WITTGENSTEIN ON
THE CRITIQUE OF LANGUAGE

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By
BHASKARAN. M.

Supervised by
Prof. (Dr.) A. KANTHAMANI

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A SYNOPSIS
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The objective of the thesis is to examine the potency and the legitimacy of the phrase 'critique of language' that lies as the centre of gravity in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. It examines the feasibility of making this as an entry point to the *five-layered* (Ontological Atomism, Picture Theory, Logic of Truth-functions, Critique of Language, Solipsism: Saying and Showing) constituents of the early work.

According to the narrative that is unfolded here, the pregnant phrase, that is an echo of Kant, having an ancestral relation to Mauthner, sustains a continuum as the later 'revolution' of Wittgenstein in the form of as 'interface'. This point is struck by situating Wittgenstein at the intersection of rival interpretations of the early and the later work (anti-realism as counterposed to realism; constructivism or verificationism or justificationism as counterposed to a refined or purified or 'extreme' form of atomism; *full-blooded* conventionalism as counterposed to *modified* conventionalism - given certain axioms or definitions, theorems follow; anti-essentialism as counterposed to essentialism; intuitionism as counterposed to Platonism, striking a coherence with his philosophy of mathematics) with a view to sustain the above interface of Aristotelianism and Anti-Aristotelianism, in the underlying Anti-
Platonist face each has in its own way. Critique of language, as we understand it, is legitimised at this interface between rival or alternative systems. The notion of alternative system is seen in its being ubiquitous. Once this is granted it is later absorbed in the model of phenomenological language in the *Tractatus* and as a motley of language-games in later Wittgenstein.

Thus the ancestry calls for a 'theoretical' or 'doctrinal' content of the phrase which caps the above investigation, even though such a doctrinal content is forthrightly disowned by Wittgenstein in his bracketing of its essential method. The lesson we want to learn is that Mauthner's ancestry can be neglected only at the great cost for Wittgenstein scholarship. In retrospect, we find that no interpreter has laid the ghost of the phrase at the door of Mauthner. To that extent, our work stands as a monument of scholarship to the Mauthner's ancestry of Wittgenstein. Throughout, our efforts lie not only with endorsing the only work to date on this ancestry (Weiler, 1970) but also to stem the tide of negatively painted picture (Scepticism) construed about the earlier work. Our counter is that Mauthner is not a sceptic, but his scepticism is not to be seen as independent of his 'hominism' and *Weltanschauungen* (alternative models of reality) but also he was a low-profile cognitive scientist. (the only thing is that Weiler dubs his 'functionalism' as 'radical'). Held against Wittgenstein's own view of scepticism (scepticism is irrefutable or non-sensical), the interpreters might
gain some response for this negligence of Mauthner. But this hardly provides the leverage for the correct understanding of Wittgenstein. Thus we find that we should make a rough and ready distinction between *Kritik an der Sprache* (Mauthner - Wittgenstein) and *Sprachkritik* (Brentano - Russell) to strike down the alleged opposition between them. Briefly Mauthner's is *psychological*, whereas Wittgenstein's is *philosophical* (logical) and while Mauthner 'completes' Kant's critique, Wittgenstein turns 'unkantian'; and this requires us to plug in the salient points of comparison (much is added by the way to Weiler) in Chapter 3 as the schematic picture at the beginning of Chapter 5 illustrates. This picture maps the relation between all these three thinkers namely, Kant, Mauthner and Wittgenstein. We advance two types of fusion theses to gain a foothold for the *theoretical* or *doctrinal* content of the celebrated phrase of critique of language, in these circumstances. Wittgenstein's first fusion thesis is an admixture of Brentano and Mauthner with the psychological underpinnings. Yet he toes Frege's anti-psychologism in general. Thus Wittgenstein overlooks the aspect of psychological empiricism of Mauthner. This is captured by his first half of the remarks on Mauthner (All philosophy is a 'critique of language' but not a following of Mauthner's method). The second half of the first fusion thesis narrowed down to deception of logical types following Russell's 'theory of definite descriptions'. In a sense Frege-Russell logic (deception of grammatical form) and Mauthner's way of empiricist critique paved the ground for Wittgenstein's
critique of language. The second fusion of Wittgenstein's philosophy is inspired by Schopenhauer's remarks on Solipsism, 'Self as the limiting cases of the critique.'

We start with (Chapter 1) a bare outline of the 'troubled episode' of the publication of the Tractatus just to indicate how the duty of a genius met with a certain resistance. We cap it with Derek Bolton's (1979) 'idealistic' reading of Wittgenstein calling it as a work of modernity as opposed to post-modernity which we counterpose with Henry Staten's smoothening out the opposites. After discussing the features of this reading, we juxtapose the fine parody of Wittgenstein advanced by Baker and Hacker (1986) which is poised to question the very fabric of analytical philosophy causing it show fissures.

We introduce the layer of two languages (phenomenological, the physical) at this stage, before closing it with a reading of the rift between Positivists and Wittgenstein after Stuart Shanker (1986), who is inclined to read the significance of the early work in the context of his relation to positivism. Positivists misunderstood the tautological character of mathematics, but the way Stuart Shanker picks up a lead is not equally satisfactory.

The second chapter is devoted to an exploration of the array of themes one come across in Wittgenstein's early work with a specific end in view - to make them coherent. (Theme 1: Ontological Atomism after Fogelin; Theme 2: Picture Theory after Kenny; Theme 3: Logic of Truth-functions, where
limit conception finds its proper place; Theme 4: the Critique of Language, where we touch on the heart of Wittgenstein's account of phenomenological language, as illustrated by the Bubble metaphor by Pears; Theme 5: Solipsism (Saying and Showing) which is painted as the crucial layer in the Tractatus.

Thus we have done enough justice to the myriad themes with a view to sustain the five-layered coherence as mentioned at the beginning.

Chapter 3 responds to Wittgenstein's crucial remark on Mauthner's ancestry disowning his method which is basically devoted to an analysis of the language of psychology. This is executed by drawing a dividing line between Kritik an der Sprache and Sprachkritik and also Sprachkraft (cf: Humboldt), thus casting a side glance at the very rationale of analytic philosophy (contra, Baker and Hacker), after Mauthner. The benchmark of Mauthner's outlook is embodied in the phrase critical attention to language. The chapter lends recognition to the myriad approaches to language as well, which was inaugurated by the so-called 'linguistic turn'. The key phrase that binds Mauthner and Wittgenstein is Zuffallssinne which means contingency as opposed to necessity. No casual necessity, no fixed necessity, thus no ideal language (philosophical questions about logic rebound here), - and all lie in symbolism of ordinary language rather than in the logical symbolism of truth-functions. The method is to divide up Weiler's work into many spaces and sub-spaces with a view to read the corresponding features in Wittgenstein, in
a much more interesting way than Weiler has done. So Zufallssinne is treated as the master concept. With this the investigation that is attempted here thoroughgoing, with a view to build up a perspective on Wittgenstein following the latest readings of two Wittgenstein's.

Chapter 4 looks at the Kantian ancestry with a view to reject it altogether and then to show how we pass from critique of reason to critique of language. The Kantian Backcloth is nearly exhaustively dealt with after Engel's extensive search. In this context, it is found necessary to narrow down the above to Engel's alleged doctrine of the tyranny of language, which separates a grand unified theory of general and special theory of linguistic deception. Engel distinguishes the two strains of analytic traditions as the 'linguistic' (Ayer) and the 'clinical' (Lazerowitz) strain.

Our observation is that the Mauthnerian intent of Engel is clear, though not acknowledged as such. So we call it as austere version of the 'limit' thesis which leaves the psychological roots somewhat unclear. The richer psychological roots are yet to be dug out. The austere theory brings out an interface between Vernunft and Vorstellung but not to the extent that it conveys what is 'deeply psychological'. This leads us to explore what we call the ersatz doctrine of the tyranny of language which is supposed to be drawn from Schopenhauer's idea of representation, will to metaphysics, logic etc. without even mentioning Mauthner.

The hiatus between these two sources of influence can now be bridged for the purpose of securing a more interesting perspective on Wittgenstein.
Thus it remains to be completed by adding a suitable doctrinal content (Chapter 5). This in turn requires the real doctrinal content which is received from Wittgenstein's reflection on solipsism (self is the limit). The limit of my language means the limit of my world. Thus we move on the oft-neglected layer 'linguistic solipsism' as enunciated by David Pears in his monumental two volumed *The FalsePrison* (1987). This also brings out the relation between microcosm and macrocosm.

Chapter 5 is set for the final evaluation of the doctrinal content of the critique of language after Mauthner thus substantiating the thesis that Mauthner's influence is richer than Kant, Schopenhauer, Hertz, etc. This is exactly where one explores the crucial concept of *Zufallssinne* from two points of view: reason and intellectual historiography, following Weiler. We analytically subsume the other claim made in the thesis culminating in the statement about the research findings and scope for further research.

The *method* is analytic, comparative and scientific and it is deployed towards the target of complete understanding of Wittgenstein, even in the climate of opposing interpretations that border on rival schools of thought. Following Pears, it is more or less kept at a distance from known schools of metaphysics or epistemology. But more light is known on the rationale of analysis. A select bibliography is appended in the end.
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY


