How to Make Opposite Ends Meet?

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The twentieth century is an epoch, in which linguistic studies were intensified, and in the history of philosophy this is referred to as the 'linguistic turn'. The philosophy of language, which emerged as a very new sub-discipline of philosophy through the investigation of theories asserted under this heading, focused primarily on the problem of meaning. The problem taking place in the analytic tradition, as a whole, is concerned with the power of linguistic expressions, which exceeds themselves, with their providing possibilities to represent the variety of universe without recognizing any obstacles such as their existence-nonexistence, complexity, abstractness, gravity, substantiality, space, indirectness (Denkel, 1984). Today, if the theories of meaning asserted in the twentieth century are investigated, it is seen that there are two opponent approaches these theories based on: 'A*bsolute objective approach*' –as Denkel calls it (1984)- and *'pragmatic approach'*. The former, the roots of which can be found in Plato, includes 'referential theory of meaning', which is argued by Russell, and Frege. This approach, which can also be classified in the logical positivist view, solely investigates the relation between language and the objects of the world. In this sense, it gives us a universalistic picture of reality. As to the latter, it is an approach based on '*ordinary language*' which gained importance towards the end of the century mainly after the publication of *Philosophical Investigations*. This approach, which is still in the process of evolving, puts the emphasis on the relation between language and the one who uses it to communicate. Therefore, the meaning of linguistic expressions depends on how they are used; and this is what brings about cultural elements as variable criteria on the determination of meanings.

In this paper, I'll assert that the trace –even the base- of these two opponent approaches of analytic philosophy can be found in Wittgenstein's dual philosophy if it is appraised in terms of the concept of meaning. Hence, contrary to the claim that his philosophy has no dual character and has no such periods as early and late, I will endorse the claim that his philosophy should be investigated in two opposing periods. To this aim, I will correlate the views expressed in *Tractatus* with the absolute objective approach and the views expressed in *Philosophical Investigations* with the pragmatic approach. More specifically, I will argue that his early understanding of meaning put forward in *Tractatus* has to do with 'referential theory of meaning' advocated by Russell and Frege, and hence with logical positivism, which introduces us a universalistic picture of reality. Whereas his late understanding of meaning, 'meaning as use', is based on pragmatic movements, which accentuate the effects of social practical elements on the meaning of terms, thus its dynamic character. As far as his understanding of meaning is concerned, in the analytic tradition, it takes place as the representative of two opposite approaches. However, this does not mean that the theories of meaning put forward by Wittgenstein, though being opposing, are not incompatible. In fact, here, I will further claim that 'meaning as representation' and 'meaning as use' are two opposite, but yet compatible theories argued by Wittgenstein. This is mainly because the pragmatic approach includes the absolute objective approach in that there are uses of language that fits the latter approach among many other language games. That is to say, the absolute objective approach is included in the pragmatic approach. Thus, it will be shown on the basis of the concept of meaning that it is not the case that Wittgenstein has no two opposing periods. On the contrary, he has such periods, which are compatible with one another.

Although there is no consensus on dividing his philosophy into periods, in my opinion, in *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein can be considered as the prime advocate of the logical positivist approach, which offers an objective picture of reality. This is simply because his early understanding of meaning put forward in *Tractatus* can be seen as a model of the 'referential theory of meaning' advocated by Russell and Frege, and hence of logical positivism, which introduces us to a universalistic picture of reality. He shares with Russell and Frege the idea that mathematical logic is of great importance to understanding the world. According to Wittgenstein's views in *Tractatus*, there is an agreement between thought, language and world indeed they all share common logical form. What is meaningful in language shares the same logical scaffolding with the world and thought. In this sense, meaningful sentences, propositions, are the logical pictures of reality, which have the same structure as reality. They are, in this sense, the representatives of states of affairs, which are relations among elementary objects of which the world consists. As to the meaning of a word, it is the elementary object which is represented in the world. So, since what is meaningful is the representative of linguistic expressions in the world, Wittgenstein can be taken as an advocate of a referential theory of meaning, 'meaning as representation.' By providing this relation through sharing common logical form with our world and thought, language, which is perfect, represents the world as a mirror. Therefore, it gives us a universalistic logical picture of reality. For him, "…we must make use of a sign-language… that is governed by *logical* grammar –by logical syntax.", as he puts it in Tractatus, 3.325. This idea leads us to a universal understanding of meaning, if something is meaningful, its meaning does not change from culture to culture or time to time. Since language shares one and the same logical scaffolding with our thought and reality, what is meaningful in language has one and the same meaning everywhere and every time, regardless of the one using it.

However, Wittgenstein, in his later works, especially in *Philosophical Investigations*, betrays the handicaps of the theory of meaning asserted in *Tractatus* and puts forward a theory of meaning that would be a prototype of the (pragmatic) approach based on 'ordinary language'. In this work, Wittgenstein adopts a mainunderstanding of meaning which gives rise to some theories, which mostly emphasize the importance of the ordinary use of language serving to communicate, hence, the social aspects of language, which points to cultural elements in language.

According to his views asserted in *Philosophical Investigations*, linguistic expressions do mean not objects or states of affairs that refer to reality, but to the use of them in a language game. If it is taken for granted that there are many different uses of a term or an expression, it will exhibit variety in meaning depending on the way it is used. This opens up different interpretations of the meaning of a term because there are many ways to use it. For as he states in § 23, "…there are…*countless* different kinds of use of what we call "symbols", "words", "sentences"…" This is, for him, something that leads us to "new types of language, new language games"; hence, to new meanings of linguistic expressions. For, since he takes language games as part of an activity of

our lives, various life-forms take us to various language games, which results in meanings. In this sense, meanings can be construed as having changeable character depending on in which language game or in which culture or in which context it is used. Hence, the meaning of an expression varies from one culture to another. Therefore, it is contradicted by Wittgenstein's early understanding of meaning (as representation), which gives objective-universal essence to meaning.

Furthermore, he rejects the perfect language argued in Tractatus by saying the followings, in §107:

"…the crystalline purity of logic was …not a *result of investigation*: it was a requirement… just because of that we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need *friction*. Back to the rough ground!"

What he means here by 'rough ground' is, as Soykan states, the language we use in our daily lives, which is shaggy, rough, and knotty (2002, 55). In this sense, as Soykan further construes, Wittgenstein points to ordinary language which gives the results of descriptive investigations as opposed to pure-crystalline perfect language, which offers an unrealistic normative explanation of world.

Now, having seen that he has two opposite periods, at least as far as the notion of meaning is concerned, I think that these two opposing theories advocated by Wittgenstein are not incompatible ones. This is simply because they are conjoined; games theory does not exclude, but comprehend picture theory. For, what is seen as meaningful in *Tractatus* is considered, in *Philosophical Investigations*, as not wrong, but only one of many languages games. In this sense, what picture theory asserts as meaningful is taken as one of countless language games; thereby picture theory is included in game theory, and therefore is combined with it. In this sense, picture theory can be seen as a subset or sub-theory of game theory. So, although being opposing, since these theories are not mutually exclusive, but conjoined, it is impossible for these conjoined yet opposite theories to be incompatible. Therefore, these opponent theories argued by Wittgenstein should be taken as compatible.

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