INTRODUCTION
The Austrian-English philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein brought a kind of revolution in philosophy due to his perception into the nature of philosophy. The most profound book of his early period, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, is considered to be the most significant document since Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. The literature on the *Tractatus* is, as Judith Jarvis aptly puts it, “beginning to resemble the literature on the real meaning of the White Whale.”

The scope of this thesis is limited to Wittgenstein’s writings of the early period. Hence the central discussion will focus primarily on *Notebooks* and *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. But relevant references from his later writings, especially from *Philosophical Investigations*, *Zettel*, *Philosophical Remarks*, *Philosophical Grammar* and from the biographical sketches, memoirs, recollections etc., are drawn upon, as and when required. In spite of a substantial difference in methods, there is a possibility to trace the important continuity of the nature and task of philosophy in his writings of early and the later periods. This prompts the

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constant reference on our part to his later writings, to have a better understanding and to substantiate our arguments.

Three major themes can be identified in this thesis:

(1) The style of philosophical writing,
(2) The observations on metaphysics, and
(3) The most significant subject of the thesis, relation between language, thought and reality.

The first chapter deals with different philosophers understanding of language *per se* and its functioning, reflecting their understanding of reality and related philosophical issues. We have tried to give a historical background for the discussion especially on earlier Wittgenstein and tried to place his views in the history of ideas. Since this chapter is mainly one of introductory and historical expositions, no explicit and definite conclusions are suggested.

In the second chapter, we have tried to link the characteristic style of Wittgenstein’s writing to an internal development in his philosophical positions, regarding the role of philosophy in general, and metaphysics in particular. The importance and superficiality of the stylistic diversity, redefined by Wittgenstein in philosophy is highlighted here.

Third chapter is devoted to the discussion of the structure of language as viewed in the *Tractatus* and Wittgenstein’s conception of philosophy.
It is a discussion on his view that viable philosophy is with logic and language. His insistence on the ordinary language on the one hand and concern for the use of symbolism on the other hand is exposed as an endeavour to meet the incompatible goals. Similarity and difference with Mauthner's conception of philosophy as a critique of language is shown, to have a better understanding of Wittgenstein's unique responses to relativism and other questions of our time. The method of logical analysis, adopted in *Tractatus*, is discussed elaborately with a comparison to Russellean and Fregean position. In short this chapter is meant to lay open the foundation on which his central doctrine of *Tractatus*, the picture theory of language and consequently the relation between language and reality, is based.

The fourth chapter deals with Wittgenstein's significant silence on certain issues, which were traditionally reserved for metaphysical discourses. We have tried to understand his 'silence' and its implications in relations to his times. It is one of the important themes in his early and later period, which is needed to highlight to have a complete understanding of his writings. Especially in *Tractatus*, he considers the cardinal problem of philosophy to be, to draw a clear picture of what can be said and what cannot be said, but only shown. This chapter attempts a critical assessment of this polemics.
In the fifth and the final chapter, we have discussed the central theme of the thesis that is the relation between language and reality in *Tractatus*. We have tried to give an exposition of the relation of thought and the world *vis-a-vis* its relation with language. An exposition of the picture theory of language, is given and critically analysed within the historical and social considerations. It’s ontological and epistemological consequences in his philosophy is discussed with a view to gain an insight into the relation between the language, thought and reality. An attempt is made to locate the thread of continuity in his early and later philosophy to look into the shortcomings in *Tractatus*, in a better way.

The methodology adopted in this thesis can be broadly called, a synthesis of archaeological and historical analysis. We have tried to situate Wittgenstein’s idea or argument in its historical milieu and try to unearth the auxiliary ideas or implied arguments that can be generated out of them. Here an awareness of the role of interpretation in understanding a text or an author is crucial, since, our basic assumption is that ideas are originated within the cross currents of various socio-historical factors. Ideas and readers are products of history. Hence, the thesis will be a product of a critical appropriation of earlier Wittgenstein’s ideas, within the range of possibilities offered by the author himself.