This work undertakes a critical exposition and examination of the concept of language game as envisaged by Wittgenstein in his classic *Philosophical Investigations*.

In the first chapter an attempt is made to delineate the importance of language as a unique possession of man and the philosopher's concern with language in the analysis of concepts and meaning. All cases of communication presuppose the trichotomy of the speaker, hearer and the medium. Language as a medium is a carrier of ideas, concepts or meaning. Philosophy unlike other social and natural sciences is essentially a conceptual enquiry. Since concepts are nothing without the language in which they are couched, philosophers in their attempt to analyse concepts, concern themselves with language. Concepts are the subject matter of philosophical analysis: clarity about concepts is the goal of philosophical investigation. However, apart from analysis of concepts, the philosopher also builds metaphysical systems. The relationship between philosophy as an essentially analytic activity and as an activity consisting of constructing metaphysical systems is an interesting one. This relationship is explored in the light of Wittgenstein's views in the *Philosophical Investigations*. 
In the second chapter there is a detailed discussion about language as an instrument to perform various speech acts. Man undertakes various activities to thrive and grow. Using a language is one of the most important activities, nay the most important activity, for it distinguishes man from other species. Human needs are multifarious and man seeks to perform various acts with language. A distinction has been drawn (in line with Austin's classification) among locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts which consists in saying something, doing something in saying something and doing something by saying something respectively. The distinction between the different aspects of a speech act viz., phonetic, phatic and rhetic has also been considered. This distinction tends to show that though language essentially consists of sound or the phonetic units, the meaningful combination of phonemes into meaning units e.g., morpheme or word is possible through the rules of syntax. But the transition from the phatic act to rhetic act consists not only in conforming to the rules of syntax but also taking note of the semantic rules. Wittgenstein's views about language game throw light on the different aspects of the meaning of an expression. The meaningful use of language not only requires that it should be
syntactically sound but also that expressions must be employed against the background of appropriate non-linguistic conditions. Language is context bound. Hence the use and understanding of an expression cannot be divorced from considerations relating to the semantic conditions.

The third chapter would contain a detailed analysis of the concept of language game and its intimate relation with the idea of a "form of life." Wittgenstein's use of the term 'language game' is highly suggestive. A game is defined by a set of rules. The rules are not only constitutive of games but also are regulative in so far as they determine the very conduct of the game. Similarly the use of language is rule governed. As the rules of games differ from game to game, similarly the rules that determine the meaningful employment of an expression in a descriptive language game may not prove valid in a religious or moral language game. But what is of paramount importance is, playing a game involves a sense of participation. Wittgenstein observes that using a language also amounts to participating in a mode of life. This follows from his recognition that language is intimately wedded to a form of life. In other words the legitimate use of an expression presupposes one's knowledge of not only the rules of syntax
by which the words are joined into a meaningful combination but also employing them in appropriate circumstances. One can clearly visualize a possibility of a parrot or a pet animal uttering certain sounds that are syntactically sound but that would not entitle one to say that they are using language. It is because of the fact that in case of the parrot or the pet animal the semantic conditions appropriate to the use of the expression are conspicuous in their absence. Hence Wittgenstein remarks - "To use a language is to enter into a mode of life," "If a lion could talk we could not understand him." This led him to advocate the use theory of meaning. The meaning of a word is the way it is used. Language is context bound. To find the meaning of an expression is to see how it functions in the language game in which it occurs. Wittgenstein shows with characteristic force that the chief mistake of philosophers consist in treating concepts in abstraction, that is, apart from the context of their occurrence.

The fourth chapter would be devoted to show that the problem of Essence in one form relates to the problem of classification of terms. In this connection we have tried to demonstrate the logical circularity involved in the platonic version of the doctrine of universals. The points of agreement and difference between Bambrough and Wittgen-
stein is thoroughly examined and we have tried to maintain that the Wittgenstenian solution to the problem is the most cogent.

The Fifth chapter contains in a nutshell Wittgenstein's views on the nature, genesis and solution of philosophical problems. It is in the 20th century that philosophers began to realise self-consciously the importance of language and its bearing on philosophical issues. Wittgenstein in particular, is responsible perhaps more than any other philosopher in giving what may be called the linguistic turn to philosophy. Philosophical problems, he observes, are of the nature of paradoxes and muddles, but are wrongly felt as problems. They arise with the philosopher's attempt to treat concepts in abstraction or isolation from the language games in which they occur. He traces the problems to a general feature of human mind that is the craving for unity which consists in finding similarity beneath dissimilarities. This leads one to assimilate words of different logical categories into one category because of their apparent grammatical similarities. For example, all nouns are taken as standing for substance and all verbs standing for functions. Wittgenstein therefore warns us not to be deceived by the grammatical form of expression, but to unearth the semantic conditions by looking into the actual ways in which it functions. The metaphysician in his attempt to build systems is not only misled by the
craving for unity to form pictures but his analysis is influenced by the tacit suggestions of the pictures. He is held captive as it were. Thus metaphysical problems arise in taking words beyond their context and therefore can be solved or rather resolved by bringing back expressions from their metaphysical use to their actual use. That again calls for commanding a clear view as to the functions of words in their different language games.

In the sixth chapter we attempt to argue that Wittgenstein is an idealist. In both the Tractatus and the Investigations he has developed his own form of idealism. Wittgenstein as a matter of fact continues the Germanic tradition of transcendental idealism as distinguished from epistemological and metaphysical idealism. Both epistemological and metaphysical idealisms are reductionist in nature.

Wittgenstein is an idealist in the Kantian sense. Idealism in Wittgenstein's work is there in a more or less implicit form. One has to dig out the idealistic standpoint from the Tractatus as well as the Philosophical Investigations. The Tractarian world is a totality of facts. These facts correspond to elementary propositions. Facts again for Wittgenstein are both possible and actual. The ideal language in the Tractatus is not constructed rather it is discovered by a particular type of analysis. The structure of the world is reflected in the structure of the language. Like Kant,
Wittgenstein sets a limit to our meaningful discourse. Thus Wittgenstein claims the limits of my language are the limits of my world. But this is not a solipsistic position. He is not a subjective idealist. The subject here is not reduced to an object of knowledge. The 'I' here is treated in the manner of Kant's transcendent self. This is a position which is usually accepted by transcendental idealists.

On the other hand Wittgenstein treats the world as a totality of facts but not of things. And these facts are configurations of objects. But how did Wittgenstein arrive at this? Through an extensional analysis of language. He treats language as truth functional. In the process of analysis he reached what he calls elementary propositions. The elementary propositions in their turn picture facts. But what is the nature of this world without the elementary propositions. As the world for Kant cannot be made intelligible without the categories so also for Wittgenstein the world is unintelligible without elementary propositions. The elementary propositions in a way give a shape to the world. This is an idealistic position.

In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein treats language as a prism through which we look at the world. Without concepts the world is unintelligible. This is
really a Kantian position. Knowledge is conceptual. Wittgenstein would say it is through the networks of language games the world is intelligible to us. The difference between Kant and Wittgenstein is that Kant believed in a fixed number of categories whereas Wittgenstein did not believe in the fixity of categories.

Language, says Wittgenstein, cannot be understood without relating it to human contexts and situations. Wittgenstein in the manner of F.H. Bradley treats the world as an organic whole. This in short is the cardinal feature of idealism. One of the major themes of idealism is that the world is a system of ideas or concepts. These ideas are not subjective rather they are objective in nature. Hegel points out that the world is an externalization of ideas. Now the question is what is the nature of these ideas? Are the ideas context bound, language bound or are they independent of language and context? Answers to these questions open up new dimensions. Thinkers like Sapir and Whorf would argue that language not only determines reality but the world view as well. The structure of language and the structure of thought are intimately connected. Thus the views of Sapir and Whorf tie reality to specific language.
To interpret Wittgenstein as a Sapirian is to commit a mistake. It is true that knowledge is conceptual and category based but these categories are not contingent upon specific languages. These categories and concepts are independent of any specific languages which embody them. In this sense Wittgenstein may be characterized as Kantian but not Sapirian. The twelve categories of Kant and seven categories of Kanada belong to this type. There is a sense in which these categories can be regarded as the bedrock of human thought and knowledge. These categories can be termed as basic, primary and fundamental categories. These primary categories are not language bound, context bound or culture bound. They are translinguistic and transcultural.

But accepting the Sapirian hypothesis one may argue that one cultural and linguistic group in principle cannot understand another for the simple reason that both of them have two distinct and different linguistic categories. But this position will not be acceptable to Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein surely believes in infinite and innumerable number of language games and forms of life. The idea of linguistic privacy and solipsism goes against the very idea of language games. Language games are public. To say that language is a
'game' is to say that it is governed by rules, and to say that it is governed by rules is to say that others can understand it in principle. It is true that certain cultural categories prevalent in one group cannot easily be made intelligible to others. There might be difficulties and obstructions on the way but it does not go to prove linguistic and cultural solipsism.

In conclusion we shall dwell upon the concept of 'language game' by trying to dispel some of the confusions that might centre around the analogy of 'game.' The use of the term 'game' in the compound expression 'language game' is metaphorical. As the very logic of metaphor suggests it is used to illustrate or highlight a particular point at hand and hence there remains a considerable risk in reaching it beyond a particular point. Wittgenstein likens games to language to highlight the functional and public character of language. Function is used here in a very general sense that is to say that to use language is to perform a speech act. By construing language as public Wittgenstein would like to stress the open texture of meaning and intelligibility. That is to say that a linguistic activity is in principle intelligible. Its significance, import and meaning can be appreciated by others, this may be a very
difficult task but not an impossibility. There is also an important respect in which language is different from a game. Games is played according to certain fixed rules. The players only conform to them. Hence there is no room for creativity. In other words one can say that a player plays well but it would be semantically odd to say that he plays creatively.

The thesis concludes with some remarks about the central importance of what I have called idealistic strand in Wittgenstein's thought in the understanding of man - man, - that is, as the subject of study of the science of man.