, for our purposes, be linked to Romantic conceptions of scientific explanation.

Plants, to Goethe, should not be understood in simple terms of concrete characteristics and differences, but as sharing essential components (much like Reuleaux's essence of machines). These archetypical essences should be understood not only in terms of distinguishing plants from one another, but - perhaps most importantly - as linking seemingly unrelated plants *together*. Again, to take Reuleaux's concept of the essence of the machine, Goethe's attempt to understand the *Urpflanze* was a project rooted in understanding qualities that may not be quantifiable, predictable, or static in very developmental terms, terms related by a multiplicity of

possible variations that were to be recognized if one were to truly understand phenomena outside of the realm of mere prediction and standardization.

7.0   *PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS* AND THE *TRACTATUS LOGICO-PHILOSOPHICUS*

7.1   LOGIC AND PERFECTIONISM

To understand Wittgenstein in Goethian terms, it is necessary to provide an overview of his early work. To begin, it is essential to recognize the differences between the two stages of Wittgenstein's life in philosophy: on one hand there is the work of Wittgenstein's early academic career, particularly the logical atomism of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, on the other hand we have the ideas of the second half of his career, most prominently associated with the posthumously published *Philosophical Investigations*. The *Philosophical Investigations*, in essence, is a work standing in direct philosophical opposition to the early Wittgenstein's view of language and philosophy originally presented in the *Tractatus*. These opposing works can be viewed as transitional, moving from the strictly descriptive account of language of the *Tractatus* to an account of the characterization of words based upon relational taxonomy derived from use and social interaction in the *Philosophical Investigations*.

Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* was primarily concerned with demonstrating that "traditional philosophy rests on radical misunderstandings within the logic of our language".[73] Among the most important ideas that the early Wittgenstein sets forth in the Tractatus is the notion that all meaningful sentences are characterized by a precise logical structure that in turn requires logical

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[73] Sluga, Hans. "Introduction", in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*. eds. Hans Sluga and David G. Stern. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). pp. 9.

analysis. Sluga sums things up nicely when he writes "Such analysis, Wittgenstein was convinced, would establish that every meaningful sentence is either a truth-functional composite of other simpler sentences or an atomic sentence consisting of a concatenation of simple names."[74] This, in essence, means that each atomic sentence is a picture of a possible "state of affairs" which reflects the same structure as the atomic sentence that depicts the image.[75] From this, Wittgenstein argued that the world must have a strict and definite logical structure. Furthermore, as Wittgenstein writes in the Tractatus, "The world is the totality of facts, not things".[76] These facts are chains of simple objects that correspond to the simple names of which simple sentences are made of. Thus some traditional subjects - such as ethics, metaphysics, and aesthetics -were not only philosophical dead-ends, but, ultimately, unintelligible. Wittgenstein writes, "Most of the propositions and questions to be found in philosophical works are not false but nonsensical".[77]

It is with this ideal conception of logic and language in mind that the later Wittgenstein should be understood – the later Wittgenstein is reacting against two primary ideas of the Tractatus – referentialism and logical perfectionism. Wittgenstein begins the *Philosophical Investigations* with a familiarly rigid and descriptive explanation of language - that of St. Augustine.

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[74] Ibid. pp. 10.

[75] This is known as the Picture Theory of Meaning.

[76] Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Trans. C.K. Ogden. (London:Routledge, 1922). pp. 1.

[77] Ibid. proposition 3.324

When grown-ups named some object and at the same time turned towards
it, I perceived this, and I grasped that the thing was signified by the sound
uttered, since they meant to point it out. This, however, I gathered from
their gestures, the natural language of all peoples, the language that by
means of facial expressions and the play of eyes, of the movements of
limbs and the tone of voice, indicates the affections of the soul when it
desires, or clings to, or rejects, or recoils from something. In this way,
little by little, I learnt to understand what things the words, which I heard
uttered in their respective places in various sentences, signified. And once
I got my tongue around these signs, I used them to express my wishes.

While not relying on logical analysis of language as the early Wittgenstein does in the *Tractatus*,

Augustine's account is still intended to conjure an ideally descriptive account of language.

Philosophers have "often uncritically adopted [referentialist perspectives] in areas which do not

apply, with the result that philosophical confusion ensues. Wittgenstein points to the writings of

St. Augustine and to his own *Tractatus* as examples of this tendency"[78] Much like the

Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, Augustine is providing a linguistic structure that is, for the most

part, referential.[79] Augustine, and indeed the *Tractatus* as well, are examples of philosophical

works that presuppose that the role of words is to stand for or refer to objects, and, subsequently,

that the presumptive role of sentences is to "picture or represent how things stand to each

other".[80] This referential account of language, the later Wittgenstein argues, is not only primitive,

but also linguistically one-dimensional. "Augustine does not mention any difference between

kinds of words. Someone who describes language in this way is, I believe, thinking primarily of

nouns like 'table', 'chair', 'bread', and of people's names, and only secondarily of certain actions

and properties; and of the remaining kinds of words as something that will take care of itself."[81]

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[78] Fogelin, Robert J. "Wittgenstein's Critique of Philosophy", in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*. eds.
Hans Sluga and David G. Stern. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. pp. 35.

[80] Ibid. pp. 37.

[81] See *Philosophical Investigations* Section 1.

Augustinian referentialism (as well as the somewhat analogous referential tenets of the

Tractatus), therefore, describes only one of many functions of language. That is, to name objects

is only one function of language; one that does not take into account the various other aspects of

meaning or communicative purpose. Wittgenstein argues that ostensive training like that which

Augustine is referring to "can be said to establish an associative connection between word and

thing." This, by itself, is nothing outside of the scope of reason. Wittgenstein, however,

continues, attempting to isolate the purpose of the word – that is, its intended use: "But what

does this mean? Well, it may mean various things; but one very likely thinks first of all that a

picture of the object comes before the child's mind when it hears the word. But now, if this does

happen – is it the purpose of the word? – Yes, it *may* by the purpose."[82] In the quoted passage,

word "may" is the key to understanding the later Wittgenstein's critique of referentialism. That is

to say, the words may - and most likely do - in fact, have different purposes other than that of

conjuring a universal image. There are many different ways to use - and therefore understand -

words, such as the teaching of words, speaking commands, etc. Thus we see a radical shift from

merely describing possible states of affairs, as is the case in the *Tractatus*, to focusing on the

variety of acceptable uses inherent within words - uses that go far beyond simple description.

More so than just assaulting traditional, referential presumptions as to the nature of words

and naming, the later Wittgenstein also attacks one of the *Tractatus'* most influential tenets - the

notion of logical perfectionism. Wittgenstein abandoned the idea that meaningful sentences must

have a precise logical structure that corresponded to the logical structure of facts illustrated by

sentences. As noted earlier, the *Tractatus* assumes that there is a perfectly ordered, fixed logical

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[82] Ibid. Section 5.

structure of language - and rules of language - that underlie all meaningful statements. Yet in the

Philosophical Investigations Wittgenstein moves away from this line of thinking.

> The more closely we examine actual language, the greater becomes the
> conflict between it and our requirement. (for the crystalline purity of logic
> was, or course, not something I had *discovered*: it was a requirement.) The
> conflict becomes intolerable; the requirement is now in danger of
> becoming vacuous. – We have got on to slippery ice where there is no
> friction, and so, in a certain sense, the conditions are ideal; but also, just
> because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need
> friction. Back to the rough ground![83]

In the next section Wittgenstein adds, "We see that what we call 'proposition',

'language', has not the formal unity that I imagined,[84] but is a family of structures more or less

akin to one another…The preconception of crystalline purity can only be removed by turning our

inquiry around."[85] To treat the logic that underlies language as ideal in the manner presented

above is, the later Wittgenstein argues, to "sublime the logic of our language."[86] Indeed,

Wittgenstein uses the words "this" and "that" as examples of the confusion that such sublimation

produces. The word "this" used as a name in ostensive explanation or naming does not have a

fixed meaning – "If you don't want to create confusion, then it is best not to say that these words

name anything. – Yet, strange to say, the word 'this' has been called the real name; so that

anything else we call a name was only an inexact, approximate sense."[87]

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[83] Ibid Section 107.

[84] In the *Tractatus*.

[85] See *Philosophical Investigations.* Section 108.

[86] Ibid. Section 38.

[87] Ibid. Section 38.

7.2   TURNING OUR *OWN* INQUIRY AROUND: CHANGING OUR PERSPECTIVE AS TO THE PURPOSE AND PROPER FUNCTION OF LANGUAGE GAMES

Here a very serious question arises. That is to say, if the later Wittgenstein believes that his early work, and indeed much of body of traditional philosophy, has been focused on the wrong things, namely defining or generalizing words, concepts, and meanings, and that we should instead focus on understanding our language in terms of the affinities and differences that are highlighted by language games, then it is of the utmost importance that we reach a firm understanding as to (1) what exactly constitutes a language game, and (2) how exactly these games work to somehow make up the entirety of language as Wittgenstein appears to claim. In other words, at this point we understand that Wittgenstein believes that we need to change our approach when trying to understand these concepts. Additionally, he provides us with a term (language games) that Wittgenstein believes to be the correct method by which to understand language and ideas, as well as a variety of examples to demonstrate what he means when he uses this term. Wittgenstein does not, however, provide the reader with anything near a working definition of the term, even in the most general sense. Perhaps most importantly, Wittgenstein does not explicitly outline how these games - if they are indeed meant to be the structure of language – actually *work*. We are left with questions that require specifics as to the function, form, and relations between these language games that mirror the questions about propositions and meaning that Wittgenstein believes language games to solve. These questions, I will argue, could be solved if were to take into account, on one hand, Wittgenstein's attitude towards traditional science, and, on the other, its possible link with Goethe's scientific views. The project, then, is to understand what Wittgenstein is doing by linking his language game

methodology to one that is similar – Goethe's own scientific work. Goethe's work with plants diagnoses similar problems within scientific method, towards, albeit, different phenomena.

While Wittgenstein does, in fact, address the complaint that he does not seriously define language games, he does not specifically answer this object in a manner other than arguing that games are meant to demonstrate that "phenomena have no one thing in common in virtue of which we use the same word for all – but there are many different kinds of affinity." To put it simply, there are major ambiguities present in Wittgenstein's language games; we have been given a tool, shown a few instances of its use, but not given explicit instructions as to its specific form or function. This summons a feeling of discomfort in the reader (which is perhaps one of Wittgenstein's intended functions of language games). Specifically, we have a general understanding of language games, and, though Wittgenstein warns us against attempting to understand language and philosophy in terms of fixed definitions, we require some sort of definite grounding to truly understand language games as more than a cluster of simplified languages or general actions (such as lying or teaching), which are normal, non-stereotypical activities categorized by Wittgenstein as "games."

I have given a brief overview of the schism between Wittgenstein's early work – as exemplified by the *Tractatus*, and the ideas that characterized his later career, most notably those expounded upon within the *Philosophical Investigations*. In short, the *Philosophical Investigations* provides readers an alternative route to take when solving the problems that Wittgenstein eventually encountered resulting from the *Tractatus* in the years following its publication. While we could simply resign ourselves to understanding language games as a basic, indeterminately defined tool that highlights certain inconsistencies in language through relational clustering, Wittgenstein (as demonstrated throughout the cited passages above) uses language

games as fundamental elements of philosophical inquiry. What this requires, then, is an attempt to understand the methodology that Wittgenstein in employing in his later philosophy. Much in the same way that the later Wittgenstein asks us to turn our inquiry around, it is necessary to turn our *own* inquiry into Wittgenstein around. In order to understand language games, we must, therefore, attempt to understand them in terms of their methodology and possible intellectual origins rather than focus our attention on their exact definition or strict place within Wittgenstein's philosophical framework. It will be through an attempt to understand the methodology behind language games, I believe, that we will not only get a better picture of a working definition for language games, but also gain a much clearer insight into what they are being used to advocate for within Wittgenstein's later philosophy than would be gained by further study of their specific mentions within the *Philosophical Investigations*. Thus it should be our new objective, after turning our inquiry around, to investigate where these language games originate – which, if we are to take the influence of Romanticism in Wittgenstein's work seriously, would lead us to using language games as a philosophical tool from which a common understanding of meaning develops. In other words, if we can't get a clear answer from Wittgenstein, then we must trace back the roots of the methodological ideas that underlie language games in an attempt to base possible answers to our questions in those who have not only influenced Wittgenstein's later philosophy, but also have perhaps provided clearer explanations of methodology and intended result. Our inquiry, then, is not just one relating to the philosophy of language, but one that is grounded within the history and philosophy of science.

8.0   CONCLUSION

To understand language games in terms of their function and classification within the Philosophical Investigations, tracing a route back to a source of possible methodological and

scientific-ideological influence is perhaps the most necessary step in deciphering what has been a primary point of debate within Wittgenstein interpretation. Language games, it seems, are used within the Philosophical Investigations to catalyze a shift in perspective from one that places a strict emphasis on definitions and concretely-defined uses of words towards one of understanding words and usage in relation to not only actual cases of behavior, but also in terms of the differences between similar, but distinct, cases of use. Defining language games and their exact purpose – much like defining actual words and their correct uses – is, I would argue, in line with their use within Wittgenstein's writings. To understand the purpose of language games, it has been helpful to look at Goethe's work as a kind of methodological proxy, one that, if analyzed, would seem to shed light on Wittgenstein's original intent.

Goethe's scientific method, I have argued, grew out of frustrations analogous to those of the later Wittgenstein, frustrations rooted in a scientific dissonance rooted in the mechanistic explanations of the world, as well as feelings that the static systems of scientific inquiry were overlooking large parts of phenomena in favor of standardized procedure, predicable output, and easily replicated results. Our ability to understand language games in Wittgenstein's writings is not only augmented by acknowledging Wittgenstein and Goethe's commonly held complaints regarding traditional scientific explanations and explanatory systems, but also amplified by understanding the ways in which Goethe and, I have argued, Wittgenstein, understood phenomena to be related. That is to say, if Goethe and Wittgenstein are linked in terms of their understanding of science and similar methods for engaging in explanation, then it would follow that their conclusions should share similar traits. To put it bluntly, if this link can be established, and Goethe's writings hold a level of clarity unable to be found in Wittgenstein's, then we should be able to find some of our answers relating to Wittgenstein in Goethe. I have attempted

to establish this link between these two thinkers using the scientific ideas of Wittgenstein outlined by Wilson to contribute to an area of Wittgensteinian interpretation that, while undoubtedly important, is all too often reluctant to turn its own enquiry around.

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