

Zoheir Bagheri Noaparast

Mutual Learning between the Language Games of Science and Religion

A Reading of Wittgenstein



ACADEMIA

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Chapter One: Preliminary Remarks

1.1. Introduction

Wittgenstein has introduced the idea of ‘language games,’ which has drawn significant attention. Language games are used to refer to different parts of the language, which have their own specific rules. In other words, since each game has its own rules and ‘Language’ is made up of various types of language, we need to pay attention to the rules governing each part of the ‘Language’. One strong reading of Wittgenstein is that he takes language games to be entirely distinct and that there can be no interaction between the language games. I will critique this reading and suggest an alternative reading according to which bridges can be built between language games. This alternative reading would make mutual learning between language games possible.

According to Wittgenstein, science and religion represent two different language games. I will focus on these two in looking for the possibility of mutual learning between language games. Why science and religion? This is because, at least from the Enlightenment onwards, the clash between science and religion has been going on for centuries. In addition, this clash has led to uneasiness in our contemporary human life, in general, and in educational institutions. The latter can be observed in the still-alive evolution/creation controversy in educational organizations, and the former can be traced back to the clashes between secularists and the religious.

In Wittgenstein's view, science and religion, each, have their own language game. As far as the language game of science is concerned, explanation has a central role. Scientists look for the causes of what happens. However, the characteristics of the language game of religion, as Wittgenstein has proposed, have been very controversial. Some readings of Wittgenstein regard the language game of religion as a form of ‘fideism,’ a concept that deems that religion relies on faith and does not need any supportive evidence (Carroll 2008). The core of this understanding of fideism is that religion cannot be criticized from the perspective of science in terms of explanation; on the other hand, faith also has no place in science. I will suggest a reading according to which communication can occur between science and religion.

1.1.1. Aims and Research Questions

In this book, based on Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, I want to examine the possibility of mutual learning for people from different language games. Specifically, I want to examine whether religious, atheist, or scientific-minded people can learn from one another.

To meet this aim, the first question of this research is whether there could be a bridge between the language games of religion and science. In dealing with these questions, I should concentrate on the following points.

1.1.2. The language game of religion

Philosophers usually tend to seek an essence, and once they have sought one, or think that they have sought one, they would come up with a definition. However, Wittgenstein was against this tendency and thought it to be a confusion between science and philosophy. Instead, Wittgenstein proposed the idea of family resemblance. As a result, we do not need to look for essences, but we need to find similarities and resemblances that allow us to identify a group of various phenomena as belonging to one category. As a result, I have proceeded to define religion in this Wittgensteinian method. Rituals, faith, metaphors, myths, and symbols are the features that exist in religions in one way or another, or combinations of them can be found in different religions. This would allow us to have a more concrete idea of the language game of religion and deal with it in this book.

To better grasp what Wittgenstein takes a language game to be and how to envisage each of these language games, I will deal with Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy in detail. In addition to this, some of the central features of language games (most notably, the concept of 'Grammar') will be examined.

1.1.3. Fideism

Fideism is a view that has often been associated with irrationality. However, this pejorative sense is of no use in an academic investigation. I will examine whether other uses of the term 'fideism' can be attributed to Wittgenstein and if so, what are the implications of this attribution for our discussion.

Wittgenstein claims that religion is a language game with its relevant hinge propositions. These hinge propositions cannot be rationally assessed but are the basis for evaluating other religious beliefs. Wittgenstein offers some criteria based on which we can differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate religious beliefs. He labels illegitimate religious beliefs “superstition”: “Religious faith and superstition are entirely different. One of them springs from fear and is a kind of false science. The other is trusting.” (Culture and Value, p. 72). Likewise, Wittgenstein is critical of religious beliefs, which can be refuted by close examination. An example is the case of a statue that bleeds on a certain day in the year discussed in Lectures on Religious Belief (1972). Illegitimate religious beliefs are based on misunderstandings of the grammar or rules of religion's language game. I will argue that although the language game of religion has its own rules, this does not mean that religion is exempt from all scrutiny.

1.1.4. Relativistic Reading of Wittgenstein

Wittgenstein has been at times called a relativist. Few works go through Wittgenstein's texts to make this claim. I will examine Wittgenstein's texts to determine whether his views commit him to various types of relativism. The range from cultural relativism to epistemic relativism and the alleged relativistic implications of Wittgenstein's conservatism will be examined thoroughly. The importance of this query is to determine whether language games are capable of interaction and whether mutual learning is possible.

1.1.5. Scientism

Unlike science, scientism can be described as an ideology. I will go through various meanings and uses that scientism has had and can have and examine how effective Wittgenstein's critical remarks regarding scientism can be. Wittgenstein has some critical remarks about science which should not be interpreted as anti-science. Having clarified the contrast between anti-science and anti-scientism and Wittgenstein's position I proceed with examining his criticism of scientism. Scientism is at times equated with naturalism and Wittgenstein has also been described as a naturalist. However, Wittgenstein's naturalism does not commit him to any metaphysical view (for example, the view that all exists is physical) or to any methodological

view (for example, the only legitimate method of inquiry is the method of natural sciences). Wittgenstein's views on the role of myth and symbols in science will also be examined.

1.1.6. Possibility and ways of Learning between the two Language games

The mutual learning between the two language games of science and religion is at the center of attention. The possibility and ways of mutual learning are addressed by appealing to what I call convergent pluralism regarding the "forms of life". This kind of pluralism is contrasted with mere perspectivism. In this pluralism, I analyze three main strands: a quasi-ontological, a quasi-epistemological, and an ethical one. The "quasi" is used to avoid the traditional philosophical intonations that Wittgenstein's view requires.

The point of the quasi-ontological view is that both science and religion are caught within the limits of "forms of life". These limits would prevent science as well as religion from the claims of omniscience and omnipotence. The point of the quasi-epistemological view is that each one of the two, science and religion, is only a way rather than "The way", one by appealing to the descriptive and the other by appealing to the metaphorical viewpoint. The point of ethical view is that science and religion, being neighborhoods, need to respect each other which would lead to mutual recognition.

Based on the three, mutual learning can be sought between the two language games. Accordingly, both science and religion can play the role of teacher and instructor for the other, whenever it becomes necessary. As far as the meaning of life is concerned, religion can be the teacher of science. On the other hand, when it comes to the facts of the world, science can take the role of a teacher.

Chapter Two: Wittgenstein on the Religious Worldview

In this chapter, I will first flesh out the components of the religious worldview. In doing so, instead of proceeding with definitions that aim to capture this worldview's essence, I will proceed in a Wittgensteinian spirit. In other words, I will examine the common elements of religious worldviews, the presence of which would allow us to recognize a resemblance between these religious worldviews and recognize them as such. I will follow the same procedure with the scientific worldview in the third chapter. I will consult Wittgenstein's written material to identify the components of the religious and scientific worldviews. He identified or emphasized certain components of these two worldviews in his works and I will proceed with them. This would also allow me to assess Wittgenstein's understanding of religious and scientific worldviews on a deeper level. His views on what distinguishes the religious and the scientific worldviews and what the characteristics of each are crucial for such an understanding. To do so, I will examine what Wittgenstein has written about the religious and scientific worldview in various texts. In discussing these two worldviews and their differences he emphasizes certain aspects of each. These aspects will be first introduced in general and later I will examine Wittgenstein's take on them in each of his specific works. Rituals, symbols, metaphors, myth, and faith are among the components of the religious worldview that will be touched upon. These components can be classified as religious practice, language, and belief. Later in this chapter, I will examine his idea of language games and their significance for the religious worldview. This shall pave the path for the second chapter's discussion of 'fideism', 'relativism', and 'disagreement'. Examining Wittgenstein's separate works in this chapter allows me to keep track of changes in his views and avoid anachronistic examinations.

Two clarifications are necessary before I continue. First, I am going to focus on what has become known as 'the later Wittgenstein'. While the distinction between the early Wittgenstein and later Wittgenstein is well-established, some have questioned such a distinction between his earlier and later work, and at least one Wittgenstein scholar has argued for a 'third Wittgenstein' which refers to the period when Wittgenstein wrote 'On

Certainty¹. I will stick with the ‘later Wittgenstein’ in the established sense of the term, which refers to the post-*Tractatus* period. Second, Although Wittgenstein was not religious nor was, he a believer – This point will be examined in more detail in the second chapter – he has been labeled as an atheist friend of religion. One can find his views on religion among atheists’ most sympathetic views. In addition to this, his hostility to the scientific spirit of our age – not science itself – and scientism are also well-known. Therefore, in examining Wittgenstein’s take on the religious and scientific worldviews, it is inevitable that the religious worldview would be considered more sympathetic and the scientific worldview would be viewed more critically. Whether Wittgenstein’s take on religion compromises the religious worldview or not, is something that will be examined in the later chapters.

2.1. The Religious Worldview

There are many religions in the world; many have ceased to exist, and most probably, some other religions will come into existence. Some religions have come into existence recently (such as Ahmaddiya in 1889) and some religions belong to earlier stages in history (such as Christianity and Judaism). Some of the extant religions are monotheistic, some are polytheistic, some are pantheistic, and some are atheistic. The list of assortments of religions can be extended. Many have attempted to define religion and have come up with many conflicting and differing definitions of religion. These definitions are not only presented by philosophers, but a vast number of scholars from other disciplines have endeavored to define religion. Sociology², Psychology³, biology, anthropology, and zoology are among the scientific branches in which the experts deal with religion and offer various definitions of religion based on their expertise. Examining

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- 1 Moyal-Scharrock has introduced this idea and has in fact edited a book with “Third Wittgenstein” in its title, Moyal-Sharrock, D. (2017). However, this idea has been criticized, e.g., Venturinha, N. (2014, February).
 - 2 One example is Emile Durkheim (2001) who considers religion as a unifying glue that binds society together with a specific morality and insists that “unanimous feeling of believers across time cannot be purely illusory.” (p. 312)
 - 3 One example is Sigmund Freud (1961) who emphasizes the illusory aspect and considers religion to be a “universal obsessional neurosis of humanity; like the obsessional neurosis of children, it arose out of the Oedipus complex, out of the relation to the father” (p. 42).

numerous takes on religion, Jensen (2014) has identified five major turns in the field of studying religion. He has identified them as the functional turn (initiated by Durkheim which focused on the function of religion in social terms and this was influential in the formation of sociology), the psychoanalytic turn (initiated by Sigmund Freud which focused on religion as a psychological phenomenon and influenced the formation of “hermeneutics of suspicion”), the existential turn (initiated by Paul Tillich and was prominent in the formation of existential philosophy after the second world war), linguistic turn (initiated by Clifford Geertz which emphasized language and symbols in studying religion and was important in studies about meaning in religion and culture), naturalistic turn (initiated by Pascal Boyer which attempts at applying advances in cognitive science to religion and argues that religion is a non-adaptive by-product of human brains).

In addition to the five major methods of studying religion just mentioned, various writers and intellectuals have presented their definitions of religion. Crawford (2003) has classified some of the definitions of religion in his book entitled “What is Religion?”. From Mathew Arnold’s definition of religion as “It is an emotion or morality touched by emotion” (p. 2) to Otto’s definition of religion as “a sense of numinous, the ‘wholly other’” (p. 3). As Crawford explains, this has led the famous philosopher of religion John Hick to state the following: “Religion is one thing to the anthropologist, another to the sociologist, another to the psychologist (and again another to the next psychologist!), another to the Marxist, another to the mystic another to Zen Buddhist and yet another to the Jew or Christian. As a result, there is a great variety of religious theories of the nature of religion. There is, consequently, no universally accepted definition of religion, and quite possibly there never will be.” (p. 3) Having gone through these various definitions, Crawford differentiates between functional and substantive definitions of religion. The functional definitions focus on the function of religion and what religion does for either the individual or a group or society. Functional definitions focus on religion as an institution and the role it plays. the substantive definitions in contrast focus on an element in religion that is substantial to religion and usually contains a supernatural element.⁴ Examining some of the definitions of religion, Crawford puts forth the following definition for religion, “Religion is a belief in God,

4 As an example of an attempt to accommodate functional and substantive elements, Crawford mentions Durkheim. Although given that Durkheim has not included the

who is the unconditioned ground of all things, and in spiritual beings, resulting in personal experience of salvation or enlightenment, communities, scriptures, rituals and a way of life.” (p. 201) It is noteworthy that up to some point, there was a tendency to talk about the essence of religion. This happened under the influence of Hegel and essence usually meant reference to the transcendental or supernatural agents. However, referring to the essence of religion has been abandoned by and large. (Jensen, 2014, p. 40) Instead of the essence talk, when it comes to religion, we can use Wittgenstein’s idea of family resemblance as a guide for recognizing the religious worldview. Instead of one defining shared element between world religions, we can look for characteristics common to most religions. To scrutinize the religious worldview, its constituents need to be examined. There are common features among all world religions, for example, the distinction between the sacred and the profane and cosmic rule and law, indicating that the whole universe is in control. Animism, the dualism of the human body and spirit, and belief in the afterlife are also constitutional elements in the formation of any religion (ibid p. 70). Wittgenstein is critical of metaphysical views attributed to religions, which will be discussed in the second chapter. Apart from the metaphysical or seemingly metaphysical views, there are certain phenomena common among various religions, namely rituals, symbols, myths, and metaphors. Let us consider each of these phenomena briefly.

2.1.1. Rituals

In the “Encyclopedia of Religious Rites, Rituals, and Festivals” published in 2004, Frank Salamone, the editor, states that a definition of ritual is not available, and it is one of those phenomena that one would recognize when one confronts it. Common among religions is agricultural rituals which are “designed to improve crop or livestock yields. An agricultural ritual can be designed to appeal directly to the gods, or the components of an agricultural ritual itself can be used to improve yields”. (Lansford, 2004, p.28) Another ritual associated with agricultural societies is animal sacrifice. Lansford describes the sacrifice ritual as an obligation for those who perform it and one which when the believer performs it, she thereby obliges

supernatural element in his substantive element it has not satisfied those who pursue the substantive definition. (p. 4)

the deity to respond (ibid, p.29). Some of these rituals are still performed in the modern world in Europe and elsewhere. However, some of them are not carried out with the religious intentions or rationale previously held. Rituals surrounding Christmas in Europe are one example. Some of these rituals are practiced by a few and considered exotic or problematic by others, for example, ascetic rituals, which consist of fasting, celibacy (maybe short term or long term), and self-mutilation. Blood rituals are also among them and consist of animal or human sacrifice. Rituals related to menstruation blood and symbolic blood are among these rituals, “Blood contains an almost universal imagery of the life force throughout various magical and religious metaphors. Blood symbolizes supernatural power in most contexts” (Tumminia, 2004, p. 53). While some rituals raise moral concerns, they are not all immoral or exclusively religious. Since rituals are a constituent of the religious worldview, the rationality or irrationality of rituals would determine the relation between scientific and religious worldviews.

2.1.2. Metaphor

The use of metaphor in religious texts is also a prevailing feature of religions. If there is a divine being transcending nature, then it would not be possible to describe him sufficiently using descriptive language. Rather our language would be, at least to some extent, metaphorical. Whereas among certain branches of monotheistic religions, there is a propensity to regard the words of their sacred text as literal facts that describe the world, other approaches consider the religious sacred texts chiefly a language embedded in metaphors, imagery, and symbols. An exhaustive literal understanding of all religious texts would turn them into manifestations of incongruity. As some would contend, considering the genesis story as a set of historical facts that historians can study would turn the genesis into false scientific claims. A fully literal reading of religious texts – which is usually ascribed to fundamentalists – would make talking of God’s actual hands and eyes inescapable.

In addition to disputes and clashes on the extent of metaphors that one may rightfully read into a religious text, there has been much theological debate about the capacity of human cognition and language in the religious context. While some argue that human language can describe the divine

reality at least to some extent⁵, some argue that since the divine is beyond all human comprehension, one ought to abstain from describing him in positive terms⁶. The consequence of the latter view is that God-talk should either be limited (to what God is not) or should be abandoned altogether⁷. What language is capable of is a general philosophical question, which also unfolds in the religious context. A third approach, which has its roots in romanticism, perceives attempts to describe God as misuse of language. In such a view instead of description, one ought to use imagination, metaphors, and symbols to hint at God. Paul Avis (1999) – a contemporary advocate of such a view – argues against a dominant view of language that takes descriptive language –which is objective and used in sciences – as the sole route to truth. This view of language influenced Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, and Bentham, and the influence is still present in analytic philosophy which was challenged by the later Wittgenstein (ibid, p. 17). Although Wittgenstein cannot be considered a Romantic, he insists on the importance of other aspects of language besides the description, which plays a major role in the religious worldview.

5 Some contemporary religious analytic philosophers would fit into this category. Richard Swinburne and Alvin Plantinga are some of the most notable examples.

6 This view with differing degrees of emphasis on the unknowability of God exists in the tradition of negative theology. Plotinus, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, and Nicholas of Cusa are among the notable examples.

7 Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite identified two main methodologies for doing theology which are kataphatic (which means towards speech) and apophatic (which means away from speech), “understood at its most basic level, the kataphatic, or affirmative, approach states that we can attain to some knowledge of God, no matter how limited, by attributing all the perfection of the created order to him as its source. This truth was accepted almost exclusively by medieval scholastics and led to the idea that God cannot be known directly outside of the *oikonomia* in which he reveals himself. The apophatic, or negative way, on the other hand, affirms God’s absolute transcendence and unknowability to such an extent that no affirmative concepts, except that of existence, may be applied to him, although some of the later Neoplatonists and some of the more radical negative theologians of the Latin West, even *to on* is denied. According to the principles of negative theology, one cannot transfer creaturely attributes to the divine nature without diminishing the unrestricted aspect of God’s transcendence” (Carabine, 2015, p. 2)

2.1.3. Symbols

Symbols are believed to play a vital role in the religious worldview, although they are not limited to religion and infiltrate all facets of our lives. An almost standard definition of a symbol is as follows, “a symbol is a deeply resonant literary image thought to have some special linkage with its meaning” (Struck 2004, p.1). In other terms, symbols are what we imagine in place of something else. We are not passive in imagining symbols and abstracting the symbolic aspect of a phenomenon from its other aspects. (Avis, p. 91) Symbols are pervasive in our lives, symbolism is a part of science just as it is a part of art, religion, and every other aspect of our lives. Symbols are a vital condition for understanding languages⁸. Some aspects of life may have a greater share of symbols and religious worldview is believed to be so. Given the pervasiveness of symbols in religion, how we deal with symbols is of great importance in understanding religious worldviews properly. If, in a certain religion, the “eyes of God” is a symbol that is supposed to convey the message that we are morally accountable for our deeds, we should not ask whether God has eyes. Symbols can be easily misunderstood if we fail to recognize what the symbols are supposed to symbolize. Such mistakes lead to seeing symbols as matters of fact and such mistakes would turn the religious worldview into a scientific worldview, although a scientific worldview that can be straightforwardly repudiated and is almost ludicrous.

2.1.4. Myth

Myth is a story that is usually about how the world was created, however, it need not be limited to the origin of the universe. Myths contain Gods and other personal creatures, some of which are not to be found in the natural world.

The scientific study of myths is a recent phenomenon originating in the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century, myth was mainly recognized

8 In describing how symbols are pervasive in science as well as any other aspect of human life, Hendel states the following in an introduction to Ernst Cassirer's work on symbols, “While there are the basic forms, such as space, time, and the categories of understanding, there are special constructive forms for each science and every theoretical construction within a science. The meanings of concepts depend upon the whole structure of the scientific system in which they are used and they vary with the general theory within which they are conceived”. (Hendel, 1980, p. 53)

as a primitive attempt at explaining the world. This meant that myth was a primitive science that moderns must abandon. While E.B. Tylor considered myths false attempts at describing the world, James Frazer thought myths were of instrumental importance and used to intervene in the world. Views of these two pioneering figures of nineteenth-century anthropology still resonate with many in our time. The nineteenth-century view of myth considered myth as opposed to science and promoted abandoning myths altogether. Tylor perceived mythological explanations as personal and scientific explanations as impersonal and believed that “both offer *direct* explanations and of the *same* events. Gods operate not behind or through impersonal forces but in the place of them.” (Segal, 2004, p. 17) Given that religion and myth come together, this meant that science ought to substitute both myth and religion. It should be noted that viewing myth as false science or as opposed to science can be held only on a literal reading of myths.

While Tylor held that myths were meant to be literal and exposed to be false by science, Friedrich Max Müller argued that they were not meant to be understood as literal, but this was an interpretive mistake that occurred later (ibid, p. 20). Some of the most important Wittgensteinian philosophers of religion - such as D.Z. Phillips - seem to have agreed with Müller on this controversy. This point will be discussed later in the chapter.

The evolutionary perspective on culture led nineteenth-century anthropologists to argue for stages of human development. Since myths were considered primitive, the moderns were urged to abandon them. Wittgenstein tried to debunk this ideology by drawing our attention to the resemblances between us and the so-called primitives. However, it should be noted that a very particular group of religious fundamentalists maintain that certain religious myths are not only true but also scientific.

2.1.5. Faith

Among religions, there is a difference in the emphasis they place on belief and action. In religions such as Christianity and Islam beliefs and doctrines are principal components of religion and decide the correct form of life. Consequently, denouncing belief in God or undermining religious doctrines has faced extreme forms of retribution in the history of these religions. Some religions on the other hand accentuate deeds. For example,

in Hinduism⁹ “there is a great diversity in beliefs, there are different deities, philosophies, and paths, but all of these require adherence to particular rules of behavior” (Shattuck, 2003, p. 15). Despite the varying degrees of prominence faith has in different religions, all religions are dependent on some ‘religious belief’ or faith. This aspect of religion has been widely discussed in philosophy and the debate usually revolves around the rationality or irrationality of such beliefs and faith. Such debates involve queries about what counts as evidence for such beliefs and whether the evidence for religious belief is different from evidence for scientific beliefs or whether religious beliefs and faith do not require evidence since they are not rational nor irrational, but non-rational. Wittgenstein’s position on faith is a complicated one and not paying attention to the intricacies of his view can result in scolding him for defending or safeguarding irrational beliefs. This, however, is not his view and I will deal with it extensively in this and the next chapter.

A proper understanding of rituals, metaphors, symbols, and myths is needed to scrutinize the religious worldview and ensure we do not misapprehend such features. If we take rituals as instances of instrumental reasoning aimed at modifying the world, then rituals become an irrational activity. When certain adherents or opponents of the religious worldview confuse symbols with facts, such confusion can be a basis for criticizing their view. The logical tools we have in dealing with the religious worldview are provided by a proper understanding of the features characteristic of the religious worldview. Later in this chapter, the critical apparatus that Wittgenstein delivers for dealing with religion will be examined. For now, it would suffice to say that an analysis that would allow a subtle and deeper understanding of the religious worldview would provide a basis for critical engagement with religion. A critical engagement that is not based on confusing the constituents of the religious worldview with those of a scientific worldview.

Having briefly considered five common elements among various religions, namely rituals, symbols, myth, metaphor, and faith, I will now turn to Wittgenstein’s take on the religious worldview in his various works. I will first briefly mention Wittgenstein’s take on religion in his early period and then examine three texts that are directly relevant to the present discussion,

9 It should be noted that some do not consider Hinduism as a religion, strictly speaking, Flood (2003) discusses this point extensively in his introduction to the Blackwell companion to Hinduism.

namely, 'Lecture on Religious Belief' and 'Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough' and 'On Certainty'¹⁰.

2.2. Religious and Scientific Language, Sense and Non-sense

Although the scope of this book is limited to considering the views of what has been labeled as 'the later Wittgenstein' a brief consideration of Wittgenstein's assessment of religion in the *Tractatus* will be helpful. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein held the view that only empirical propositions were effable, and as a result religious, moral, and aesthetic propositions were ineffable. If one were to express or articulate religious propositions, he would be uttering non-sense, "the Tractarian nonsensicalist conception of religion entails that there can be no propositions, and therefore no actual language, about God; however, God might still show or manifest himself in certain kinds of nonsensical use of words" (Andrejč, 2016, p. 34) In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein speaks about God in the following passage, where he states, "God does not reveal himself in the world." (6. 432) This along with the following passage¹¹ indicate a strong mystical attitude towards the world¹², however, the religious language remains nonsensical because of this view.

Examining the mystical element in the *Tractatus*, McGuinness (1966) argues that although there is no evidence that Wittgenstein had read Bertrand Russell's 'Logic and Mysticism', nevertheless McGuinness detects striking similarities between these two works. Russell had enumerated four characteristics for mysticism. First, mysticism has a claim to an insight into reality which is not the same as what senses and reason can grasp¹³. Second,

10 Andrejč (2016) has categorized Wittgenstein's conceptions of religious belief into four sections and has labeled them as "grammaticalist", "instinctivist", "existentialist", and "nonsensicalist".

11 It is not how things are in the world that is mystical, but that it is. To view the world *sub specie aeterni* is to view it as a whole—a limited whole. Feeling the world as a limited whole—it is this that is mystical. (TLP 6.44–6.45)

12 This mystical attitude has also been touched upon in Wittgenstein's notebooks, "The urge towards the mystical comes from the non-satisfaction of our wishes by science. We feel that even if all possible scientific questions are answered, our problem is still not touched at all". (NB 51)

13 "There is a feeling which may be called *das Mystische*, an inexpressible feeling, to have had which is to have solved the problem of life: those who have had it feel that

belief in the unity and oneness of reality bereft of oppositions¹⁴. Third, the unreality of time¹⁵ and fourth, good and evil are not realities but either appearances or illusions¹⁶. There are parallel remarks in the *Tractatus* for each of these remarks by Russell. However, one significant difference between the two remains. As McGuinness observes, while Russell thought that the mystical perception is ineffable, Wittgenstein held that philosophy, logic, ethics, religion, aesthetics, and basically whatever is not science shares the same fate.¹⁷ This is why we can see parallels between 'logic' and 'mysticism' in Wittgenstein's early work. They both cannot say anything but can show us how things are. Although in *Tractatus* there is no mention of how the word God is used in religious discourse and no examination of its actual use, in 'Lecture on Ethics' Wittgenstein does mention actual use of the religious language, "[The] first of them [wonder at the existence of the world] is, I believe, exactly what people were referring to when they said that God had created the world; and the experience of absolute safety has been described by saying that we feel safe in the hands of God." (Lecture on Ethics, § 10). Although Wittgenstein finds any expression of ethics and religion as hopeless attempts in running, "against the boundaries of language...Ethics, so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable, can be no science. What it says does not add to our knowledge in any sense. But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help re-

they know something, but cannot put it into words (*Tractatus* 6.522)" (McGuinness, 1966, p. 306)

- 14 "Which is surely parallel with Wittgenstein's description of mysticism as "viewing or feeling the world as a limited whole" (6.45)" (ibid).
- 15 "The third mark was timelessness, as parallels for which in the *Tractatus* we have both the view of the world *sub specie aeterni* (Russell too quotes Spinoza in this connection) and the eternal life which, according to Wittgenstein, belongs to the man who lives in the present (6.45, 6.43 I I)" (ibid).
- 16 "Wittgenstein's account of good and evil, in which he denies that they are in the world. Rather, they attach to the subject; they consist in an attitude of the will toward the world-acceptance in the case of the happy man, for whom the world is good, while the unhappy man finds the world inharmonious: he has a bad conscience and is therefore in disagreement with the world (6.4's *passim*)" (ibid, p. 307)
- 17 Another Russell text which may have influenced Wittgenstein deeply is Russell's "Scientific Method in Philosophy". McGuinness says the following in this regard, "it speaks of extruding the idea of the universe (perhaps what Wittgenstein would call "the world as a limited whole") and that of good and evil from scientific philosophy" (ibid, p. 309)

specting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it". (Lecture on Ethics, § 12).

In his later phase, Wittgenstein abandoned the conception of language in the *Tractatus* and developed another conception. He criticized his earlier views in numerous passages. However, one passage in 'Culture and Value' depicts why such a distinction between sense and non-sense was arbitrary and needed to be abandoned, "Now why am I so anxious to keep apart these ways of using 'declarative sentences'? ... It is simply an attempt to see that every usage gets its due. Perhaps then a reaction against the over-estimation of science. The use of the word 'science' for 'everything that can be said without nonsense' already betrays this overestimation. This amounts in reality to dividing utterances into two classes: good and bad, and the danger is already there. It is similar to dividing all animals, plants, and rocks into the useful and the harmful". (CV 70).. In contrast, in the *Tractatus* the conception of language was, "largely timeless, unlocated and impersonal" and had "transcendental and Schopenhauerian aspects", in his later phase language became, "this-worldly, concrete social activity, expressive of human needs." (Williams, 1973, p. 79)

2.3. Religion in 'Lectures on Religious Belief'

'Lectures on Religious Belief' (henceforth Lectures), is a series of notes which were written down by students attending Wittgenstein's lecture (first published in 1966). These notes indicate a transition from the *Tractatus* to 'Philosophical Investigations' and 'On Certainty'. In the *Tractatian* phase, as mentioned above, Wittgenstein thought that religious concepts and terms are deeply important, however, they should not be uttered because they are nonsense. Therefore, Wittgenstein proposed silence as the proper linguistic activity (or inactivity) regarding religion. As a result, the religious was ineffable for Wittgenstein, a view that has affinities with mysticism. In the early phase, religious expressions, such as God, find no function in language. In the second phase –which consists of Lectures– Wittgenstein has abandoned the view that religion is nonsensical and instead insists on the difference between religious discourse, on the one hand, and scientific and historical discourse, on the other, which aims at stating facts. Wittgenstein aims to show that "religious utterances serve to present and maintain experiences, images, stories, ('pictures') that convey a sense of the meaning of life." (Churchill, 1981, p. 33) In this phase, Wittgenstein

does not defend the ineffability thesis rather, he emphasizes the different 'functions' of religious discourse and scientific discourse. This sets the path for Wittgenstein to develop his view in the later works where he advances the concept of language games. I will first elaborate on Wittgenstein's view of religious discourse and belief in the Lectures and then assess them.

In Lectures, Wittgenstein tries to specify the distinguishing features of religious discourse by drawing on disagreements between a believer and a non-believer. Religious discourse, unlike scientific discourse, does not deal with conceptions such as 'proof' and 'evidence' – at least not in any conventional use of these concepts in scientific discourse – and religion is not a theory and religious beliefs are not to be examined as theories.

In the very beginning of the Lectures, considering the disagreement between the religious and non-religious, Wittgenstein does not consider this disagreement to be about truth or falsehood. He emphasizes that the disagreeing parties in such a disagreement usually refer to the opponent's position with emotive phrases such as 'ludicrous'. Such emotive strong responses are supposed to indicate that something more profound is at stake. The disagreement is not about the truth of one proposition, rather it is about the grounding of the propositions. We judge a historical proposition to be true or false. We assess the truth of a proposition based on a certain grounding for such propositions. We would weigh the evidence and announce the status of that proposition. Wittgenstein emphasizes that the grounds for scientific and religious propositions are not the same. Therefore, he proposes that in such disagreements when non-believers do not believe what the religious person says they are not contradicting her, "does this mean that I believe the opposite to him, just that there won't be such a thing? I would say: "not at all, or not always." (Wittgenstein, 1987, p.1). If despite the appearances, the believer and the non-believer are not disagreeing with one another, then they are operating with different modes of language. The religious believer is not describing a fact that would stand in opposition to the facts that the non-believer states¹⁸.

In Lectures, religious belief is significantly different from our conventional definition of belief. This has two clear implications which I will set

18 One way to understand the non-contradiction claim is to perceive religion and science as two different paradigms and argue for their incommensurability. However, Martin argues against this possibility. He mentions the possibility of two scientific theories contradicting each other, "even if they share no predicates with the same sense or reference...meaning variance does not entail incommensurability." (Martin, 1991, p. 376)

out to discover here. First, I will try to spell out what are the peculiarities of religious belief and what sort of disagreement the religious and non-religious involved.

This controversy is inconclusive for Wittgenstein because we cannot settle the controversy with the aid of evidence. We are dealing with grounds of two sets of opposing beliefs, which are not prone to assessment with other beliefs or evidence. Wittgenstein states something about the relation between evidence and the controversy, which is of relevance here, "The point is that if there were evidence, this would in fact destroy the whole business." (p. 3) If one could find any sort of evidence to settle this controversy, it would not be a controversy between the scientific and religious worldviews, but a disagreement within a scientific worldview. Wittgenstein does not perceive the possibility of settling this controversy with the aid of evidence; he does not see the controversy between the religious believer and nonbeliever as two contradictories, or opposing views, or even a disagreement in the conventional sense that we use, but rather he uses the word controversy. This controversy is inconclusive because it is about grounds of belief, and we cannot assess grounds of belief. We cannot justify or find any evidence for other grounds of belief, such as our reasoning, eyesight, and the like.

Further, Wittgenstein sets out to clarify the nature of this controversy by telling us what a religious belief is and what it is not. Emphasizing the regulative role of religion, Wittgenstein is demarcating a realm for religion distinct from the scientific one. He is emphasizing the practical aspect of religion in which the believer is seeking a framework to regulate his actions and not a theory to describe the world and its affairs best.

First, Religious belief is not an opinion. So religious belief is not a subjective view that people are entitled to have or not have based on personal preferences (For example, the opinion that Humphrey Bogart is handsome). Wittgenstein reminds us that words such as 'dogma' and 'faith' are used to describe religious belief not 'opinion'. (P.3).

Second, unlike scientific propositions, speaking of predictability about religious propositions does not make sense. We say that when you add Cesium to water, a minimal explosion will occur; this scientific prediction should not be the same as "The Day of Judgment will occur". In the scientific forecast, we say if this and that element are combined, or if this and that condition is met, such and such will occur. If we understand the "Day of Judgment" as a scientific prediction, we need to figure out how we can either forecast this event or expedite it. Isaac Newton was a famous

case who tried to predict the end of time as some religious people tried to expedite the resurrection of their savior. In this Wittgensteinian view, such attempts are based on confusing religious and scientific beliefs.

Third, religious belief has nothing to do with proof in the way a scientist will have proof for his theory. The believer has an unshakable belief that does not show itself "by reasoning or by appeal to ordinary grounds for belief but by regulating for in all his life". (ibid). Religious belief should be distinguishable as the "firmest of all beliefs" from "well-established beliefs" for a religious believer.

Evidence cannot settle the dispute between a believer and a non-believer because evidence is a concept used in the scientific or philosophical context. In other words, if we speak of evidence, we have already taken the grounding for the scientific discourse into account. Therefore, according to Wittgenstein, if we assess religious beliefs with evidence, we have neglected the grounding for such a discourse and confused religion for science. Later, Wittgenstein developed his idea of language games, a more nuanced version of such a claim. Many theists and atheists disagree with the distinction between religious and non-religious beliefs. Most Analytic philosophers of religion evaluate evidence in the broad sense of the word –not just empirical evidence but also arguments and reasons– in topics related to the existence of God and other religious beliefs¹⁹. Taking Wittgenstein's view about the non-applicability of evidence to religious belief implies abandoning the claim that religious beliefs describe reality. After all, if religion were to speak about reality, demanding evidence would be only rational. However, For Wittgenstein, "belief in a Judgement Day, or the fundamental

19 Wittgenstein argued vehemently that philosophy ought to restrict itself to description and not put forth a theory. But in the Lectures, Wittgenstein is not describing religious practice and discourse and is rather putting forth a normative account of how religious discourse and beliefs ought to be. Michael Martin (1991) argues that in addition to the fact that Wittgenstein does not remain faithful to his dictum, he offers an account of religion that is not widely practiced. Many religious believers hold strong metaphysical claims based on their religious beliefs, and they are not willing to restrict their religious discourse to non-fact stating propositions. One can find philosophers such as Richard Swinburne and Alvin Plantinga among them. In addition to this, Martin draws our attention to the fact that religion does not play a regulative role for all religious believers, "Sociologists of religion have pointed out that many modern religious believers compartmentalize their religious beliefs in such a way that they have little effect on the rest of their lives". (Martin, 1991, p. 373). While it is true that many religious believers perceive some of their religious beliefs to describe the world and in such cases, their religious views might contradict scientific claims, it is not evident that Wittgenstein is wrong in offering his corrective view.

Christian beliefs articulated in the Nicene Creed, are not beliefs about the nature of reality and the occurrence of past and future events. They are, rather, expressions of a commitment to seeing the world in a particular way and to leading one's life in a certain way". (Child, 2011, p. 225).

This point explains why Wittgenstein questions efforts to ground religious beliefs on rational or scientific beliefs, something Wittgenstein finds superstitious and an instance of cheating. Addressing father O'Hara, whom Wittgenstein finds guilty of committing himself to this superstition. Wittgenstein also contends that historical facts cannot be the base of religious belief either. Christianity "Doesn't rest on a historic basis in the sense that the ordinary belief in the historic facts could serve as a foundation" (p.3). Note that Wittgenstein is not arguing that historical records cannot or should not accord with the narratives of the Bible or other content of religious beliefs. He is claiming that basing religious belief on historical or other scientific facts is confusing religious belief with scientific beliefs.

Given that religion has a different grounding, some may argue that on a Wittgensteinian account of religion, one should share religious beliefs to be able to understand them. In so far as we understand languages and have a grasp of the logic of concepts involved, we can assess them. Wittgenstein mentions this point in more than one place through his writings, "A language that I do not understand is no language." (2000: 109-196). Additionally, Wittgenstein was not religious himself, and if this motto were correct, Wittgenstein did not understand religion. It would be strange to defend Wittgenstein's take on religion while denying that understanding religion is dependent on being religious. However, this is a controversial claim and does not find support in what Wittgenstein has to say about religion. One can understand words a religious believer uses like 'God' but not believe in them. The word 'God' can be used in different ways and according to Wittgenstein, using 'God' as if it were a scientific hypothesis is a mistake. To understand and assess this claim, one need not be religious. Some religious believers do hold that God is a reasonable hypothesis or think that belief in God can be based on evidence and theories. Wittgenstein's objection to such believers would be that they confuse science and religion. In fact, in *Lectures*, he criticizes Father O'Hara for doing so and labels him as superstitious for doing so²⁰. Understanding and acceptance

20 Wittgenstein may have misunderstood Father O'Hara, as Davies (1982) argues. Nonetheless, Wittgenstein is critical of any attempt to base religious belief on evidence and theories.

are not considered the same for Wittgenstein. The same point can be made about science, we do not need to be practicing scientists to understand what the scientist says.

In so far as two people 'believe' in P and not-P, they contradict each other unless one specifies that two people are using two different senses of 'belief' when referring to P and not-P. Satris (2013), referring to the same point, states, "I must admit that it certainly does seem that the person who says "I believe in the Last Judgement" and the person who says that he does not are contradicting each other" (p. 3). He then mentions in the footnote, "At least, that is, provided that we successfully get past the "I believe" part and construe the contradiction as one between the belief that there will be a Last Judgement and the belief that there will not." (ibid). However, I would argue that given Wittgenstein's insistence on the irrelevance of evidence and proof of religious belief, he must have a different conception of "belief" regarding religious beliefs. Or else, the "Last Judgment" could be something the believer and the non-believer disagree about. One of them holds that the Last Judgment is an actual event that will occur in the future, whereas one holds the Last Judgment to be a picture that would hold oneself accountable to and organize his actions according to this picture. This second sense of the Last Judgment sounds more compatible with Wittgenstein's account of religious belief. This would mean religious utterances should not be stating what would count as a scientific prediction. Satris (2013) mentions how a disagreement between a believer and a non-believer would involve scientific claims. Considering the example Wittgenstein puts forth, Satris argues that when the believer mentions that the body particles will rejoin and resurrection will take place, the believer is not merely proposing a religious view but also a scientific one. If we accept Wittgenstein's verdict that religious beliefs and scientific beliefs cannot contradict each other, in cases where there is a seeming contradiction, we need to adjust our understanding of the religious and scientific beliefs so that no contradiction is involved. This position, as it stands, is not an irrational view. However, it could turn into an irrational position, "if whatever religious beliefs a person expresses are always exempt from contradiction with what it would (otherwise) be reasonable to believe, this seems to grant religious beliefs an almost total immunity from criticism". (Satris, 2013, p.5) I will deal in more detail with such an irrational position that attempts to safeguard religious belief at all costs in the section I deal with 'Fideism'.

Ought we develop this non-contradicting disagreement to cases where two religious believers disagree with another as well, or should we limit it to

disagreement between a believer and a non-believer? Some believers hold that there will be a Last Judgment, whereas some believe there will be a reincarnation. How are we to judge between them? Given that Wittgenstein is emphasizing the regulative role of religion and evidence plays no role in vindicating religion true or false, a disagreement or comparison between two different religions would be about their practical aspect. Which religion is more capable when it comes to having a regulative role, which ones are more easy-going, which ones require a great deal of effort, and which religions have been more successful? However, a critical remark by Satris (2013) on Wittgenstein's philosophical development is helpful. At this stage, Wittgenstein has not yet fully developed the idea that we can have various beliefs with various uses. Therefore, in the Lectures, Wittgenstein advances the idea that religious beliefs and disagreements are not normal beliefs and disagreements and this distinction between normal and abnormal beliefs and disagreements is problematic. There is no account of what constitutes 'normal' beliefs, so we could differentiate them from religious beliefs. There are aesthetic disagreements, moral disagreements, political disagreements and religious disagreements and, scientific ones, and so on. In the lectures, there is no developed account of how religious disagreements (either between a believer and a non-believer or between two believers) are different from other disagreements and, therefore how they differ and diverge from the normal beliefs and what role evidence plays in each controversy.

2.4. Religion in 'Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough'

In '*The Golden Bough*', James Frazer distinguished three different ways to comprehend, describe, and intervene in the natural world: magic, religion, and science²¹. Interpreting religion and magic as instances of failed instrumentalist rationality, Frazer concluded that they are instances of false science that 'primitive' people used. Magic and religion signified failed

21 Frazer uses a metaphor to show the relationship between science, religion, and magic as a "web woven of three different threads – the black thread of magic, the red thread of religion, and the white thread of science... there rests on the middle portion of the web, where religion has entered deeply into its texture, a dark crimson stain, which shades off insensibly into a lighter tint as the white thread of science is woven more and more into the tissue" (1998: 807)

attempts to alter nature. Unlike Frazer, Wittgenstein²² holds that truth and falsehood can only be used when we are dealing with propositions and theories. Therefore, in so far as practices such as rituals are not attempting to offer any theories, truth and falsehood do not apply to them.

For Wittgenstein, theory is not the domain of religion, and one should not attempt to base religion on theory. Wittgenstein holds that only theories can be true or false, and practices in so far as they are not accompanied by metaphysical baggage and theoretical claims are neither true nor false. Since practices cannot be true or false, speaking of a mistake regarding rituals does not make sense. Wittgenstein does not allow the possibility of a 'mistake' for the practitioners of rituals unless they put forth a theory and base the ritual on that theory. As mentioned earlier, in *Lectures on Religious Belief*, he labeled Father O'Hara as superstitious because O'Hara wanted to base religion on scientific theory. The problem with such an attempt is that a theory can be either true or false and basing practices on a theory would provide the possibility that a practice may be built on a mistake. In contrast, practices should be based on something firm. A basis which one cannot doubt and is certain can be the basis of practice. The same view is repeated in 'Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough'²³ (henceforth Remarks) where he states, "No opinion serves as the foundation for a religious symbol. And only an opinion can involve an error." (§ 123). Wittgenstein reiterated a similar position in a conversation with Friedrich Waismann, stating, "I can very well imagine a religion in which there are no doctrines, and hence nothing will be said. The essence of religion can have nothing to do with speech or more: if speech is present, it is a component of the religious activity [Handlung] and no theory. Nothing turns on whether the words are true or false or senseless [Unsinnig]." (Norris, 2015, p. 7).

22 Drury was Wittgenstein's friend and student and got Frazer's book from the library and read it to him. He mentions that Wittgenstein "was particularly emphatic that it was wrong to think, as Frazer seemed to do, that primitive rituals were like scientific errors. He pointed out that besides these (ritual) customs, primitive peoples had quite an advanced technique [skills] in agriculture, metalworking, pottery, etc. The ceremonies that Frazer described were expressions of deeply felt emotions, of religious awe." (Drury, 1981, p. 134)

23 Remarks consist of a set of notes which were written in two different periods. The first series were written in 1931, while the second section was written in 1936 or after. (Rhees 1979)

Frazer perceived magic as an early philosophy of life that mankind had developed and argued that magic is based on a theoretical framework that attempts to explain the natural world. Frazer identifies two principles of resemblance and contiguity at the core of this framework, “If we analyze the principles of thought on which magic is based, they will probably be found to resolve themselves into two: first, that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause; and, second, that things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed. The former principle may be called the Law of Similarity, the latter the Law of Contact or Contagion”. (Frazer 1922: 11). Frazer argues that the magicians produced a statue or doll-like some person and did what they wanted to do to it. Frazer further contends that this was believed to have a causal effect on the person who resembled that statute or doll. In another instance of magic, the magician would gather what belongs to a person – personal belongings and parts of the body such as hair - and perform magic on those stuff to influence that person. As Brian Clack (1999b) observes, in *The Golden Bough*, Frazer does not consider magic to be irrational. Rather he argues that magic presupposes – just as the modern sciences do – that nature is unified²⁴. Frazer thinks that the mistake of the magicians in primitive cultures is the failure to identify ‘causality’ instead of ‘resemblance’ and ‘contagion’ as the proper connecting feature. Therefore, according to Frazer, all magic is wrong because it fails to identify ‘causality’ as a proper concept to study nature. The failure of magic, according to Frazer, itself paved the path for ‘the primitives’ to believe that the gods are more powerful and they control nature. This lesson in modesty is behind the formation of religion. Frazer also holds that science is the next stage where human beings learn about the shortcomings of religion.

Wittgenstein is critical of the explanatory attempts of Frazer because he thinks that ‘the primitive’ did not base their rituals on opinions. Explanations of rituals like the one Frazer offers to make rituals intelligible to us but do not get to the heart of rituals. Wittgenstein attempts to advance an understanding of rituals that is not scientific. The difference between Frazer and Wittgenstein is summed by Eldrige (1987) concisely as a difference in how they perceive human beings, “According to Frazer, our fundamental or characteristic activity as conscious beings is that of forming beliefs based on hypotheses about natural phenomena. It is this general

24 In the first chapter of his book, Clack (1999b) offers a more sympathetic examination of Frazer’s views.

picture of human being in the world that attracts Wittgenstein's attention and interest" (p. 226). For Wittgenstein, unlike Frazer, we are trained to fit the world by imitating practices and how things are done and not by forming hypotheses and scientific explanations of things. Therefore, Frazer perceives the rituals to be based on mistaken hypotheses about nature because he believes that rituals can only be understood if they are taken to be instances of instrumental reasoning which is itself based on beliefs about how nature works. Frazer then concludes that rituals are bad science based on a wrong conception of nature and are ineffective. Wittgenstein, on the other hand, questions instrumental reasoning as a necessary component of rituals and instead focuses on celebrating natural phenomena and events. How we perceive the relationship between a human being and the world is at the heart of this debate. The problem arises when we expand the scientific outlook to such an extent that we define human beings as 'hypothesizing creatures' and then perceive every activity and phenomenon so that it fits this definition. Wittgenstein insists that instead of seeking the origins of rituals and trying to offer a hypothesis about how rituals emerged as a pre-scientific enterprise we can interpret them with our current understanding. Rudich and Stassen (1971) argue that Wittgenstein's criticism of Frazer is a philosophical critique that can be applied to all social science, namely, "we know –empirically, verifiably- that certain customs exist along with certain beliefs, but we do not know for sure that the customs originated in those beliefs." (pp. 85-86).

In response to Frazer's criticisms of the rituals of tribesmen, in *Remarks*, Wittgenstein reminds us that there are certain acts that both we and tribesmen do, acts that can be described as aimless reactions. (Wittgenstein, 1987, 4). According to Wittgenstein, human beings have an instinctive tendency to react to certain phenomena. With Clack, we can call these reactions 'instinct-actions' (1999) or with Lara 'instinct-rituals' (2003). An additional difference between Frazer and Wittgenstein is that while Frazer presupposes that the basis of rituals is opinions and hypotheses about nature, Wittgenstein perceives rituals as "instinctual responses to an inner need for release and satisfaction, unconscious and with no other purpose" (p. 86). Therefore, for Wittgenstein 'burning in effigies' and 'kissing the picture of a loved one' are actions that we just do and "then feel satisfied". (Wittgenstein, 1987). This similarity reminds us that not every act by "primitives" needs to be considered irrational or based on false beliefs about the world; rather these practices, like our own practices – such as kissing the

pictures of loved ones – are based on instincts. Instincts cannot be true or false.

Wittgenstein enumerates the ritualistic activities that we ‘moderns’ have such as kissing the picture of loved ones. These similarities and commonalities provide a basis for interpreting the rituals of the people in the past. By connecting the rituals to our thoughts and feelings, Wittgenstein attempts to capture a deeper understanding of rituals. This deeper understanding cannot be attained through scientific and historical examination. (Wittgenstein, 1993, § 143). Wittgenstein holds that since rituals are not based on opinions and beliefs about how the world is, we should not assert that we can infer a theory from these rituals about the natural world and then assess them as scientific claims²⁵. Wittgenstein considers the function of religious discourse to be different from the scientific discourse²⁶. Frazer, on the other hand, is trying to figure out the “bad science” behind the rituals of the so-called primitive people. In addition, Frazer has a further supposition in which he thinks there is one “bad science” or theory behind all the similar rituals he had gathered.

Wittgenstein and Frazer hold two very different views regarding the function of language. Frazer holds the primary function of language to describe reality. In contrast, Wittgenstein holds that that is only one of the functions of the language. While there are other functions, there is no reason to prioritize the descriptive language of science over all other functions of language²⁷. Wittgenstein seems to be, most of all, against the

25 This is how Drury summarizes what he takes to be Frazer’s mistake and Wittgenstein’s achievement, “Frazer thinks he can make clear the origin of the rites and ceremonies he describes by regarding them as primitive and erroneous scientific beliefs...They were not mistaken beliefs that produced the rites but the need to express something; the ceremonies were a form of language, a form of life. Thus today, if we are introduced to someone, we shake hands; if we enter a church, we take off our hats and speak in a low voice; at Christmas perhaps, we decorate a tree. These are expressions of friendliness, reverence, and of celebration”. (Drury, 1973, p. 5)

26 “Christianity is not a doctrine, not, I mean, a theory about what has happened and will happen to the human soul, but a description of something that takes place in human life. For ‘consciousness of sin’ is a real event, and so are despair and salvation through faith. Those who speak of such things (Bunyan for instance) are simply describing what has happened to them, whatever gloss anyone may want to put on it”. (Wittgenstein 1980: 28)

27 De Zengotita (1989) mentions the importance of linguistic practices over the truth of the expressions for Wittgenstein, “Wittgenstein had realized that prayer was one of the language’s many legitimate uses and that truth-functional references were not its point” (p. 391)

scientism of Frazer in which scientific explanations and causal relations are all that one can state about any phenomenon. Wittgenstein offers alternative ways of understanding what the religious believers utter, "If someone who believes in God looks around and asks, 'Where does everything I see come from?', 'Where does all this come from?', he is not craving for a (causal) explanation; and his question gets its point from being the expression of a certain craving. He is, namely, expressing an attitude to all explanations". (Wittgenstein 1980: 85). If we limit all the functions of language to science-type claims that aim at describing some reality and assess all language in terms of truth and falsehood, we will miss out on many of the functions in language. Wittgenstein uses an example from the novel 'The Brothers Karamazov' by Fyodor Dostoevsky to indicate that people who misunderstand various functions of language, e.g., symbolism for description, think like, "People who call themselves Modernists are the most deceived of all. I will tell you what Modernism is like: in The Brothers Karamazov, the old father says that the monks in the nearby monastery believe that the devils have hooks to pull people down to Hell. "Now," says the old father, "I can't believe in those hooks." That is the same sort of mistake the Modernists make when they misunderstand the nature of symbolism". (Drury, 1981, p.122).²⁸

In addition, Wittgenstein refers to successful instances of instrumental reasoning among 'the primitives' to argue that their understanding of nature was not wrong but the way they interpreted nature has some differences from how we do it. Wittgenstein reminds us that the so-called 'primitive' people managed to make tools with which they hunted for food and survived. Therefore, one cannot conclude that they had no clear idea of what instrumental rationality is and that they were not good at it, and this means that they are not in a gross mistake regarding how nature works. As Wittgenstein puts it "their knowledge of nature, if they wrote it down, would not be fundamentally different from ours. Only their magic is different." (1987, § 245) Thus, if one interprets religion as instrumental rationality of the people of the past and their only instance of instrumental rational-

28 In addition to the quote in the text, in the following Wittgenstein stresses the expressive component of language in contrast to the scientific explanation, "If I, who do not believe that somewhere or other there are human-superhuman beings which we might call gods- if I say 'I fear the wrath of the gods,' then this shows that with these words I can mean something or express a feeling that need not be connected with that belief". (Wittgenstein 1979: 8)

ity²⁹, then one comes to the kind of dismissive conclusion that Frazer came to³⁰.

Wittgenstein's reaction to Frazer has been interpreted in various ways. Although some parts of what Wittgenstein has to say about rituals seem to support an expressivist view³¹ (e.g., Cook 1988, Banner 1992), other interpretations tend to emphasize that, for Wittgenstein, what is at the core of religious belief and rituals, is an instinct that we moderns and the pre-literature tribesmen share (Clack 2001; Lara 2003). It is an instinct to react to certain phenomena. It would be a mistake to consider every instance of ritual and religious belief in terms of instrumental or expressivist understanding. While the instrumentalist view reduces religion to an instrumental function for interfering in the world, the expressivist view argues that religious beliefs do not have any cognitive content and are

29 If instrumentalism is limited to interfering and changing the course of nature, then an instrumental interpretation of religion is not tenable. However, if instrumentalism also includes changing the course of human affairs and societies, then we need to deal with it differently. One should not forget that some religions promise a better life for their followers as well as the spread of morality and goodness. In addition to this, religious beliefs and rituals bring about further changes in people's lives. Mass prayers give community members a sense of belonging and unity, or they can help individuals gain calm or expiate their guilt. Religious rituals and prayers can motivate community members to combat poverty through charity. In addition to that, members of a religious community can become united against certain groups of people. Almost all religions have the concept of 'outsider', and one of the instrumental uses of religious belief has been to exclude or ostracize those people from society. Such instrumental aspects may or may not be the reason people have religious beliefs. Nevertheless, they seem to be a part of the religious life of many believers and need to be assessed.

30 "When we are attempting to interpret someone else's statements, it is often a sound procedure to eschew a particular interpretation if that interpretation involves ascribing irrational beliefs to the person in question. Furthermore, the desirability of avoiding such ascriptions is increased if that person usually manifests a good grasp on issues of justification but remains willing to make these problematic statements even when the grounds for our concerns about lack of justification have been explicitly drawn to his or her attention. And it is very striking that in the Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*, Wittgenstein repeatedly appeals to these interpretative principles in order to reject Frazer's explanations of the significance and origins of particular rituals." (Bailey, 2002, p. 123)

31 Redding (1987) identifies different language games used by Wittgenstein and Frazer. Wittgenstein is advancing an expressivist view in which the emphasis is on understanding the rituals whereas Frazer is advancing a scientific view in which the emphasis is on explaining the rituals. Leaving aside the shortcomings of Frazer's view and its ideological baggage aside, one cannot rule out the possibility of a scientific study of rituals or religion in general.

mere expressions and therefore cannot be assessed with cognitive tools such as "truth" and "falsehood". There is an element in rituals that cannot be captured by instrumental reasoning, "ritual itself is fundamentally action 'without purpose' ... symbolizing and expressing our feelings and attitudes . . . In Wittgenstein's view, there is in human beings a deep need to symbolize and express what is important to them in their lives ... Primitive rituals and their accompanying beliefs do for those who participate in them what the symbolic acts we have to do for us, expressing and evoking deep needs and emotions". (O'Hear, 1984: 10-12)

One major concern is whether Wittgenstein is defending an 'essence' for rituals. Although Wittgenstein advanced a critical stance toward essentialist views later in his philosophical development, it is not obvious that he had such a view when he wrote Remarks. From what we have examined so far it does not follow that Wittgenstein is against all scientific examination of rituals.

It should be noted that Wittgenstein's view of rituals is not comprehensive by any means. Frank Cioffi (1998) finds Wittgenstein's one-sided remarks about rituals as a "dismally opinionated utterance and a profoundly un-Wittgensteinian one. All rites are not of 'this kind' nor of any other kind, and Wittgenstein himself knows that they are not since the statement that they are is contradicted by remarks he makes elsewhere as well as in the Frazer notes themselves" (p. 158). Even on a more charitable reading, Wittgenstein's account seems to have ignored certain aspects of rituals. For example, he mentions that praying for rain among 'primitive' tribes is not meant to bring about rain. (Wittgenstein, 1987, p. 12). In other words, praying for rain is not to be understood in instrumental terms. However, Frazer recorded an instance of an Abyssinian king who would have been stoned to death had he failed to bring rain. (Clack, 1999, p. 64). A recent study of rituals reveals that "Although most agricultural rituals are calendrical, some increase rituals and other rituals can take place at any time of the year. During times of trouble, divination rituals are held to determine what actions have displeased the gods and what steps can be taken to appease them and improve growing conditions. This is especially true of rain ceremonies designed to halt floods, famine, or infestations of rodents and insects. During droughts or intense heat, the Iroquois of North America performed a ritual they called the "Thunder Rite," which was thought to convince the gods to constrain the sun and prevent crops from being scorched or withered". (Lansford, 2004, p. 29). This account of rituals indicates that some "rain ceremonies" are calendrical. Which means that

they are not instrumental but ceremonial and this supports Wittgenstein's view. Whereas in the same account some "rain ceremonies" are performed in times to influence the weather and climate instrumentally. This means that rain ceremonies can be divided into two groups: the ones which are ritualistic and the ones which are instances of instrumental rationality. Faced with this duality, several possibilities can be examined. One could argue that Frazer is right and that 'the primitives' had a naturalistic theory behind their rituals and figured out an interpretation to accommodate the calendrical ceremonies into this account. A second possibility is to approve of Wittgenstein's view and hold the ceremonial character of calendrical rituals as the proper description and dismiss the instrumental instances as confusion. Wittgenstein dismisses rituals in which animal sacrifice occurs as instances of confusion. (Hoyt, 2012). A third possibility would be to argue that not all rituals are the same and some of them are based on a theory about nature whereas other rituals are not. There are different games like chess and football, and as Wittgenstein has taught us, we should not try to restrict the concept of games so that some games will be excluded. Similarly, we should not define rituals so that some rituals would be excluded. There is indeed the possibility to assess different classes of rituals based on various criteria. We can assess them based on moral concerns, aesthetic judgments, efficiency in bringing about their intended results, linguistic confusion, etc.

The instrumental view of religion is by no means limited to preliterate tribes. For example, praying for rain is a ritual that Muslims occasionally engage in, even today. It is interesting to note that clergymen are rarely willing to do so. If they pray and there is no rain, then this might be interpreted as a sign that they are not sufficiently pure. Additionally, pace Wittgenstein, many people believed and still believe in the supernatural powers of kings and priests. Wittgenstein held that the preliterate tribes did not believe that their kings had the power to bring rain. (Wittgenstein, 1979, p. 73). Additionally, some rituals are designed to exploit people. The ruling religious classes sometimes invent rituals to gain wealth and obedience. Even if certain rituals are not designed to exploit, rituals are prone to give rise to political and economic exploitation.

If a ritual is intended as instrumental and does not bring about the desired change, we can criticize it because of this. If a ritual is claimed to bring peace of mind but does not serve that purpose, it can be criticized exactly based on this failure. However, Wittgenstein is dismissive of all instrumentalist rituals because he thinks they are based on confusion about

the nature of rituals. The philosophical critique is aimed at the grounding of rituals. If rituals are grounded on opinions or theories and aimed at bringing about change in nature, then they are instances of bad science in the guise of rituals. Since Frazer has correctly observed instances of instrumental rationality among the rituals he has collected, he was right in dismissing those instances as bad science. The mistake that Frazer made was to generalize and propose a theory about all rituals as mistaken science. Wittgenstein has tried to show that proper rituals are not bad science. This is the normative aspect of Wittgenstein's critical view of rituals.

As D.Z. Phillips puts it if we turn the generalizations in the Remarks into a statement like 'most or some rituals are like that,' the problem will be solved. However, there is evidence that Wittgenstein was aware of the diversity of rituals. Therefore The Remarks, which were notes taken down by Wittgenstein's friend should be interpreted with charity. For example, G.E. Moore reports the following from Wittgenstein's lecture, "He gave as an instance of this sort of mistake Frazer's statement, in speaking of Magic, that when primitive people stab an effigy of a particular person, they believe that they have hurt the person in question. He said that primitive people do not always entertain this '*false scientific belief*', though in some cases they may: that they may have quite different reasons for stabbing the effigy. But he said that the tendency to suppose that there is 'one motive which is the motive' was 'enormously strong', giving as an instance that there are theories of play each of which gives only one answer to the question 'Why do children play?' (Moore 1954–55: 106; my italics). It is clear from this passage that Wittgenstein even admitted that some of the rituals that the primitive held constituted instances of false scientific belief.

Wittgenstein has not dealt with the commonality of rituals. He recognizes that religious expressions and rituals are based on instant reactions. While this fits his example of kicking a tree when angry or pressing one's lips when confronted by someone who talks too much or generally wonders about why the world exists, it fails to cover more complex examples of rituals. Wittgenstein emphasizes individualistic explanations for rituals, but it is insufficient to account for the social character of such rituals, which could be considered as collective action. Mass prayers have great complexities that one cannot explain merely as instinct actions. People go to prayers and rituals at certain times of the day, week, or year. These events are planned, and it would be strange to assume that they are instant reactions to a certain phenomenon.

A conclusion that we can draw from Wittgenstein's examination of Frazer's views which is also compatible with Wittgenstein's later philosophical views, is stated by Redding, "there can be no a priori rule forbidding us to construe ritual expressions as propositions about the world. If we choose, for some particular reasons, to construe them thus, then we will surely generally judge them to be false. But neither is there any compulsion to construe them in this way in every context... we are no more, and no less, essentially rational than we are ceremonial." (1987, p. 267) One consequence of such critical remarks by Wittgenstein is that a strict distinction between modern and primitives, as intended by Frazer and others who hold an evolutionary idea of culture, collapses.

As mentioned, Wittgenstein's Remarks were put forth before he developed the idea of language games. Whether Wittgenstein maintains that the language game of religion is an expressivist one in the later phase of his thought will be examined in the following sections. Some have criticized this 'expressivist phase' as an attempt to safeguard religion from scientific criticism, e.g., Banner (1992). Given that some critics have proposed this charge in examining Wittgenstein's idea of religious language games, I will examine this charge in the fideism section. Before that, we need to examine the idea of the Language game in Wittgenstein's philosophy.

2.5. Language Games

Wittgenstein developed the idea of language game in several texts and manuscripts which he had written. This idea is discussed mainly in the 'Brown Book', 'Philosophical Investigations,' and 'On Certainty'. In the 'Brown Book' (2007), Wittgenstein considers different ways of using language with distinct rules, from 'counting' to 'ostension' and playing card games. The different rules that govern each of these realms of language lead to the formation of different language games. Being rule-governed, Wittgenstein describes language games as, "complete in themselves" (p. 81). Given this feature, it is not surprising that Wittgenstein emphasizes and examines the relation between training, instruction, and initiation into a language game in the Brown Book. Another feature of language games discussed in the Brown book is that the rules of a game are crucial in determining the meaning of the words and expressions used in that game. This feature of language games allows us to detect instances that we thought of as contradicting claims. In contrast, in fact, they were two propositions that

belonged to two different language games. In such cases, we use the same word in other games, with different rules, leading to different meanings. An example that Wittgenstein considers in the *Brown Book* is a person who uses the expressions related to the language game of time-telling differently. In such an instance, Wittgenstein suggests that instead of claiming outright he contradicts us, we should see how he uses these expressions and, most importantly, ask him about the different uses of time-telling language games. Imagine in such an example, we figure out a further use of the word that is used. Wittgenstein emphasizes the legitimacy of both uses and states that “we have now two uses of these terms, and no reason to say that one of them is less real and pure than the other.” (p. 106). This point is like the point Wittgenstein made in *Lectures on Religious Belief* which I examined earlier in this section. There, Wittgenstein argued that he is not contradicting the religious believer when she speaks of the afterlife. The terms the religious believer employs are different and constitute a different game and this is how we can understand the claim that the believer and non-believer are not contradicting one another. Words and expressions we use are already embedded in a rule-governed language game. Therefore, if someone uses the word ‘God’ or utters a phrase we consider religious, we need to make sure to assess the word or phrase based on the rules governing it and not impose rules of other language games into it. A word like ‘God’ can mean many things in different language games and contexts. To think that the word ‘God’ always means the same thing is a mistake which Wittgenstein describes as imagining an aura for words that they carry with themselves in all contexts and uses (PI, § 117). Therefore, in a scientific context the word God would mean something different from a religious context. In various branches of science, God would also mean something different as well. For example, in physics God may be taken to be the first cause, or on a pantheistic interpretation, the whole nature may be taken to be God. In psychology God may be an internalized father figure and in sociology, God may be a figure which a certain class of society has created. God in religion is of a different type. Different conceptions of God in religions need to be assessed based on the rules of the language game.

The two points mentioned in the *Brown book* –namely the completeness of each language game and the non-supremacy of one language game over another– are among the controversial features of the concept ‘language game’, which are further elaborated by Wittgenstein in the *Philosophical Investigations* (Henceforth PI). In PI, Wittgenstein emphasizes a particular

conception of language which the term ‘Language game’ is supposed to serve, “the term “language-game” is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity or a form of life”. (PI, § 23). It is clear from this quotation that for Wittgenstein, participating in a language game, whether scientific or religious, is itself embedded in a broader context. This broader context “covers much of what we might ordinarily consider their surroundings: broader patterns of action, the equipment used (such as color samples and blocks), and even the sites where the activities in question take place.” (Stern, 2004, p. 89) or as Andrew Lugg (2002) puts it “language-use is not something separate from the rest of what we do. When we use words, we operate with them, and it makes sense to regard the ‘the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven’, as a language-game”. (p. 23). In other words, if we are to make sense of the use of the words involved in a certain language game, we need to take into consideration the whole life of a community. Sticking to some words and trying to assess a language game solely based on that would not lead to comprehending the uses of a language game. Note that this does not mean we must be a part of a form of life to understand it. Rather we need to consider that form of life to understand it. Otherwise, there is a hermeneutical threat of imposing irrelevant rules of interpretation on the word or concept involved. Wittgenstein identifies a lack of attention to the use of words as the main mistake of contemporary philosophers³². Emphasis on the ‘use’ of the words has led some to think that Wittgenstein is proposing a theory of meaning. However, he “does not identify the meaning of a word with its use. The reverse, he explicitly states that the meaning of a word is its use ‘for a large class of cases – though not for all’ and immediately notes an exception” (Lugg, 2002, p. 83). Wittgenstein adds that a word’s meaning is sometimes determined by pointing to an object. Therefore, it would be a misconception to think that the meaning of all words, including religious and scientific ones, can be determined solely by their use. This means that we must investigate how best to understand various religious expressions³³.

32 “If I had to say what is the main mistake made by philosophers of the present generation, including Moore, I would say that it is that when language is looked at, what is looked at it is a form of words and not the use made of the form of the words” (Wittgenstein, 2007, p.2)

33 Likewise, Wittgenstein is critical of atomism and holism as theories that determine the meaning of sentences. Instead, we need to pay attention to the language games being played. Sometimes we have to pay attention to the components of sentences and need to analyze them and sometimes we need to refrain from them.

Can we speak of a common element to all language games? Something which we can call the essence of language? For Wittgenstein, different language games “have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all, —but that they are related in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all ‘language’”. (PI, § 65). This allows us to examine the language games of religion without trying to impose one feature of the scientific language game on the religious language game or vice-versa. Therefore, it would be a mistake to imagine that some feature of the scientific language game is an essential feature of all language games and the ones that lack that feature are not ‘correct’ language games. Instead, we need to investigate different uses of words, something which Wittgenstein called ‘describing the grammar’ or ‘describing the language game’. What about the mere existence of language games? Wittgenstein held that the existence of language games cannot be explained. This is because words such as ‘justification’, ‘explanation’ and ‘reason’ are themselves parts of different language games, “there is no explanation that rises above our language games, and explains them. This would be a super-concept of explanation—which means that it is an ill-conceived fantasy”. (Malcolm, 2002, p. 78)

2.6. Normativity of Language-games

Emphasis on the ‘use’ of words and the impossibility of super-concepts may be understood as the view that Wittgenstein is offering a descriptive sociology of language instead of philosophy. However, Wittgenstein’s account is normative through and through; from *Tractatus*, where he held the view that religious propositions should not be uttered, to *Lectures* where he argues that religious language should differ from scientific and ‘normal’ language, to *Remarks* where he argues against basing rituals on scientific theories. Likewise, language games also have a normative aspect. I will examine and criticize a view that holds language games to be bereft of any normativity; John Cook’s criticism of the concept of language games.

John Cook (1998) finds Wittgenstein’s conception of language behavioristic and criticizes it. Cook argues that to argue against Frege, Wittgenstein invented language games and attributed them to some tribes to indicate that even though they engage in certain activities differently and not according to our logic, we cannot label them as mad. Contrary to Frege, who held a universal conception of logic within the human mind, Wittgen-

stein thought when faced with such instances, we should announce them as having a different type of logic. One example Wittgenstein provides consists of people who sell wood without measuring the height and only width and breadth. Cook takes issue with all such examples in that in all of them, an activity that we can recognize (such as measuring or trading) is involved, and this means we should be able to judge our way of doing things and their way of doing things. Nevertheless, we are told that there is no mistake involved and only a different way of doing things. The erroneous conception Wittgenstein is using, according to Cook, is taking language-game to be behavior, “On the one hand, he presents his characters as saying things, making calculations, making purchases, and so on, and in this respect, he has made them out to be like us in that they are not zombie-like creatures, while on the other hand, he has presented them as behaving in a senseless fashion so that they are made out to resemble nothing so much as performing animals”. (Cook, 1998, p. 441). It is true that based on a purely behavioristic account of language, there is no significant difference between humans and other animals in that both must be trained to engage in different ways of behaving. Given that Wittgenstein has proposed ‘absurd’ scenarios to show that people can act differently if trained differently, Cook argues when confronted with those people, “we have to think of them as being rather like circus animals, animals that have been trained, for example, to mimic people. But in that case, we cannot allow that they actually say things, that they make calculations, purchases, and so on” (Cook, 1998, p. 440).

However, this behaviorist reading of the language in Wittgenstein’s writings is problematic. Contrary to what Cook argues, Wittgenstein held a normative conception of language. The word ‘game’ in the phrase ‘language game’ signifies three points, “first, that these activities are guided and constrained by the rules we enunciate when we explain the meanings of words; second, that they are extremely varied and are not usefully seen as elaborations of a single theme, such as communicating information or producing beliefs; and third, that they take place and have significance only in the context of human forms of life and culture”. (Hyman, 2001, p. 4).

In PI § 242, Wittgenstein argues that for the communication of language to work, we need to agree on definitions and judgments. In other words, we should already agree on the correct and incorrect use of the words to be able to communicate in the language. Therefore, there is a normative conception of language in play and not merely a behavioral one in which the ‘use’ of the words is to be understood. As Peter Hacker (2003) puts it, for

Wittgenstein language “stripped of normativity is no more language than chess stripped of its rules is a game.” (p. 16). This means that the use of the words for Wittgenstein is always assessed and judged based on some rules; therefore, correct and incorrect use of the words is in play.

The examples Wittgenstein provides show that what we do can be done otherwise. The strange scenarios that Wittgenstein depicts indicate that even though they appear so bizarre and different nevertheless they are like what we do. After all, labeling two different activities with the same name – for example, calculating – would be futile if they had no great deal in common. A further implication is that we can recognize those activities as calculating and measuring etc. and therefore we can understand them. This is in fact what Wittgenstein has done. Wittgenstein imagines scenarios in which people do things very differently from us and then tells us that if we look closely and attentively, we can recognize those activities. If I recognize an activity as calculating, then I have a broad basis for understanding that activity. This is because activities are rule-governed and identifying an activity as calculating means I have identified the general rules governing that activity.

We should refrain from taking one aspect of an activity as an essential property of that activity or its essence. Each activity can be carried out in many ways. Identifying one feature of an activity done in a specific way as the essence of that activity would be an ad hoc way of eliminating other ways of carrying out that activity. If we assume that an essential aspect of measuring is to gain economic profit, then any act of measuring that does not guarantee economic profit would not count as measuring. However, there is no reason to assume that economic profit is an essential feature of measuring. In Wittgenstein’s scenario, the tribesmen may go bankrupt, and we can criticize that type of measuring based on economic profiting. The tribesmen should also take our criticism seriously if they are trying to gain economic profit by selling wood. However, if that is not their aim, they can safely ignore our economic warnings. At any rate, what they do does count as measuring even if it lacks sophistication for certain goals (such as making a profit).

It is arguable whether the specific scenarios that Wittgenstein offers are the best possible scenarios, but the objective of these examples should not be confused with the success of the specific scenarios. There can be various ways of measuring and calculating. In so far as those activities are recognized as measuring and calculating – despite their differences – we should not dismiss them as irrational. This point indicates that we

ought not to mistake a specific form of activity (e.g., calculation) with the norms that differentiate various forms of that activity (various forms of calculation) from other activities. Wittgenstein offers all sorts of scenarios to indicate that a variety of rule-governed activities are not irrational, but we would be led to believe so if we confuse the specific form of activity with the normative aspect of that activity, which are the rules that govern it. Therefore, when engaged in language games, we need to understand the normative aspect of the religious or scientific language game would allow for various activities that could be called religion or science. In addition to this point, each language game should be assessed, criticized, and analyzed based on the normativity that governs that very language game. In other words, the rules of that specific language game.

If the use of the words is of importance, and the uses of words are not fixed, then it is not illegitimate to suggest new uses of the words. If the legitimate uses of words are limited and already determined, a purely descriptive account of the language games would make sense. But this is not the case. We introduce new uses of the words and old uses become obsolete all the time and some uses persist through time.

As Hacker (2003, p. 25) observes, when it comes to introducing new 'uses' for words and expressions, Wittgenstein holds that certain uses cannot change or be revised; while some of these non-revisable propositions for Wittgenstein are logical, others are empirical. Since such a change or revision would undermine our entire capacity for reasoning (for example, revision of the law of non-contradiction or tautology) or they would undermine our web of beliefs (for example, denying that the earth has existed for a very long time). Wittgenstein's normative conception of language does not allow for just any use to be introduced into the language. Certain concepts and propositions need to be in place for the whole language to remain meaningful and functioning. Based on this understanding, there are fixed conceptual propositions that assess empirical propositions possible, and such propositions would render some statements meaningless and some meaningful. Therefore, shared among all language games are several propositions that provide the condition for meaningfulness and assessment of truth and falsehood of the propositions within the language games.

A philosopher can criticize the use of the word based on certain logical or conceptual considerations. Wittgenstein himself engages in them to a great extent. For example, Wittgenstein criticizes Father O'Hara and Frazer for arguing that grounds for religious belief and rituals, respectively are based on some theory. Father O'Hara defends religious belief and its ratio-

nality by basing it on scientific theories. Frazer criticizes rituals for being based on false theories. Wittgenstein criticizes these two figures based on conceptual considerations which engage with the language games involving religious beliefs or rituals. Such language games, conceptually speaking, are not based on theory or hypothesis. The normative conception of language games allows Wittgenstein to argue against confusing religion with scientific language games. Had Wittgenstein proposed a behavioristic account of language games or a sociology of word use, such a normative critique would have not been possible.

Examining words like ‘knowledge’ and ‘being’, Wittgenstein speaks of “home” for words and reminds us that when we are confronted by philosophical concepts, we should always ask ourselves “Is the word used in this way in the language in which it is at home?” (PI, § 116). After stating this point, he mentions that words are brought back from their metaphysical use to their everyday use. Therefore, we could say that for Wittgenstein, everyday use of the words has primacy over metaphysical use. This is like the critical remarks he made when dealing with Frazer, stating that we are not primarily hypothesis-making creatures as advocates of scientism want us to believe. The question here is twofold. First, we need to examine whether it is meaningful to speak of the primacy of one language game over other language games. If such a possibility exists, we need to investigate which language game has primacy over other language games. To examine the first question, we need to ask whether speaking of the primacy of one language game is based on the claim that one can step outside all language games and determine which one has primacy. This is especially important since Wittgenstein argues that any claim to knowledge of the nature of the world or language is not a mistake but a superstition. (PI, § 110). by emphasizing such attempts as ‘superstition’ instead of a mistake, Wittgenstein is hinting at the futility of such attempts³⁴. Had he labeled such attempts as ‘mistakes’, it would have implied that the opposite is correct. (Lugg, 2002 p. 192). If we cannot grasp the nature of the world and language and the like, it is because we do not have access to a point outside these phenomena that would

34 Labeling certain statements as superstition instead of attributing truth or falsehood to them can be understood as lacking proper use in a language game, “time and again Wittgenstein appeals explicitly or implicitly to the principle that if there is no practical language-game use for the description of something as not-F or un-F, then, philosophically grammatically speaking, there can equally be no practical language-game authorization for trying to describe the thing as F, and conversely” (Jacquette 2010, p. 65).

allow such knowledge. If this is the case, then how can Wittgenstein claim that primacy is with everyday use of the words and prioritize us as belonging to the world over human beings as hypothesis-offering scientists? Why does he not argue that these are two different types of perceiving the world and none is superior to the other?

There is extensive debate over the supremacy of certain language games and the uses of the words over others. The debates usually concern the supremacy of scientific language over other uses of words and language-games³⁵. When discussing intentions and other psychological states, some argue that terms we use in our language – folk psychology – are a real description of our mental states. Some think these terms and expressions are merely useful. Some think that they are outright false, and a scientific description needs to replace it. Wittgenstein's emphasis on different uses and the legitimacy of all uses need not necessarily be interpreted as undermining the scientific language game. Each use and each language game serve a purpose and are therefore 'useful'. Therefore, we should not claim language games to be of equal validity. The validity of the scientific language game is determined by the purposes that we have. The purposes also determine religious language game's validity. Since they serve different purposes, speaking of their equal validity can be misleading. Instead, we should say each language game is valid as it serves the purpose it intended to serve.

Some features of the idea of a language game have been controversial when applied to religion. One of the controversies surrounds the claim that one needs to be religious to be able to understand the language game of religion. Another controversial claim is related to the autonomy of the religious language game and the third one is the idea of incommensurability of the religious and the scientific language games. These controversial claims are all interwoven and have been usually presented as a charge against Wittgensteinian – and not necessarily Wittgenstein himself – philosophers. The charge is 'fideism', which I will deal with along with 'disagreements' in the following chapters.

35 There is also another concern which is mainly political in which the morality of a language game and use of words over other language games and use of words are considered. Some words and language games contain discrimination and reinforce it. Moral considerations over which uses are morally permissible, is a different concern from the one we are discussing here.

2.7. The Grammar of Religious Language

Giving up on his early phase conception of language, in which Wittgenstein had restricted language use to describing scientific facts, he realized that language is like a city. Each part of this city has a distinct character. Nevertheless, all those districts are part of the city³⁶. Instead of offering an essence for language at the price of mutilating it, Wittgenstein offered the conception of family resemblance. Different parts of language resemble each other as family members do. Each part of language is governed by grammar. Religious language is also one part of language, and Wittgenstein takes some central religious beliefs to play the role of grammar in the religious language game.

The word Grammar for Wittgenstein has a particular meaning. Some of the Wittgensteinian scholars have treated this word in Wittgenstein's writings without paying any attention to previous similar uses of the term in other philosophers' works. Considering previous uses of 'grammar' like the ones Wittgenstein intends would help us gain a more thorough understanding of 'grammar' as Wittgenstein uses it. In my investigations, I have found that Nietzsche has also used this term in his philosophy, and there are striking similarities between how he and Wittgenstein use these terms. Therefore, I briefly consider what Nietzsche meant by grammar.³⁷ This I do only to create a basis for understanding Wittgenstein's use of grammar. This is not meant to be a comparative piece but rather only a basis for a better understanding of Wittgenstein's peculiar use of the word grammar.

36 "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 all this surrounded by a multitude of new suburbs with straight and regular streets and uniform houses." (PI § 18)

37 Wittgenstein himself has worded one important difference between them. Unlike Nietzsche, Wittgenstein did not conceive a grand responsibility possible for philosophy, "There are problems I never tackle, which do not lie in my path or belong to my world. Problems of the intellectual world of the West which Beethoven (& perhaps Goethe to a certain extent) tackled & wrestled with but which no philosopher has ever confronted (perhaps Nietzsche passed close to them). [...] In this world (mine) there is no tragedy & with that all the endlessness that gives rise to tragedy (as its result) is lacking/It is as though everything were soluble in the ether; there are no harnesses/This means that hardness & conflict do not become something splendid, but a defect/Conflict is dissipated in much the same way as is the tension of a spring in a mechanism that you melt (or dissolve in nitric acid). In this solution tensions no longer exist." (CV, II–12)

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche argues, “In fact, where there is the affinity of language, owing to the common philosophy of grammar—I mean owing to the unconscious domination and guidance of similar grammatical functions—it cannot but be that everything is prepared at the outset for a similar development and succession of philosophical systems, just as the way seems barred against certain other possibilities of world-interpretation.” (1989, § 20) João Constâncio commenting on these passages § 17 and § 54 from *Beyond Good and Evil*, states, “The fundamental concepts of philosophy – the concepts the philosophical tradition calls “categories” (concepts such as “cause”, “effect”, “substance”, “accident”, “identity”, “equal”, and so on) –, these concepts are the very structure of language, the “grammar” that is common to all languages. And it is from them, Nietzsche thinks, that the “superstition of the subject and of the I” arises”. (2011, p. 83) Constâncio mentions further passages from *Twilight of the Idols* in which Nietzsche believes that grammatical categories such as identity, unity and cause deceive us into thinking that they are metaphysical truths or properties of reality as it is, “Language makes us think of reality in the terms of its (that is, language’s) internal logic – in the terms of grammar. There is a Sprach-Metaphysik, a “metaphysics of language” (TI Reason 5): language generates a net of categories which anticipates all possible experience of reality, and which functions as if it were the structure of reality itself, not merely of our language and our phenomenal world” (ibid, p. 85). In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche argues that to get rid of ‘God’ we need to get rid of the grammar of our language, “I am afraid that we have not got rid of God because we still have faith in grammar.” (1964, § 5) Interestingly, Nietzsche argues that the grammar that we use is dependent on the form of life we adopt, “The crucial point for Nietzsche, however, is that these judgments are the judgments of a given form of life – judgments that develop and are preserved in a given form of life (i.e., that are selected in its evolution) only insofar as they help preserve this form of life” (Constâncio, 2011, p. 92). Even if concepts such as cause, unity, and permanence are necessary for our language and communication, it is not because they are some transcendental conditions of thought. Still, rather Nietzsche argues they are based in our instincts. For Nietzsche, we use language to create categories or logical fiction as he sometimes calls them to talk about ourselves (for example, ‘I’) or to speak about the world (for example, cause), and these categories we use in our language are according to Nietzsche “always already signs (i.e., creative abbreviations) of previous unconscious perspectives and interpretations carried out by our drives and affects.” (Ibid, p. III).

Wittgenstein believes that words like 'God' and 'object' are not metaphysical entities but words that determine the grammar of various language games. His insistence that the religious believer is not mistaken unless she makes a metaphysical statement indicates that in so far as the believer is using the word God as a grammar of the religious language there is no confusion and no mistakes made.

In a lecture delivered in Cambridge and written down by G. E. Moore, Wittgenstein refers to the various ways in which we can speak of God and how the grammar determines which sense of God is meant, "About "God" his main point seemed to be that this word is used in many grammatically different senses. He said, for instance, that many controversies about God could be settled by saying " I'm not using the word in such a sense that you can say . . .", and that different religions "treat things as making sense which others treat as -nonsense, and don't merely deny some proposition which another religion affirms"; and he illustrated this by saying that if people use "god" to mean something like a human being, then "God has four arms" and "God has two arms " will both have sense, but that others so use "God" that "God has arms" is nonsense-would say "God can't have arms". Similarly, he said of the expression "the soul", that sometimes people so use that expression that "the soul is a gaseous human being" has sense, but sometimes so that it has not. To explain what he meant by "grammatically" different senses, he said, "we wanted terms which are not comparable", as e.g., "solid" and "gaseous" are comparable, but which differ as, e.g. "chair" differs from "permission to sit on a chair", or "railway" from "railway accident"". (Moore, 1955, pp. 16 – 17) In addition to his insistence on the distinctness of grammar from metaphysical claims, Wittgenstein, like Nietzsche, mentions the importance of "forms of life" and "instincts" in the formation of grammar.

One important question would be, how did concepts like God and soul and object come into existence? Here as elsewhere, we need to be careful not to generalize one way of concept formation and attribute it to all its instances. Some of such concepts have their bases in our instincts. Given that there are many different concepts of God, each of them may have come into practice as a result of a different procedure. Andrejč identifies certain kinds of experiences that people have as one characteristic of the existentialist conception of religion in Wittgenstein's writings. The experiences with an existential dimension are not to be confused with experiences that affirm or negate a certain proposition. As Wittgenstein puts it,

“Life can educate you to ‘believe in God’. And experiences too are what do this but not visions, or other sense experiences, which show us the ‘existence of this being’, but e.g., sufferings of various sorts. And they do not show us, God, as a sense experience does an object, nor do they give rise to conjectures about him. Experiences, thoughts, —life can force this concept on us. So perhaps it is like the concept ‘object’”. (CV 97).

Therefore, one cannot infer the existence of God from such experiences, nor can one draw any metaphysical conclusions. These experiences provide the possibility of perceiving the world in a new light. Just as the concept of ‘object’ allows us to speak in a certain way and conduct certain practices and so forth, certain experiences can provide us with the concept of God which would allow an existential conception of religion³⁸. One should be careful not to confuse the introduction of such a concept with a metaphysical claim about the existence of a certain Deity.

By adopting the term “grammar” Wittgenstein is opposing the idea that a philosophical conception which is a theoretical conception of God is central to religious belief. This metaphysical conception is aiming at describing reality or the ultimate reality. Wittgenstein’s objection to metaphysical knowledge needs elaboration. The conception of metaphysics which he has in mind requires “the assumed human ability to climb ladders from the human condition to metaphysical knowledge”. (Labron, 2009, p. 8). Wittgenstein is against the idea that there are such things as ‘Über-begriffen’ or super-concepts and invites us to admit the humility of the human condition and the human ways of knowing, “if the words ‘language’, ‘experience’, ‘world’ have a use, it must be as humble one as that of the words ‘table’, ‘lamp’, ‘door’”. (PI § 97). Therefore, for Wittgenstein concepts like God, Object, causality, and endurance are not super-concepts describing reality, rather they are allowing us to create a framework or a language game within which we can pursue different things. With the aid of the concept of God, we create the possibility to act in a certain way and live a certain way. With the aid of the concept of ‘causality’ or ‘object’ we can interpret the world and what goes on around us efficiently. However, we should not be confused that with such concepts we are describing reality as it is, rather we

38 Andrejč remarks, “Just like the formal concept ‘object’ enables much of the talk about empirical reality, whereas trying to ‘prove that objects exist’ does not make sense, so too, the concept ‘God’ enables us to speak and relate to reality in a particular (say, Christian) way, whereas trying to prove that ‘God exists’ does not make sense.” (Andrejč, 2016, p. 38)

are describing what we experience based on certain concepts we have developed for this purpose³⁹.

In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein tells us that theology is the grammar of the religious language game, “Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is (Theology as grammar).” (§ 373). This means that what is claimed about God in religious discourse is not a set of factual claims attempting to describe a metaphysical entity. Rather “the standard assertions of the theologian - ‘God exists,’ ‘God is omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal,’ ‘God is love’ - are to be understood...as grammatical remarks expressing rules for the use of theological terms in everyday religious discourse. These rules constitute or create the language of religious belief. One is simply not talking of God if there is any question about his existence, if, that is to say, it makes sense to wonder whether he exists... ‘God is omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal’ is, therefore, a conceptual claim, or better, a rule defining the concept of God... Things would go wrong if the theologian thought he was making true factual claims about God. Doing so would turn him into a metaphysician who had confused grammatical and factual investigations. And there would be nothing wrong with atheology if the atheologian who says ‘God does not exist’ were simply ruling out as meaningless all talk of God. But the atheologian would be making a confused metaphysical claim if he thought he was giving us a truth about the world: in fact, there is no God.” (Arrington, 2002, p. 172) Therefore, for Wittgenstein, theology is not a theoretical branch of knowledge that attempts to describe the ultimate reality. Rather, they allow a certain form of life to be lived, a form of life with a set of rules which informs its adherents what to do and what not to do. These rules, regulate the lives of religious believers. Regulative rules and concepts cannot be right or wrong in the sense that they describe or fail to describe reality. These rules can be assessed on other basis, for example, whether they are useful for us, or whether they make our lives meaningful. I will turn to the idea of language games and examine their nuances in more detail in the next chapters.

39 Given that such concepts make our understanding and acting in certain ways possible if they are arbitrary, it seems like a very strong relativism. Indeed, these concepts are not a priori or transcendental conditions of understanding the world. However, they are rooted in our instincts and our characteristics as human beings. Therefore, for Wittgenstein, there is a fixed point based on which such concepts are developed, and further modifications on such concepts cannot neglect this fixed point.

2.8. Instincts as the Basis of Action

Wittgenstein identifies instincts as the basis of religious belief. If this is the case, then those who want to base religious belief on rational grounds and those who want to say that religious beliefs are false because they stand on mistaken rational grounds are confused about religion. However, Wittgenstein does not only consider religious belief to be instinctual but considers a wide range of what we human beings do as instinctual. In other words, he argues against the contention that many of the things we do are done as a result of or based on a certain hypothesis or rational belief. Some of the cases that Wittgenstein has considered in his work include pain behavior, induction, cause and effect, rule-following, and color naming⁴⁰. This is by no means an entirely new idea. Basing our action in instincts rather than ratiocination was proposed by David Hume and the influence of Hume on Wittgenstein has been noticed and examined. Cook (1994) examines Wittgenstein's metaphysical views in his early and later philosophy and detects a Humean view of the world in his works. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein advances the Humean idea that there is no necessity to what we take to be causal relations in the physical realm and the only necessity that exists are logical necessities⁴¹. In other words, in the physical realm, anything may happen⁴². Similar to Hume, Wittgenstein held that we should not confuse induction based on past events with logical necessities or a priori truths.⁴³ Wittgenstein uses the famous example provided by Hume about the sun rising as well, "It is a hypothesis that the sun will rise tomorrow: and this means that we do not know whether it will rise" (TLP, 6.36311). Cook (1994) points to further remarks in the *Tractatus* that provide evidence for the Humean view of Wittgenstein:

"There is no possible way of making an inference from the existence of one situation [such as a man falling to the pavement from a great height]

40 Strandberg (2016) offers an examination of all these instances. Strandberg, H. (2016). *The Possibility of Discussion: Relativism, Truth, and Criticism of Religious Beliefs*. Routledge.

41 "There is no compulsion making one thing happen because another has happened. The only necessity that exists is logical necessity" (TLP, 6.37)

42 "Outside logic everything is accidental" (TLP, 6.3)

43 "The so-called law of induction [i.e., that past regularities will continue into the future] cannot possibly be a law of logic, since it is obviously a proposition with sense [and so could prove to be false]. Nor, therefore, can it be an a priori law" (TLP, 6.31).

to the existence of another, entirely different situation [such as his being injured or killed]” (TLP, 5.135).

“There is no causal nexus to justify such an inference” (TLP, 5.136).

“We cannot infer the events of the future from those of the present” (TLP, 5.1361).

Cook points to sections in Wittgenstein’s later work to indicate that the Humean view had remained the same. For example, he mentions these passages from *Philosophical Investigations*, “The character of the belief in the uniformity of nature can perhaps be seen most clearly in the case in which we fear what we expect. Nothing could induce me to put my hand into a flame - although after all, it is only in the past that I have burnt myself (PI, § 472). The belief that fire will burn me is of the same kind as the fear that it will burn me” (PI, § 473). The Humean view, which Wittgenstein adopts, expands, and elaborates is a world in which no regularities or laws of nature are fixed as such and whatever we know about the world could turn out to be false. The ideas that we develop about the world and how they work are based on our past experiences or simply an instinctual response that we have towards the world, “The Humean-Wittgensteinian world is, one might say, a fractured world, a world in which events are bereft of any causal connections with one another. It is a world in which whatever happens ‘just happens’. It is also a world in which planning and taking precautions provide no assurance of a safe or satisfactory outcome.” (Cook, 1994, p. 179) Whereas before Hume, other philosophers had questioned specific descriptions of causal intelligibility, (Malebranche on the Cartesian link between mind and body and Locke on the causal connection between primary and secondary qualities), Hume questioned the intelligibility of causality independent of experience altogether. Our understanding of causality for Hume is instinctual and, like other animals⁴⁴. Likewise, Wittgenstein questions the intelligibility of the concept of ‘God’ or ‘object’ apart from their role in our practices. Wittgenstein contends that these practices are rooted in our instincts as well.

Therefore, the instinctive conception of religion has its roots in a broader theme in Wittgenstein’s philosophy. In addition to action and religious belief, the entire language is considered by Wittgenstein to be based on instincts. It is true that in our time, religious beliefs and practices are

44 See chapter 5 “Two Definitions of ‘Cause’” in Garrett, D. (2002). *Cognition and Commitment in Hume’s Philosophy*. Oxford University Press.

interwoven with philosophical, theological, and historical arguments. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein held the view that the origin of religious belief was not any intellectual or hypothetical thesis but instincts.

In several of his writings, Wittgenstein has written based on Language games or rather what the foundations of language games are. He contends that Language games are not based on ratiocination, reasoning, and rationality of any sort but rather the basis of language games are instincts and what he calls 'primitive behavior', "I want to say that scruples in thinking begin with (have their roots in) instinct. Or again: a language game does not have its origin in consideration. Consideration is part of a language game. And that is why the concept [of consideration] is in its element within the language game." (Z, § 391), "But what is the word 'primitive' meant to say here? Presumably, that this sort of behavior is pre-linguistic: that a language game is based on it." (Z, § 541) "Our language game is an extension of primitive behavior." (ibid § 545) and "The origin and primitive form of the language game is a reaction; only from this can more complicated forms develop. Language—I want to say—is a refinement, 'in the beginning, was the deed.'" (CV, p. 31), "I want to regard man here as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct but not ratiocination. As a creature in a primitive state. Any logic good enough for a primitive means of communication needs no apology from us. Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination." (OC, § 475), "Instinct comes first, reasoning second. Not until there is a language game are there reasons." (RPP, II, § 689).

These remarks can have critical implications and have been the subject of intense debate, especially regarding religious belief. If all language games are based on instincts, then all of them are grounded in instincts, and in that respect, none is superior. In addition to this, this means we cannot address the instinctual foundations of our language games with the aid of rationality. Therefore, no language game is superior to any other language game concerning rationality.

To sum up, in his considerations on the religious *Weltbild*, Wittgenstein has been mainly concerned with the religious language. His conception of language in general has gone through some changes despite all changes he has not been dismissive of religion. Rather, he has emphasized the 'difference' between religious and scientific discourse. Early in his career, he, too thought religious discourse was ineffable. Later, he thought it was respectful nonsense and then developed the idea that religious utterances are meaningful and effable on one condition: that they are not metaphysi-

cal claims, this is Wittgenstein's view on the entirety of language and is not only restricted to religion. Given our human condition and our epistemological status, Wittgenstein argues against the impossibility of metaphysical language. Our instincts form our languages and at the root of everything human is instinct. Therefore, instead of looking for transcendental or metaphysical arguments, we should divert our attention to human beings and how they act and talk.

Such claims have brought about changes against Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinian philosophers of religion. Fideism and relativism are among the charges I will consider in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Fideism, Relativism, and Realism

In this chapter, I will deal with the charges and critical points which were elaborated on in the previous chapter. I will first deal with fideism and then move on to examine the relativism charge. This will also engage us with the realism/anti-realism debate in religion. Before proceeding with these issues, I will deal more thoroughly with Wittgenstein's philosophy. This would allow us to assess the charges leveled against Wittgenstein more thoroughly. To complete our investigation, we need to examine Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy. It is his philosophical view that provides the platform for conceptualizing "language games" and the assessment of this philosophy indicates the legitimacy of this conceptualization. Therefore, I will examine his philosophical view in some detail. However, given that Wittgenstein's later philosophy covers a broad range of topics, I will limit the investigation only to the topics relevant to this research. This consideration aims to see whether the philosophical view which grounds the concept of language games is plausible, to what extent it can be defended, and how it allows us to understand charges such as fideism and relativism.

3.1. Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy

There is a popular view that claims Wittgenstein was anti-philosophical or else his method of doing philosophy was not shared by other philosophers⁴⁵. Nevertheless, the differences between Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy and others are only possible because of a shared basis. Discussing Wittgenstein's method of doing philosophy, Rush Rhees (2003) reminds us that Wittgenstein perceived himself as engaging with questions that Plato was engaged with. Plato was concerned with the distinction between philosophy and sophistry, or dialectic and deceitful language. Wittgenstein was also concerned with the characteristics that constitute meaningful language or what it means to say something in contrast to making noise. However, there is a big difference between how Wittgenstein tackles this issue and some other major philosophical figures. In

45 A recent defense of such a reading of Wittgenstein can be found in Horwich (2012).

his *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein was tackling philosophical questions like most other philosophers. Namely, he sought essences and unified conceptions lurking behind the words awaiting exploration. In his later philosophy, Wittgenstein realized that there is no single thing that makes language meaningful. In other words, instead of using a single form of a proposition as an essentialist response to the question involved, he proposed the idea of a language game that is not a unified phenomenon. Given that language-game does not have an essence and it does not have a unified form either, Rhees argues that therefore it cannot be a closed system either and it is not possible to limit beforehand what counts as a language game. Therefore, Wittgenstein shows interest in exploring different types of language games⁴⁶.

Wittgenstein's opposition to 'essence' and metaphysics and the traditional way of doing philosophy – not just any philosophy – and instead clarifying grammar and getting rid of conceptual confusion has made him an exception in the analytic tradition. Some (e.g., Arif Ahmed, 2010) even go as far as to say that the difference between the two ways of doing philosophy, namely the method favored by Wittgenstein and the method dominant among other analytic philosophers, is so grave that no comparison or connection can be made between the two. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, it should be noted that despite the differences, there is a great deal of similarity between Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy and the traditional conception. Examining each aspect of the traditional philosophy that Wittgenstein is critical of, Stephan Mulhall (2004) argues that each of those aspects is also present in Wittgenstein's philosophy yet perceived in a new light. Wittgenstein has argued against metaphysics because metaphysicians seek some hidden essence behind a myriad of phenomena. Mulhall quotes the passage from *PI* to indicate that Wittgenstein also believes that the most important aspect of things we look for in philosophy is hidden⁴⁷. Likewise, Wittgenstein is critical of the notion of 'depth' in traditional philosophy,

46 "In the remarks in *On Certainty* he uses 'logic' as equivalent to philosophy. He makes such statements as that the description of a language game belongs to logic... in 'A Defense of Common Sense', Moore enumerates several propositions which he says that he knows, with certainty, to be true. Wittgenstein gives no such list of things that can be known. What interests him is the peculiar role these propositions play. He is investigating what we do with these propositions". (Rhees, 2003, p. 10)

47 The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something – because it is always before one's eyes.) The real foundations of his enquiry do not strike a man at all.

yet he assumes 'depth'⁴⁸. Mulhall enumerates further similarities between Wittgenstein's terminology and the traditional philosophy while admitting the different approaches and states:

"In a sense, then, nothing – no specifiable thing – is different after the Wittgensteinian event in philosophy; and yet everything is different. Every word the tradition says about itself chagrins him, precisely because they are the right words used in the wrong spirit – or more precisely, in a spirit which voids them of sense, sublimates them. In his philosophical revolution, every such term remains but is meant (put to work) differently, or rather properly put to work for the first time – recovered from emptiness by being given a genuine, everyday use. Each word is not, then, to be rejected but rather projected differently, turned aside from metaphysical subliming, returned to the everyday sublimity of its use in characterizing a genuine possibility for philosophy and, thus, a way of making our urge to understand the essence of things humanly intelligible (a drive we can satisfy)". (Mulhall, 2004, p. 78).

It should also be noted that gaining clarity and eradicating conceptual confusion for the later Wittgenstein is an ongoing process. In different contexts, this ideal can be achieved through different means. Unlike the *Tractatus* in which Wittgenstein thought there is a possibility to achieve a status where clarity of concepts and eradication of confusion have been achieved once and for all. Although an ideal conception of language may promise such a status, it delivers an empty promise. Different situations in our life constitute different contexts and in each of these cases, requirements for clarity differ and need to be met in specific ways.

Although this broad affinity does exist between Wittgenstein's later conception of philosophy and other Analytic philosophers, there are salient differences worthy of our attention. Unlike many of his 20th-century fellow philosophers, Wittgenstein was vehemently critical of any attempt to identify philosophy with science. He argued that in so far as philosophy aims at ascertaining a hidden essence behind phenomena, it is conducted like

Unless *that* fact has at some time struck him. – And this means we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and powerful. (PI 129).

- 48 The problems arising through a misinterpretation of our forms of language have the character of *depth*. They are deep disquietudes; their roots are as deep in us as the forms of our language and their significance is as great as the importance of our language. – Let us ask ourselves: why do we feel a grammatical joke to be *deep*? (And that is the depth of philosophy). (PI 111).

science⁴⁹. There are many ways in which language functions, and philosophers are tempted to discover a presupposed hidden essence behind all of them. This is a metaphysical confusion, according to Wittgenstein, which needs ‘therapeutic philosophy’. Instead of looking for an essence behind a variety of similar phenomena, one should look for various functions words and concepts have in language and the norms that govern those various uses⁵⁰.

There are nuances in Wittgenstein’s opposition to mainstream philosophy that need elaboration. Philosophers have attempted to describe an absolute, objective picture of reality. However, it seems that we cannot have access to such a conception of reality. If so, we must either embrace skepticism, given that such knowledge is not attainable, or we must deny the existence of the absolute objective realm altogether. This is the standard tripartite battle between realists, skeptics, and relativists in a nutshell. However, arguing against the existence of the absolute objective realm would somehow defeat the purpose. If the objective absolute conception of the world exists and we do not have access to it, how can we affirm or deny it? Either way – whether one affirms or denies this realm – one is faced with skepticism. Wittgenstein’s response to this problem is of a different kind. He argues that the language we use to describe such a conception of reality is meaningless. Wittgenstein argues that such cravings are proto-scientific, and philosophy should not concern itself with them. There is a fundamental debate about whether science can achieve the absolute objective picture

49 It should be noted that the 20th-century philosophers who were inclined to do philosophy with science in mind, were not essentialists. Bertrand Russell, members of The Viennese Circle and later Quine did not perceive science nor philosophy as aiming at discovering any hidden essence. The point is not to suggest any such view.

50 To have an eye on the relationship between such remarks and religion, one good example to keep in mind is the word ‘God’. In the religious context, the most commonplace view seems to be that the word ‘God’ represents a hidden essence. While some believe that that essence can never be comprehended others argue for various ways in which language and concepts can guide us in arriving at that concept. Wittgenstein however thinks that instead of looking for a spiritual or mental essence behind the word God and its different uses, one should restrict herself to analyzing and describing these various uses within the language game of religion, “In other words, philosophical problems have two roots: our tendency to idealize or sublime our ideals (as if essentially dissatisfied with their sheer ordinairiness, their everyday sublimity), and our inability to deny our satisfaction with the ordinary, our knowledge that every day is, in fact, perfectly in order. The first drives us to say that ‘this isn’t how it is!’; the second drives us to say, ‘Yet *this* is how it has to be!’ (PI 112).

of reality, which I will examine in the next chapter where I deal with the scientific worldview.

Wittgenstein's criticism of the above-mentioned metaphysical language leaves us with the question of how to perceive reality⁵¹. How we perceive language influences how we perceive reality. If we think that language is a set of signs that we use to signify objects in the world, we perceive reality as an ordered whole that awaits naming its objects. Wittgenstein criticizes this conception of language in the opening of philosophical investigations. He criticizes St. Augustine for making 'ostension' the hallmark of language and its relationship with reality. Wittgenstein instead emphasizes practice in his philosophy. By practice, he means how we do things. However, practice in his philosophy is a very broad concept and covers all human activities. Language use is also a practice and like any other practice, it is rule-governed. To speak a language or to carry out the practice of language we need to learn the rules. The rules determine the proper use of words and concepts. Ostension like any other part of our language, such as commanding, questioning, or exclaiming is a rule-governed practice. Therefore, naming objects, describing reality, discussing it, and admiring it are all rule-governed activities within our language. language as a rule-governed practice is key to our conception of reality. This means that our understanding of reality is rule-governed, and rules and concepts determine

51 As I have discussed before in the previous chapter, Wittgenstein's criticism of metaphysical language is not tantamount to the reduction of language and its rules to the sociology of language. Meaning as use is also not a theory of meaning, "Section 43a has been treated, again and again, as Wittgenstein's statement of his 'use theory of meaning' – notwithstanding the blatant fact that if it were such a statement, it would lack any recognizable point and purpose in its context:

For a *large* class of cases – though not for *all** – in which we employ the word 'meaning' it can be explained* thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language. Since the explanation of the word 'meaning' is restricted to 'the meaning of a word', the paragraph says that in cases which belong to the '*large* class' and where the word 'meaning' is used to refer to word meaning, the word 'meaning' (nothing else, and in particular, not word *meaning* – the reference is unambiguous in the original) can be explained in a certain way." (Eike von Savigny, 2004, p.54)

A further Quote from G.E. Moore also indicates this point:

"He seemed to imply that for a sign to have significance it is not sufficient that we should "commit ourselves" by its use, but that it is also necessary that the sign in question should belong to the same "system" with other signs. Perhaps, however, he only meant, not that for a sign to have some meaning, but that for some signs to have the significance which they actually have in a given language, it is necessary that they should belong to the same " system " with other signs". (Moore, 1955, p. 8)

our understanding of reality. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, it would not make sense to speak of a super language game in Wittgenstein's philosophy, which could describe absolute objective reality and trump all other language games. Proposing the idea of a super language game would be proposing an essence for language. We should abandon such a view through therapy. In effect, for Wittgenstein, metaphysics in this sense is an illness of our thought. It should be noted that although Wittgenstein uses phrases such as 'therapy' for metaphysics⁵² and considers it an illness, he is respectful of the philosophers who have engaged in metaphysics. For example, in a conversation with Drury, he states,

"Man's need for Metaphysics. I think I can see very well what Schopenhauer got out of his philosophy. Don't think I despise metaphysics. I regard some of the great philosophical systems of the past as among the noblest productions of the human mind. For some people, it would require a heroic effort to give up this sort of writing." (Drury, 1981, p. 184).

Wittgenstein's take on metaphysics was an insider's view. He was himself occupied in the kind of metaphysics which he later became critical of. Assessing the *Tractatus* and how Wittgenstein changed his view, Peter Hacker (2004) argues that one of the metaphysical projects that Wittgenstein was most critical of was the *Tractatus* itself. In that book, Wittgenstein thought there is a logic that can mirror the metaphysical properties of the world. Therefore, logic as the sole underlying structure of the world was to be

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- 52 Wittgenstein has argued against proof in philosophy and has also emphasized the therapeutic aspect of philosophy. Kenny briefly describes the two aspects, "In the *Investigations* as in the *Tractatus*, the nearest thing that there is to proof in philosophy is the demonstration to a metaphysician that he has failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions. The demonstration, of course, now takes a different form: it consists of showing that he is using a sign without the support of any language game. (Either he has taken a sign from an existing language game and used it outside the network within which alone it has sense, or he has purported to invent a new sign without appropriately embedding it in a new game.) Why, then, does Wittgenstein say that philosophy does not make deductions or draw conclusions? There are, I believe, two reasons corresponding to two different tasks that Wittgenstein assigns to philosophy. First, there is the negative, therapeutic task of philosophy: the resolution of philosophical problems by the dissolution of philosophical illusion. Second, there is the more positive task of giving us an overview of the actual working of our language. (The two tasks, of course, overlap.) In neither activity is there any room for the deduction, for the drawing of conclusions from premises in accordance with logical rules?" (Kenny, 2004, p. 175)

sought in language. If it was not present, then one had to look 'behind the surface'. This meant that a variety of different uses of the words and language had to be dismissed because one type of language used was supposed to do the profound job the *Tractatus* wanted it to. Therefore, the ordinary use of the words and the language that actual human beings used were confused, and it was the task of Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* to reveal the essence of language in which truth and falsehood were clear-cut and bereft of any binary cases. As Hacker puts it, Wittgenstein later realized that although he thought that he was examining an a priori order of things, he had presupposed such an order. He had presupposed that there were hidden essences which were to be found. The mistake that Wittgenstein had made was that he had taken ordinary use of the words, which were significant, and had assumed that there should exist some sublime or metaphysical conception of these words. Then he had set himself the task of discovering those conceptions. Given that such conceptions are not to be found in natural languages, then the result is that one must look for them behind the scenes. Wittgenstein later became critical of this metaphysical view of things. As Hacker puts it,

"In an atypical historical remark written in 1937, Wittgenstein observed that it was characteristic of thinkers of the previous cultural period to want to find the a priori where there is none, or indeed to have *produced* the concept of the a priori. They would never have done so, Wittgenstein wrote, had they seen things the way we do; but then the world would have lost a great and significant error. But actually, he concludes, one cannot reason thus, for this concept was *grounded in the whole culture of the times* (MS 183, 81). Presumably, he meant the culture informing eighteenth-century science and enlightenment, which presupposed a divine order and inner necessity of things." (2004, p. 19)

Therefore, one can say that according to Wittgenstein, to understand reality, we do not need to find the hidden realm behind language through philosophy. Reality is here to be understood through rules governing our language use, concepts, and understanding. Early Wittgenstein's belief that there is one correct logical universal structure to language was one instance in the analytic tradition of the time. Bertrand Russell and Gottlob Frege⁵³ were attempting the same – although in their specific ways – and influ-

53 In fact, these two figures are the only ones whom Wittgenstein mentions in the preface to the *Tractatus*, "I will only mention that to the great works of Frege and the

enced early Wittgenstein's take on language profoundly. Wittgenstein later came to realize that the ordinary uses of the words seem all right most of the time and allow communication. However, there are times in which we reach a puzzlement with them. Wittgenstein's famous example discussed in PI is Augustine's question about the nature of time. Augustine has always been capable of using the word 'time' as if he knew what it meant but when faced with the question 'what is time?' he is not capable of answering the question. Philosophers usually tend to respond to this puzzlement by proposing what the essence of time could be. The response which is supposed to tell us what the essence of time is, will also clarify what the proper definition of time is, and based on this proper definition we can figure out the confused uses of time in ordinary language. Wittgenstein argues against the possibility of such an essential definition and as a result perceives attempts at constructing such definitions as attempts at making artificial words and definitions which have no use in the actual language. In such instances, as Wittgenstein phrases it, language goes on holiday. Therefore, instead of looking for a unified underlying structure we need to recognize the diversity of uses in language and deal with each based on specific rules and norms which govern them. Various parts of language have distinct rules and functions.

If there is no essence to language, then this means that there is no single rule or norm that governs all aspects of language. If there is no unified phenomenon as a language with one set of rules that determine how the words ought to be used, then language is best understood as a phenomenon encompassing various sections each of which has its own distinct rules⁵⁴. These rules determine what is the right use of the words in that very section. These sections are language games for Wittgenstein. Although one gets rid of the 'essence' of language in Wittgenstein's account, there is a danger here that one might think there is an 'essence' for each language game. One might think that the language game of religion has an essence. One implication of such a view would be that there is a unified correct use of the word God for the language game of religion, hidden and in need of discovery, which would determine how the word should be used

writings of my friend Bertrand Russell, I owe in large measure the stimulation of my thoughts" (Wittgenstein, 2010, p. 23)

- 54 "Unsere Sprache kann man ansehen als eine alte Stadt: Ein Gewinkel von Gäßchen und Plätzen, alten und neuen Häusern, und Häusern mit Zubauten aus verschiedenen Zeiten; und dies umgeben von einer Menge neuer Vororte mit geraden und regelmäßigen Straßen und mit einförmigen Häusern." (PI § 18).

in all instances of religious discourse. This view presupposes that there is a metaphysical conception of God that exists beyond the religious language game and one can capture the essence of such a God and dictate the proper use of the term 'God' to all believers. However, this is merely shifting the confusion from language in general to a language game of religion. There is a way to determine the proper use of words within language games without resorting to essence and metaphysics. That is resorting to the grammar of language games. This point was discussed in the first chapter, and I will not repeat what has already been said. Instead, I want to see whether Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy in combination with his take on religion leads to fideism and relativism.

If each language game has a specific grammar and that grammar determines the proper use of words in that language game, then given that two language games have different grammars, it would follow that one cannot criticize the use of words in one language game with the rules of another language game. This is only when one has clarified the proper use of each word in the given language game. Before that, it may be the case that a given word is being used in a way that does not belong to the language game that it seems to belong to. For example, if one uses God as a hypothetical explanation for the origin of the universe, one is not using 'God' as a religious concept, and therefore, if a scientist criticizes that conception of God based on the language game of science, it is a meaningful criticism. Only after such considerations can one be sure a specific use of the word does not involve some confusion. Before proceeding with the charges of fideism and relativism which grow out of the idea of language games, let us examine what is meant by 'grammar' in Wittgenstein's philosophy.

3.1.1. Grammar

The concept of grammar has a pivotal role in Wittgenstein's conception of language games. Proper examination of this concept will allow us to eradicate certain confusions that surround the idea of language games. In the previous chapter, I proposed possible sources of influence for this concept, and in the following, I want to mention what role it has in Wittgenstein's philosophy and his conception of language games. To do so I will elaborate on some of the most important sources which has dealt with the concept of 'grammar'.

Michael Forster (2004) has thoroughly examined various occurrences of ‘grammar’ in Wittgenstein’s writings and explains the concept of grammar and enumerates its characteristics in Wittgenstein’s philosophy, “Wittgenstein’s most basic conception of grammar is that it consists in rules which govern the use of words, and which thereby constitute meanings or concepts. Thus, he identifies grammar in general with the “rules for use of a word” (p. 7). Foster further enumerates seven characteristics of ‘grammar’ in Wittgenstein’s philosophy,

- “(1) Just as the rules of a game constitute the game and first make possible the moves which occur within it, likewise grammar constitutes an area of language and first makes possible the linguistic moves which occur within it
- (2) ...grammar prescribes or permits certain linguistic moves and proscribes others and thereby also constitutes the identity of the concepts required for making particular linguistic moves
- (3) ...the rules of grammar in addition to governing and essentially constituting particular linguistic moves also provide a standard for adjudicating their success or failure
- (4) ...grammatical rules are not assertions but more like commands, commandments, or categorical imperatives
- (5) ...grammatical rules are in some sense conventions: “Grammar consists of conventions”
- (6) ...the rules of grammar may either be explicitly formulated in language or else implicit and if they are implicit, they may subsequently achieve explicit formulation
- (7) ...the rules of grammar may in some cases be definite but in others vague or fluctuating”. (Forster, 2004, pp. 8-9).

Forster also mentions the fact that Wittgenstein does not argue for a sharp and fixed line between what counts as grammar and what counts as factual propositions and that sometimes there is an exchange between grammar and factual propositions. He further elaborates that what counts as grammar is a type of necessity (logical, analytical, and mathematical). For example, ‘red is darker than yellow’ or ‘a rod must have a length’ are

grammatical remarks. These are not facts, but rules which determine how to speak and evaluate facts⁵⁵.

What we are equipped with is a language that has words as its grammar and such words determine the proper use⁵⁶. Wittgenstein argues that we should avoid confusion that stems from identifying the grammar of our language with metaphysical statements. Rather than seeking the hidden essence behind grammar, we should figure out how they guide our use of words in a specific domain and how they should organize our practices. In his view, if someone pretends that he is using the word God to refer to some metaphysical reality, he is confused and is misusing language. Instead, the grammatical concept of God should instruct his religiosity.

Unlike the *Tractatus* which had limited 'sense' to descriptive language of science, in the later phase, Wittgenstein introduces other sensible uses of the words. In so far as 'God' is not used to describe an ultimate reality and is used as a hinge based on which a certain language game becomes possible the word 'God' has sense. It allows a language game based on which we can structure our actions and our moral take on life. However, if one confuses this use with a description of any sort, it means one has trespassed the metaphysical nonsensicality of describing the Ur-reality. This means that one is attempting at describing what is impossible to describe in any meaningful way. This tendency has existed among religious believers and Wittgenstein recognizes this in his lecture on ethics and shows deep respect for it. Therefore, one can say that while the religious discourse was entirely non-sense in the *Tractatus* phase, later, Wittgenstein developed two possibilities for the religious discourse. One aims to describe the ultimate reality and one aims to establish a language game that allows for action and leading a specific form of life. The former remains nonsense, and the latter is a legitimate use of religious discourse. Sensible religion remains part of the realm of practical reason and does not interfere with theoretical reason.

55 These are some passages from Wittgenstein which Forster quotes: "There must be a cause" (WLC, p. 16), "Green and blue cannot be in the same place simultaneously" (BB, p. 65; cf. LC, p. 94), "There is no such thing as a reddish green" (Z, 346). "In mathematics, we are convinced of grammatical propositions" [RFM, III, 26]).

56 There are other concepts in our language whose existence allows for certain activities and regulations of our actions. For example, money is one such thing. Money is not a metaphysical reality, we have formed this concept, and based on that a whole enterprise of economic activity has become meaningful.

There is a famous passage in PI in which Wittgenstein equates theology with grammar⁵⁷. In this passage, theology is supposed to elaborate on the proper use of the words in the language game of religion. Instead of perceiving theology as a branch of knowledge that aims at describing or making sense of the ultimate reality or a metaphysical God, Wittgenstein takes its task to determine the legitimate use of religious terms. Theology for Wittgenstein is not a metaphysical enterprise at all, nor is it a branch of science⁵⁸.

If our understanding of reality is governed by the rules of our language games and there is no super language game and there are different language games, it means that there are different ways to conceive reality. However, important questions need to be addressed. Can religion be criticized or safeguarded with Wittgenstein's conception of language game? What is the relation between these different language games? Could we have contradictory language games? Could there be a disagreement between language games? Are language games autonomous? Does this picture of reality lead to relativism? I will deal with these questions in the following.

3.2. *Fideism*

Critics of Wittgenstein's take on religion are not a homogenous and include both theist and atheist philosophers. One of the most famous charges leveled against Wittgenstein has been 'fideism'. This was first articulated by Kai Nielsen in a paper entitled "Wittgensteinian Fideism" (1967). Nielsen does not direct this charge at Wittgenstein himself in his first paper but rather at certain followers of Wittgenstein, including Peter Winch, Norman Malcolm, and Stanley Cavell. However, In the footnote, Nielsen mentions that this seems like a natural outgrowth of Wittgenstein's philosophy. In

57 "Welche Art von Gegenstand etwas ist, sagt die Grammatik. (Theologie als Grammatik)." (PI § 373).

58 The conception of grammar stands in direct opposition to what most analytic philosophers engage with, "Of course, what makes Wittgenstein's notion of 'theology as grammar' such a thorny issue is the realism-pragmatism debate which it ultimately forces" (Harvey, 1989, 97). Although Wittgenstein is not a pragmatist, it is correct to diagnose the intensity of this debate as rooted in a philosophical issue. Therefore, when we talk about religion and God being grammar, we must keep in mind that a deep philosophical disagreement lurks behind the positions of the participants in the debate.

his first publication, Nielsen enumerates these features as characteristic of Wittgensteinian fideism:

1. "The forms of language are the forms of life.
2. What is given are the forms of life.
3. Ordinary language is all right as it is.
4. A philosopher's task is not to evaluate or criticize language or the forms of life, but to describe them where necessary and to the extent necessary to break philosophical perplexity concerning their operation.
5. The different modes of discourse which are distinctive forms of life all have a logic of their own.
6. Forms of life taken as a whole are not amenable to criticism; each mode of discourse is in order as it is, for each has its criteria and each sets its norms of intelligibility, reality, and rationality.
7. These general, dispute-engendering concepts, i.e., intelligibility, reality, and rationality are systematically ambiguous; then exact meaning can only be determined in the context of a determinate way of life.
8. There is no Archimedean point in terms of which a philosopher (or for that matter anyone else) can relevantly criticize whole modes of discourse or, what comes to the same thing, ways of life, for each mode of discourse has its specific criteria of rationality/irrationality, intelligibility/unintelligibility, and reality /unreality". (Nielsen, 1967, pp. 192-3).

The greatest worry that Nielsen expresses and the most important criticism he offers is that such an understanding of religious language games would not allow critics to criticize the very rationality of this language game. This would mean that Wittgenstein's approach defends irrational beliefs in the face of criticism. Nielsen further argues that he and others brought up in a society where religion has been present, know how to play the language game and can legitimately question religion because of its incoherence. Emphasis on belonging to the religious tradition as a prerequisite for understanding God-talk is another controversial point that Nielsen examines. As Nielsen perceives it, Wittgensteinians deny any point of contact between language and reality, and what counts as real is only to be assessed through the 'use' of a language. The idea of the autonomy of the religious language game as well as other language games has been labeled as 'compartmentalization' of language by Nielsen, an idea which makes

critical remarks of science against religion and vice-versa impossible. For Nielsen, this argument amounts to the claim that we cannot examine the forms of life and language games as intelligible, logical, or rational. Nielsen assumes that because of rational inquiry, human beings have abandoned certain forms of life and can also do so. He further argues that once people believed in fairies and witches as real things, they do not anymore. This is an example of how certain terms were used in certain religious language games but have gone out of use. This happened after asking about the coherence of these concepts and the evidence for them.

I will engage with these critical remarks in the following. The charge of fideism has been a hotly debated topic since the publication of this paper, and proponents and opponents of this charge have each contributed to the debate. It would be useful to see what ‘fideism’ means before we set to examine the charges.

3.2.1. Origins of ‘Fideism’ and its Multiple Meanings

The word fideism comes from the Latin phrase ‘fides’ which means faith. One example that comes up frequently to indicate what is meant by this phrase is Tertullian questioning the relation between Athens and Jerusalem⁵⁹. As Labron (2009) puts it, “The general idea is that faith is independent of, and perhaps opposed to, reason in matters of theology” (pp. 61-62). However, a survey of the uses of fideism will reveal that this term is not as clear as one might think it to be. Thomas Carroll (2008) has surveyed various uses and origins of the term fideism. His research indicates that sometimes the term ‘fideism’ is used as a pejorative term to condemn the irrationality of some position. Although this use of the term is not scholarly it is quite common and Pascal, Kierkegaard, Karl Barth and Wittgenstein are among the ones attributed with this pejorative term. The word fideism is a French word that first appeared in the English language in 1885. The Lutheran theologian Eugene Menegoz and the catholic philosopher Leon Olle-Laprune are among the first people who used this word or rather coined the word. The latter used this term to refer to,

59 “Those who classify Tertullian as a fideist typically point to the expression ‘credo quia absurdum’ as indicative of the view that faith is based in absurdity and runs counter to reason. Scholars now often indicate that this is a misquotation of Tertullian; the phrase in question should be ‘credibile est, quia ineptum est.’” (Carroll, 2008, p. 7).

“a distressing overreliance on moral faith in establishing the existence of God in Kantian and post-Kantian idealism.” (p. 10). Adherents of various religious sects and affiliations used this term in different ways. For example, “protestants used the term ‘fideism’ to describe their theology; the neo-Thomists used it to classify the thought of others who relied ‘dangerously’ on faith alone in establishing God’s existence.” (p. 11). The two originators of the word fideism saw themselves combating on two fronts, the religious dogmatic orthodoxy and the positivist science of the post-enlightenment and sought to find a middle path in between. Menegoz thought faith is the most important element of religion and it alone is enough for salvation and doctrines are not as fundamental as they are thought. He goes on to say that faced with new scientific discoveries we need to admit that since religions were presented at a certain point in time, it is unavoidable that they carry with them the worldview of their zeitgeist. Carroll has quoted Menegoz, who states “[W]e must distinguish between faith itself, which is the essence of religious life, and the contingent and transitory form in which that faith is clothed at any given time in its history. The substance is, as to its nature, always identical with itself; the form is variable and subject to the laws of evolution.” (p. 13) Relying on faith as what is fundamental to religion, the fideist is critical of natural theology because it is too philosophical and cannot capture the kind of personal and emotional connection in which a religious believer needs to find himself. Insisting that faith, on a Schleirmachian vein, is a phenomenon that has to do with feelings of awe, respect, love, fear, and the like does not automatically make religion an irrational position to hold. This and other conceptions of religion can be classified as non-rational.⁶⁰ To claim that a religious belief is irrational, is to claim that it can be assessed with epistemic standards but fails to comply with them.

60 It is interesting that John Paul II also identifies fideism as a double-truth doctrine and dismisses it. He argues that faith and reason are both gifts of God and cannot contradict one another and rational knowledge contributes to faith. This passage is from *Fides et Ratio* written by John Paul II, quoted in Carroll’s paper, “Against the temptations of fideism, however, it was necessary to stress the unity of truth and thus the positive contribution which rational knowledge can and must make to faith’s knowledge: ‘Even if faith is superior to reason there can never be a true divergence between faith and reason, since the same God who reveals the mysteries and bestows the gift of faith has also placed in the human spirit the light of reason. This God could not deny himself, nor could the truth ever contradict the truth.’” (Carroll, 2008, p. 6)

Therefore, it would be safe to say that the word fideism in its non-pejorative sense is an approach that emphasizes faith as fundamental in religion. It attempts to update the religious corpus surrounding faith with our worldview instead of leaving it as it was with the worldview of the ancients. It also does not yield to the scientific worldview in which faith and religion are of no value and use. Now that we have a use of fideism at hand, which is not used as a pejorative term and has some use let us see if Wittgenstein can be labeled as a fideist. To do so, I will examine what constitutes faith for Wittgenstein and what role it has in religion and will consider his attitude towards the relation of science and faith. Wittgenstein was influenced by figures such as Nietzsche, Tolstoy, and Kierkegaard in his take on faith. It would also be helpful to mention these influences briefly.

3.2.2. Wittgenstein on Faith

Although Wittgenstein has not written extensively on the nature of faith, there are indications in his writings of how he perceives faith. As mentioned in the previous chapter, for Wittgenstein, religious faith can be compared to instincts. Therefore, he does not take it to be influenced by rational arguments or scientific discoveries. In what some may perceive to be a controversial remark, Wittgenstein states,

“Christianity is not based on historical truth; rather, it gives us a (historical) narrative and says: now believe! But not, believe this narrative with the belief appropriate to a historical narrative—rather: believe, through thick and thin, and you can do that only as the result of a life. Here you have a narrative— don’t take the same attitude to it as to another historical narrative! Give it an entirely different place in your life. — There is nothing paradoxical in that!” (VB, p. 32)

There are further remarks which have been taken as evidence for substantiating the fideism charge, which is as follows:

“Queer as it sounds: The historical accounts in the Gospels might, historically speaking, be demonstrably false, and yet belief would lose nothing by this: not, however, because it concerns ‘universal truths of reason’! Rather, because historical proof (the historical proof game) is irrelevant to belief. This message (the Gospels) is seized on by men believably (i.e., lovingly).⁸ That is the certainty characterizing this particular acceptance

as true, not something else. A believer's relation to these narratives is neither the relation to historical truth (probability) nor that to a theory consisting of 'truths of reason'. There is such a thing". (CV [1937], p. 32)

"Suppose somebody made this guidance for his life: believing in the Last Judgement. Whenever he does anything, this is before his mind. [...] It will show, not by reasoning or by appeal to ordinary grounds for belief, but by regulating for in all his life". (LC, pp. 53–4)

"Schlick says that theological ethics contains two concepts of the essence of the Good. According to the more superficial interpretation, the Good is good because God wills it; according to the deeper interpretation, God wills the Good because it is good. I think that the first conception is the deeper one: Good is what God orders. For it cuts off the path to any and every explanation 'Why' it is good.... The first conception says clearly that the essence of the Good has nothing to do with facts and therefore cannot be explained by any proposition. If any proposition expresses just what I mean, it is: Good is what God orders". (Waismann, 1965, p. 15).

"Religion says: Do this! - Think like that! - but it cannot justify this and once it even tries to it becomes repellant; because for every reason it offers, there is a valid counter-reason. It is more convincing to say: "Think like this! However, strangely it may strike you." Or: "Won't you do this? - however repugnant you find it." (CV § 30)

"The effect of making men think in accordance with dogmas, perhaps in the form of certain graphic propositions, will be very peculiar: I am not thinking of these dogmas as determining men's opinions but rather as completely controlling the expression of all opinions. People will live under an absolute, palpable tyranny, though without being able to say they are not free. I think the Catholic Church does something rather like this. For dogma is expressed in the form of an assertion, and is unshakable, but at the same time, any practical opinion can be made to harmonize with it... This is how dogma becomes irrefutable and beyond the reach of attack" (CV § 28)

Given Wittgenstein's remark on the falsehood of parables in the Old Testament, one might think that he is proposing the view that religious beliefs can be false or that Jesus did not exist, but it does not matter. This would be an articulation of fideism in its pejorative sense. If a belief is false, and its falsehood is known to one, then one should refrain from

holding that belief. Any advice to the contrary would be an invitation to irrationality. However, as one Wittgenstein scholar makes it clear, “I can find no evidence that Wittgenstein ever discusses this sort of view, or that he ever says that religious belief is simply false.” (Vasiliou, 2001, p. 30) To fully appreciate this point, it should be noted that Wittgenstein emphasizes an aspect of religion that is usually neglected in philosophical discussions. Whereas in philosophy, we are dealing with arguments about rationality or irrationality of belief in God and his existence or lack thereof, religious language is not concerned with such arguments. Rather it is more about orienting one’s life, “Wittgenstein’s metaphor of a guiding picture is far more revealing than the metaphor of a network of interlocking statements. Religious dogmas shape one’s worldview not by logically determining beliefs, but by gripping the spirit and orienting one’s life” (Hoyt, 2007, p. 49). In the following, I will briefly mention the influence of Nietzsche and Tolstoy on Wittgenstein’s understanding of religion.

3.2.3. Nietzsche

Ray Monk (1991) identifies a stance towards religion by Nietzsche which was adopted and well preserved throughout his life by Wittgenstein. Nietzsche, in his ‘Anti-Christ’, argued that the value of Christianity and the reason it remained a live option for people today, is not the truth of its beliefs. Rather it is because it helps the believers to live in this meaningless world filled with suffering. Wittgenstein, following Nietzsche, took religion to be mainly about practices and instincts, “Christianity was for him (at this time) ‘the only *sure* way to happiness’ – not because it promised an after-life, but because, in the words and the figure of Christ, it provided an example, an attitude, to follow, that made suffering bearable.” (Monk, 1991, p. 123)

3.2.4. Tolstoy

Tolstoy was another figure who inspired Wittgenstein⁶¹. Tolstoy holds the historical accounts of the Gospels and the theological views expressed in

61 In addition to the fact that Wittgenstein read “The Gospel in Brief” and “A Confession” by Tolstoy and was influenced by them is common knowledge among scholars.

them to be insignificant, “I consider Christianity to be neither a pure revelation nor a phase of history, but I consider it as the only doctrine which gives a meaning to life” (Tolstoy, 1943, p. 8) He emphasizes this point further: “I sought a solution of the problem of life, and not of a theological and historical question; and that is why I was indifferent to know whether Jesus Christ is or is not God, and from whom proceeds the Holy Spirit, etc. and it is just as unimportant and unnecessary to know when and by whom such and such a Gospel was written and whether such a parable came from Jesus himself or not. For me, the only important concern was this light, which, for eighteen hundred years, has shone upon mankind, which has shone upon me likewise, and which shines upon me still.” (Tolstoy, 1943, p.10) Tolstoy further argues that Jesus as a teacher and as a man – not as a God who performed miracles and so on, claims which he finds superstitious – has offered insights into life that make it meaningful and worth living, and this alone is why following him and being a Christian is not irrational. The historical accounts are not the primary concern of the religious person; rather, the teachings and framework to which one dedicates herself matter in addition to the role religious beliefs play in our lives. It is this practical dimension in religion that is of great importance⁶².

These two sources of influence – Nietzsche and Tolstoy – also emphasize religion’s power for orienting one’s life rather than presenting it as a truth-tracking branch of knowledge. Now let us explore in more detail what Wittgenstein has to say about faith and its relation to reason and evidence.

3.3. *Faith, Reason, and Evidence*

Wittgenstein mentions the relation between historical facts and religious belief in LRB as well, where he states,

In religious discourse, we use such expressions as: ‘I believe that so and so will happen,’ and use them differently from how we use them in

There are other details of this fascination and influence which are less commonly known. For example, “In an unpublished letter of I 9, I 2 Wittgenstein speaks with much enthusiasm of Hadji Murad, which he has just read. That work is, of course, one of Tolstoy’s most successful attempts to convey his ethical ideas in artistic form.” (McGuinness, 1966, p. 309)

- 62 “Following the likes of Kierkegaard and Tolstoy (and let us not forget, the Jesus of the gospels himself), Wittgenstein was keen to stress the difficulty of Christian faith”. (Burley, 2012, p. 80).

science. Although there is a great temptation to think we do. Because we do talk of evidence and do talk of evidence by experience. We could even talk about historic events. It has been said that Christianity rests on a historic basis. It has been said a thousand times by intelligent people that indubitability is not enough in this case. Even if there is as much evidence as for Napoleon. Because the indubitability wouldn't be enough to make me change my whole life. It doesn't rest on a historic basis in the sense that the ordinary belief in historic facts could serve as a foundation. Here we have a belief in historic facts different from a belief in ordinary historic facts. Even, they are not treated as historical, empirical propositions.

A further quotation from the same text makes the interface between faith and evidence clear for Wittgenstein,

The point is that if there were evidence, this would in fact destroy the whole business. Anything that I normally call evidence would not in the slightest influence me. Suppose, for instance, we knew people who foresaw the future; make forecasts for years and years ahead; and described some sort of Judgement Day. Queerly enough, even if there were such a thing, and even if it were more convincing than I have described but [sic], belief in this happening wouldn't be at all a religious belief. Suppose that I would have to forgo all pleasures because of such a forecast. If I do so and so, someone will put me on fire in a thousand years, etc. I wouldn't budge. The best scientific evidence is just nothing. A religious belief might in fact fly in the face of such a forecast, and say, 'No. There it will break down.' (LC, p. 56)

It is evident that for Wittgenstein religious beliefs cannot be equated with scientific beliefs and religious belief is characterized by touching our lives in a way that other beliefs are not capable to do so. They touch us in a way that influences the way we act and live. Historical facts or scientific facts are 'cold facts' so to speak, and do not motivate us to act and change our lives⁶³. Wittgenstein finds accounts of natural theology as an impediment to becoming a religious person,

63 "Believing in the point of a narrative 'through thick and thin' can only be the result of a particular kind of commitment, a commitment that makes no sense with respect to ordinary empirical belief. Rationally held ordinary empirical beliefs are beliefs that need to be revised in light of new evidence. Religious belief is something you can have only 'as the result of a life' and requires a commitment to a *Bezugssystem*. The

“It is a dogma of the Roman Church [said Wittgenstein] that the existence of God can be proved by natural reason. Now this dogma would make it impossible for me to be a Roman Catholic. If I thought of God as another being like myself, outside myself, only infinitely more powerful, then I would regard it as my duty to defy him.” (Drury, ‘Conversations with Wittgenstein’, in *Recollections of Wittgenstein*, op. cit. pp. 107).

The emotional aspect of faith and religious belief is also emphasized by Wittgenstein in more than one place. For Wittgenstein religious belief results from an attitude toward oneself, in which one takes herself to need salvation, help, and rescue,

“People are religious to the extent that they believe themselves to be not so much imperfect, as ill.... Any halfway decent man will think himself extremely imperfect, but a religious man believes himself wretched.” (VB, p. 45).

And, where he states,

“The Christian religion is only for one who needs infinite help, therefore only for one who feels an infinite need. The whole planet cannot be in greater anguish than a single soul. The Christian faith—as I view it—is the refuge in this ultimate anguish. To whom it is given in this anguish to open his heart, instead of contracting it, accepts the means of salvation in his heart”. (VB, p. 46).

And those who are in such a state do not need rational arguments. Instead, they need faith. Faith is marked by the certainty that it brings about in contrast to speculation and thought. Finally, the following statement from Wittgenstein should make clear what he means when he emphasizes the difference between faith and reason.

“One of the things Christianity says, I think, is that all sound doctrines are of no avail. One must change one’s life. (Or the direction of one’s

nature of the commitment is not a rational one, in the specific sense that it has not been arrived at based on the most plausible evidence. It is rather a belief that is held passionately (*leidenschaftlich*). Although the meaning of this is obscure, I think it suggests that there is a commitment to a ‘way of assessing life’ that is not based on evidence; rather, what is the case will turn out to be based on the ‘way of assessing life’ or the ‘system of reference.’ Such a passionate commitment perhaps explains why even a life-changing empirical belief would not count as religious belief”. (Vasiliou, 2001, pp. 36-37)

life.) That all wisdom is cold; and that one can no more use it to bring one's life into order than one can forge cold iron. A sound doctrine does not have to catch hold of one; one can follow it like a doctor's prescription. —But here something must grasp one and turn one around. — (This is how I understand it.) Once turned around, one must stay turned around. Wisdom is passionless. In contrast, faith is what Kierkegaard calls a passion". (VB, p. 53)

We can gain a sympathetic understanding of why Tertullian questioned the relationship between Athens and Jerusalem. The God of Plato or Aristotle is transcendent and acts as the metaphysical foundation based on which the world rests, the "Greek conception of God deals in abstractions, while the Judeo-Christian conception of God is more concrete (and closer to Wittgenstein's philosophy)" (Labron, 2009, p.67). This is also evident in one of the remarks Wittgenstein made to Drury, in which he remarks, "If what we do now is to make no difference in the end, then all the seriousness of life is done away with. Your religious ideas have always seemed to me more Greek than biblical. Whereas my thoughts are one hundred percent Hebraic". (Drury, § 161).

Postulating a God or realm beyond this world and regarding it as foundational would amount to disengagement with this world or neglecting its seriousness. Instead, the seriousness of life is emphasized by Wittgenstein. A conception of God that would not transcend the world and engage us in the seriousness of life seems something like the God of Tolstoy and Kierkegaard rather than a Greek conception of God. Christopher Hoyt (2007) points to the fact that having read William James' "Varieties of Religious Experience", Wittgenstein was aware of the different types of religious beliefs but thought that genuine faith is not an intellectualist one. This is because as Hoyt mentions, for Wittgenstein people do not believe in God because of proof or evidence but because of their upbringing. Hoyt mentions this passage from Wittgenstein's *Culture and Value* to support his reading, in which Wittgenstein states that Theologians "have wanted to give 'belief' an intellectual analysis and foundation, although they themselves would never have come to believe as a result of such proofs." (Hoyt, 2007, p. 42).

For Wittgenstein, not only theory and evidence are not the basis of faith, but words and language are not fundamental to religion either. This is evident from his conversation with Weismann, in which he states, "Is talking essential for religion? I can easily imagine a religion in which there

are no doctrines, in which, therefore, no talking occurs. The essence of religion cannot have anything to do with the fact that talking occurs, or rather if talking occurs, then this is itself part of the religious act, and not a theory. And it does not matter, therefore, whether such words are true, false, or nonsensical” (Weismann, 1979, p.117). Bramann (1975) argues that the nonsensicality of religious language in the first phase of Wittgenstein’s philosophy ought to be understood as an emphasis on what the religious person does. If taken as descriptive or representations of reality, religious language becomes highly problematic. When one speaks of God’s hands and eyes, he is not describing God. However, if one argues that he is using similes and metaphors, then the question is, what is it a simile or metaphor of? We do not have any idea what the reality of God – if we assume that he does exist – is like and therefore, we do not know how this simile or metaphor is supposed to connect to the supposed reality of God, as he is. Religious language seems to be in the business of describing the indescribable, and it remains nonsense and unintelligible. However, as Bramann (1975) suggests there is another way to deal with the religious language. When faced with the religious language that speaks of the Last Judgment and God seeing us and the like, we can take them to be images that do not attempt at representing or describing reality but rather attempt at regulating and motivating us to act in a certain way. When we say God sees us, instead of trying to figure out whether there is a God that even though he does not have eyes, somehow ‘sees’ us, we can perceive this as a part of imagery in which the believer finds guidance for acting. In other words, religious language provides a framework with the aid of imagery based on which an individual can act. Bramann quotes the following passage from Tolstoy’s *Gospel in Brief*, which Wittgenstein admired and read many times during the first world war, “No arguments could convince me of the truth of their faith. Only deeds that showed that they saw a meaning in life made what was so dreadful to me -- poverty, sickness. and death -- not dreadful to them, could convince me.” (Bramann, 1975, p. 8) The insistence on action and how one can act because of religious belief and based on the religious imagery presented in it, distinguishes Wittgenstein’s way of perceiving religion from those who insist that religion is mainly a theoretical enterprise⁶⁴.

64 As Bramann puts it, “Most philosophers feel compelled to think about the “Laws of Thought” as something inviolable, as Laws which exist independently of what people think and do. Wittgenstein, by contrast, argues...that the “Laws of Thought”

In addition to these points, Wittgenstein maintains that faith plays a role quite distinct from what philosophy, science, and history do. It gives us a framework based on which we can attach meaning to our lives and pursue a certain way of living passionately. If following the example of Jesus, one decides to refrain from debauchery, gluttony, and other types of excess and commits himself to this way of living, there is nothing irrational about it. This way of living can give meaning to one's life and organize the actions of an individual accordingly. As Wittgenstein has emphasized, the religious believer is making a mistake only when he is putting forth a theory. Religion is an existential response to some of the events and phenomena we experience in life, such as birth and death, absolute safety, and guilt but does not explain these phenomena, as science attempts to explain phenomena⁶⁵.

If one decides to live following the example of Jesus and then tries to find a metaphysical foundation based on which that way of living is based, this should not be a pretense that faith is based on metaphysical doctrines. The metaphysical doctrines, such as the existence of God, as philosophical positions are in no way certain. There are no valid proofs of the existence of God which would provide certainty for belief in God. Those who try to provide evidence for the existence of God and indicate that God's existence is probable or rational are doing what is irrelevant to the believer. The reason is that faith is not based on evidence and probability, and the pretense to do so amounts to what Wittgenstein calls superstition. Recall from the previous chapter that for Wittgenstein superstition is not the same as false belief because the opposite would be true in that case. Wittgenstein is not saying that evidence and proofs can prove or refute faith; rather he is saying that faith is a different matter altogether and proof and evidence have no bearing on it. Faith is like an instinct that one would direct towards a certain way of living, not some proposition that one finds rational justifi-

simply reflect what people actually do, that there is no validity of these laws over and above human practice...Wittgenstein...confronted most theologians in the same way...he denied that anything could be made sense of without considering what people actually do". (Ibid, pp. 8-9).

- 65 the "understanding of religious belief, according to which it is an unmediated response to certain experiences, stands in contrast to the metaphysical understanding of religious belief, according to which the concept of God is introduced to serve a theoretical (or practical) purpose, and hence is understood merely instrumentally." (Strandberg, 2016, p. 29)

cation for. Just as other instincts exist in us, and we do not need to find rational justification for them, faith can also exist in the same way,

“What inclines even me to believe in Christ's Resurrection? It is as though I play with the thought. - If he did not rise from the dead, then he is decomposed in the grave like any other man. He is dead and decomposed. In that case, he is a teacher like any other and can no longer help; and once more we are orphaned and alone. So, we have to content ourselves with wisdom and speculation. We are in a sort of hell where we can do nothing but dream, roofed in, as it were, and cut off from heaven. But if I am to be REALLY saved, - what I need is certainty - not wisdom, dreams, or speculation - and this certainty is faith. And faith is faith in what is needed by my heart, my soul, not my speculative intelligence. For it is my soul with its passions, as it were with its flesh and blood, that has to be saved, not my abstract mind. Perhaps we can say: Only love can believe the Resurrection”. (Wittgenstein 1980a, 33)

Wittgenstein is not trying to safeguard faith against criticism, rather he is arguing that faith cannot be criticized, nor can it be defended by rational assessment. Faith for him is non-rational and instinctual and it requires the will to dedicate oneself to it⁶⁶. Therefore, Wittgenstein cannot be a fideist in the pejorative sense of the word. Before closing this section, it is worth noting a distinction that Hyman makes between how religious beliefs are formed and how they are justified in Wittgenstein's view,

66 “Wittgenstein was not a conventionally religious man. He had no sympathy with organized religion, and no interest in the idea of God as creator of the universe. But his powerful sense of duty, his sense of his guilt, unworthiness, and failings of character, and his desire for redemption gave him an affinity with certain religious ideas. In the Notebooks and Tractatus, Wittgenstein treats ‘God’ as a term for the meaning of life – the meaning of the world. The meaning of life, he says there, is something that we cannot put into words, but that shows itself in the existence of the world. So, believing in God is not a matter of having any factual beliefs; it is a matter of seeing that life has meaning. In his later philosophy, Wittgenstein retains the idea that religious beliefs are not factual beliefs; and, he says, they cannot be justified or criticized by appeal to evidence. A religious belief is ‘something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference’: to have religious beliefs is to conceive of the world and oneself in terms of a distinctively religious set of concepts, and to live one's life in a religious way. So, the difference between the religious believer and the non-believer is not a difference about any matters of fact; it is a difference in the way they conceive themselves and the world, and in the way they lead their lives.” (Child, 2011, p. 240)

“Concerning the first, he does not think that religious beliefs are produced by evidence or arguments, but (at least in some cases) by experiences, such as “sufferings of various sorts.” “Experiences, thoughts, – life [he says] can force this concept on us.” (Notice that he is again here thinking of the formation of belief as the internalization of concepts.) Concerning the second, he holds that most religious beliefs are simply not subject to rational assessment...Wittgenstein does not exclude legitimate criticism of religion altogether. For example, he criticizes the scapegoat ritual described in Leviticus (16:20 – 22) because it embodies a confused conception of guilt and responsibility, a “false mythology,” as he puts it (PO, p. 197), and he believes that genuine faith can be mixed with superstition in a believer’s mind.” (Hyman, 2010, p. 183).

Wittgenstein’s criticism of Frazer indicates that for Wittgenstein the source of human reaction to certain phenomena in the world is not the result of a rational process nor should it be evaluated by rationality. There are ‘primitive’ reactions in all of us that are akin to instincts. These instincts are not the result of ratiocination rather they are the foundations based on which our rationality, language, and the like rise⁶⁷. For Wittgenstein religious reaction to the world is one of such instinctual reactions. Those who try to support this instinctual basis with rational arguments are not getting the proper picture. This is because as Wittgenstein says these instincts are “the prototype of a way of thinking and not the result of thought” (Z 541).

As Mulhall (2011) argues, if Wittgenstein is to be classified as a fideist it is not because he is a fideist regarding religion, but because he is a fideist regarding all human phenomena, such as language. In other words, to show that Wittgenstein is mistaken about religion, it requires more than name-calling and using ‘fideism’ as a disparaging term. Rather one must show that Wittgenstein’s philosophical view is mistaken, and religious beliefs are in essence, subject to rational assessment. If so, then the atheists and theists can go back to the game of gauging the rationality of religious views.

Now that I have examined the term ‘fideism’ and Wittgenstein’s take on faith, let me go back to Nielsen’s charges. Even though some scholars have concluded that Nielsen’s charge of ‘fideism’ is pejorative and does

67 I want to regard man here as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct but not ratiocination. As a creature in a primitive state. Any logic good enough for a primitive means of communication needs no apology from us. Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination. (OC § 475).

not have much value, there are two fundamental objections Nielsen makes that need to be dealt with. One of them is the autonomy of the religious language game. If one were able to show that language games are all autonomous, then the idea of autonomy for religious language game is not a surprise. However, in so far as language games are not autonomous, then any attempt to indicate the religious language game as autonomous would count as safeguarding religion from rational criticism. Carroll argues that Wittgensteinian fideism has been defined as the "claim that every form of life, including religion, develops its own autonomous language game, and that it is neither necessary nor possible for it to be justified by anything outside of itself". (Carroll, 2008, p. 4)

The second point is about realism in religious language game. Nielsen takes 'realism' to be fundamental to religion and argues against what he perceives to be anti-realism in the Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion. Another charge that goes hand in hand with this charge, is the charge of relativism which I will also deal with in the following. I will first deal with the realism debate and then examine the relativism charge and autonomy of language games.

3.4. *Religious Language-game without Metaphysics and Realism*

Let us see what realism about God amounts to and why is it problematic. Andrew Moore (2003) considers the following conditions to be defining features of religious realism: "(1) God exists independently of our awareness of him and our will, but that (2) despite this, we can know him, and that (3) human language is not an inadequate or inappropriate medium for truthful speech about God". (pp. 1-2) As a realist, Moore finds it problematic to insist that religious grammar is solely determined by theology. What is his reason? There are various types of theology, realist and anti-realist, and since all of them are instances of theology, therefore all of them can determine what is correct. However, as a realist, Moore wants to establish the supremacy of one type of theology – certain realist theologies- over other types of theology. To distinguish between the good and bad grammar of the religious language, he argues that theology is itself regulated. The regulation is to be sought in God himself, "indeed, God's standing in this prevenient relationship to Christian practices is both constitutive and definitive of them; their existence and fruitfulness as Christian practices are dependent on the grace of God. If they are to continue as Christian

practices (rather than as empty rituals, Christian in name only), they cannot be regarded, as a purely Wittgensteinian approach regards them, as self-sustaining and self-regulating.” (Moore, 2003, pp. 78-9)

Wittgenstein’s opposition to realism about God is in tandem with his philosophical view, it is not an add-on to it. Wittgenstein’s view from *Tractatus* till the end is committed to the view that we do not have access to the perspective that makes metaphysical knowledge possible. In his later philosophy, he argued that we cannot abandon our perspective and our perspective is bound with the grammar of our language. The fact that we use words like ‘object’ and ‘God’ or concepts like ‘causality’ and ‘endurance’ is not because our language represents such words or concepts. Whether there is such a thing as God in the metaphysical sense is of no concern to us since we cannot find out about it. Because it is unintelligible.

The reality of God is at the center of debates between theists and atheists. Often the debate is set as if it is concerned with a matter of fact. As a result, the debate centers around the truth or falsehood of the proposition ‘God exists’. What God’s ‘existence’ means is itself a question that has been a matter of debate. If one takes God to be just another fact in the world, this will mean that one has given the status of an object to God. If God is one object among many other objects or as Kierkegaard put it, God may also be a “tremendously large green bird, with a red beak” (Ross, 1975, p. 150). However, God cannot be an object among other objects. Rather, he should be the foundation, cause, or reason of all existing objects. In emphasizing the difference between God’s existence and the existence of other objects, some like Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, reject the dichotomy of being and non-being for describing God. Neither concept is appropriate for capturing the essence of God. Yet, Dionysius was not an atheist and did not want to say that God does not exist in any sense of the term. It seems like some would be tempted to use a concept like ‘Ur-existence’ or ‘super-existence’ so that they would differentiate between the existence of God and the existence of other objects.

Let us elaborate on this point with another example. ‘World exists’ is a fact. However, there is a difference between this fact and the fact that I am living in this world, or the capital of Austria is Vienna, and many other facts that are true of the world. It is a Wittgensteinian virtue to disentangle concepts that are merely the same *prima facie*. The fact that the world exists and the fact that my dog is a mixed breed are very different facts. For example, one may argue that the existence of the world is a neces-

sity. In contrast, the existence of objects within the world is a matter of contingency, and this constitutes their difference. This would establish the difference between the two different ‘matters of fact’ in question. However, the necessity of the world is not the only game in town. The world could be contingent, a brute contingency, or else a contingency that its existence may be dependent upon some reason. Nevertheless, if this is the case, there is still one big difference between the world as a matter of fact, and the existence of objects in the world. While we can conceive of the existence and non-existence of the objects in the world, we cannot possibly conceive of the non-existence of the world. In either case, the world’s necessity or contingency, the existence of the world is a different type of fact from the existence of any object within the world. This is a point that Wittgenstein elaborates on in his ‘On Certainty’ in a different manner. When we claim that Napoleon won a certain war as a historical fact, we are already assuming that the earth has existed for a very long time⁶⁸. The existence of the earth is itself dependent on the existence of the solar system and the solar system upon other physical systems and all of these are dependent on the existence of the world. The fact that the world exists is the presupposition or a hinge that the whole fact-checking enterprise is dependent on it. In his criticism of Descartes in OC, Wittgenstein argues that to doubt one needs certainty⁶⁹. In other words, doubt presupposes certainty. Descartes had embarked on a global skepticism in which he doubted the existence of the external world. The world, however, is not an object in front of us that we could doubt its existence and examine the possibility of skepticism regarding perception. The world must exist as a certainty so that doubt about the existence of particular facts would be possible. It would be meaningless to say that I can question the existence of the world, given that one cannot exist if the world did not exist and if the world did not exist, one could not argue about a possible way of understanding it and its components. Descartes has not proved that his mind exists, rather he has assumed the existence of his mind from the very beginning. It is with the aid of his mind that he is doubting. In his work, it takes some philosophical reflection

68 “It would strike me as ridiculous to want to doubt the existence of Napoleon; but if someone doubted the existence of the earth 150 years ago, perhaps I should be more willing to listen, for now, he is doubting our whole system of evidence. It does strike me as if this system were more certain than a certainty within it.” (OC § 185).

69 “If you tried to doubt everything you would not get as far as doubting anything. The game of doubting itself presupposes certainty.” (§ 115)

to reveal this presupposition, not that he proves that his mind exists. As Wittgenstein's point makes it clear, you must take your mind as a certainty so that any skeptical project or questioning would become possible⁷⁰. This is not a claim about the metaphysical existence of the mind or God or any other certainty that we might have to take as a hinge to make a certain discourse meaningful.

The theist who believes that God is the reason for the world does not prove or doubt the existence of God. Rather, for her, God is the hinge that she believes the system relies on and, as a result, can pose questions about the meaning of objects in the world, the meaning of one's life, and other questions related to what goes on in this world and in one's personal life. Of course, one may not be a believer and therefore God would not be the hinge based on which one understands everything. One may be educated in a certain way and as a result become religious, or one may have a certain experience in life and as a result of that experience, form a belief in God. There are other possibilities of forming belief in God, but as mentioned earlier Wittgenstein is against any rational justification for God and does not perceive rational arguments of any value among the believers.

3.5. Nielsen, Wittgensteinians and Realism

Philosophy for Wittgenstein is the practice of eradicating conceptual confusion. As is apparent from the *Philosophical Investigations*, confusions arise when words and concepts are used in ways in which they are not supposed to. The task of the philosopher, unlike the scientist, is not to propose theories but to bring words back home or to show their proper use. Therefore, his insistence on clarifying different uses of words and concepts in religion and science is part of his philosophical project. In its general form, this Wittgensteinian dictum seems sanguine and acceptable. Getting concepts clear is fundamental to doing philosophy. Disagreements arise when 'proper use' is to be determined. The proper use of 'God' in religion has been subject to extensive debates throughout history. The debate between Nielsen and Phillips is more than anything on the proper use of God

70 The ancient skeptics unlike Descartes and other what has been called 'modern skepticism' were not 'global skeptics'. They did not doubt the existence of the world, rather they assumed the existence of the world and thought of skepticism as a tool that would guarantee happiness or rather a blissful state of mind.

and other fundamental religious concepts. Nielsen is of the mainstream idea that in the religious language game, God is a metaphysical entity. Given that Nielsen thinks God as a metaphysical entity does not exist, he accuses Phillips and other Wittgensteinians of safeguarding religion from criticism. This is because Phillips and his fellow Wittgensteinians along with Wittgenstein himself thought that it is a mistake to perceive 'God' in a metaphysical sense. As noted earlier in this chapter, the Wittgensteinian view is not defending the Metaphysical conception of God, nor is it safeguarding it from criticism. Rather it is undermining the debate between atheists like Nielsen and theists like Alvin Plantinga altogether. In other words, it is against realism about God.

The metaphysical views attributed to religion such as the existence of God, angels, demons, and other such entities are considered redneck science by some atheists. They argue that these entities were used by people who knew no better in the past, and there is no reason to stick to these outdated entities. As a result of this view, they suggest that we abandon these entities. It is interesting to note that some theists and believers also agree with this argument if it does not lead to the abandonment of religion and theism. Some theist liberal theologians, for example, argue that what is central to religion is not the outdated metaphysical baggage but the moral or spiritual teachings. The Wittgensteinian view is claiming something different. It is claimed that it is a conceptual confusion to think of God as a metaphysical entity, it was never supposed to be a metaphysical entity and as a result, the progress of science and the scientific worldview cannot discredit it. If it is not metaphysics, then what is it? God is the grammar of the religious language game. Confusing grammar with metaphysical entities leads to the mystification of language. One of the major Wittgensteinian themes is to demystify words, and demystification is eradicating the metaphysical pretense of the words⁷¹.

Nielsen seems to disagree with his interpretation of Wittgenstein with Phillips and other Wittgensteinians as well. Nielsen thinks that Wittgenstein is also of the view that the metaphysics of religion though one time perceived as valid is now outdated and is of no significance, "These reli-

71 When philosophers use a word – "knowledge", "being", "object", "I", "proposition", "or name" – and try to grasp the *essence* of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language which is its original home? – What *we* do is bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use. (PI 116)

gious metaphysical beliefs are not what is really important in religion, and religiously sensitive people have—though sometimes inchoately—always recognized that. What Wittgenstein saw as important in religion is that if one could have faith—if one could trust in God—then that will turn around one's life, enabling one to be a decent person and to do good in the world without vanity or arrogance". (Nielsen, 2002, p. 148) This line of argument is present in the writings of one of the major figures who influenced Wittgenstein, especially in his earlier phase of thought, namely Leo Tolstoy. Tolstoy thought that the metaphysical claims in religion, in addition to many other stories in the Bible, were fabricated and not essential to Christianity anyway. It should be noted, however, that Nielsen is conflating two different issues here. Religions may have metaphysical claims. In addition to this point, there may be metaphysical views attributed to religion or later added to it. Such metaphysical views can also be assessed but would not be considered as originally belonging to religion⁷². Another point would be that some of the religious claims which are perceived to be metaphysical are not metaphysical claims but the grammar of religion. There is no evidence that Wittgenstein thought that the metaphysics of Christianity is outdated. Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinians are of the view that the metaphysical understanding of religious entities was added to religion later. Whether the metaphysical baggage is original to religion or added later is a debate among anthropologists which was mentioned in the first chapter. Given that Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinians believed that the metaphysical baggage was added later, they offered a way of understanding the religious claims which appear to be metaphysical. Their solution was to consider such entities as grammatical remarks and not as metaphysical entities,

"It might be objected here that a philosopher like Nielsen can demonstrate that one way of speaking—one grammar—is superior to another. Wittgenstein responds to such a move by declaring the autonomy of language and the arbitrariness of grammar. Grammar, he thinks, is not accountable to reality, and any attempt to describe experience or reality in a way that could justify or refute a particular grammar will always beg the question in favor of the grammar used in the evidentiary description." (Arrington, 2002, p. 174)

72 In a debate on the morality of certain passages in the Bible, the Christian philosopher Van In Wagen claims that the book is not the word of God and agrees on the immorality of such passages. (Quote from God of Abraham)

The absence of metaphysics in the Wittgensteinian account of religion has led to other criticisms as well. For example, Cook (1998) accuses followers of Wittgenstein and Wittgenstein himself of offering a reductionist account of religion. This is because Cook contends that Wittgensteinians argue that belief in a metaphysical God is not and has never been a part of religious belief proper. As mentioned in the previous chapter, even if a religious person believes in a metaphysical being or some religious believers hold such beliefs, Wittgensteinians would argue that this belief is not a part of proper religious beliefs. According to Wittgensteinians, religious belief without the metaphysical conception of God is not only possible but also proper religious belief does not have such metaphysical baggage. Cook observes that Wittgensteinians differ from those who argue that belief in metaphysical entities was once part and parcel of religious belief but now that we know them to be false, we can set them aside and stick to other aspects of religious beliefs. Cook finds the rejection of the traditional view of God by Wittgensteinians problematic and characterizes it as a view in which, “believing in (the existence of) God just is a set of attitudes and practices and that the word ‘God’, therefore, is not (and never was) the name for any sort of unique being having supernatural powers—powers for raising the dead, answering prayers, and so on. They also insist that those who hold the Traditional View are guilty of misconstruing the ‘grammar’ of both the words ‘God’ and ‘believe’” (Cook, 1998, p. 444). Cook levels his criticism against Wittgenstein and his followers by stating that, “Wittgenstein and some of his followers have attempted to reduce religious belief to ethical attitudes solemnized and memorialized in ritual, and they think that this entitles them to use religious terms and phraseology despite their denial of the transcendent.” (Ibid, p. 219). There is a historical claim made here about how religion originally was, this lies outside my expertise, and I cannot pass a judgment on that. I will only engage with the philosophical aspect of this debate. Note that here the accusation is not ‘fideism’ but reductionism. Interestingly, Nielsen also accuses Wittgenstein of reductionism, although of another kind,

“Wittgenstein, I think, would respond—and here I think Kierkegaard would respond in the same or a similar manner—that these doctrinal elements, these metaphysical or metaphysical-theological beliefs, as important as they have historically been to Christianity and other religions as well, are nonetheless incoherent and should be set aside while still keep-

ing, for example, the kernel of Christianity. These religious metaphysical beliefs are not what is really important in religion, and religiously sensitive people have—though sometimes inchoately—always recognized that. What Wittgenstein saw as important in religion is that if one could have faith—if one could trust in God—then that will turn around one's life, enabling one to be a decent person and to do good in the world without vanity or arrogance. He took faith without works to be utterly vain. Indeed, it would not, as he saw it, properly speaking even be called 'faith'. Moreover, as he says in his Notebooks of 1916, 'to pray is to think about the meaning of life' and 'to believe in God means to see that life has meaning' These remarks are, against most of the philosophical temper of Wittgenstein, utterly reductionistic. If what they say were so, it would make, by implicit stipulative redefinition, many reflective and sensitive atheists into believers in God. By verbal magic, all sensitive, reflective, caring people become religious believers." (Nielsen, 2002, p. 148).

As we saw earlier in this chapter, Nielsen accuses Wittgenstein and his followers of fideism. By fideism, he means safeguarding religion from rational criticism. Here Nielsen is accusing Wittgenstein of reducing religion to some naturalistic explanation and merely labeling it as religious. Firstly, we should keep in mind that the idea of language games belongs to Wittgenstein's later period of thought. Nielsen leveled the charge of fideism because he thought the idea of language games leads to the compartmentalization of language and as a result, religion would be safeguarded. However, the text Nielsen is quoting from Wittgenstein here is from a 1916 notebook and belongs to the early Wittgenstein when the idea of language games was not yet introduced. Apart from this exegetical point, it should be noted that either reduction in a certain area is possible or it is not. For example, either sociology can be reduced to physics or not. If it can be reduced one has to offer arguments as to why such a reduction is not possible. If religion cannot be reduced to ethics, one has to offer arguments for that. Here again, we go back to the historical question of what religion was, whether it contained metaphysics or not.

There is a question regarding the essence of monotheistic religions which some proponents and opponents of the Wittgensteinian view of religion accept. That essence is taken to be the belief in a metaphysical entity beyond the natural realm. Some critics like C.B Martin and Nielsen argue that "without such metaphysical constructions, belief in God would

not be linked to the hopes that have been traditionally and pervasively a part of Christianity" (Nielsen, 1980, p. 12) and there is no fundamental difference between religion and other forms of secular Humanism. This makes the disagreements quite clear. The debate is whether the metaphysical conception of God is essential to religion or it is a misconception that was added to religion later. Most atheists and theists agree that the metaphysical conception of God is essential to religion. Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinians disagree.

To deal with this charge thoroughly, let us first see how a Wittgensteinian critique of one of the metaphysical views of religion might be. Many metaphysical conceptions of God have been presented by various philosophers. Given that Wittgensteinians mainly engaged with the analytic tradition, I will choose one of the contemporary analytic philosophers for this matter, namely Richard Swinburne. For this purpose, I will examine one of the Wittgensteinians who has explicitly argued for this view. Although Wittgenstein has himself maintained such a position, and I have elaborated on it before, it would be fruitful to examine D.Z. Phillips' arguments in this section.

3.6. Richard Swinburne's Metaphysical Conception of God

Richard Swinburne defines God as follows, "God is a personal being – that is in some sense a person. By a person I mean an individual with basic powers (to act intentionally), purposes, and beliefs." (2010, p. 4). He explores the claim that God exists as follows,

"I take the proposition "God exists" (and the equivalent proposition "There is a God") to be logically equivalent to "there exists necessarily a person without a body (i.e., a spirit) who necessarily is eternal, perfectly free, omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly good and the creator of all things". I use "God" as the name of the person picked out by this description." (2004, p. 7).

Swinburne then goes on to describe God in more detail. In describing God's omnipotence and omniscience, he seems to be suggesting that there is a quantitative difference between God's knowledge, freedom, and power, on the one hand, and human's knowledge, freedom, and power, on the other hand. There is, however, one big difference between God and human beings in that God is a bodiless person,

“God is supposed to be bodiless. For a person to have a body is for there to be a chunk of matter through which alone he or she can make a difference to the physical world and acquire true beliefs about it. But being omnipotent, God can make a difference in the world and learn about it without being thus dependent. So, he will have no body; he does not depend on matter to affect and learn about the world. He moves the stars. As we move our arms, just like that – as a basic action”. (2010, p. 10).

Wittgenstein famously argued against the meaningfulness of attributing psychological states to non-human beings, “that only of a living human being and what resembles (behaves like) a living human being can one say: it has sensations, it seems, is blind; hears; is deaf; is conscious or unconscious.” (PI § 281). Given that God in the Abrahamic tradition is widely recognized to be a person, it seems like based on Wittgenstein’s argument we should conclude that attributing psychological states to God is meaningless. Of course, attributing such states to God in a metaphorical way is not meaningless. As Wittgenstein further elaborates in this section of the PI, we may speak about a doll being in pain or a pot seeing and hearing stuff, “Is it untrue or nonsensical to say that a pot talks? Does one have a clear idea of the circumstances in which we’d say of a pot that it talked? (Even a nonsense poem is not nonsense in the same way as the babble of a baby.)” (PI § 282). The last part of this quotation indicates that there are various types of nonsense and what is meant by the meaninglessness of God being a bodiless spirit needs examination. The nonsensicality of God being a person is not like the babble of a baby. The problem can be best understood by what Wittgenstein says about having a “clear idea of the circumstances in which we’d say of a pot that it talked”. Given that we cannot recognize such circumstances we cannot meaningfully assess what it means for a pot to talk. If we attribute ‘talking’ to pots, it would only be meaningful for us if we anthropomorphize the pot. Let us take the example of Gregor Samsa in the Kafka’s short story ‘The Metamorphosis’. In that story, we have a human being who suddenly turns into an insect. Although Samsa is not a human anymore in the story, he describes his situation, expresses anger and despair, and other psychological states. The insect is anthropomorphized to the extent that one can say, it is as if it is the story of a human being who is wearing the outfit of an insect. This is because we do not have any idea what it would take for an insect or a lion to describe his situation to us. Likewise, if we attribute psychological attributes and states to God, given

that we do not have a clear idea of what would be the circumstances in which a bodiless spirit could be so, it could only become meaningful for us if we anthropomorphized God. It should be noted that anthropomorphism regarding God is not accepted in monotheism. However, among monotheists, it is quite common to attribute psychological states to God.

In addition, if one were to argue that God has all the power (omnipotence), the consequences would defy the grammar of the word God. This happens especially because we judge the concept of 'power' attributed to human beings but then amplify this concept so that it 'fits' the divine. As a result, we hear claims to the effect that God can do immoral things and can destruct a person, a people, and the entire human race if it wanted to. This conception of God is a 'Frankenstein without limits' as Rhees argues and elaborates why we should refrain from talking about 'power' when it comes to God as if it were a human attribute but just much more intense,

"The difference between the power of God and the power of the devil: it is difficult to understand at all clearly what this difference is (otherwise there might be no idolatry); and yet people with any religion at all will have a lively idea of it, generally. The power of God is a different power from the power of the devil. But if you said that God is more powerful than the devil – then I should not understand you, because I should not know what sort of measure you used." (Rhees, 1997, p. 37).

The metaphysical conception of God presented by Swinburne is not the only conception of God in the Abrahamic religions, namely the three religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Each of these religions needs consideration before coming up with a sweeping remark about all of them. For example, there has been a surge of interest in the Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion among Jewish scholars and in examining this phenomenon, Fisher (2015) points to the following features as a source of this interest, "classical Judaism has no term that corresponds to the Greek-derived word "theology." One common strategy among Jewish thinkers to resolve these issues is to argue that the rabbinic term commonly identified with the belief—'Emunah—has etymological roots more closely associated with trust than belief...This deeply entrenched view that belief has a minimal role in the Jewish context is at the heart of the symbiosis between Wittgenstein's philosophy and contemporary Jewish thought." (p. 338).

Examining the history of Christianity also reveals that there are different conceptions of God in place. Identifying three broad trends in the history of Christianity, Hyman speaks of three conceptions of faith in Christianity,

“the Thomist conception, the Lutheran conception, and the Kierkegaardian conception. Simplifying somewhat, Thomist faith consists in believing that certain metaphysical and historical propositions are true, Lutheran faith combines this with trust in the living God, and Kierkegaardian faith is simply trust in the living God. It was the last of these conceptions of faith that attracted Wittgenstein: “Religious faith and superstition are quite different,” he wrote. “One of the results from fear and is a sort of false science. The other is a trusting.” (CV, p. 72, 1948)” (cited in Hyman, 2010, p. 186).

Many other types of Christianity are at odds with the way Swinburne talks about God. Take the example of ‘The Mystical theology’ attributed to Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. In this work, the author contends that God is beyond human understanding and language, and we cannot possibly describe or understand him. Therefore, attributing any characteristic to God, be it love or hatred, wisdom, or ignorance, is not meaningful. This treatise belongs to the 5th or 6th century and argues against the possibility of positive claims regarding God⁷³. This work is an instance of what is called ‘negative theology’ or ‘Apophatic theology’ which broadly speaking insists on the unknowability of God through positive knowledge. It stands in contrast to ‘Cataphatic theology’ which broadly speaking claims that knowledge of God through positive attributes can be gained. In considering the theological positions of three important Christian figures, namely John

73 This is a passage from this short mystical Christian treaty in which it says of God that, “ it is neither soul nor intellect; nor has it imagination, opinion reason or understanding; nor can it be expressed or conceived, since it is neither number nor order; nor greatness nor smallness; nor equality nor inequality; nor similarity nor dissimilarity; neither is it standing, nor moving, nor at rest; neither has it power nor is power, nor is light; neither does it live nor is it life; neither is it essence, nor eternity nor time; nor is it subject to intelligible contact; nor is it science nor truth, nor kingship nor wisdom; neither one nor oneness, nor godhead nor goodness; nor is it spirit according to our understanding, nor filiation, nor paternity; nor anything else known to us or to any other beings of the things that are or the things that are not; neither does anything that is know it as it is; nor does it know existing things according to existing knowledge; neither can the reason attain to it, nor name it, nor know it; neither is it darkness nor light, nor the false nor the true; nor can any affirmation or negation be applied to it, for although we may affirm or deny the things below it, we can neither affirm nor deny it, inasmuch as the all-perfect and unique Cause of all things transcends all affirmation, and the simple pre-eminence of Its absolute nature is outside of every negation- free from every limitation and beyond them all.” (Achieved from the following link, <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeII/MysticalTheology.html>)

Scotus Eriugena (9th century), Anselm (11th century), and Nicholas of Cusa (15th century), Anthony Kenny detects their varying degrees of insistence on what can be sensibly uttered about God. For example, John Scotus Eriugena maintains that even in using attributes like 'good' and 'just' for God, we are using them metaphorically. According to him, "God's essence is unknown to men and angels: indeed, it is unknown to God himself. Just as I, a human being, know who I am, but not what I am, God does not know what he is. If he did, he would be able to define himself; but the infinite cannot be defined." (Kenny, 2006, p. 445). Among the three that Kenny considers, Nicholas of Cusa seems to have the most radical view, "Cusa regards negative predicates as no less misleading than positive ones if they are applied to God. No name is apt for God. We cannot even call him 'The One', because for us oneness excludes otherness and plurality. If we exclude that exclusion, when calling God 'The One' what are we left with? We are still infinitely distant from naming God." (Ibid, p. 447). Such views by prominent Christian thinkers are all metaphysical positions, holding that God is an entity independent and beyond our cognition, although very different from the view presented by Swinburne. Despite the initial similarities that Wittgenstein's position might have with such views present in negative theology, it is important to keep in mind that the anti-metaphysical stance of Wittgenstein does not exclude views.⁷⁴⁷⁵

If the metaphysical conception of God is not a part of religion and is not fundamental to it, then what is? The religious language game and the concepts it contains allow us to interpret and understand life in a certain

74 This has led some to argue that Wittgenstein's position is an elitist view, "perhaps Wittgenstein's account is true of the religious beliefs of some sophisticated contemporary believers. But, as before, his account seems much less plausible as a description of the religious beliefs of most ordinary religious believers." (Child, 2011, p. 229)

75 Although some have difficulty in recognizing the type of theology Wittgenstein advocates as a legitimate theology, some accept it but are critical of Wittgenstein's dismissal of other types of theology. As one example, Hansen expresses his criticism in the following manner, "Wittgenstein was impressed by Tolstoy's depiction of the faith of simple folk; Kierkegaardian construal of faith echoes throughout Wittgenstein's writings and Wittgenstein was familiar with the writings of St. Augustine. The likes of Kierkegaard and Tolstoy may be right about a lot of things about the Christian faith, but their theological views are not the only games in town, and ruling competing views on faith, salvation, and religion proper out of court by use of the tag 'superstition' lays Wittgenstein and his followers open to the charge of displaying the kind of narrow-mindedness and lack of attention to detail that Wittgenstein saw in Frazer." (Hansen, 2010, p. 1019)

way. The concepts that Wittgenstein emphasizes are guilt and redemption. Living a religious life means practicing the language game which operates with this way of looking at life. This is, however, not limited to religious language games. One example which Wittgenstein uses is the concept of 'object'. We cannot find an 'object' anywhere in the world⁷⁶. Rather it is a concept that allows us to speak in a certain way about reality. As Hyman puts it, "One of the fundamental claims in Wittgenstein's later philosophy is that the systems of concepts we use cannot be justified by reference to reality, because they cannot either conflict with the facts or accord with the facts. Some systems of concepts are more powerful, or more convenient for a given purpose than some others." (Hyman, 2010, p.182) Therefore, another criticism that could be leveled against a certain religion in comparison to other religions, or to religions in general in contrast to a secular way of life, is to compare them in terms of a common purpose they all have a claim to.

To sum up, the concept of 'God' does not represent a metaphysical reality for Wittgenstein. Rather it allows us to interpret and understand life in a certain manner. It is like the word 'object' which allows a certain way of practice and language use. It would be futile to look for an 'object' in the world or to try to find evidence for or against the existence of 'an object'. As Arrington puts it, whereas in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein found metaphysical claims such as 'there is God' or 'there is an object' meaningless propositions, in his later philosophy he found a use for them. They direct and provide a certain way of practice. They will become nonsense if we take them to be claims about reality. The metaphysician is making a mistake in that he takes these grammatical remarks to be factual claims⁷⁷, "Many of the houses of cards Wittgenstein wishes to destroy (PI § 118) are metaphysical statements which are confused because the metaphysician attributes to them the properties of both factual and conceptual propositions. They are viewed by the metaphysician as being about the world (factual) and also as necessarily true (conceptual)". (Arrington, 2002, p. 169).

76 'A is a physical object' is a piece of instruction which we give only to someone who doesn't yet understand either what 'A' means or what 'physical object' means. Thus, it is instruction about the use of words, and 'physical object' is a logical concept. (Like color, quantity...) And that is why no such proposition as 'There are physical objects' can be formulated". (OC § 36).

77 "Philosophical investigations: conceptual investigations. The essential thing about metaphysics: it obliterates the distinction between factual and conceptual investigations." (Z § 458).

There is an interesting claim that suggests a link between fideism and metaphysics. Forrest (2013) formulates the problem as follows, “While Nielsen’s arguments regarding the relation between ‘religious belief and metaphysics’ have met a range of objections... some have pointed out that once we allow metaphysics enter into religious language game fideism collapses. If we modify the language game of religion to embrace metaphysical claims, then the autonomy thesis (the standards of religious forms of life justify religious language) no more holds”. (Forrest 2013). The argument is that metaphysics would make religion prone to the same standards of rationality and truth that exist in other language games. This argument is a valid one only if metaphysical claims are a part of the language game of religion. Once again, the role of metaphysics in religion takes us back to the historical question mentioned before. If monotheistic religions were originally filled with metaphysical claims and Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinians still insisted on omitting them, then they are not any different from liberal theologians. In that case, there is no fundamental difference between the language game of religion and science. Rather both were originally meant to be about truth, rationality, proper description of the world, and so on. However, it turned out that religion is inferior to science in these aspects, so if one wants to preserve religion one has to omit these aspects. This is totally against what Wittgenstein claims to be the case. However, it is probable that upon historical investigation we find out that Wittgenstein’s conception of religion is compatible with some religions (e.g., Christianity) and not compatible with other religions (e.g., Islam). To settle such disagreements, historical investigations are required.

3.7. Absurdities of the Metaphysical View

To appreciate what kind of absurdities one may run into when one argues for the metaphysical conception of God, let us examine an example D.Z. Phillips (1993) offers regarding the problem of evil. In his examination of this view, Phillips argues for the absurdity of claims which attempt to transcend the human condition and claim access to the metaphysical realm. The problem of evil in its contemporary variation mostly deals with a moral question. How can an omnipotent, omniscient, all-loving (or omnibenevolent God) allow so much pain and suffering to befall human beings? His omnipotence implies his ability to avoid or prevent harm and suffering experienced by humans. His omniscience implies knowing

how to prevent and avoid pain. His all-loving character will also motivate him to take care of us and prevent pain and suffering. There are myriad of arguments and counterarguments offered for and against the problem of evil. Some seek to offer explanations or justifications for the existence of pain and suffering in a world that has been created and is governed by the Almighty God. Such attempts are called theodicies. Developing a Wittgensteinian argument, Phillips finds offering theodicies irreligious. The philosopher who proposes theodicies is of the idea that everything is comprehensible to human reason and, she has managed to comprehend such a profound problem and solve it. Phillips argues that this leads to proposing theodicies that picture a monstrous God. We have a moral standard based on which we judge all actions whether they are the acts of human beings or acts of God. Not preventing the pain and suffering which goes on in this world, in case such prevention is possible, is immoral. As a result of this view, we may conclude that God is immoral. Phillips criticizes many philosophers of religion in his book, but most of all he focuses on Richard Swinburne. Phillips criticizes Swinburne for a myriad of reasons. For example, Swinburne defines God's features without paying any attention to the religious tradition. He defines omnipotence as God's ability to do anything which does not involve a contradiction. Phillips mocks this definition by offering examples which God cannot perform but which do not involve a contradiction,

“Riding a bicycle, licking and savoring a Haagen-Dazs ice cream, bumping one's head, having sexual intercourse, learning a language, and so on...To ride a bicycle is to have a body possessing limbs, etc., and it takes a being with a head to bump it. I need a tongue and taste buds to savor ice cream. As for sexual intercourse, need I say?” (Phillips, 2003, p. 12)

Phillips then goes on to examine the grammar of 'God'. He argues that the conceptual considerations in the grammar of God would limit our definition of God and the features we can attribute to him. Among the criticisms that Phillips levels Swinburne is his reliance on a metaphysical stance. Holding a metaphysical stance towards God would not allow us to claim knowledge of God and this has dire consequences for the theist,

“If everything is said to be seeming, nothing is. The metaphysical claim ceases to affect anything that happens. We will go on making our usual distinction between 'what seems to be the case' and 'what is the case'. Swinburne's God, in this context, suffers the same fate as Descartes's ma-

lignant demon. The threat of a world of ‘seeming’ is not more successful than the threat to deceive us all the time.” (Phillips, 2003, p. 53)

Most theodicies in contemporary debates have three shared features that Phillips enumerates and are as follows. These features are inherited from 17th and 18th-century Theism. The first one is a deist conception of God which somehow perceives God as a detached deity from the natural world. Secondly, evil is not considered a horrendous experience that human beings go through but an abstract entity that needs to reconcile with the existence of such a God. Thirdly, God is compared with human beings in having will power and mind, and intentions and judged as an agent like other human agents which can be judged and understood fully. The Theodacist wants to maintain her moral standards so that we can judge and understand God’s actions with them. As a result of this, she must find a way to acquit God from immorality given the pain and suffering that goes on in the world. Phillips argues that the Theodacist is trying to have her cake and eat it too. As a result of this intellectual greed, we are faced with theodicies that are insensitive to human pain and suffering, immoral, and portray God as a monster. Phillips then goes on to argue that exploring the grammar of God in the religious context allows us to appreciate other religious options which are not confused. Instead of claiming to know the essence of God, we ought to accept our human condition and the limitations it has for our understanding. Drawing on the story of Job in the Bible, Phillips tells us that wonder at the existence of pain and suffering is a very human reaction that cannot be silenced by theodicies. It is not as if there is a wonder and then come theodicies and other explanations. Rather the wonder and bewilderment come after all explanations. In the story of Job, having considered all possibilities and explanations for the evil that occurred, he remains bewildered. Accepting the human condition which entails death, suffering, pain, sickness, treachery of friends, and the like or something like fate may replace the sense of wonder. This is because we cannot know God’s ways.

Wittgenstein emphasized the sense of wonder as a brute response to certain phenomena and was against the view that scientific explanation can be a response to this sense of wonder or that it can eliminate this wonder. The Theodacist is of the idea that this wonder can be explained away. The rational attempts in explaining God’s ways in the religious discourse take this sense of wonder away. Interestingly, Phillips distinguishes between two parallel secular ways of thinking. One in which the philosopher thinks he

can explain the sense of wonder with science and technology, and one in which one does not find such a response possible and instead finds ways to come to terms with the human condition⁷⁸. Phillips' philosophical view is a Wittgensteinian one which emphasizes the meaninglessness of metaphysics and stresses the limitations of the human condition. He shows the meaninglessness of metaphysics by showing how absurd it can become. This applies to non-religious concepts like time and justice as well as religious ones like God. Phillips himself indicates that the disagreement is not to be placed between religious and non-religious but "between those who recognize and those who do not recognize that the limits of human existence are beyond understating." (1993, p. 153). It should be noted here that 'meaninglessness' is not like the babble of a child here. We can understand what a metaphysical God with human moral traits who allows pain and suffering means. Phillips would argue that it means a monster in the sky. This is exactly the 'meaninglessness' in question. Speaking of the metaphysical God would turn 'God' into a 'monster' and that is because when we speak about the metaphysical God, we tend to anthropomorphize it. We have no other option because we do not have any idea what the circumstances are in which a metaphysical God would 'create' the world and 'love' his creatures and so on. Therefore, to use a Wittgensteinian phrase, the language that we use to talk about the metaphysical God, goes on holiday. This is what is meant by the meaninglessness of the metaphysical conception of God⁷⁹.

78 This indicates the inadequacy of the fideism charge insofar as it means safeguarding religion against criticism. Phillips is criticizing a certain religious attitude himself and defending another one. Meanwhile, he is also defending the reasonableness of a secular view and criticizing another secular view.

79 Rundle (2004) has a somewhat similar argument why talking about the metaphysical God is meaningless "Someone who insists that God, though lacking eyes and ears, watches him incessantly and listens to his prayers, is not using "watch" or "listen" in a sense we can recognize, so while the words may be individually meaningful and their combination grammatical, that is as far as meaningfulness goes: what we have is an unintelligible use of an intelligible form of words. God is not of this world, but that is not going to stop us from speaking of him as if he were. It is not that we have a proposition that is meaningless because unverifiable, but we simply misuse the language, making an affirmation that, in the light of our understanding of the words, is totally unwarranted, an affirmation that makes no intelligible contact with reality". (P. 11).

3.8. Wittgenstein's Personal View of Religion

Wittgenstein's personal views on religion are in accordance with his philosophical views. Although he was not a religious man, Wittgenstein famously claimed "I am not a religious man: but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view." (Drury, 1981, p. 94). He has been described as an agnostic by his close friends who felt deep sympathy for certain religious concepts while found other religious concepts deplorable,

"If we call him an agnostic, this must not be understood in the sense of the familiar polemical agnosticism that concentrates and prides itself, on the argument that man could never know about these matters. The idea of a God in the sense of the Bible, the image of God as the creator of the world, hardly ever engaged Wittgenstein's attention . . . , but the notion of a last judgment was of profound concern to him. 'When we meet again at the last judgment' was a recurrent phrase with him, which he used in many a conversation at a particularly momentous point. He would pronounce the words with an indescribably inward-gazing look in his eyes, his head bowed, the picture of a man stirred to his depths". (Engelmann 1967: 77–8).

He was a person who was deeply troubled by a sense of guilt and anxiety and to him religion seemed to correspond to this attitude, "In the unpublished part of the letter to Russell, dated 22 June 1912, Wittgenstein says that he is reading James's book whenever he can and that it is doing him a lot of good since it is helping him to get rid of *Sorge* (in the sense in which Goethe used the word in the second part of *Faust*)" (McGuinness, 1966, p. 321) such concepts as guilt, anxiety, wretchedness and the like which were present in religion and impressed him is exactly what he means by religious way of looking at the world. In addition to the above quotation from Engelmann, Norman Malcolm another close friend of Wittgenstein also reports a similar attraction to certain religious concepts for Wittgenstein,

"If 'to be a religious person' means to lead a religious life', then I think he was not a religious person. Yet he reflected often and deeply on what it would mean to live such a life. He was dismayed by his own character, perceiving himself as vain, cowardly, and false. Sometimes he suffered the anguish that has pushed others into religious life. Probably he had no real hope that his life would take a new direction, that he would be 'turned around'. Probably he felt that he could not, or would not, 'open his heart'. At times he felt a dread of the Last Judgement – as when he

wrote to me [in 1940] ‘may I prove not too much of a skunk when I shall be tried’”. (Malcolm 1984: 83)

Malcolm further reports that Wittgenstein was not interested in God as the cause of the universe, as its creator and sustainer because he thought the idea of a creator was unintelligible⁸⁰. Wittgenstein was fervently against the idea of God as a being who created the world,

“It is a dogma of the Roman Church [said Wittgenstein] that the existence of God can be proved by natural reason. Now this dogma would make it impossible for me to be a Roman Catholic. If I thought of God as another being like myself, outside myself, only infinitely more powerful, then I would regard it as my duty to defy him.” (Drury, 'Conversations with Wittgenstein', in *Recollections of Wittgenstein*, op. cit. pp. 107)

In a further remark, he has been recorded as saying,

“Wittgenstein [once said] that he thought that he could understand the conception of God, in so far as it is involved in one’s awareness of one’s own sin and guilt. He added that he could not understand the conception of a Creator. I think that the ideas of Divine judgment, forgiveness, and redemption had some intelligibility for him, as being related in his mind to feelings of disgust with himself, an intense desire for purity, and a sense of the helplessness of human beings to make themselves better. But the notion of a being making the world had no intelligibility for him at all”. (Malcolm 1984: 59)

There is a personal incident in Wittgenstein’s life that indicates that his philosophical conviction is following his personal view. Goodman (2004) elaborates on this experience that Wittgenstein had in his life and the traumatic effect it had on him and his belief that religion can cure such calamities,

80 “Wittgenstein [once said] that he thought that could understand the conception of God, in so far as it is involved in one’s awareness of one’s sin and guilt. He added that he could not understand the conception of a Creator. I think that the ideas of Divine judgment, forgiveness, and redemption had some intelligibility for him, as being related in his mind to feelings of disgust with himself, an intense desire for purity, and a sense of the helplessness of human beings to make themselves better. But the notion of a being making the world had no intelligibility for him at all”. (Malcolm 1984: 59)

“On their second meeting, Wittgenstein and Drury took a walk to the small village of Madingley, outside Cambridge, during which the forty-one-year-old author of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* – officially enrolled under Frank Ramsey as a Ph.D. student – told the twenty-three-year-old undergraduate philosophy student about his childhood fears, induced by a pattern of fallen plaster in the lavatory of his home. He still suffered from these fears while a student at Manchester in 1910, Wittgenstein continued: “You will think I am crazy, you will think I have gone mad when I tell you that only religious feelings are a cure for such fears.” (p. 37)

In his early philosophy, he perceived God to be the meaning of life. Believing in God is about making life meaningful not articulating factual beliefs. Therefore, it is not the business of evidence to deal with religion and religion is about faith and perceiving the world with the aid of certain concepts and leading one’s life accordingly, “So the difference between the religious believer and the non-believer is not a difference about any matters of fact; it is a difference in the way they conceive themselves and the world, and in the way, they lead their lives.” (Child, 2011, p. 240)

The personal views of Wittgenstein which were examined are also in accordance with his take on religion. This is not an argument in favor of his views of course. The legitimacy of his argument and his perception of religion is dependent on whether such a view can be held. To resolve the disagreement about whether God was a metaphysical entity in religion or not we need to resort to history and not philosophy. How Christianity originally articulated God – metaphysical or grammatical – is at the heart of the debate between Nielsen, Cook, and the like on the one hand and Wittgensteinians on the other hand. History lies outside my expertise and therefore I will not be able to pass judgment on that. Likewise, if one were to argue for the compatibility of Wittgenstein’s views with Islam and Judaism non-philosophical considerations are required as well. Having fully considered this issue let us now turn to two last points which are relevant to the fideism charge, namely ‘understanding the religious language’ and ‘autonomy of language games’.

3.9. Can Only the Religious Understand Religion?

There is an idea sometimes attributed to Wittgenstein and his followers in the philosophy of religion that one must be religious to understand what

religion is. As mentioned earlier, Nielsen considers this point as one of the components of the fideism charge. There are various ways in which this claim can be understood and assessment of these different ways of understanding religious belief is different. There is the non-controversial claim that at least some of the concepts that we have can be developed if we have had the relevant experience. I can know redness only if I have had the visual experience of seeing the color red or I can have knowledge of how coffee smells if I have been exposed to the smell of coffee. It does not seem possible to describe the color red or the smell of coffee in words. If there is indeed no such possibility, then the only way I can gain knowledge of concepts like redness depends on my experience of the color red. Here I am not referring to propositional knowledge about the wavelength of the color red but about the phenomenological encounter with the color red. However, if there is the possibility of describing such concepts as the color red or the smell of coffee, knowledge of one aspect of such concepts remains dependent on experiencing them. This is the phenomenal acquaintance with the redness. As the famous Mary Argument by Frank Jackson (1986) has it, Mary is a scientist who knows every scientific fact that there is to know about the color red. However, she has never had the chance to encounter this color in real life and therefore lacks the phenomenal knowledge of redness. When encountered with the redness, let us say in an instance of being exposed to a very red rose, she gains new knowledge which was not available to her before this encounter. One may argue that religious experience is as basic as experiencing the color red or the smell of coffee. In this case, if one is to achieve a non-propositional knowledge of the religion, one must have the religious experience, “Wittgenstein compared the reality of God with the reality of color. Developing that striking comparison, I would say that while the color system opens up a ‘logical space’ for describing the appearance of objects, monotheistic systems open up a ‘logical space’ for challenging false absolutes—whether they be the individual ego, a human collectivity, or elemental powers of nature.” (Brenner, 2001, p. 53).

Wittgenstein counts certain experiences as reasons for converting to religion. It may be retorted that we interpret our experiences with already existing concepts frameworks and concepts that we have. Therefore, one must be religious to interpret experiences religiously. There is a tradition in the philosophy of religion, Rudolf Otto being one of them, which argues that experiencing ‘the holy’ is such an anomalous experience that cannot be

explained with the aid of non-religious concepts. When one first encounters this experience it may be horrid, or one may feel one has encountered something evil or alien. This is because this experience is so different from other experiences we have. As a result of this one develops or adopts religious concepts and language to refer to this experience and come to terms with it⁸¹⁸².

There is of course another way of assessing this claim and that is that having no experience of a religious life would not provide the requirements of the principle of charity for understanding it. If one is not familiar enough with religious life or religious belief, then the system of reference based on which one assesses religious beliefs would be irrelevant to it. This is in fact what happens when one examines religion solely based on the language game of science. It turns religion into a hypothesis and then examines the scientific plausibility of its components. Some types of religious believers are willing to treat their beliefs as such and have scientific claims. In such cases, one needs not be religious to be able to understand them. However, if religious beliefs are not hidden scientific claims and are genuinely religious beliefs then to understand and assess them, we need familiarity with religion. Otherwise, the possibility of charitable understanding which is a necessary condition for engaging with a phenomenon resulting in understanding it, would not arise.

Having propositional knowledge of religion and understanding those propositions is possible for anyone who has a good command of language. Wittgenstein and his followers are right in that a deep understanding, which means something more than propositional knowledge, requires practicing religion. This is true of every other practice, and it is not limited to religion. A good example that can illustrate this point can be derived from anthropology. The anthropologist goes to a foreign culture and studies the people there and writes on his observations and findings for his people. The people who are studied carry out practices in their daily life some

81 For a more detailed discussion of this tradition see Somerville (1995).

82 Speaking of experience in this context, as a necessary component of knowing some phenomenon also needs elaboration. In some religious and mystical traditions, experiencing God or an actual encounter with him is supposed to be a form of experience that is necessary for knowledge of God. While Wittgenstein also emphasizes life experience as an important component of converting to religious belief, there are great differences between these conceptions of experience which require examination, 'Sufferings of various sorts. These neither show us, God, in the way a sense impression shows us an object nor do they give rise to conjectures about him. Experiences, thoughts, —life can force this concept on us' (CV, p. 86).

of which are not shared by the anthropologist and her society. The anthropologist does not participate in those practices, nevertheless, she observes them firsthand and asks questions, and tries to understand them. She then writes on them, and her folks back home will read her secondhand account. The natives who practice their practices have a deeper understanding of what they are doing and the anthropologist fares second while the readers of her book will have the least deep understating of all. The same could be said of religion or any other practice, including science. The scientist who works in the laboratory and conducts experiments has a much deeper knowledge of what science as a practice is than those who merely hear the results of the scientific discoveries in the news or pop science books. The emphasis on practice means that the experts in religion are not theologians or philosophers of religion, but rather those believers who go through the thick and thin of religious practice, namely, the faithful. Therefore, the question is not about understanding the verbal structure of sentences in each language. Rather it is about the level of understanding that one gain given the level of engagement one has with a certain practice.

Hillary Putnam succinctly mentions the difference between propositional knowledge and the deeper knowledge which comes as a result of participation in the religious form of life. He argues that to understand the religious discourse we need to understand a certain form of life, “What characterizes that form of life is not the expression of belief that accompany it, but a way- a way that includes words and pictures but is far from consisting of just words and pictures –of living one’s life, of regulating all of one’s decisions”. (2009, p. 154).

3.10. Autonomy of Language-games

‘Autonomy’ of language games can be used in two different senses. The first one is controversial. In this case, the claim is that each sphere of language is a separate and also private sphere which has no interaction with other spheres, and they are fixed. The second sense of autonomy consists of the claim that each section has its own rules although there are some common elements for the assessment among various language games. In addition to this point, a further claim is that each section is prone to change. Huang draws our attention to the fact that the ‘privatization of language games’ is not inherent to the conception of language games and the autonomy of each language game,

It is one thing to say, with Wittgenstein, that different languages have different logics, and quite another to say, with a fideist, that they are private and can be understood by their respective users only. Few would doubt that our scientific, moral, fictional, aesthetic, and logico-mathematical languages do have different logics and need to be understood in different ways. It is a plain truth that fictional language is not to be read as scientific and vice versa; aesthetic language is not to be confused with moral and vice versa; etc. Yet, to hold such a plain truth has nothing to do with privatization. For despite their differences, one need not be a scientist to know how to read a scientific report, an artist to appreciate a work of art, or a moralist to understand a moral imperative, etc. One needs only to know that each of these languages has its logic and is to be understood in its own light. Now, Wittgenstein simply adds that religious language is yet another language, with yet another logic, to be understood in yet another way. (Huang 1995: 252–3)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Wittgenstein has not simply equated meaning with use. Such a simplistic equation would imply that any use of the words and concepts would be legitimate, and no normative discussion would be required. One dominant point in Nielsen's criticism is that certain Wittgensteinians offer an uncritical acceptance of whatever use exists in language games. My considerations in the previous section indicate that this is false. Wittgenstein has indeed argued, as mentioned in the previous chapter, that the very existence of language games cannot be justified because reasons and justifications are themselves part of our language games, but this does not lead to compartmentalization of language games and unquestionability of the existing language games⁸³.

The kind of problem that the autonomy of language games can make gains explicit formulation in the following passage from Child (2011),

83 As I mentioned earlier criticisms against Wittgenstein are not only leveled by atheists. John Hick (1964) was among the theists who were critical of Wittgenstein. Here Hick criticizes specifically the idea of the autonomy of religious language game "Religious language is autonomous as a distinctive form of life; and modes of question, distinction, affirmation, and denial which have their proper place in other "language-games" (for instance those of the sciences) will if intruded here only give rise to false problems. The religious life, including its appropriate modes of speech, observably exists, and the external observer must be content to say, with Wittgenstein: *dieses Sprachspiel wird gespielt* [this language game is played]". (Hick 1964:238) Hick's criticism is based on a misunderstanding. Wittgenstein nowhere argues that there is no common element between language games whatsoever. He argues that each language game has distinct rules.

“If religious beliefs are supposed to be true in the same sense as other beliefs, they cannot be judged by a distinctive set of standards that are internal to the religious world picture to which they belong; they are answerable to the same standards of truth and rationality that we apply elsewhere. On the other hand, if religion is a self-contained practice, with no implications for our other beliefs – if, in particular, religious utterances and beliefs are not supposed to be literally true – then religion is not answerable to the standards of truth and rationality that are appropriate to non-religious beliefs. The question, then, is whether or not religious beliefs are supposed to be literally true: true in just the same way as other beliefs. It does seem possible for there to be a religious practice that is insulated from normal standards of truth and rationality because the beliefs involved do not aspire to literal truth. Such a practice would fit Wittgenstein’s characterization of religion and religious belief. And, as we said above, perhaps Wittgenstein’s account is true of the religious beliefs of some sophisticated contemporary believers. But, as before, his account seems much less plausible as a description of the religious beliefs of most ordinary religious believers.” (Child, 2011, p. 229).

Although Child is right that ordinary religious believers would not agree with Wittgenstein, but it should be clear that the majority do not determine the proper use of a word. The proper use of the words becomes clear once the words have gone through grammatical investigations.

This does not mean that the grammar of language games is fixed once and for all, and as a result, the proper use of words is fixed once and for all. Wittgenstein has an analogy of the riverbed in OC, where he tells us that some parts of the riverbed change gradually⁸⁴. If it were to change fast, our language would become chaotic. Other passages in Wittgenstein’s written material indicate the falsehood of the claim that language games were fixed and unchangeable forever. As the following passage indicates,

“New types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten”. (PI § 23).

84 “The mythology may change back into a state of flux, the river-bed of thoughts may shift. But I distinguish between the movement of the waters on the riverbed and the shift of the bed itself, though there is not a sharp division of the one from the other.” (OC § 97).

3.11. Relativism Charge

So far, I have assessed the charge of fideism against Wittgenstein. There is another charge against Wittgenstein, namely, ‘relativism’. In the following, I will assess the claim that Wittgenstein’s philosophical view leads to relativism. To do so, I will examine various conceptions of relativism and see whether they fit with Wittgenstein’s philosophy.

3.11.1. Arbitrariness of Grammar

The riverbed analogy, which was mentioned above, indicates that just because grammar is prone to change, it does not mean that there is chaos. There are restrictions on grammar, and Wittgenstein did not advocate an extreme relativism of ‘anything goes’ type towards grammar in his later works. As Forster (2004) explains, Wittgenstein toyed with the idea that grammar could be arbitrary, and it was a matter of choice what proposition could be adopted as grammar, and one could shift from one game to another as one willed to do so. However, this view later was substituted by the idea that what counts as grammar is itself restricted. Our human nature or the social and cultural upbringing play their respective roles in the formation of grammar, and only propositions which could be employed in our lives can function as grammar. The following are two examples from Wittgenstein that Forster mentions,

“So, is the calculus something we adopt arbitrarily? No more so than the fear of fire, or the fear of a raging man coming at us” (PG, I, 68; cf. BT, p. 160).

“And thinking and inferring (like counting) is . . . bounded for us, not by an arbitrary definition, but by natural limits,” including the fact that a person “can’t *think* it . . . he can’t fill it with personal content; he can’t really *go along with it*—personally, with his intelligence” (RFM, I, 116; cf. 131).

3.11.2. Epistemic Relativism

One of the criticisms leveled against Wittgenstein is that his philosophy lends to relativism or, in a starker formulation, it is a relativist philosophy.

This accusation has been severed since some self-proclaimed relativists or those accused of relativism have used Wittgenstein to defend their position. Some of these figures are engaged in social sciences (such as David Bloor). The most important figure in the analytic tradition in this regard is perhaps Richard Rorty (2009). Let us examine Wittgenstein's position himself and see whether it is an instance of 'relativism'.

In OC § 609-612, Wittgenstein makes the following claims:

§ 609 Supposing we met people who did not regard that as a telling reason. Now, how do we imagine this? Instead of the physicist, they consult an oracle. (And for that we consider them primitive.) Is it wrong for them to consult an oracle and be guided by it? —If we call this 'wrong', aren't we using our language game as a basis from which to *combat* theirs?

§ 610 And are we right or wrong to combat it? Of course, there are all sorts of slogans that will be used to support our proceeding.

§ 611 Where two principles really do meet which cannot be reconciled with one another, then each man declares the other a fool and heretic.

§ 612 said I would 'combat' the other man—but wouldn't I give him *reasons*? Certainly, but how far do they go? At the end of reasons comes *persuasion*. (Think what happens when missionaries convert natives.)

It could only be said that Wittgenstein is offering a relativist picture if one could show that he is arguing for relativism regarding grounds for forming beliefs or 'epistemic relativism'. In his book "Fear of Knowledge", Paul Boghossian examines this argument to see whether Wittgenstein's argument is an account of epistemic relativism. He mentions two possible readings from the OC passage quoted above. Both interpretations deal with instances where one is faced with someone else who uses different standards for reasoning. Based on the first interpretation the one who disagrees with our standard of reasoning is mistaken and her disability to recognize the superiority of our standard is her shortcoming. Had she been reasonable, she would have agreed to the superiority of our epistemic system. Given that she fails to engage in a rational assessment of the rational standards, we are left with few options which include appeal to emotions and persuasion, and even violence. Boghossian introduces a second possible interpretation which is committed to epistemic relativism. In this reading, "our argument would not have shown anything about the

correctness of our system, even by *our own lights*, and not just by the lights of our opponents.” (Boghossian, 2007 p. 78) In other words, we cannot show how our language game is superior to another language game using the rules of our language game. If this were the case, Boghossian argues the most we can do is to declare our language game correct according to our rules, and our opponent would declare her language game correct according to her rules. This bootstrapping will not show the superiority of any language game. As a result, there would be no possibility to show the superiority of one language game over the other, and when two language games are confronted with one another at the end comes persuasion and conversion.

The word ‘primitive’ is key in this passage. Let us see what the possible meanings of this word for Wittgenstein are. In analyzing the opening statement of PI, Wittgenstein uses the word ‘primitive’ twice when discussing the Augustinian picture of language. This is the passage,

“These words, it seems to me, give us a particular picture of the essence of human language. It is this: the individual words in language name objects – sentences are combinations of such names. – In this picture of language, we find the roots of the following idea: Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands.” (§ 1)

Joachim Schulte (2004) elaborates on the two uses of primitive and argues that the first use of the primitive has a pejorative connotation and the second use is merely stressing less complexity. In addition to these two meanings for the word ‘primitive’, which Schulte suggests, the word ‘primitive’ for Wittgenstein – as we saw in his analysis of Frazer’s remarks – sometimes means pre-theoretical and something related to instincts. On each of these three different meanings, the passage from OC will have a different fate. If understood in the pejorative sense, then the implication is that when two people with two different language games meet, in the end, there are no reasons left and they resort to verbal attacks. In the second meaning of the word ‘primitive’, The person who consults an oracle is using a less complex system to understand the world. In this case, if simplicity implies a comparison with physics, then two systems are not incommensurable and could be in effect, compared. The final sense of the word ‘primitive’ mentioned above, would imply that one system is pre-theoretical (consulting oracles) and the other one is theoretical (physics), and criticizing a pre-theoretical phenomenon with a theoretical one cannot be settled with the aid of

reason. Recall that Wittgenstein was criticizing Frazer because the latter thought the primitive reactions were theoretical. However, this is a folly according to Wittgenstein, and although it seems like a rational criticism of the rituals of the natives, nevertheless, it is a conceptual confusion in which one mistakes primitive reactions with theoretical hypothesis. None of these three possible readings imply the possibility of relativism. Neither is Wittgenstein saying that these two language-games are contradicting one another and yet both are true; neither is he saying that both language games are of equal value.

3.11.3. Cultural Relativism

Wittgenstein makes further claims that appear to support this relativist reading of his written material. Most importantly, his insistence that justification, reason, and logic are all meaningful in a form of life which I have mentioned in the first chapter. However, it should be noted that the form of life is not merely a social phenomenon for Wittgenstein. If logic, reasoning, and justification were merely social phenomena, given that such phenomena are prone to change and vary from time to time and place to place, it would mean that our justification for our beliefs and our reasons and the logic we use to argue would also be dependent on the social context. This would be a clear articulation of epistemic relativism. Studies in anthropology were struggling with the question of cultural relativism before Wittgenstein was writing this material. For example, De Laguna (1942) defines cultural relativism in the following manner,

“Beliefs as meanings, and standards as evaluations, are determined by, and relative to, the cultures, to which they belong as the meaning of a word or phrase is determined by its linguistic context. The concepts in terms of which the members of one culture think are significant only within and with reference to the frames of that culture. They accordingly constitute a peculiar and untreatable idiom of thought. Nor are they applicable to the institutions and customs of another culture except in so far as the two cultures are alike. The logical conclusion then, in which a consistent and thoroughgoing cultural relativism inevitably leads, is that no concepts are universally applicable and no standards objectively valid.” (pp. 145-6)

This is a standard definition of cultural relativism in which one's culture or form of life determines epistemic standards, logic, concepts, and knowledge. Some remarks in Wittgenstein's written material may indeed hint at this direction. For example,

'So, you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?'—it is what human beings *say* that is true and false, and they agree in the *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in the form of life. (PI: § 241).

However, Wittgenstein is not endorsing the relativism alluded to above. 'Form of life' for Wittgenstein is not a social or cultural unit that social scientists use to argue for cultural relativism. For Wittgenstein 'form of life' involves the human body, instincts, biology, and other non-cultural elements. Wittgenstein famously claimed that if a lion were to speak, we would not understand him. This is because we do not share the same form of life. Whereas he never makes such a claim to any two groups of people. On the contrary, as I have discussed in the passage in the previous chapter, he argues that one feature of human language is that it can be understood by other human beings. In OC he also emphasizes the fact that our judgments are based on something shared among all of us human beings⁸⁵. The contrast between a lion and a human in his example can make it clear that the 'form of life' is not a cultural unit and therefore it cannot be argued Wittgenstein holds that cultures determine our epistemic standards, logic, concepts, and knowledge in a way that no comparison is possible. In addition to these points, Wittgenstein's argument against what he calls modernist prejudice is helpful here. Frazer and other anthropologists like him, unlike the cultural relativists, thought that there is a shared basis based on which judgment and comparison between cultures are possible. Their response was ignorant, they thought that people from the past and non-westerners were primitive. As I have discussed this point in the previous chapter, Wittgenstein tries to show how this view is unfounded. He does so by showing that what Frazer and the like take to be instances of superstition in other cultures are also present in Frazer's culture and are common among all human beings.

The emphasis on a shared form of life as a prerequisite for understanding and shared judgments is important in understanding Wittgenstein's position. There are Walt Disney cartoons in which a lion speaks in English, and we can fully understand him. However, in those instances, the lion

85 "To make a mistake, a man must already judge in conformity with mankind." (§ 156).

has been anthropomorphized. The point is that our understanding of one another or the possibility of shared judgments is not dependent on any one factor. Rather it is dependent upon the entire show. One must have the form of life of a human being to be able to participate in human activities such as reasoning and passing judgments and the like. Wittgenstein is not a cultural relativist, and this does not mean that he holds that certain cultures are inferior to other ones. He is arguing that our cultures, sciences, religions, and the like are all the result of a shared form of life. Quoting King Lear, Wittgenstein has emphasized that, unlike Hegel, he is willing to teach us differences, nevertheless, he is only doing so on a shared basis, namely, a form of life.

Wittgenstein emphasizes the non-relative component of forms of life which is shared among all human beings. In OC there are other passages that when taken into consideration would make this clear. For example, in § 156, he states, “To make a mistake, a man must already judge in conformity with mankind”. in addition to this in PI Wittgenstein has argued that ‘If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgments’ (§ 242). These claims indicate that justification, reasoning, and logic are not merely conventional, and as a result, a relativist reading of Wittgenstein would have to neglect such passages. Having examined the possibility of reading Wittgenstein as a relativist and after mentioning the textual evidence from OC and PI which I have also referred to, Maria Baghramian (2004) concludes that it is open to debate whether Wittgenstein was a relativist. She mentions the fact that many in the social sciences have relied on Wittgenstein to support their relativist stance, “but what is beyond doubt is that Wittgenstein introduced a view of language where all criteria of meaningfulness and significance are internal to our practices. This internalist view, in turn, furthered relativistic thinking in a number of intellectual circles, including in the social sciences and religion.” (p. 78) How social scientists prefer to gerrymander Wittgenstein’s texts to suit their agenda is an interesting topic. This, however, need not concern us here⁸⁶.

Wittgenstein held that logic is always in effect and determines what we do and what we say. He did not argue, as Baghramian seems to suggest,

86 In examining Wittgenstein’s influence on the relativism of David Bloor and Barry Barnes, Markus Seidel (2004) also argues that the cryptic and aphoristic style of Wittgenstein may provide the basis for relativists who have an interest in connecting Wittgenstein to their project to do so. (See p. 145).

that there is a relativism regarding logic. Rather he thought that it did not make sense to say that there is a single unified conception of logic that governs all our thoughts and deeds. The concept of ‘correct’ which is part of the logic of every thought and activity varies in different contexts. This is, of course, not to deny the similarity between these different uses of ‘correct’, it is an emphasis not to neglect their specificities and differences. Grammar or logic determines the correct use of the words in each context and arguing that there are different grammars involved in different practices allows us to determine the correct use of the words correctly. Otherwise, one would impose the grammar of one area of discourse on all other areas. The fact that different areas of our language have different rules and logic is not relativism.

If this is so, what are we to make of the passage from OC (609-612) which I examined in the ‘epistemic relativism’ section? Wittgenstein is not referring to two different ‘cultures’ when he is speaking of two language games. He is merely speaking about two different activities which people might use to figure out how the world is. These two language games can be in the same culture. To clarify this point, it would be helpful to go back to what Wittgenstein had to say about Frazer in the previous chapter. Frazer thought that the so-called primitives were not capable of grasping causality and as a result, they performed certain rituals and thought that they could interfere with nature with the aid of rituals. Frazer was in effect questioning their capacity for instrumental reasoning. Wittgenstein argued against this position and directed our attention to the fact that the so-called primitives were masterful in making tools and insisted on rituals being an instinctual action common among moderns and ‘primitives’. However, in this passage from OC, it seems like the ‘primitives’ and the moderns are using two different means to understand and intervene in the world. In other words, unlike the rituals, the oracle in this passage is not a totally different phenomenon from science. Rather it seems like a legitimate claim to say that the oracle and physics in this example are rival methods for achieving the same goal. Therefore, it does make sense to compare these two language games and to argue for the superiority of one over the other. From what has been said in this section, it could be stated that from the two possible interpretations Boghossian enumerates for this passage, the milder interpretation fits Wittgenstein’s position better. In other words, one is wrong in this disagreement, which may not be readily accepted by the other party. Instead, they would need more than arguments to be convinced by it. They would need persuasion.

3.11.4. Relativism as Equal Validity

There is a further way to proceed with the charge of relativism. One may argue that Wittgenstein's claim amounts to 'equal validity' of language games. This would be a typical articulation of relativism. If two language games or cultures have equal validity, this would mean that despite their (contradicting) differences, both are true and of equal value. The equal validity claim presupposes the possibility of comparison between two phenomena. If I claim that cultures are of equal validity, this means that there is a possibility of comparison between cultures, it is just the case that they are all equally valid, and none of them turns out to be better or worse. Wittgenstein does allow for comparison based on a shared form of life. Wittgenstein does not conceive of an Archimedean point outside language games that would provide the basis for comparing language games. Therefore, the 'equal validity' charge does not apply to his conception of language games. If one presupposes the possibility of an Archimedean point outside the language game, then the equal validity claim does not hold. This is because the Archimedean point will allow us to pass judgments between two contradicting views and decide which one is of value and which one is not, or which has more value than the other. In brief, either there is an Archimedean point, and 'equal validity' is refuted or there is no Archimedean point, and the 'equal validity' claim is not possible. Therefore, the equal validity claim is not a valid claim, and Wittgenstein does not propose it either.

This point, however, takes us back to the accusation that Wittgenstein's philosophy does not allow for criticism. If language games are autonomous and there is no Archimedean point outside them, doesn't this mean that we cannot criticize language games from without? There are misogynistic, racist, homophobic, and biased language games of religion. Does Wittgenstein's philosophy entail that we are not allowed to criticize them? The autonomy thesis seems to bring about the worry that the many political and moral aspects of religion cannot be criticized. However, this worry is misplaced. There are ways to criticize a phenomenon without resorting to the Archimedean point outside language.

In addition to the possible criticism, namely, criticizing religious concepts and practices based on the grammar and rules of the religious language game, there is the possibility of criticizing the religious language game for moral and political reasons. If we take our moral concerns to be part of a language game, we can assess the moral aspects of all the

possible language games with the very rules and grammar of the moral language game. It does not matter if actions and practices are performed in one specific language game. What matters is to assess practice in a language game only when the grammar and rules apply. One should not confuse this normative claim about language games, with a claim about the location of practices. If a practice is in the language game of religion or science, it does not automatically mean that it cannot be criticized from a moral point of view. Being in a language game does not make a practice immune from assessment. In so far as rules apply, criticism can be made. Therefore, the charge of making religion immune from criticism is confused. Stephan Mulhall argues that Nietzsche's criticism of Christianity can be leveled against the language game of religion and does not go against Wittgenstein's dictum. He argues that Nietzsche's

“genealogical analysis of Christianity is an attempt to characterize the essence of that mode of religious belief – where essence here is understood exactly as Wittgenstein proposes: as a matter of the function or structure of the phenomenon under consideration, taken not as a doctrinal system on which a set of practices is founded but as a mode of speaking, thinking, and living – a way of making sense of things. When Nietzsche characterizes that form of human life as inherently ascetic, hence as a sadomasochistic mode of life-denial, he aims to provide a criticism of the point or purpose of the Christian religious enterprise as such (together with its secular variants and offshoots). And nothing Wittgenstein says about the essentially descriptive nature of philosophy provides any reason for believing that religious forms of life, taken as a whole, cannot coherently be criticized in such terms.” (Mulhall, 2011, p. 705)

This is not meant to be an argument for the validity of Nietzsche's criticism against Christianity, rather I have mentioned it as a possible means of criticizing religious language games. In so far as the rules of such criticisms apply, they may be either true or false.

3.11.5. Political Conservatism as a Result of Relativism

Wittgenstein's view on Language-games has invited other criticisms which could be perceived as other variations of the relativism charge. The claim that language games cannot be criticized, and the task of philosophy is

not to put theories but to describe has led Herbert Marcuse to argue that Wittgenstein is defending political conservatism. Whereas Nielsen was critical of safeguarding religion, Marcuse is critical of safeguarding the political order. Since Marcuse believes that our consumerist societies have a pretense of rationality which they lack, any attempt to restrict such criticisms would mean restricting rationality. Strandberg (2006) deals with Marcuse's argument thoroughly. After enumerating Wittgenstein's mixed political views, (from condemning Nazism and other less significant types of national prejudice to sympathizing with the Soviet Union for providing work for everyone and sympathizing with Stalin because he had to do a lot), he argues that,

"One way of countering this criticism of Wittgenstein's philosophy would be to say that there certainly are questions where his way of thinking does not have much to contribute, but such questions are not philosophical. Such a proposed definition of what questions are philosophical is not in accordance with the history of the subject, however, and the main reason for regarding questions about one's life and society as non-philosophical – namely, that they cannot be discussed thoroughly – is one of the things which, with the help of Wittgenstein's philosophy, I have been trying to argue against in this study, by pointing out that discussion is not just a matter of argumentation." (p. 167).

Yet Strandberg fails to discuss aspects of Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy, which can help us criticize the political order. If politics is a practice, which it is, then it is rule-governed and it can be criticized accordingly. As I have discussed before, moral criticisms can be applied when the rules allow us. There is nothing in Wittgenstein's philosophy that would disallow moral criticism of the political order. In addition to this, political criticism of political practices is also possible. When politics pretends to follow certain rules, whereas it deceives us in doing so, then we can bring this point to light by analyzing and assessing the rules. Indeed, Wittgenstein often expressed political views that seem to justify Marcuse's accusation. Some anecdotes could help us understand Wittgenstein's position on political issues, "Paul Engelmann had read a story about a League for Peace and Freedom projected or founded by Russell, the Women's League for Peace and Freedom, which Russell was on his way to address when he met Wittgenstein at Innsbruck in 1922. Russell told Wittgenstein, "I suppose you would prefer a League for War and Slavery" (Für Krieg

und Knechtschaft). ‘Better that! Better that!’, Wittgenstein replied with emphasis (‘Eher noch! Eher noch!’).” (McGuinness, 1988, p. 114). However, his personal views on politics – which are by no means clear and coherent enough to label him as a conservative or a socialist – are one thing, and the political implications of his view of philosophy are another thing.

3.11.6. Relativism as Opposition to Realism

There is an additional charge of relativism that could be leveled against Wittgenstein. One may argue that by introducing the concept of language games Wittgenstein has argued that we are trapped in language and all we have is language. This charge of relativism is based on opposing relativism with realism. To argue that Wittgenstein is denying the existence of reality or access to reality is a confused claim. Neither is Wittgenstein arguing that we are trapped in language. Such charges are based on undiligent exegesis and ignore Wittgenstein’s opposition to the Cartesian legacy in philosophy. Descartes had set up a gap between the consciousness and the external world and set to fill in this gap. This tradition was followed by figures such as Locke, Berkley, Hume, and Kant. One of the curious outcomes of this tradition, all their differences withstanding, was a distinction between an apparent realm of reality and a hidden one. Wittgenstein is against such a distinction and finds it a confused distinction because it postulates ‘metaphysical realism’ or a metaphysical conception of reality. Wittgenstein is against the metaphysical conception of reality or realism; However, he does not deny that we have access to the world. As D.Z Phillips argues, it is the equation of metaphysical realism with realism in the Cartesian legacy that has led some to argue that Wittgenstein was an anti-realist, “Wittgenstein is not denying, as the skeptic does, that we contact reality. He is saying that metaphysics distorts what that contact amounts to. Once that is understood, we see that the central issue in the dispute between Wittgensteinian philosophers of religion and analytic philosophers of religion concerns an assumption that the latter simply take for granted – the assumption that there is no difference between realism and metaphysical realism”. (Phillips, 2004, p. 40).

The dichotomy between ‘metaphysical realism’ and ‘relativism’ is a remnant of ancient Greece, where Plato thought that to demonstrate the falsity of pre-Socratic relativists, it was his task to defend metaphysical realism.

Accepting this dichotomy leads to the conclusion that if one denies metaphysical realism, then one is a committed relativist. However, Wittgenstein is not denying ‘metaphysical realism’ if denying one means declaring its falsity. Rather, Wittgenstein is declaring its nonsensicality. If a proposition is nonsense, its negation is also nonsense. Plato thought that if one denies metaphysical realism, one is left with a Heraclitan world in which everything is in flux. Everything being in flux translated into ‘relativism’. Wittgenstein takes issue with this view in OC. In this book, Wittgenstein enumerates empirical propositions which are steadfast and are not in flux. The fact that humans have brains in their heads is empirical. One does not need to fear that if one cracks a friend’s skull, it will turn out to contain dust⁸⁷. The old age of the earth, the fact that human beings have parents, and many other empirical facts are steadfast and are not in flux. These empirical facts, not some metaphysical realm outside the world of empirical change, are what debunks relativism. In other words, these empirical facts fix points based on which we talk and assess the parts of our lives that are in flux so to speak. These empirical facts are what Wittgenstein calls ‘hinge’ and they play the role of a hinge based on which other things rotate. These hinges are certain and are assumed in all our activities. Regardless of what we do, the old age of the earth or the fact that humans have brains are operating as fixed certainties behind our practice. This practice can be a broad phenomenon like language, religion, or science or it could be a particular activity like moving a pen on a piece of paper.

3.11.7. Incommensurability

Wittgenstein never describes language games as incommensurable. Although the philosophers of science who brought ‘incommensurability’ into prominence, namely Kuhn and Feyerabend, were influenced by Wittgenstein. Hoyningen and Sankey (2013) trace the use of ‘incommensurability’ in the philosophy of science to a paper published by Feyerabend, ‘Explanation, Reduction and Empiricism’ and Thomas Kuhn’s book ‘The Structure of Scientific Revolutions’ both published in 1962. Feyerabend argued that some scientific theories are incommensurable, and he took this to mean

87 “I, L.W., believe, am sure, that my friend hasn’t sawdust in his body or his head, even though I have no direct evidence of my senses to the contrary. I am sure, by reason of what has been said to me, of what I have read, and of my experience.” (OC § 281).

that the semantics of the terms used in scientific theories are different. As a result, direct comparison of scientific theories is not possible. For Kuhn, incommensurability has methodological, semantic, and perceptual aspects, and given that different paradigms have different criteria of assessment as a result the terminology used by scientists changes their meaning in different paradigms and this leads to perceiving the world differently in different paradigms. Hoyningen and Sankey (2013) identify the origin of incommensurability to be in mathematics where it refers to the lack of a common unit of measurement. They mention that in the philosophy of science however, it has become an epistemological and semantic issue that usually deals with the incommensurability of the content of theories, different meanings of the same words used in different theories, untranslatability of terms in scientific terms in other paradigms, lack of common unit of assessment between theories. These ideas have been extremely controversial in the philosophy of science and have led to discussions in the philosophy of science that are still alive. But when the idea of incommensurability is applied to different language games, such as aesthetics and science, or sport and religion and the like such an idea does not seem to be so controversial. The fact that a given word in two different language games may have a different meaning and assessing the correct use of that word is different in different language games does not strike one as controversial.

3.11.8. Radical Relativism: Strange Scenarios

There are two major readings of Wittgenstein's examples of people with radically different ways of doing things. These examples are almost always imaginary cases in which people have very different conceptions of logic, using very different concepts to the extent that we cannot understand them. One reading suggests that Wittgenstein is arguing for the possibility of such instances and aims to show us that our language games are not the only games in town. However, there is another reading which suggests that Wittgenstein is proceeding with a *reductio ad absurdum*. He envisages extremely different language games and pushes them to their inconsistent end to show that they are not possible. Among the advocates of this second reading are Bernard Williams and Jonathan Lear who argue that Wittgenstein is aiming to show we humans are the limit of logic, concept, and language and there is no 'radical' alternative. Michael Forster (2004) argues

that these are examples that intend to show differences and some examples act as *reductio ad absurdum*. The examples that Wittgenstein uses can be sorted out into these two categories. The examples that suggest a radically different language game are intended to show us that a radically different group of humans is not possible. For example, the case of people carrying out measurements in a very different way in contrast to us and our belief in the old age of the earth in contrast to the king who was educated to believe that the world started with his birth. (OC 92⁸⁸) and the lesser radical examples are meant to show that we as human beings can have different language games. For example, for those who believe that God created the world and those who do not (OC 336⁸⁹). In other words, different language games can exist within the bounds of shared humanity. This shared aspect is sometimes referred to as a form of life or ‘Lebensform’ by Wittgenstein. As a result of this shared background, there is no unintelligible language game for any of us. We may be confronted with different language games, nevertheless, they cannot be so alien that we would not recognize them as language games and fail to understand them. This of course does not imply that understanding other language games is easy or comes automatically. One of the points that Wittgenstein is emphasizing in the passage from OC is that, to criticize a language game one should look at it in its entirety. To see whether the grammar and the components fit together and if its grammar is not pseudo-grammar and the like. Hasty criticism of other language games based on the grammar of our own language game is not real criticism. Criticism comes after understanding and understanding a language game requires that we pay attention to the components of that game in its entirety.

88 “However, we can ask: May someone have telling grounds for believing that the earth has only existed for a short time, say since his own birth? – Suppose he had always been told that, – would he have any good reason to doubt it? Men have believed that they could make the rain; why should not a king be brought up in the belief that the world began with him? And if Moore and this king were to meet and discuss, could Moore really prove his belief to be the right one? I do not say that Moore could not convert the king to his view, but it would be a conversion of a special kind; the king would be brought to look at the world in a different way. Remember that one is sometimes convinced of the correctness of a view by its simplicity or symmetry, i.e., these are what induce one to go over to this point of view. One then simply says something like: “That’s how it must be.””

89 “Very intelligent and well-educated people believe in the story of creation in the Bible, while others hold it as proven false, and the grounds of the latter are well known to the former”.

Williams rightly points to the fact that Wittgenstein invites us to perceive different language games with the aid of imagination, “Other ways of seeing the world are not imaginatively inaccessible to us; on the contrary, it is one of Wittgenstein’s aims to encourage such imagination” (Williams, 1973, p.87).

There are passages in ‘On Certainty’ which have been interpreted by some as instances of relativism. For example, “I do not get my picture of the world [Weltbild] by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied with its correctness. No: it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false.” (§ 94) and “The propositions describing this world-picture might be part of a kind of mythology. And their role is like that of rules of a game; and the game can be learned purely practically, without learning any explicit rules.” (§ 95) and “suppose we met people who did not regard that (sc. the propositions of physics) as a telling reason. Now, how do we imagine this? Instead of the physicist, they consult an oracle. (And for that, we consider them primitive.) Is it wrong for them to consult an oracle and be guided by it? - If we call this ‘wrong’, aren’t we using our language-game as a base from which to *combat* theirs?” (§ 609) and “I said I would ‘combat’ the other man, - but wouldn’t I give him reasons? Certainly, but how far do they go? At the end of reasons comes persuasion. (Think of what happens when missionaries convert natives).” (§ 612).

Bernard Williams argues that such examples are not actual alternatives that are incommensurable for us; these imaginary scenarios - which Wittgenstein was very fond of - are meant to help us in exploring our world-view, “Rather, the business of considering them is part of finding our way around inside our view, feeling our way out to the points at which we begin to lose our hold on it (or it, its hold on us), and things begin to be hopelessly strange to us. The imagined alternatives are not alternatives *to* us; they are alternatives *for* us” (Williams, 1973, p. 91). This line of argument fits better with Wittgenstein’s insistence on shared humanity which has been examined so far. Wittgenstein’s criticism of people like Frazer is based on the view of human nature in which no radical difference exists between ‘moderns’ and ‘primitives’. The scenarios mentioned in this part that Williams has interpreted are also instances that Frazer would have labeled as ‘moderns’ and ‘primitives’.

3.12. Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined two broad charges: fideism and relativism. Wittgenstein's conception of religion emphasizes faith and practice. The religious language game is not founded on a rational basis, and it is not dependent on a metaphysical conception of God. However, as I tried to show in this chapter this does not mean that the religious language game safeguards irrational beliefs. I also examined whether Wittgenstein's philosophical views support relativism. The view that religion and science are two different language games has encouraged some to interpret Wittgenstein as a relativist. There are further remarks about disagreement between believers and non-believers in Wittgenstein's works that encourage such a reading. Having considered various types of relativism I concluded that none of them can be attributed to Wittgenstein. In the following chapter, I will discuss scientific worldview and Wittgenstein's take on it.

Chapter Four: Wittgenstein on scientism and the language game of science

In the previous chapters, we have dealt with the religious worldview and language game as Wittgenstein perceived them to be. In this chapter, we are going to deal with Wittgenstein's ideas on the scientific worldview and language game. I will first examine whether Wittgenstein can be considered as 'anti-science'. This consideration gains some significance due to some of his critical remarks addressing science and the scientific age. After clarifying that Wittgenstein's take on science is to set the limits of its language game, I will examine the metaphysical position or worldview that Wittgenstein opposes, namely scientism. I will elaborate on the various types of scientism and then go through the criticisms that Wittgenstein leveled against various aspects of scientism. Since scientism and naturalism are often used interchangeably, and Wittgenstein is also often described as a naturalist, I will clarify what it means to call Wittgenstein a naturalist and the fundamental differences between Wittgenstein and scientific naturalists. I will then proceed to examine one of the greatest differences between Wittgenstein and naturalists and that is Wittgenstein's view that there is a distinct and separate methodology for philosophy. Wittgenstein, under the influence of Goethe, proposed a methodology for philosophy whereas adherents of methodological scientism believe that philosophy is valid in so far as it adopts the methodology of natural sciences. Given that 'family resemblance' is a part and parcel of this philosophical methodology, I will examine this concept in Wittgenstein's work as well. Having dealt with Wittgenstein's criticisms of methodological scientism, I will next deal with his criticism of 'progress' which is often claimed to be an ideological component of scientism. Then I will deal with the role of pictures and mythology in all language games, including the language game of science. Wittgenstein has a very different conception of mythology in comparison to the adherents of scientism. These differences will be explored and finally, I will elaborate on the idea that all language games, whether science or religion, are dependent on faith or trust. This chapter along with the previous chapters will pave our path to examine what kind of relationship religion and science could have and what are the different ways in which they could

engage with one another and what are the possibilities of mutual learning between the two.

4.1. Wittgenstein on science

There are many remarks made by Wittgenstein that taken in isolation could have strong anti-science overtones. Wittgenstein was not anti-science in any sense of the word. However, he was tremendously frustrated with the scientific zeal of his age (and our age) that takes science to be the answer to every problem that we have. Science as a language game is not what Wittgenstein opposes, on the contrary he sets to put everything in its place. Science and religion are language games that should be played according to their own rules. Wittgenstein's criticism is directed at scientific imperialism. By scientific imperialism, I mean extending the language game of science to parts of language where other rules are at play. The term that most critics use to refer to this position is 'scientism'. In the following, I will first examine Wittgenstein's take on science itself, then explore what is meant by 'scientism', and then probe Wittgenstein's criticisms of scientism and assess them and elaborate on them.

In *Culture and Value*, Wittgenstein states, "Man has to awaken to wonder – and so perhaps do peoples. Science is a way of sending him to sleep again . . . as though lightning were more commonplace or less astounding today than 2000 years ago." (Wittgenstein, 1980, p. 5) and in another passage from the same book Wittgenstein has been recorded to say that it is not absurd to believe that science and technology are pathways to end of humanity (ibid, p. 56). Such remarks may suggest that Wittgenstein is against science itself.

Before elaborating on this point let us see what 'against science' exactly means. Against science would most probably mean someone who is against all forms of science, its use and value, and implementation. It is not known to me if anyone has offered any reason to hold such a view in our current epoch. Nevertheless, some oppose certain scientific theories. These people are usually envisaged as anti-science. The fundamentalists who argue against evolution or those who argue for intelligent design are among the figures who are often presented as anti-science. Note that not all religious believers are against science in general and evolution in particular. Let us take two examples from Christianity and Islam. Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI, (1995) argues that evolution and the Christian narrative of creation

are complementary, “we cannot say: creation or evolution, inasmuch as these two things respond to two different realities. The story of the dust of the earth and the breath of God, which we just heard, does not explain how human persons come to be but rather what they are. And, vice versa, the theory of evolution seeks to understand and describe biological developments. But in so doing it cannot explain where the “project” of human persons comes from, nor their inner origin, nor their nature. To that extent, we are faced here with two complementary – rather than mutually exclusive – realities.” (p. 50). Yadollah Sahabi (2011), a Muslim scholar, argues that many verses in the Quran indicate human beings were not created in one instance in the form of a man and a woman rather there are implications of a process of creation which was completed in different stages. Sahabi believes that evolution is limited to the corporeal aspect of human beings and in the beginning human beings were violent and irresponsible and it is only with Adam and Eve that they become rational agents. Whether we find these arguments convincing or not, they claim that science (evolution to be specific) is compatible with their religion.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that many of those who oppose evolution or support intelligent design are in the business of offering evidence for their claims. The opponents of evolution have made many efforts to offer evidence against evolution. Now they are on the retreat, nevertheless, this is the nature of the scientific investigation. Two disagreeing parties offer their evidence and ultimately the weight of evidence would indicate which side can account for the body of evidence. As one example take William Dembski (2006) and his defense of the intelligent design. In his book chapter, he offers what he takes to be the evidence for intelligent design, exactly like any book or article that aims at defending the opposite view⁹⁰. This of course does not mean that we must agree with Dembski or his opponents. Everyone dealing with these scientific questions is trying his best to offer evidence. There are good scientific theories and bad ones, there are also false scientific theories that are still considered scientific in the sense that they can be assessed by the criteria with which we assess

90 Dembski has for example offered a theory of designed inference based on which complex objects require a designer and are to be distinguished from objects that come about as a result of natural causes. Although this criterion has not been welcomed as such, nevertheless it is an effort to introduce an empirical method for detecting design. Therefore, it is not anti-science, rather one could argue for it being bad science. For some criticism of the scientific validity of Dembski’s project see Loikannen (2018).

scientific theories. Therefore, labeling someone who is also in the business of offering evidence as anti-science is not appropriate. Although as I stated above, people like Dembski are playing (or trying to play) with the rules of science and offering evidence, some do not use ‘evidence’ as it is conventionally used by the scientific community. For example, some religious communities take the literal word of their holy books to be scientific descriptions of reality and consider that as evidence that rational people ought to accept. Although what they consider as the evidence does not gain this recognition in the scientific communities, they also insist that what they are offering is ‘evidence’. In other words, they do consider themselves to be in the business of offering evidence, and one must engage with their concept of evidence if one wants to exclude them from the scientific community. It is not outright clear that the latter group should be simply labeled as ‘anti-science’. However, if we confine ‘science’ to practices with standards accepted by the current scientific community then the term ‘anti-science’ can have a bite in describing at least some of those who propose to take their holy book as scientific evidence.

Wittgenstein cannot be described as anti-science in any of these senses. As I have stated in the previous chapters, he believed that the language game of religion is not in the business of offering theories and describing reality. Wittgenstein does not think that religion can offer any competing theory that the scientific community would have trouble accepting it. If Wittgenstein is not anti-science in these senses, we need to figure out what to make of his critical remarks on science and scientism. As we shall see in this chapter, Wittgenstein’s criticisms are mainly directed at scientism and not science itself. To grasp his position, we need to first make it clear what scientism means. We will first examine an overview of varieties of scientism and then consider some of the general objections to it. Having done that, then we will examine Wittgenstein’s objections to scientism. This will allow us to figure out the legitimate scope of the language game of science.

4.2. What is scientism?

There is a variety of definitions of scientism available. All of them emphasize an exclusive role for science in matters related to knowledge, value, and existence, “Scientism is, roughly, the view that only science can provide us with the knowledge or rational belief, that only science can tell us

what exists, and that only science can effectively address our moral and existential questions". (Woudenberg, 2018, p. 1).

Various categories allow us to examine the concept of 'scientism' with more precision. Peels (2018) has offered a variety of categories and in the following, I would rely on them in elaborating the various kinds of scientism. Sometimes the term 'scientism' is only meant to apply to the academic fields. Therefore, in this use of the term 'scientism' we are dealing with the academic disciplines that are taught in the universities. This would include a vast variety of disciplines such as mathematics, physics, philosophy, theology, and literature. The advocates of scientism believe that the prime example for every other academic discipline is natural sciences. Peels (2018) divides this type of scientism that he labels as 'academic scientism' into two groups: the methodological and the eliminative. The methodological variety recognizes that all academic disciplines are legitimate branches of inquiry in so far as they all adhere to the methodology in the natural sciences. Therefore, the questions that are posed by philosophers, theologians, and by literary critics are all legitimate questions and meaningful questions and can have proper answers if the methods used by philosophers, theologians, and literary critics are adopted from natural sciences.

Another version of academic scientism which is a much more radical one, argues that the academic branches that are not part of the natural sciences, deal with obscure or nonsensical questions. Peels call this variety of scientism, the eliminative academic scientism. As the titles of this variety suggest, it aims at eliminating any academic discipline that is not a subgroup of the natural sciences. An explicit endorsement of this type of scientism can be found in the writings of Otto Neurath (1987):

how does the elimination of metaphysics proceed in practice? Men are induced to give up senseless sentences and freed from metaphysics. But must this always remain so? Must everyone in turn go through metaphysics as through a childhood disease— perhaps the earlier he gets it, the less dangerous it is— to be led back to unified science? No. *Every child can in principle learn to apply the language of physicalism correctly from the outset*, first in a crude form, then in a more refined and precise way. (Neurath 1987: 9)

Peels mentions Stephen Stich and Patricia Churchland as advocates of a milder version of this type of scientism. Their idea is that given that certain philosophical questions have been dealt with for more than two thousand years and have no answer, it is better to abandon them because the natu-

ral sciences cannot answer them. There is a remarkable resemblance and difference between this view and Wittgenstein's later view on philosophy. Wittgenstein, too, thought that certain philosophical questions that have been posed for over two thousand years without any answer need not be tackled head-on. So instead of offering clever new answers to these questions we need to find out the confusions present in these philosophical questions. Although Wittgenstein agrees with the likes of Churchland and Stich that the fruitless history of philosophy in responding to its questions recalls for abandonment of those questions, nevertheless they come up with this idea for very different reasons and they have very different solutions. Stich and Churchland consider natural sciences to be the sole arbiter of meaningful questions and truth whereas Wittgenstein thinks that philosophical questions need conceptual clarifications. There are such similarities and differences and without considering them properly we would not be able to appreciate Wittgenstein's take on scientism. In the following sections of this chapter, I will deal with Wittgenstein's take on scientism in more detail and examine his criticisms.

Other varieties of scientism do not aim to impose one academic discipline's methodology onto others or to reduce one entire academic discipline to other disciplines. The scope of these types of scientism is not limited to academic disciplines rather it aims at explaining all varieties of knowledge. The first type identified by Peels is epistemological scientism. The following are different versions of this type of scientism which Peels enumerates,

- “(a) All genuine knowledge is to be found only through (methods of) natural science.
- (b) Natural science provides the only reliable path to knowledge.
- (c) All questions can in principle be answered by natural science.
- (d) Everything that can be known can be known through natural science.” (Peels, 2018, p. 34)

In contrast to varieties of epistemological scientism that limit themselves to the scope of knowledge, ontological scientism asserts that the only things that could be said to exist are things that natural sciences tell us exist. This is a somewhat ambitious claim and would amount to denying the existence of many of the phenomena that we take their existence to be intuitive. If the only things that genuinely exist are physical particles, then we must claim that our intentions, desires and thoughts, and the like are

nonexistent. Among the very few advocates of such a view, one can mention Alex Rosenberg (2011). Rosenberg explicitly claims that a true adherent of scientism would admit that physics tells us what reality consists of,

“IF WE’RE GOING TO BE SCIENTISTIC, THEN WE HAVE to attain our view of reality from what physics tells us about it. We’ll have to do more than that: we’ll have to embrace physics as the whole truth about reality.” (p. 20)

One might wonder why we should allow physics to play such a vital role in our lives. In other words, where does physics gain such credit to tell us what exists and what does not exist? Rosenberg makes it clear that his ontological scientism rests on epistemological scientism. “Why buy the picture of reality that physics paints? Well, it’s simple, really. We trust science as the only way to acquire knowledge”. (ibid).

Or elsewhere he states that nothing can account for knowledge unless it can be fitted into the basket of hard sciences. Therefore, interpretation of human affairs is not knowledge unless it can be fitted into neuroscientific terms and ultimately, physics, “science can’t accept interpretation as providing knowledge of human affairs if it can’t at least in principle be absorbed into, perhaps even reduced to, neuroscience”. (Rosenberg, 2014a, p. 41)

There is also a political claim that is often endorsed by advocates of scientism. This claim goes back to the Enlightenment. The claim is that it is with the aid of science and believing in the scientific worldview alone that we human beings can become joyful and gain a peaceful, prosperous, and harmonious life. Peels (2018) identifies this type of scientism as ‘moral scientism’. Another categorization of scientism closely related to ‘moral scientism’ is ‘existential scientism’; the claim is that natural sciences should replace religion, mythology, and false or wrong ideologies such as Marxism and fascism in answering our most significant questions about life.

It should be obvious that not all these different types of scientism are compatible. For example, if one believes in ontological scientism and as a result thinks that morality and free will, and intentions are all illusions then she cannot believe in moral scientism. Scientism is at times used as a synonymous word for naturalism. As a result, methodological naturalism would mean that the only reliable knowledge that can be gained about nature is the knowledge through natural sciences and metaphysical naturalism would mean that the only existing entities would be natural entities. In this case, natural would be opposed to supernatural. In the following, I

will be using ‘naturalism’ and ‘scientism’ interchangeably unless some qualification is required. Despite all the differences that exist between various versions of scientism, Wittgenstein is a staunch critic of all its varieties. In the following, I will first deal with a general assessment of scientism and then deal with Wittgenstein’s critical remarks on scientism and assess them.

4.3. Methodological criticisms of scientism

As we saw in the previous section, in all varieties of scientism the methodology of science and how it should proceed is of utmost importance. The scientific methodology has been subject to many heated debates throughout the twentieth century up to now. Philosophers of science have had various conceptions of what the methodology of science should be, and these conceptions have undergone drastic changes. In the following, I will briefly mention some of these conceptions relying on Gillies's (1993) ‘Philosophy of Science in the twentieth century’, each of which gained a great deal of attention in its own time.

4.3.1. Inductivism

The first proponent of Inductivism was Francis Bacon. He developed this method in his book *Novum Organum* (*Organum* means “tool” and was the name given to collected writings of Aristotle). As Gillies (1993) elaborates in his book, Inductivism views the following to be the procedure of science: the scientist first observes and then comes up with generalizations based on those observations. These generalizations are laws or theories with which predictions are possible. Good science is based on many observations and lacks any speculation where no data is available. Given that theories are based upon observations the results can only be highly probable and never certain because there is always a possibility that new observation will falsify the previously held generalization based on observations. In other words, repetition of observations does not allow us to conclude that the same will happen in the future with certainty. One important presupposition which needs to be taken for granted for induction to make any sense is the uniformity of nature. Some of the proponents of this view in the twentieth century were Bertrand Russell and some members of the Vienna Circle. Russell Argues that one cannot use experience to prove induction but if we

give up on induction, we have to become complete skeptics about future events, and this would make science impossible.

4.3.2. Karl Popper

Karl Popper's conception of conjecture and refutation was a replacement for inductivism. As Gillies (1993) elaborates on his methodology, Popper criticized the idea that science is based on pure observation because observation is always based on some theoretical background that the scientist possesses. The scientist already has classifications in mind, looks for certain problems, and has certain interests in pursuit of his scientific work. Popper further criticizes the principle of induction: one cannot prove this principle based on induction (circularity) nor can we rely on a higher principle to prove it because that would need a further higher principle *ad infinitum* (infinite regress). One can only prove in an *a priori* manner which Popper rejects as an article of faith. Popper thinks we don't need induction to do science and therefore we do not need to accept it based on faith. He argues that it is true that we cannot prove or verify a generalization based on observation, but we can falsify generalizations based on observation. Science does not start with observation according to Popper instead it starts with conjectures which the scientists try to falsify and refute with observations and other experimentations. Therefore, scientific theories can never be known with certainty and can only be held tentatively.

4.3.3. Duhem and Quine

Two other figures examined by Gilles are, Pierre Duhem and W.V.O. Quine. Duhem labels inductivism as the Newtonian method, given that Newton's physics was based on the inductive method (acquired through Bacon). Newton infers general laws of gravity based on limited observations.

Duhem argues that in science the unit with which the scientist deals are not observation sentences, rather scientific theories as a group of hypotheses are the units with which the scientist deals. An isolated observation does not refute or challenge a hypothesis, rather it challenges the whole theory. Scientific theories should not be perceived as a gathering of isolated observations, each waiting to be tested.

Whereas Duhem argues that his holistic approach is limited to a branch of science – physics – Quine argues that this holistic approach is not limited to any branch of knowledge but applicable to all human knowledge. Our beliefs constitute a web of beliefs and in the center of this web lies logic and mathematics and, on the edge, lies observable propositions. This whole web of belief is put to the test and not merely observation-propositions. Quine also rejected the verifiability theory of meaning and instead proposed a holistic approach to determining the meaning of statements. The meaning of any given proposition is determined by its place in the web of beliefs. This is because single statements and propositions are only possible if one has already made a great deal of suppositions and assumptions. Therefore, if you test your statement and it is falsified you cannot simply claim that the statement was false, but it may be the case that one of those assumptions in place was mistaken or inaccurate.

4.3.4. Methodology of science

Having briefly mentioned this overview of historical changes in what is the method of science, leaving out some other developments in this debate, we can observe that there is no single agreed-upon conception of what the method of science should be. However, as we saw above, advocates of some varieties of scientism insist that the only reliable knowledge is the scientific knowledge derived through the scientific method. It remains a mystery how such a claim can be made. Suppose we need to find out what the methodology of science is. How can we claim that the only reliable source of knowledge is the knowledge derived from scientific methodology?

As mentioned previously, Alex Rosenberg, an advocate of this view, takes the success of natural sciences, most importantly physics, and argues that all knowledge should be attained through the method of natural sciences. Although he does not engage with any nuanced account of methodology in sciences, some of which we overviewed briefly, he claims that observation and experimentation are the methodology of science. Defining the scientific method as observation and experimentation leaves a great deal of our knowledge unaccounted for. Although observation and experimentation are common among many branches of natural sciences, nevertheless there are very prestigious fields in the natural sciences in which observation and experimentation have no role. There are many debates about the status of string theory and whether it should be counted as science or not, given

that observation and experimentation play no role in it. Dawid (2013) has argued that the importance of string theory urges us to develop a new methodology for science and the philosophy of science needs to undergo a big change for such a thing to happen. This is a point that Williamson (2013) also emphasizes from a different angle. He does so by bringing in the example of mathematics. Williamson argues that the most solid kind of knowledge that we have is mathematics and yet it is not attained through observation or experimentation. A further point that Williamson mentions is that there are facts that physics cannot account for. There are ample historical and literary facts on which physics can have no say. The example provided is that Mr. Collins is the hero of the English novel *Pride and Prejudice*. This is a fact along with many other historical and literary facts that constitute knowledge, however, we acquire these types of knowledge not through the methodology of natural sciences. In addition to this, natural sciences such as physics are dependent on historical knowledge, a point made by Collingwood. Without knowing past experiments and previous findings, scientists cannot carry out any research. Williamson's argument starts by taking intuitive cases of knowledge and then revealing the fact that the methodology of natural sciences cannot achieve them. In such a case, Rosenberg or defendants of scientism need to either show that ultimately such a knowledge – such as the knowledge about historical and literary facts – can be attained through the methodology of natural sciences or they need to deny that historical and literary facts constitute knowledge.

Apart from the fact that there is no consensus upon what the methodology of science is, there are numerous criticisms leveled against academic scientism with its insistence on modeling every branch of science on natural sciences. Let us examine some of these criticisms.

Roger Scruton (2014), relying on Dilthey's conception of 'Verstehen' argues that there are two very different conceptions of knowledge involved in natural sciences and humanities,

"In the German universities of the late nineteenth century, there had been a public *Methodenstreit*—a contest of methods—between the sciences (the *Naturwissenschaften*) and the humanities (the *Geisteswissenschaften*), both claiming to be forms of objective knowledge. The influence here was the Kantian philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey and his theory of *Verstehen*, by which he meant the kind of understanding that grants knowledge and membership of the human world, and which

cannot be reduced to the forms of explanation found in the natural sciences.” (p. 131)

Scruton argues against all attempts that try to assimilate humanities into natural sciences. The prime example he has in mind is attempts to explain normative concepts such as beauty and good with the help of neuroscience and evolution. Whereas natural sciences, neuroscience, for example, may be able to explain the neurophysiological mechanisms that enable us to appreciate beauty, nevertheless, they cannot tell us what the meaning, worth, and value of a piece of art is. Scruton argues that other kinds of knowledge, such as interpersonal knowledge, have nothing to do with the methods of natural sciences. Since scientism pretends that natural sciences can answer all the questions and cannot answer these normative questions and questions related to meaning and understanding, it fails to satisfy its ambitious claim.

In a similar criticism leveled against scientism, the Wittgensteinian philosopher Peter Hacker argues that the methods of natural sciences are incapable of answering many of the questions that we can answer otherwise. Hacker argues that,

No amount of physics, chemistry, or biology can explain why Hannibal did not attack Rome itself after the battle of Cannae, why increasing wealth is accompanied by falling birthrates, let alone why Raphael painted the figure of Democritus in *The School of Athens* with boots on. But we do know the answers to these questions. Similarly, no amount of natural science can explain what the mind is, how the mind is related to the body, or—given that I have a mind, a body, and a soul—what it is that has all these things. But we do know the answers to these questions. In short, the natural sciences are the best way to explain the phenomena of physics, chemistry, and biology, but they are no way to explain the phenomena of history, political economy, culture, and society, let alone to answer the conceptual problems of philosophy. (Hacker, 2014, p. 98)

Unlike what one may think, academic scientism has had advocates who have not been prominent scientists or shown a proper command of science. Friedrich Hayek (1942) mentions Francis Bacon and August Comte as two important advocates of scientism. Both held anti-scientific views of their own time. Bacon opposed Copernican astronomy, and Comte thought using microscopes to study minute particles was harmful. In addition to what Hayek mentions, it is noteworthy that defending or proposing scien-

tism, although with metaphysical pretensions, has often been a political agenda. Lawrence Principe (2014) mentions that Comte proposed the idea of history having three stages (theological, philosophical, and scientific) because he wanted to regrid French society after the fall of Napoleon,

Looking around at contemporaneous France, he viewed the Enlightenment as the end of the first phase, the attempts of Napoleon to reconstitute law and society on a secular basis as the second phase, and his current day of the mid-nineteenth century as the dawn of the scientific or positive phase, when science and scientific principles—he hoped—free from uncertainty and ambiguity would provide a rational and unassailable basis for the reformulation of human society according to a new science he called sociology. Later in life, Comte also promoted the establishment of an *ersatz* religion based on positivism, the *religion de l'humanité*, replete with services, rituals, priesthood, and sacraments, incarnated in several churches of positivism. Despite this unsuccessful attempt to launch a positivist religion, which alienated many of Comte's original followers, Comtean positivism implied that theistic religion belonged to a primitive state and science to a mature state of humanity. The move from one stage to another resulted from an inexorable process of progressive evolution; human behavior, Comte believed, was determined by natural laws as certain as those of physics. (pp. 44-45)

In addition to the social and political motivations behind the scientism of Comte, the more recent rise of atheistic scientism, the so-called “new atheism”, has also been viewed as a political reaction to the 9/11 events (Schulzke 2013).

After criticizing Comte and Bacon, Hayek then goes on to define scientism as

“Slavish imitation of the method and language of Science, speak of "scientism" or the "scientistic" prejudice... It should be noted that, in the sense in which we shall use these terms, they describe, of course, an attitude that is decidedly unscientific in the true sense of the word, since it involves a mechanical and uncritical application of habits of thought to fields different from those in which they have been formed” (Hayek, 1942, p. 269).

Like the criticisms of Scruton and Hacker, Hayek's criticism is a methodological one and argues that given the emphasis of advocates of scientism

that all sciences should be modeled on the natural sciences, it leads to malformation of many of the branches of science and dogmatic practices and thus leads to an unscientific spirit⁹¹.

Finally, Smith (2015) argues that in the debate between science and religion, many forget that science is a cultural activity just like religion. In other words, Smith argues that it would be wrong to assume that science is equal to nature and that religion is a part of the culture, and as a result, religion, just like any other cultural artifact, should adjust itself to whatever science announces. Although there are different methodologies involved in science and religion, both are cultural products, and as such none of them enjoys a privileged position. Smith cites Robert Brandom, who says that although physics deals with stuff that have a nature, nevertheless physics itself has a history, and “even concepts such as *electron* and *aromatic compound* are the sort of thing that has a history” (Brandom 2000, pp. 26–27).

Having addressed some issues related to scientism and its criticism, we need to clarify one point before examining Wittgenstein’s critical remarks on scientism. Wittgenstein is himself described as a naturalist. What does his naturalism amount to? I will first turn to this question.

4.4. Wittgenstein’s naturalism

Wittgenstein has been described as a naturalist by many scholars. However, his position is very different from the scientific naturalism or scientism that he is opposed to. In order, to make this opposition vivid, I will explore the main features of Wittgenstein’s naturalism in the following. This would allow us to contrast his view with the adherents of scientific naturalism in the following sections. I will first elaborate on the characteristics of Wittgenstein’s naturalism which have been discussed by others and at the end of this section I will examine them and see what can be made of Wittgenstein’s naturalism.

Paul Snowden (2018), like many other commentators, identifies Wittgenstein as a naturalist. After arguing that Wittgenstein did indeed put forth

91 In contrast to the views that insist all branches of science should follow natural sciences, some hold that different branches of science should engage in dialogue with one another and complement one another. C. P. Snow (2012), in his famous ‘The Two Cultures,’ addresses the lack of communication between natural sciences and humanities.

some positive theories, Snowden distinguishes reductive naturalism from another type of naturalism that only seeks to offer a natural explanation of phenomena. Relying on Wittgenstein's considerations on 'rule following' and his idea of 'meaning as use' instead of abstract non-natural conceptions of thought present in Frege, Snowden argues that Wittgenstein was working in a naturalistic framework. Snowden does not intend to say that Wittgenstein was an adherent of scientific naturalism. Adherents of scientific naturalism believe that the only way to ensure that their position would qualify as naturalism is that it would be reduced to hard sciences. This is because they hold that if nature is to be equated with reality, it should be only made up of natural kinds that hard sciences can study and recognize. This is the position of Rosenberg (2014b), where he explicitly states that "reality contains only the kinds of things that the hard sciences recognize". (p. 32)

Macarthur (2018) in his effort to distinguish Wittgenstein's naturalism from scientific naturalism, points to two main points. First, Scientific Naturalism intends to explain the causal relationship between observable phenomena with the aid of postulating unobservable entities. As a result, science seeks to discover hidden new phenomena. Whereas Wittgenstein thinks philosophy needs to clarify the manifest world. Second, scientific naturalism presupposes scientific metaphysics discoverable by the methodology of sciences. This presupposition is the philosophical view underpinning scientific naturalism. Whereas Wittgenstein thought that the metaphysical use of the words was confusing and needed clarification and restoration of their proper use.

Expanding Macarthur's point on Wittgenstein's view, even if we accept scientific naturalism as a philosophical doctrine, it should be an instrumentalist philosophy. In other words, if one is committed to scientific naturalism or physicalism, then one is committed to some metaphysical position. A metaphysical position that tends to tell us what the building blocks of reality are. Macarthur then examines Frank Jackson's definition of metaphysics, and he models it on physics,

Metaphysicians seek a comprehensive account of some subject matter—the mind, the semantic, or, most ambitiously, everything—in terms of a limited number of more or less basic notions. In doing this they are following the good example of physicists. The methodology is not that of letting a thousand flowers bloom but rather that of making do with as meager a diet as possible . . . But if metaphysics seeks comprehension in

terms of limited ingredients, it is continually going to be faced with the problem of location. Because the ingredients are limited, some putative features of the world are not going to appear explicitly in the story. The question then will be whether they, nevertheless, figure implicitly in the story. Serious metaphysics is simultaneously discriminatory and putatively complete, and the combination of these two facts means that there is bound to be a whole range of putative features of our world up for either elimination or location. (Jackson, 1994, p. 25).

Macarthur (2018) himself gives some reasons as to why such a project is problematic. For example, he argues that such a view is first dependent on the ‘unity of sciences’, and the reducibility of all branches of science to physics. Something which is nothing but a dream right now. He also argues that there are many aspects of the world that science cannot explain. A chair is not something physical sciences can explain but rather its components. Therefore, physics cannot explain the human interests and intentions that were involved in creating it. These are also explanations for the existence of the chair that cannot be explained with physics and Macarthur, unlike Jackson, holds that these psychological states cannot be reduced to physics. I will engage with the issue of the reducibility of the psychological to the physical in more detail in the following. Wittgenstein however, remained critical of such views because they conflated philosophy and science. In Wittgenstein’s view philosophy cannot tell us about the fundamental nature of reality or reduce everything to minute particles and offer a reductive account of reality. However, Wittgenstein does agree that this is the model that sciences are based on,

“Our preoccupation with the method of science. I mean the method of reducing the explanation of natural phenomena to the smallest possible number of primitive natural laws; and, in mathematics, of unifying the treatment of different topics by using a generalization. Philosophers constantly see the method of science before their eyes and are irresistibly tempted to ask and answer questions in the way science does. This tendency is the real source of metaphysics and leads the philosopher into complete darkness.” (Wittgenstein, 1969, 18).

Wittgenstein’s opposition to scientism stems from his concern with trespassing the boundaries of language games. Employing scientific methods to deal with language games of religion and art and philosophy would distort these language games. Wittgenstein found some of the well-known pop

science books of his time to commit this mistake. The reason is that in such works the author uses the scientific method but aims to explain everything that comes to their mind. Chon Tejedor (2017) identifies Frazer's anthropological writings as well as Eddington's works as examples that commit the very mistake Wittgenstein warns against.

Although Wittgenstein is against scientific naturalism, it does not mean that he postulates entities such as souls or minds in the Cartesian sense of the word⁹². Peter Hacker (1997) argues that for Wittgenstein the conception of human nature is not a dualistic account. He explains one of Wittgenstein's most famous attacks on the Cartesian account of mind which was later very influential in the history of Western philosophy. The idea is that our mind is a private realm that we have privileged access to through our understanding. Wittgenstein was vehemently against this idea of a private compartment. Although Wittgenstein did not deny that each of us is in a better condition to describe his condition,

"I can say how things are with me, and typically *my word* has a privileged *status*. This is not because I have access to a private peepshow and describe what I see in it, that others cannot see. Rather, what I say is an *expression* of pain, comparable to a moan. To want to win is not a *description* of my state of mind but a *manifestation* of it. I think (or believe) such-and-such is an *expression* of opinion". (p. 31).

Likewise, Wittgenstein held the idea that psychological predicates cannot be attributed to our bodies or minds, they can be attributed to us. Hacker argues that such predicates cannot be attributed to parts of the body (brains) either. This would constitute a critique of certain cognitive scientists and neurophysiological psychologists who attribute psychological predicates to the brain. Hacker concludes his criticism by stating that just as we cannot say that our brain has a toothache, we cannot say that our brain knows something or puts forth a question⁹³. Therefore,

92 "What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings; not curiosities, however, but facts that no one has doubted, which have escaped notice only because they are always before our eyes." (PI § 415).

93 One contemporary example which helps us illuminate this case is a book written by Bennet and Hacker in 2003, where they employ a Wittgensteinian tactic to question much of what has been said in the field of neuroscience and related scientific fields such as cognitive science. Bennet and Hacker examine Descartes' dualism and argue that it is based on conceptual confusion and therefore they label the position as meaningless. The authors also examine some contemporary scientists and philoso-

Wittgenstein's approach to the mind/brain problem neither postulates the mind as an independent entity nor does it endorse the reductionist accounts common among proponents of scientific naturalism. Not only does Wittgenstein oppose the reduction of mind to brain, but he is also critical of the idea that psychology could become a science. This is because he held that scientific psychology is based on confusion,

The confusion and barrenness of psychology are not to be explained by calling it a 'young science'; its state is not comparable with that of physics, for instance, in its beginnings... In psychology, there are experimental methods and *conceptual confusion* ... The existence of experimental methods makes us think we have the means of solving the problems which trouble us; though problems and methods pass one another by. (PI, part 2, § 232).

phers and attempt to find faulty uses of words and terminology in their work to reveal conceptual confusion. For example, Bennet and Hacker argue that psychological states are attributed to the totality of a human being and not to its organs. They consider such attributions to organs as conceptual confusions. However, such attributions to brains are commonplace in scientific and philosophical discussions related to neuroscience. Paul Churchland (2006) has argued against this Wittgensteinian criticism offered by Bennet and Hacker. Churchland identifies some of what Bennet and Hacker consider 'conceptual confusions' (for example the one leveled against Descartes) as meaningful statements which were proven to be false in the face of empirical findings. Churchland is also critical of assessing new uses of words and terminology based on our everyday uses of the words because such a restriction would have not allowed any of the scientific advances that we have had, "such objections do no more than highlight the independently obvious fact that the new theory violates some of the default expectations of the average ten-year-old. But where is the crime in this? Why should we make those baseline expectations permanently criterial for the meaningful use of the terms at issue? Were we permanently to cleave to the standards of "conceptual hygiene" thus imposed by B&H, we would be doomed to only the most trivial of scientific advances." (Churchland, 2006, 473). The most important part of this debate for our discussion is this question posed by Churchland, "Why should we make those baseline expectations permanently critical for the meaningful use of the terms at issue?" In response to this criticism, Smit and Hacker (2014) argue that in considering the case of Descartes dualism, Churchland fails to see that the question is a conceptual one and no empirical finding can have a bearing on the immaterial substance named mind in the dualistic sense intended by Descartes, "This is not an empirical statement that can be tested, since it is not intelligible to talk about an immaterial substance. A substance is something that we can identify, but there are no criteria of identity for the mind defined as an immaterial substance. We do not know how to identify the mind as an immaterial substance, how to measure this substance, and so forth." (p. 1087).

Donald Davidson (1995) takes Wittgenstein's criticism of psychology as a science of rationality to be valid not just against the psychology that was present at the time Wittgenstein lived but against psychology in general. In physics, scientists explain the apparent phenomena with the use of hidden forces and energies. Whereas when we want to explain human behavior, it seems counter-intuitive to claim that our behavior is not the result of our intentions, beliefs, and desires but some hidden forces and energies. We can give reasons for what we do and the way we behave. As Gilbert Ryle (1949) puts it,

But when we are in a less impressionable frame of mind, we find something implausible in the promise of discoveries yet to be made of the hidden causes of our own actions and reactions. We know quite well what caused the farmer to return from the market with his pigs unsold. He found that the prices were lower than he had expected. We know quite well why John Doe scowled and slammed the door. He had been insulted. (p. 325).

To find a place for Wittgenstein among various types of naturalism, we need to identify the middle ground that he is standing on. To do so, we need to take into consideration his take on metaphysics as well. In one sense, Wittgenstein is a naturalist. He did not find concepts that are supposed to represent supernatural entities as meaningful. Therefore, personal God, disembodied souls, spirits and ghosts, and the rest of the entities that are supposed to be supernatural are based on conceptual confusion. Note that Wittgenstein is not engaging in weighing the evidence for or against such entities as most naturalists would do. Rather he is taking issue with the very concepts involved. This is one of the prominent features of Wittgenstein's naturalism. Meaningful concepts, for Wittgenstein, are limited to the natural world. Yet he contrasts his method of philosophy, which is attentive to general facts of nature, from natural sciences,

"We are, indeed, also interested in the correspondence between concepts and **very general facts of nature**. (Such facts as mostly do not strike us because of their generality.) But our interest is not thereby thrown back on to these possible causes of concept formation; we are not doing natural science; nor yet natural history—since we can also invent fictitious natural history for our purposes." (Wittgenstein, PI, § 365).

Although this much can be said about Wittgenstein, there are still many issues left regarding naturalism and his position which need some attention.

Benedict Smith (2017) argues that Wittgenstein's naturalism is a middle ground between empirical approaches to philosophy on the one hand and the a priori approaches to philosophy on the other hand. Philosophy for Wittgenstein, as Smith argues, is the art of closely observing human life and describing it.

Macarthur (2018) also defines Wittgenstein's naturalism as liberal naturalism - a middle ground between scientific naturalism and supernaturalism - and enumerates the following characteristics of it:

“a denial that reality is, or contains, any supernatural beings—where, let us say, a supernatural being is an unobservable super-human being posited for causal explanatory purposes, but which lacks the requisite scientific support to be credible e.g., the theological commitment to a supermundane God or Devil.

2. a denial that reality is exhausted by the scientific image (or, better, the composite scientific images) of the world.

3. the affirmation that there is a plurality of non-scientific and scientific forms of knowing and/or understanding. The sciences do not provide a single unified and complete account of reality.” (p. 46).

However, let us see if Wittgenstein can be aptly described as a liberal naturalist. Daniel Hutton and Glenda Satne (2018) identify liberal naturalism as the kind of naturalism that is opposed to scientific naturalism. It focuses mostly on human nature rather than other parts of nature. Liberal naturalists recognize that there are non-reducible components in nature (non-reducible to the physical realm), for example, the normative realm, and try to incorporate those realms into the natural world. Finally, liberal naturalists believe that philosophy is autonomous from sciences and has its methodology and that there is a plurality of methods in both sciences and philosophy. Figures such as John Dupré, Jennifer Hornsby, John McDowell, Barry Stroud, Hilary Putnam, Huw Price, Akeel Bilgrami, and Stanley Cavell as well as Macarthur and De Caro are among the main figures of liberal naturalism.

Hutton and Satne (2018) further identify two problems with liberal naturalism. The first problem is that they fail to offer a coherent account of their metaphysical stance and the second problem is that they fail to offer a valid account of how science and philosophy relate to one another. The first problem is as follows: given that liberal naturalism does not take science to be the single criterion for demarcating the natural from the non-natural

they are left with a bloated ontology. They find the method of McDowell more promising. McDowell tries to redefine 'nature' as it is presented by sciences. McDowell resists the urge to reduce the normative to the scientific realm and as a result, he has difficulty connecting these hanging facts – the normative and scientific facts – together. In other words, just as scientific naturalism lives by the dream of unity of sciences, liberal naturalists live by the dream that the two realms of reality – the normative and the scientific ones – will somehow get connected.

The major difference between the liberal naturalists and Wittgenstein – as Marie McGinn (2014) identifies it – is that Wittgenstein asks us to leave everything as it is and be satisfied with the description of various activities. Liberal naturalists like McDowell are seeking to find explanations to figure out how they can offer a philosophical account of phenomena like meaning and understanding⁹⁴. Such efforts are exactly the kind of efforts that Wittgenstein wanted to liberate us from,

“To buy into the idea that we grasp mental contents and bring meanings to mind, as McDowell does, is to resurrect the very picture about what following a rule comes to in practice that Wittgenstein sought to expose as a superfluous superstition.” (McGinn, 2014, p. 66).

It is difficult to try to fit Wittgenstein into one of these categories, such as liberal naturalism. Although there are affinities between Wittgenstein's views and liberal naturalism, there are also differences. While Wittgenstein was against reducing the natural world to what natural sciences have to say

94 McGinn assesses two approaches to Wittgenstein's conception of rule-following, namely one proposed by Crispin Wright and another proposed by John McDowell. Both these philosophers identify Wittgenstein as a naturalist and want to account for certain aspects of this naturalism. Both respond to Kripke's skeptical reading of Wittgenstein's rule-following. Why do we follow rules? In response to the question and Kripke's skeptical solution, Wright ultimately identifies brute responses and dispositions as the answer. The problem with this response is that it empties it from any normativity and as a result, differentiating between correct and incorrect use of rules would be nullified. In response to Wright, McDowell offers an account that would encompass normativity. This is because McDowell is of the belief that Wright's account has the same setback of Kripke's, whereas it was attempting at overcoming that very setback. McDowell instead emphasizes a set of norms that we are initiated into, and those very norms decide the correct and incorrect use of rules. It is this second nature that we acquire through Bildung and being initiated into practices that give us an account for differentiating between right and wrong without embracing any kind of Platonism. Therefore, McDowell's approach is called 'naturalized Platonism'.

about it and emphasized human nature and its importance in understanding many philosophical problems, he was clearly against posing the idea of a normative realm or reality. Wittgenstein was also against the use of some supernatural concepts (such as disembodied spirits) but not because he thought there was no evidence for them, but rather because he thought they were meaningless. Instead of trying to accommodate Wittgenstein in one of the categories, we can remain satisfied with enumerating the characteristics of his naturalism.

Wittgenstein was so strongly opposed to metaphysics. Metaphysics seeks to describe the manifest world in terms of some underlying foundation blocks. This is exactly the metaphysics that many scientists have accepted and worked with. However, Wittgenstein nowhere disagrees with the idea that science should proceed in this manner. In other words, there is no textual evidence that Wittgenstein is against the idea that science proceeds by reducing the explanation of all physical phenomena to several laws or to claim that reality is made up of tiny particles which are the building blocks of reality. If Wittgenstein is against metaphysics and reduction, he should also be against it when it works as a philosophical underpinning of science. If we are to rescue Wittgenstein from contradictions, we might assume that scientific naturalism which many scientists seem to be dedicated to, is not a real metaphysical position but merely a useful assumption. Nevertheless, one may try to formulate this point in a more Wittgensteinian point and state that scientific naturalism is part of the grammar of the scientific language game, just as God is part of the grammar of the language game of religion. In both cases, God and scientific naturalism are not metaphysical positions but grammatical rules that provide the possibility of the use of the respective language games. In the previous chapter, I examined the concept of grammar in Wittgenstein's philosophy and will not repeat them here again. In the next chapter, I will deal with the implications of these two grammars for their respective language games and the interrelation between these two language games.

4.5. Methodology in philosophy, social sciences, and hard sciences

Having considered Wittgenstein's naturalism, now let us see what his critical remarks on scientific naturalism are. Wittgenstein's opposition to scientism is more than anything directed at its methodological imperialism. As I mentioned previously in this chapter, methodological scientism is the view

that whatever can be answered meaningfully can be answered through the methods of natural sciences. Wittgenstein's opposition to this view stems from the distinct methodology that he introduces for philosophy and social sciences. This distinct methodology is called 'perspicuous representation'. Influenced by Goethe's morphological method and his critical remarks on Newton's account of colors, Wittgenstein has developed 'perspicuous representation' as the methodology of philosophy and social sciences. Let us examine this concept and its place in Wittgenstein's philosophy.

4.5.1. What is perspicuous representation?

Wittgenstein introduces the notion of 'übersichtlichen Darstellung' which has been translated as 'perspicuous representation', 'surveyable representation', and 'bird's-eye view' in his book, *Philosophical Investigations*. He writes

"A main source of our failure to understand is that we don't have *an overview* of the use of our words. – Our grammar is deficient in surveyability. A surveyable representation produces precisely that kind of understanding which consists in 'seeing connections'. Hence the importance of finding and inventing *intermediate links*.

The concept of a surveyable representation is of fundamental significance to us. It characterizes the way we represent things, and how we look at matters. (Is this a 'Weltanschauung'?)" (PI § 122-123)

Perspicuous representation is the method of philosophy according to Wittgenstein. It allows us to take a glimpse at the grammar of our language and makes us aware of different aspects of our language. Therefore, we would be able to recognize analogies, metaphors, and mythologies in our language and we would not be misled by them. Our language is a rich resource of analogies and mythologies and when we take them as facts or empirical propositions we are misled about their use in our language. We get familiar with the use of our words to the extent that we would need a certain strategy to enable us to recognize the proper use of the words. This method of gaining an overview of the proper uses of the words by looking at the greater context enables us to get rid of linguistic confusion and gain clarity. As Gordon Baker puts it, perspicuous representation enables us to find our way out of philosophical confusion by "linking its content to the idea of exposing new aspects of systems of expression to break our bondage

to analogies absorbed into the forms of our language” (Baker, 1991: 45). Therefore, if we are to succeed in gaining the clarity which is intended by perspicuous representation, we need to find intermediate links. When faced with a group of people with different practices, we may judge their activities without proper understanding. This is in fact what Frazer had done with the tribes he was studying. He failed to find an intermediate link between himself and the people of the tribes he was studying and as a result, he had to condemn them as irrational. In the face of this failure, Wittgenstein offered examples to bridge the gap between us and the tribesmen and women. The examples Wittgenstein offered were rituals and rites that we carry out today. By enumerating the rites and rituals that we engage in, Wittgenstein enables us to gain a clearer understanding of people from other cultures or people from the past. Among the examples that Wittgenstein offers, one can mention kissing the picture of a person we love. When we kiss their picture, we know that our kiss on the piece of paper is not going to somehow magically land on the face of the person we love. Nor do we believe that by kissing that picture, our loved one will somehow receive the vibes from this kiss. We simply express our emotions in this way. Now of course there may be Individuals who would expect a causal effect on their loved ones after having kissed their photo. However, this is the mistake of those Individuals. Just because some people get carried away and carry out such an activity with a mistaken belief, it does not follow that all those who kiss the picture of their loved ones are mistaken. In other words, rites and rituals need not be based on mistakes about causality. Likewise, the people from tribes whom Frazer was studying were carrying out rites and rituals. Some of them may have been mistaken about the causal effects of the rites and rituals. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we can come up with a general verdict about rites and rituals in general. Had Frazer paid attention to these facts through perspicuous representation, he would not have continued his project in the manner that he did.

Frazer's project, as we have already examined in the previous chapters, was based on a dichotomy between rational and irrational people based on their place in history and geography. Some may reject Frazer's dichotomy between rational and irrational based on some political ideology or based on some moral grounds. However, here Wittgenstein does not argue against Frazer based on such grounds. Rather Wittgenstein argues from a grammatical point of view. Frazer neglects all aspects of our lives and wants to explain everything about a certain tribe with the aid of science. Frazer seems to have neglected the fact that we are human beings and humans

engage in certain activities that have nothing to do with scientific activity. If scientists are seeking to understand the empirical world, and science is the activity, then it is not clear why all our activities should be carried out to understand the empirical world. There is no reason to judge all activities that human beings are engaged with, with the criterion of scientific activity. We human beings have ceremonies, festivals, rites, and rituals and these activities need not be based on false beliefs about nature and its working. All such activities are based on false belief according to Frazer. Scientism is an ideology that seeks to overestimate science's importance in our lives at the expense of neglecting every other discourse. Science has been a great achievement but there is no reason to argue that it is the only game in town or even the best one. Science has a limited scope, just like art, philosophy, religion, and other aspects of our lives. Each of these aspects deals with a certain domain of our lives. If we overemphasize each of these phenomena and try to understand all aspects of our lives with only one of them, we will be drowned in confusion.

Perspicuous representation as a philosophical method reveals the confusion that conventional philosophy is engaged with as well. Wittgenstein offers many examples in his works, particularly *Philosophical Investigations*, in which philosophers have lost sight of the proper use of words and are using them in a confused way. Wittgenstein offers examples of what the philosophers take to be 'super-concepts' such as "being', 'experience', 'proposition', etc. If the representation of these words (the attempt to bring them 'back from their metaphysical to their everyday use' (Wittgenstein 1958: § 116)), is successful, then it will be 'perspicuous'. (Clack, 1999, p. 62) Given that perspicuous representation is an activity that requires a holistic view and keeping different aspects of our lives in view at once, it cannot be done in the isolation of one of the language games. If we are to detect confusion in science, we need to pay attention to the use of words, and analogies in science and philosophy. If we want to gain clarity in religion, we need to pay attention to other language games and avoid assimilating religion into those language games. In the next chapter, where I will deal with mutual learning between the language games of religion and science, I will elaborate on this point extensively.

In his criticism of Frazer, Wittgenstein makes use of the concept of 'perspicuous representation'. I have examined Frazer's remarks on religion and rituals and Wittgenstein's criticisms in the previous chapters and I will not repeat them here again. Rather we will focus on perspicuous representation. Wittgenstein criticizes the theory that Frazer adopts to explain the

rituals. Using an evolutionary framework, Frazer needs to find an error or fault in the cognition of those engaged in rituals. Wittgenstein thinks that instead of coming up with a theory to explain rituals we can simply gather as many facts about them and assemble those facts to gain a wider view of the phenomenon,

'And so the chorus points to a secret law' [*Und so deutet das Chor auf ein geheimes Gesetz*] one feels like saying to Frazer's collection of facts. I can represent this law, this idea, by means of an evolutionary hypothesis, or also, analogously to the schema of a plant, by means of the schema of a religious ceremony, but also by means of the arrangement of its factual content alone, in a '*perspicuous*' representation. (Wittgenstein 1979c: 69)

Brian Clack (1999) traces the origin of the Idea of perspicuous representation in Goethe's works, he cites the following passage from Goethe,

You are confused, beloved, by the thousand-fold mingled multitude of flowers all over the garden. You listen to their many names which are forever, one after another, ringing outlandishly in your ears. All their shapes are similar, yet none is the same as the next; and thus the whole chorus of them suggests a secret law, a sacred riddle [*Und so deutet das Char auf ein geheimes Gesetz*]. Sweet lady, could I but at once convey to you in a word the happy solution! (Goethe 1986: 147-8)

Goethe himself went through some change of mind in his efforts to find out what the 'primal plant' or Urpflanz was. Rowe (1991) explores this change of mind briefly. As he describes it, Goethe initially wanted to find one plant form from which other plants could be derived and had an essentialist view. However, later he gave up on the idea of the Plant that other plants had derived from and instead proposed the leaf as the Urpflanz from those other parts of the plants were derived. Yet at a later stage, Goethe came up with the idea that

'The *Urpflanze* was an archetype whose origin lay partly within man's self, and that it was a way of grouping or intellectually grasping the totality of plants' (Rowe 1991: 289).

Likewise, Wittgenstein holds that the ideals of religion, rituals, science, and other phenomena exist within our minds, and we use these concepts to group diverse phenomena. Therefore, there is a risk that we might have too rigid a conception of religion, ritual, or science and as a result, we might dismiss certain phenomena from inclusion into these categories too

quickly. Instead, we should allow the entirety of phenomena like religion, ritual, and science to reveal themselves to us through perspicuous representation. To reach a perspicuous representation, we should refrain from using theories to understand these phenomena and instead list and gather all the facts that we can about that specific field. For example, when it comes to rituals instead of trying to explain them with some evolutionary theory, using perspicuous representation we can gather all facts and records about rituals together and allow them to show us how they connect. Finally, we need to connect this body of collected data to our own lives. When it comes to rituals, Wittgenstein has already done that. He has identified some of the ritualistic activities that we moderns engage with (as we have already done in the previous chapter). By doing this we find our place within that activity and can connect to other people who engage with other varieties of that very activity. We gain a more holistic understanding of that phenomenon, and this understanding is not abstract. Rather we gain a personal insight into it and learn about the insight of other individuals about it. How others had performed rituals and what similarities exist between our rituals and their rituals despite the differences. Although the gathering of different pieces together is emphasized it should be noted that it is not something we do once and for all. Rather, we may need to order and reorder the pieces together in various ways so that we can gain insight into their configuration. We may need to group various activities that we engage in with various activities that 'alien' cultures engage in and then change the grouping so that we can gain a better and more familiarized understanding of the 'alien' culture. These groupings aimed at clarifying certain phenomena are instances of perspicuous representation. As Brian Clack (1999) emphasizes, perspicuous representation is intended to replace a proto-scientific understanding of phenomena, in which we assume that our primitive actions are theory-based and aim at achieving some end, with an expressivist understanding in which our actions are perceived as expressions of our human feelings.

To further elaborate on conspicuous representation, let us turn to what Annalisa Coliva (2017) has to say about it. She distinguishes hard sciences on the one hand and social sciences and philosophy on the other hand in the following way,

While a causal explanation produces understanding only to the extent that the relationships of causes and effects that it identifies are real and are either general laws or cases that can be subsumed under general

laws, a perspicuous description produces understanding to the extent that the phenomenon to which it relates appears clear (or clearer) to those seeking to understand it. (p. 43)

As Coliva (2017) makes it clear the difference between perspicuous representation and causal explanation is that the former creates insight by relating a phenomenon to the person whereas causal explanations create an understanding in which this personal dimension is of no importance. By the lights of what Coliva states, Frazer's biggest mistakes consist of not including the requirements for the emergence of personal insight. However, the mistake is two-sided. In his treatment of rituals, he treats them as mechanical processes based on false conceptions of nature. Rituals should not be considered as mechanical processes, but activities that human beings engage in. Given that human beings engage in it, then there are personal dimensions to it that we need to take into consideration. For example, venting anger or expressing other emotions and desires need to be taken into consideration when dealing with rituals. Secondly, as Wittgenstein makes it clear our ritualistic actions are not necessarily based on false science, and as a result, we can infer those ritualistic actions of the people from the past or other cultures are not necessarily based on false science. Rituals from the past or in the present can be based on the expression of feelings and attitudes and as a result rational action.

Coliva (2017) further explains that the use of 'family resemblance' by Wittgenstein helps us to find intermediate links between various phenomena and is an important part of the perspicuous representation. Family resemblance is part of the methodology of philosophy and social sciences and the kind of understanding that it brings about is different from the kind of knowledge the hard sciences produce. As Wittgenstein in his later stages of thought argued, philosophy is not in the business of producing theories but rather it should clarify our language and thought. With the help of family resemblance, we come to gain an understanding of something that we thought of as alien or non-comprehensible or simply abhorrent, and the natural becomes mystified. Coliva considers the example of rituals that Wittgenstein has dealt with in his criticism of Frazer. Frazer, in his attempt to offer a causal explanation of religious rites and rituals, argued that religious rituals were based on false physics. However, Wittgenstein offered examples of rituals or ritualistic behaviors that we are engaged with to pave the path for a different type of understanding. When we kiss the picture of a loved one or when we tear the picture of a person with whom

we have broken up, we are not necessarily deluded that such actions will have a causal effect on those people. On Wittgenstein's view,

“a rite is not based so much on an opinion (be it right or wrong) as on a symbolic and conative element. According to Wittgenstein, there can be no error in a ritual (cf. RFGB, p. 125), since there could be an error only where there is a representation of reality, not where there is simply the expression of a desire and a non-strictly cognitive attitude towards the occurring of a certain phenomenon”. (p. 42)

In addition to this, in one of his remarks, Wittgenstein gives an example that clarifies how philosophy should be done,

Savages have games (that's what we call them, anyway) for which they have no written rules, no inventory of rules. Now let's imagine the activity of an explorer traveling throughout the countries of these peoples and setting up lists of rules for their games. This is completely analogous to what the philosopher does. (BT, p. 313e)

Wittgenstein takes scientific explanations unfit for a complete explanation of the phenomena which involve human beings. Although there may be some aspects of human activity that could be analyzed by causal explanation, there are important aspects that cannot. In such cases, we need to relate to the human insight of those who engage with it and try to gain an understanding that entails connecting those activities to our activities. There is a worry here that some of the rituals may be so alien to us and the cultural contexts within which they occur may be so far away from us that we would not be able to recognize how to connect them to our own lives and how to incorporate the personal element into it.

To examine the possibility of carrying out what Wittgenstein says let us examine an argument offered by Bernard Williams (1974). Williams argues that certain historical contexts do not exist anymore, and they are so distant from us that we are not able to form sound moral judgments about them. He gives examples of Japanese Samurais. The Japanese cultural context in the distant past does not provide us with enough understanding so that we would be able to form moral judgments about their actions. We do not have the required concepts to deal with them and understand them. Here we are not going to focus on the possibility of passing moral judgments, but on a broader context in which we can understand such 'alien' cultures. If Williams is right about such cases, and not just the case of Japanese Samurai, then what will be the fate of Frazer's and Wittgenstein's

considerations? Let us first consider the case of Frazer and then move on to Wittgenstein.

Frazer was attempting to offer a causal explanation of the rituals of tribes from other cultures. Therefore, whether the conceptual gap that Williams speaks of exists between Frazer and the members of the tribe does not matter to him. This is because, in the causal explanation that Frazer offers, he uses a theoretical framework that he finds convincing. His explanation does not relate to the insights and concepts that those individuals are embedded in and use. In other words, he does not talk to tribesmen and does not engage with them as human beings rather he considers them as atomic particles that need some theoretical explanation. Despite all the other criticisms that can be leveled against Frazer, one might think that Williams' criticism does not have a bit against his position. It is because the type of causal explanation that Frazer seeks to offer rests on a very minimal understanding of those tribes. Frazer merely assumes that they have a distorted conception of nature. However, if we were to develop an argument against Frazer in this vein, we could say that Frazer does not have a proper grasp of the concepts that they use and therefore he cannot come up with a verdict about their conception of nature. I will return to this point briefly in comparison to what Wittgenstein states.

Wittgenstein, in his criticism of the causal explanation of the rituals, intends to incorporate the personal aspect, and by so doing he wants to foster an insight in us. The criticism that Williams offers is relevant here and we need to examine it. If we pay attention to the examples that Wittgenstein offers and the examples like them (such as kissing the picture of loved ones and burning the photo of a person, we hate) we come to see that they are not very detailed. They are merely examples that show that there are activities that we carry out but are not based on false conceptions of nature. Likewise, it is possible that members of those tribes would have certain ritualistic activities that are not based on false conceptions of nature. Here we are not concerned with any details as such but merely a possibility. Therefore, Wittgenstein's analysis is not dependent on any deep understanding of the specific aspects of the lives of the tribespeople. However, it should be noted that his consideration of this possibility is dependent on a broad conception of human nature that he has. Wittgenstein believes that not all those human beings do is based on some idea or theory or surmising. Rather some of the activities that we engage in are expressive of our emotions and attitudes. Could someone argue that we do not know enough about ancient cultures to come up with

such a verdict? In case one were to argue that a certain incident in a specific ancient culture is expressive of emotions, one would need a great deal of details. But to claim that in general all those human beings do is not based on ideas and theories, and some actions are expressive of emotions, is not dependent on the details of any specific culture. This is a view of human nature that Wittgenstein holds and stands in strong contrast to people like Frazer. Frazer thinks that the people from tribes have a specific conception of nature and that they have false science guiding their rituals. The reason is that Frazer holds that human nature is such that all our activities are based on some theories or some ideas. We have two different conceptions of human nature at work here. We could weigh both in terms of explanatory power. For example, we might survey various human activities in various cultures and see which of the two conceptions of human nature can explain a wider variety of human activity with coherence. Nevertheless, Williams may argue that we do not have enough shared background with the people from ancient tribes to be able to understand their activities and therefore our frameworks will not suffice. Let us say that for the sake of argument, what Williams says is true. We can still use these two frameworks and consider the activities of people from our own culture. We can see that some of our actions are expressive of emotions and attitudes. For example, when we kick a tree when we are angry. If Wittgenstein's conception of human nature is more efficient in explaining our activities, this is by itself a reason to prefer it to Frazer's conception. Now we can extrapolate and show that Wittgenstein's conception of human nature is superior to Frazer's when it comes to providing a framework for explaining ancient cultures. We can argue that the fact that we are called human beings and the Samurai in ancient Japan were called human beings is possible because there are some affinities between us. These affinities are not specific cultural details, but rather broader possibilities. Just as we can carry out some actions to vent anger, so did the Samurai have such a possibility. To determine which activities carried out by the Samurai were expressive of emotions and which ones were based on some ideas and theories we need a great deal of detail. Therefore, it seems that Wittgenstein's account of human nature is a richer conception and has a more powerful explanatory power.

As mentioned above, Coliva (2017) emphasizes the importance of 'family resemblance' for the philosophical method Wittgenstein has in mind and briefly examines their relationship. Let us now examine 'family resemblance' in more detail to grasp a more nuanced understanding of perspicuous representation.

4.5.2. Family resemblance

Wittgenstein introduces the concept of 'family resemblance' in the *Brown* and *Blue* books as well as the philosophical investigations. Given that he deals with it more thoroughly in the philosophical investigations, I will quote his discussion of family resemblance from it. This is a somewhat lengthy quote, however, given the importance of this part of the book for our discussion it seems inevitable,

Here we come up against the great question that lies behind all these considerations. -For someone might object against me: "You take the easy way out! You talk about all sorts of language games but have nowhere said what the essence of a language game, and hence of language, is: what is common to all these activities, and what makes them into language or parts of language. So, you let yourself off the very part of the investigation that once gave you yourself most headache, the part about the general form of propositions and language."

And this is true. -Instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all, -but that they are related to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all "language". I will try to explain this.

Consider for example the proceedings that we call "games". I mean board games, card games, ball games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all? -- Don't say: "There must be something 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 will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don't think but look! -- Look for example at board games, with their multifarious relationships. Now pass to card-games; here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and others appear.

When we pass next to ballgames, much that is common is retained, but much is lost. -- Are they all 'amusing'? 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. Look at the parts played by skill and luck, and at the

difference between skill in chess and skill in tennis. Think now of games like ring-a-ring-a-roses; here is the element of amusement, but how many other characteristic features have disappeared! sometimes similarities of detail. And we can go through the many, many other groups of games in the same way; can see how similarities crop up and disappear. And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities. (§ 65-66).

Wittgenstein is reacting to the following idea. If we use a common name for various phenomena then we are committed to the idea of an 'essence', by which here we mean a common feature among all those phenomena by which we use the same term. There are many activities that we call 'games' and if we are to use this term for any activity, some philosophers would argue, that activity should share a single common feature with the other games. Wittgenstein is enumerating different games in this passage and his challenge to the idea of an 'essence' common among all games using 'family resemblance' can be interpreted in two ways. Wennerberg (1967) identifies a weaker version and a stronger version of 'family resemblance'. According to the weaker interpretation, although there are common features among various phenomena we call games, these features are not restricted to games. According to the stronger version, there is no common feature among all the phenomena we call games. In other words, based on the weaker version, there is a common feature among games, or there may even be common features among games. Let us say the common feature is that all of them are entertaining, as Wittgenstein himself poses this question in the above quotation. If this is common among all games, it is not restricted to games. Many other things do not count as games but are still entertaining. Based on the strong version, not all games are entertaining. However, we should note that Wittgenstein is not directly arguing against the possibility of finding one common element between a myriad of phenomena that all have the same name. He is explicitly arguing against the idea that there 'must' be a shared feature among different phenomena that are listed under the same name. To follow what Wittgenstein is arguing, we need to follow his advice. We need to 'look' at different cases and figure out whether in each instance there is a common feature or not. Wittgenstein thinks that there is no 'must' in the existence of essences. Instead, there are instances in which we can resort to family resemblances. Wittgenstein is offering family resemblance as an alternative picture for 'essence'. It would

be useful to use this picture at times. Note that for Wittgenstein, there is no such thing as ‘essence’ out there behind the phenomena, rather the idea of an ‘essence’ just like the idea of ‘family resemblance’ is a picture that we use.

Bernard Suits (2014) has set out to refute games being a paradigm example of family resemblance in his book ‘The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia’. In this book, a grasshopper has two pupils, Prudence and Skepticus. This book alludes to a famous story in which the grasshopper did not collect enough food for the winter and died, even though the ant had warned him this would happen if he did not work during summer. Yet the grasshopper thinks that playing games is the choice that he can defend philosophically and rejects his pupils offering him food and shelter for the coming winter. The grasshopper thinks that in a utopia since all our needs are met easily, the only thing that we would want to do is to play games. While the grasshopper intends to prove that playing games is what makes life worth living, here we will limit our discussion to his definition of a game which is related to our discussion. He defines games in the following manner, “To play a game is to attempt to achieve a specific state of affairs [preludory goal], using only means permitted by rules [ludory means], where the rules prohibit the use of more efficient in favor of less efficient means [constitutive rules], and where the rules are accepted just because they make possible such activity [ludory attitude] ... Voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles.” (p. 43). Before engaging with this passage and whether the essence of games exist and can be captured, I would like to quote a passage from Suits’ introduction to his book that illuminates how he differs from Wittgenstein,

The following inquiry is not, and should not be taken to be, a kind of anti-anti definitional manifesto. . . It seems altogether more reasonable to begin with the hypothesis that some things are definable, and some things are not, and that the only way to find out which are which is to follow Wittgenstein’s excellent advice and look and see. (p. 5).

Suits understands Wittgenstein’s position to be anti-definitional, whereas as Johnson and Hudecki (2019) show Wittgenstein was not against definitions. Wittgenstein offered definitions of various phenomena in his works (he uses ostensive definitions in philosophical investigations). Johnson and Hudecki cite Wittgenstein in *The Philosophical Investigation* where Wittgenstein proposes a common feature among various phenomena that are called by one name,

Suppose I show someone various multicolored pictures and say: 'The color you see in all these is called 'yellow ochre'. This is a definition, and others will get to understand it by looking for and seeing what is common to the pictures. Then he can look at, can point to, the common thing. (§ 72)

Johnson and Hudecki also emphasize the fact that Wittgenstein is not against the existence of common features among various phenomena, rather he is arguing against the dogmatic urge that there must be one and there are instances where instead of finding a common feature, we can use family resemblance to achieve our end. The authors then move on to challenge Suits on his claim that he has found the essence of games. However, I will not engage with the details of that argument here, since for my purposes it suffices to clarify what Wittgenstein's position was regarding essences and family resemblance. We do not need to grasp the essence of a phenomenon to be able to recognize the instances of that phenomenon. We can achieve this end using family resemblance as well. Like the concept of a game for which we do not need to grasp its 'essence' to be able to recognize new instances of games or to understand what a game means or use the word 'game' properly, we do not need to gain the essence of terms like God, time, free will and the like to be able to understand them, use them and recognize the various uses of these terms. Philosophy should not be in the business of offering theories that would disclose the essence of various concepts to us. Through family resemblance and perspicuous representation, philosophy can help us to clarify concepts.

Having thoroughly examined the methodology of philosophy and how it differs from the methodology of natural sciences, we have examined Wittgenstein's critical remarks on methodological naturalism. In the following, three other Wittgensteinian criticisms of scientism will be examined. First, we will deal with the idea of progress, then we will examine the role of mythology in the language (the language of science included) and finally, we will deal with the role of trust and faith in the language game of science. These criticisms will land a fatal blow on the face of scientism.

4.6. *Progress the Ideology of Metaphysical Naturalism*

If metaphysical naturalism is to be taken seriously, then there is no God or any divine being and as a result, any belief or practice based on belief in such a deity would be irrational and false. Upon such a suggestion there

is an outright problem. It would amount to announcing most humans in history as irrational. Although this is not by itself impossible, nevertheless it invites caution. The proponent of metaphysical naturalism might mitigate her claim by stating that there may have been times in which given the available evidence it was not irrational to believe in supernatural beings. However, she would insist that given the evidence that we have now as a result of the advancement and progress of sciences, it remains clear that it is irrational to believe in anything beyond nature and in anything that cannot be explained by sciences. Although this would acquit the holders of such beliefs in the past from any charges of irrationality, nevertheless those beliefs have been always false. As a result, metaphysical naturalists would urge all those who want to be rational in our day and age to embrace their worldview. We have already dealt with the unwarranted faith of the proponents of metaphysical naturalism in their belief system. I will not repeat those arguments any further, rather I want to deal with Wittgenstein's specific criticism of an ideology behind the claim of the metaphysical naturalist.

The story of progress tells us how rationality has triumphed over irrationality as a result of the progress of science. There are a few problems with this ideology. First, we may forget that the way our history has proceeded is a matter of contingency. Things could have been very different, and science could have been either very different or may not have reached the stage it has. Had things been otherwise, we may have been practicing superstition and magic. Cooper (2015) argues that although the naturalist might concede this point, nevertheless she would insist that in that case, we could not have claimed that there is any rational progress involved. Cooper then reminds the naturalist of Wittgenstein's insistence on the role of background beliefs in the formation of our concepts, words, and beliefs,

The import of such remarks is that the background of our beliefs, understanding, and practices is not something that we can properly survey and describe. It is not simply that it is difficult or impossible to extricate ourselves from a form of life in which we are participants so as to obtain a perspicuous overview of it. The problem, as well, is that what would present itself to view – human life and history – is too fluid, too much of a hurly-burly, too protean to enable anything approaching systematic description. (p. 35).

As a result, Cooper thinks that claims such as those made by metaphysical naturalists, that require a panoramic view of history beyond any discourse,

are ill-fated and cannot deliver what they promise. Therefore, such a view of history is itself suspect and incapable of providing evidence for progress. Taking this criticism seriously, it would mean that progress is one of those super-concepts with which Wittgenstein had a serious problem. The concept of 'progress' shoulders the grand responsibility of describing a hidden cause beneath the course of history. A law-like process that governs the course of history.

In addition to the kind of criticism Cooper is leveling against the possibility of progress, Rupert Read (2016) argues that Wittgenstein wanted to free us from progress as one of the pictures that held us captive. He enumerates Wittgenstein's pessimism and conservatism as components of his thought that led to his opposition to progress⁹⁵. Nyiri (1982) deals with Wittgenstein's conservatism in more detail by examining the influence of figures such as Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and Paul Ernst on Wittgenstein's thought. Nyiri points out that for Wittgenstein the idea that it is the end of times – a view common to staunch conservatives – and progress is an illusion was quite clear. Nyiri even finds Wittgenstein's later philosophy as a solution to the challenge that neo-conservatism faced. According to him, unlike conservatism, neo-conservatism lacked the concept of absolute,

“Wittgenstein's solution to the neo-conservative paradox was his insight that the possibility of other orders does not in the least weaken the inexorable binding force of our own, although autonomous changes in the latter might of course very well occur”. (p. 59).

In the previous chapter I have already dealt with Wittgenstein's conservatism in some detail, and I would refrain from repeating myself here. Now is the time to turn to another feature of the language in general, which is also common to the language game of science, namely the role of mythology and pictures. This feature of human language is itself a reason to abandon scientism's pretense that science is a purely descriptive enterprise.

95 The quotation in the beginning of the Philosophical Investigations is from Johann Nestroy's play, it reads, "Anyway, the thing about progress is that it always seems greater than it really is." Barker (1986) has examined the many striking similarities between Wittgenstein and Gottlieb Herb, the character of Nestroy's play *Der Schüzling*. Cahill (2006) argues that 'progress' as a metaphysical concept is confused, however, in its social and political use it can be used and assessed. Whereas Wittgenstein was opposed to progress in its scientific-technological overtones, he thought of progress in music as the betterment of human beings. (Guter, 2017).

The dichotomy between science and mythology as posed by the adherents of scientism will collapse once we consider Wittgenstein's insight about language. Mythology has an entirely different meaning for Wittgenstein from what the advocates of scientism understand. We will now turn to this point in the following section.

4.7. Language, Pictures, and Mythology

Given certain 'postmodern' claims about the status of science, it strikes a chord to claim that science has anything to do with mythology in certain academic circles. Regardless of such allergic reactions to 'postmodernism'⁹⁶, here I am going to explore in some detail the role of mythology in language as Wittgenstein perceived it and its consequences for understanding the language game of science⁹⁷.

A great source of influence on Wittgenstein's thought regarding the role of mythology in language and its importance is the Austrian poet, Paul Ernst. Although he had written extensively, the available evidence indicates that Wittgenstein was familiar with a *Nachwort* that Ernst had written for the Grimm's fairy tales (Bastianelli 2013). In this *Nachwort*, Ernst (1910) argues that language tries to give form to needs, desires, and emotions but can never capture them properly. Therefore, our greatest moral and religious beliefs cannot show themselves in our language in the fashion we would expect a rational argument would. Rather, they reveal themselves

96 The terms 'postmodern' and 'postmodernism' often lack precision and fail to designate a real person or a real school of thought. As a result, it is often used as a pejorative term.

97 Wittgenstein argues that neither science nor oracle-consulting are justified or unjustified. This claim that has invited a great deal of controversy. It has similarities with 'postmodern' views about science which declare science just as another narrative of equal value with mythology and other practices or declaring science as a narrative that all aim at questioning objectivity of science. However, Wittgenstein is not declaring science and oracle-consulting of equal value. He is insisting that the different practices that we have are not justified. Justification needs clarification here. The fact that we use induction, deduction, hypothesis and so on which constitute the practice of science are activities which we carry out. These concepts are different from the concepts developed by those who consult oracles and play different roles. These concepts (such as induction and deduction) are not representing facts in the world. There are no things as 'induction' apart from human practices which are called so. However, it should not be thought that such concepts are either formed arbitrarily or are arbitrary. As we have discussed it before, our form of life gives rise to certain practices and science is one of such activities.

through poetic language, mythology, and pictures. Each era has its poetic language that expresses the needs and desires of the people of that age. As a result, rational examination of religious themes such as God and the immortal soul is not a proper way of dealing with such themes. As a result of such a view, our deepest human needs and desires are not expressed in scientific language but in the language of mythology, pictures, and poetic language. Taking this view into consideration, scientism would be a failure if applied to religion and ethical languages. The latter languages reveal themselves in the form of poetry and mythology. Unlike what some advocates of scientism would want us to believe, mythology would not be bad science, superstition, or simply false beliefs. Rather, mythology is an expression of our deepest human needs and desires that cannot be expressed otherwise.

Wittgenstein has dealt with pictures and their importance in his works is well-known. Bastianelli (2013) has successfully argued for the similarities and influences of Ernst on Wittgenstein, which I have briefly mentioned. In the following, I want to deal with Wittgenstein's writings in this regard in more detail.

Among the criticisms that Wittgenstein had leveled against Frazer, Wittgenstein had insisted that the similarities between us and the people from the past or other cultures are rooted in our human nature. While I have explored some of these aspects in the previous chapter and this very chapter, here I want to examine in more depth another common feature between human beings from different cultures and different times. That is the status of mythology in our language. Mythology has a complicated and multifaceted role in Wittgenstein's philosophy. To appreciate this complexity, we need to examine various uses of the word 'mythology' in Wittgenstein's philosophy.

One of the uses of mythology in Wittgenstein's philosophy denotes a fundamental feature of human language. For Wittgenstein at the basis of our language and its core, there lies pictures that are not a result of ratiocination or rational thinking. These pictures are mythologies,

"a picture that is firmly rooted in us may indeed be compared to superstition, but it may be said too that we always have to reach some firm ground, be it a picture, or not, so that a picture at the root of all our thinking is to be respected and not treated as superstition". (Wittgenstein, quoted in Bastianelli (2013), p. 87).

This use of ‘pictures’ seems to be influenced by Paul Ernst, whom I briefly examined above. The deeply rooted pictures in us, which include belief in God, are not to be discounted as superstitions rather they are firm grounds based on which an entire language game and discourse becomes possible. In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein criticizes the Cartesian project of doubt, because it neglects a fundamental aspect of our language and thought. We can only doubt if there are certainties in place. There are certain ‘certainties’ that are deeply rooted in us.

“I have consciousness” – that is a statement about which no doubt is possible.’ Why should that not say the same as: “I have consciousness” is not a proposition [Satz]’? (Z 401)

What are these certainties or ‘hinges’ or ‘hinge propositions’ (as Wittgenstein sometimes calls them)? There are firm beliefs that we have such as ‘the world has existed for a long time’ or ‘I have consciousness’ that are not justifiable. We cannot find an Archimedean point outside the world based on which we could examine the truth of such a proposition. Should we abandon such a belief because it is unjustifiable? If we abandon our belief in such propositions, we cannot pursue any project, including scientific projects. These beliefs need to be certainties, firmly rooted in us, so that we can pursue our rational inquiries,

Giving grounds, justifying the evidence, comes to an end; – but the end is not certain propositions’ [Sätze] striking us immediately as true, i.e., it is not a kind of seeing on our part; it is our acting, which lies at the bottom of the language-game. (OC 204).

If the true is what is grounded, then the ground is not true, nor yet false. (OC 205).

Moyall-Sharrock (2004) has enumerated the following characteristics common among hinge propositions in Wittgenstein’s *On Certainty*,

- (1) indubitable: doubt and mistake are logically meaningless
- (2) foundational: they do not result from justification
- (3) non-empirical: they are not derived from the senses
- (4) grammatical: they are rules of grammar
- (5) ineffable: they cannot be said
- (6) enacted: they can only show themselves in what we say and do

Sharrock proceeds by illustrating that for Wittgenstein, the objectivity of a proposition means a logical impossibility of doubting it. Hinges being

indubitable does not mean that they are necessarily true since there is no truth or falsehood involved when considering hinges and this is exactly why they are indubitable.

For the foundational aspect, Sharrock argues that they do not need justification, they are conceptually groundless. The realm of hinges is not a realm of inquiry nor explanation but a realm of description, this is how we act, and “why” does not make sense. Explanation no matter how good, or bad cannot convince us regarding hinges⁹⁸.

Sharrock argues against those who are mesmerized by the change in riverbed analogy so much that they have forgotten that the riverbed has a fixed and established component. She blames this criticism’s misconception of drawing an analogy between Wittgenstein and Quine’s web of belief in a way that hinges become nothing but empirical propositions which are more enduring than the other ones.

Sharrock states that there is a categorical difference between hinges and empirical propositions and their continuum is what Quine argued for, not Wittgenstein:

“Knowledge” and “certainty” belong to different categories”. (OC 308).

and further, those hinges are not derived from experience.

“No, experience is not the ground for our game of judging. Nor is its outstanding success”. (OC 131).

Some of our empirical propositions like the ones Moore examined, indicate a necessary or *a priori* character and this may lead us to assume that there

98 Sharrock addresses criticisms of the foundationalist reading of hinges: One objection is that an element of coherentism is present in *On Certainty*, Sharrock contends that there is also an element of foundationalism, and in fact hinges are foundational and they cohere, since they ground and underlie all thoughts, yet they hold fast with propositions uttered based on them. Sharrock mentions Hilary Kornblith who argues that coherence is not in opposition to foundationalism, since hierarchy of our beliefs does not exclude their causal dependence on one another.

“In Wittgenstein’s view, the position and stability of our terminal beliefs are dependent on, or reinforced by, their coherence with other terminal beliefs – where coherence cannot be understood in terms of propositional or rational justification, but in causal terms (such as, for instance, repeated exposure). Wittgenstein’s stance might therefore be seen as a kind of ‘foundherentism’ – to borrow Susan Haack’s term, though without the epistemic features and implications of Haack’s foundherentism: objective certainty, not truth, being the binding force” (Sharrock, 2004, p. 79)

is no sharp boundary between empirical propositions of this sort and rules. According to Sharrock, Wittgenstein refutes such a distinction:

“That is, we are interested in the fact that about certain empirical propositions, no doubt can exist if making judgments is to be possible at all. Or again: I am inclined to believe that not everything that has the form of an empirical proposition is one”. (OC 308).

The form of these propositions is what misleads us into counting them as rules. Yet they are propositions, so the question arises whether they are propositions or not. Sharrock quotes Stroll on this point,

“...even in the *Tractatus* [Wittgenstein] had recognized that such locutions are not straightforwardly about the world. The term he used for their ‘peculiar’ status was ‘pseudo-proposition’. Then later...he thought of these as ‘logical insights’ and/or as ‘grammatical rules’. The concept of a ‘hinge proposition’ is his newest attempt to indicate their status. They are on this latest account proposition-like, and yet they are neither true nor false, not subject to evidence, proof, confirmation, or disconfirmation. They are thus not propositions at all”. (1994, p. 146).

Hinge propositions are nonsense, so they cannot be said. If one mentions that red is a color or red is not a color, both are nonsense, (negation of nonsense is also nonsense) the first one is because one has said what counts as a grammatical rule, and the second one is for negating it. This is stated by Sharrock as follows “Our foundational certainty is operative only in action, not in words.” (p. 96).

Given the characteristics that Sharrock enumerates for these hinge propositions and keeping in mind Paul Ernst’s ideas about the verbal formation of our deepest desires and needs, we come to the point that any verbal formulation of such certainties is mythological. Given that they are mythological to verbalize them we need to use poetic language or use pictures and we should refrain from rationally analyzing them. However, this does not mean that they are exempt from all sorts of scrutiny. This is because Wittgenstein argues that we have good and bad mythologies. It is the business of philosophy to reveal bad mythologies for us. Unlike the advocates of scientism who believe that mythology is equal to falsehoods and that we should abandon them, Wittgenstein aims at eradicating instances in which certain mythologies lead to confusion.

Given that what we have considered is a common feature among all language games, the role of mythology should not be restricted to religion.

Rather, it is a fundamental part of our human language, and we will not be able to do without it. Therefore, any attempt to eradicate mythology from language, as an act of purification, will only lead to the mutilation of language. Pictures hold us captive in all language games, including the language game of science. As Hoyt remarks, Wittgenstein is critical of the fact that some philosophers forget that when speaking of their theories of truth, meaning, time, and other philosophical issues they are using models, “the wayward philosopher confuses his own metaphor for literal statement, his ideal for fact” (Hoyt, 2007. P. 46) Having considered the role of mythology and picture in the language games, let us now turn to another feature of language which challenges the presupposition of adherents of scientism, namely the role of ‘trust’.

4.8. *The Role of Trust and Faith in Science and Religion*

Another feature of the language, in general, is ‘trust’ or ‘faith’. Without trust and faith, human language and epistemology cannot hold ground. Among the advocates of scientism, there is a very common tendency to present the language of science as purely based on evidence. However, this is far from obvious and the language game of science like any other language game is very much dependent on trust and faith. There are various theories proposed as to the nature of trust and faith. When a person holds a religious belief and follows the religious framework, she has trusted God. Holton (1994) argues that trust is a non-cognitive stance that we human beings have. Be it a simple case of trusting the bicycle I am about to ride or having faith in God. Trust is acting-as-if and is not committed to a cognitive belief and one can at least sometimes decide to trust. If one were to decide to trust God, one would act as if God existed and that the religious way of perceiving the world was true. Such a decision does not entail that one formed a cognitive belief about the existence of God backed up with evidence.

There are affinities between what Wittgenstein holds on faith and the non-cognitivist accounts of faith. Given that acting as-if is so vital to such accounts of faith, the religious practice determines whether one trusts God and has faith in him or not. Similarly, for Wittgenstein faith is closely affiliated with religious practice. Therefore, when Drury asks him about conversion, Wittgenstein mentions that conversion and confession to belief

are not what matters but what matters is what one does⁹⁹. If one has faith, in the sense that Wittgenstein is intending, one is seizing one way of living and dedicating oneself to it and acting accordingly. However, it is completely possible to confess to a religious belief, argue for the rationality of religious belief or the superiority of religious belief over non-belief, and not have faith in this sense intended. Living a religious life in this sense is not an easy task. It requires one to monitor and examine every action one does and make sure that he does not refrain from the framework which tells him what to do. Verbal confession to a religious belief can lead to hypocrisy or insincerity if it is not accompanied by acting according to the framework.

It should be noted that we human beings hold onto beliefs without evidence in many of our aspects of lives and this is by no means a reason to label us as irrational. Without faith, we will not be able to lead our lives. Backer (1987) mentions scientists and lawyers as two groups who do not follow evidentialism, but we would usually not label what they do as irrational. Some scientists in the formation of hypotheses and theories stick to their hypotheses and theories and take them to be true and do not abandon them in the face of counterevidence. By the standards of evidentialism, such a scientist should be labeled as irrational, because he holds a belief true which he does not have sufficient evidence for. Thomas Kuhn argued that if scientists would abandon their hypotheses and theories when faced with counter-evidence, we would not have this body of knowledge called science. Instead, scientists preserve their hypotheses and theories and try to find evidence to support their hypotheses. This hope should not be labeled as irrational even though it happens without evidence. Similarly, a lawyer defends his client based on the assumption that she is innocent. The lawyer holds a belief that she does not have enough evidence for, namely the innocence of her client. The other side in the court offers evidence that her client is not innocent, but the lawyer will try to undermine the counterevidence and establish the truth of her client. Strictly speaking, based on evidentialism in such cases scientists and lawyers should either suspend judgment or abandon their hypothesis/belief altogether. Consider another case offered by Sarah Stroud (2006). Stroud argues that friendship is a relation in which we cannot hold epistemic impartiality and given that

99 Wittgenstein has told Drury, "If someone tells me he has bought the outfit of a tightrope-walker I am not impressed until I see what is done with it". (Monk, 1991, 463).

friendship is one of the most important phenomena in our lives she argues that we ought to alter our epistemic standards or abandon them. Taking the examples of scientists, lawyers, and friends into consideration, we are dealing with three important aspects of our lives; how we understand the world, how we regulate our social life, and our emotional interpersonal relationships. Even if we do not reach Stroud's conclusion that we ought to alter our epistemic standards, we ought to concede that as human beings certain aspects of our lives simply do not cohere with evidentialism. We are not after all computing machines involved only in assessing the weight of evidence. This point is not intended to be *bona fide* to form irrational beliefs at will. Rather understand human beings in their totality, which does not only consist of their epistemic activity but we ought also to consider it. One aspect of human life is faith and as the examples provided indicate this faith is not restricted to religious beliefs.

There is a further point to be made in this regard. The starting point for any practice on the Wittgensteinian view is trust. Whether it is science or religion, one must begin with trust. Either trust in our faculties and their ability to detect and understand the regularities in the natural world or our ability to practice the religious life and deliver. In other words, if there is no trust in the practice to begin with, the practice cannot be carried out and one must deal with skepticism of a very radical type. This trust or faith is the requirement of practicing every phenomenon on this view and not just religion. As Mulhall puts it and was mentioned in the previous chapter, if Wittgenstein is a fideist, then he is a fideist about all language games. In other words, all our language games are dependent on an initial act of faith, of trusting the language game and participating in it. Unlike what many of the advocates of scientism would want us to believe, faith is not equal to irrationality, and it is not restricted to religion. Our trust in the natural world is the backbone of scientific research. Sometimes the advocates of scientism seem to confuse our trust in nature with a metaphysical stance about nature. No one knows nature enough to be able to tell us about its metaphysical status. All we have access to are (wild) guesses and some successful predictions that allow us to interfere within certain limited realms of nature. It is not irrational for us to trust nature, because doing so enables us to carry out our scientific research. Likewise, trusting God is not irrational and it enables us to carry out the language game of religion.

Having examined various aspects of the language game of science, scientism, and Wittgenstein's critical remarks, we are set to move to the next chapter in which we will examine the relationship between the worldviews

and language games of religion and science and a possible mutual learning between the two.

Chapter Five: Inspirations of Wittgenstein's View on Learning and Education

In this chapter, at stake are the relationships between Wittgenstein's views and the mutual learning between the language games of science and religion. However, to give this account, I need first to give an account of learning itself according to Wittgenstein's views on language-game. After that, it would be possible to talk about mutual learning. In dealing with this concept, I will divide it into two concepts of asymmetrical and symmetrical mutual learning. The former refers to education as far as teaching is involved in it. The asymmetry refers to the unequal relationship between the teacher and the student. The latter, namely symmetrical mutual learning, concentrates on the relationship between the two language games of science and religion.

Thus, in what follows, the first section is dedicated to the question of "What is learning?" The next section deals with mutual learning with two subtitles on asymmetrical and symmetrical mutual learning. The former deals with education, and the latter deals with the learning relationship between the two language games of science and religion.

5.1. What is learning?

In recent times, there has been a growing tendency toward putting learning at the heart of education. This indicates not only the marginalization of teaching but also the undermining of the realms of knowledge. Digital technologies have strengthened this tendency because of their roles in the facilitation of self-learning. In this section, I am going to show that Wittgenstein's concept of language-game raises a real challenge to this tendency by indicating its emptiness. By the same token, the Wittgensteinian concept enriches learning by putting it within the context of language games.

Referring to learning-centered education, Biesta (2010) has coined the phrase "learnification" indicating that any dimension of education is shadowed and qualified by learning. However, according to him, education cannot be emptied from teaching in the name of learning.

The role of technology in strengthening learning-centered education has been huge. While the early emphases on learning by technology were on 'information technologies' (IT) and 'information communication technologies' (ICT), the recent emphasis in Europe has shifted to the more learning-friendly phrase of 'Technology-enhanced learning' (TEL). By bringing learning at the center of attention in this phrase, a contrast between 'instructionism' and 'constructionism' comes to the fore in which the latter is advantaged over the former. The weaknesses of traditional education have been a pretext for advocating 'constructionism' according to which students themselves construct their meanings instead of receiving them from teachers (Derry, 2009). Derry refers to Robert Reich's thought as an example of such thinking where he talks about learners as constructors of meaning or "symbolic analysts" in front of the data available for them just by touching a computer key (Reich, 1992, p. 299).

According to Derry, what is lost in this emphasis on learning and constructionism is the background of knowledge domains within which learning becomes possible. Derry traces constructionism to its troublesome epistemological presupposition in which dualism is at stake; a meaningless world, on the one hand, and a meaning-making mind, on the other hand: "The argument here is that this epistemological view goes along with neglect of the fact that at every point in time, there is always a body or domain of knowledge about the world already in existence even if it is rejected by later generations as inadequate." (Derry, 2009, p. 146) Accordingly, learning does not occur in a solipsistic manner by giving meaning to meaningless things in the world; instead, the learning process starts by entering the space of language and the backgrounds of knowledge domains in which meanings are already there.

This is in line with what a Wittgensteinian would say about learning. Not only does the child enter the space of language, but also, later, into the complicated space of language games, including the language games of sciences and religion. Thus, according to Wittgenstein, even though we as children learn facts from the start, this does not occur in front of direct relation to the facts as meaningless bits of the world that need to become meaningful to us; rather, we learn facts by the mediation of beliefs that adults give us: "As children, we learn facts, e.g., that every human being has a brain, and we take them on trust. I believe there is an island, Australia, of such and such a shape, and so on and so on; I believe I had great grandparents, that the people who gave themselves out as my parents were my parents, etc. This belief may never have been expressed; even the thought that

it was so, never thought.” (OC, §159) In this learning endeavor, children trust adults: “Thus, the child learns by believing the adult.” (OC, § 160).

As far as complicated language games are concerned, learning according to Wittgenstein occurs by becoming familiar with the rules that govern each language game and following them. To learn the usage of a word, the child needs to understand that the word can be used according to different sets of rules in different forms of life: “The word ‘language-game’ is also used to emphasize that *speaking* the language is part of an activity or form of life” (PI, § 23). It is interesting to note that Wittgenstein’s list of examples of language games in the same paragraph of PI includes “forming and testing a hypothesis” as well as “praying”; that is to say, the language games of science and religion which are at issue in the present research.

According to this Wittgensteinian view, learners do not create meaning by themselves; rather, they are already in the context of pre-established language games along with their certain rules and meanings. This does not exclude creativity or critical thinking in learning altogether. As far as creativity is concerned, Wittgenstein’s view only excludes creation *ex nihilo*, creating meaning out of nothing and in a meaningless world. Language games are what make creative learning possible by putting forward the rules concerned; exactly in the same way as the rules of, say, football make creative football playing possible. All the football players along with their “particular styles” of playing follow the same rules.

On the other hand, critical thinking is not excluded from learning based on Wittgenstein’s view of language games. What Wittgenstein holds is that critique comes after establishment as doubt comes after certainty (OC, § 160) because certainty is one of the rules of the language game of doubt. Thus, referring to the teacher and student relationship, Wittgenstein states: “A pupil and a teacher. The pupil will not let anything be explained to him, for he continually interrupts with doubts, for instance as to the existence of things, the meaning of words, etc. The teacher says “Stop interrupting me and do as I tell you. So far, your doubts don’t make sense at all.” (OC, § 310) Again, in the same line: “What if the pupil refused to believe that this mountain had been there beyond human memory? We should say that he had no *grounds* for this suspicion.” (OC, § 322)

Wittgenstein provides us with an extensive picture of different language games each with its concepts and rules that show the background of learning. For instance, referring to philosophy as a language game, different from science dealing with explanation, he talks about its rules in terms of clarification of concepts by reminding us of what we already know but for-

get: "Philosophy just puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. – Since everything lies open to view, there is nothing to explain" (PI, § 126); hence, the 'work of the philosopher consists in marshaling recollections for a particular purpose' (PI, § 127). Also, referring to the language game of ethics, he shows in his Cambridge Lecture on Ethics how the usage of the word "good" in ethics is different from its usage in everyday life where one talks, for instance, about the good way or right way to a town.

Regarding language games, learning requires familiarity with the rules concerned. Inspired by Wittgenstein's forms of life, Paul Hirst (1965) has talked about "forms of knowledge". According to them, any form of knowledge, such as those of science and philosophy, is constituted of certain concepts, propositions, as well as methods of justification. For instance, propositions of mathematics are made by using certain concepts, such as addition and subtraction, and their truth values are determined by the axiomatic methods dedicated to mathematics. On the other hand, religious propositions are made using certain concepts, such as sin, God, and salvation, and their validity could be determined by, for instance, referring to sacred texts.

5.2. *What is mutual learning?*

While learning is a unipolar concept, mutual learning is a bipolar one in which two sides are involved and the learning of one side is being influenced by the other side. Given the answer to the question of "What is learning?" in the last section, it would follow that the same activities of learning are involved in mutual learning but in a bipolar order. In other words, if learning is the entrance into a language game along with a mild form of creativity, then mutual learning would be a co-operated entrance into a language game. Undoubtedly, this cooperation has some merits that unipolar learning lacks. These merits will be addressed in what follows.

Regarding the fact that the two sides of mutual learning might be unequal or equal, this type of learning would have two shapes asymmetrical and symmetrical. The former refers to education and teaching and the latter to the relation between the two language games of science and religion as the pivotal point of the present research. Even though these two shapes of mutual learning are sub-sections of this section, because of the length

of the sub-sections, I will discuss them in autonomous sections in what follows.

5.3. *Asymmetrical Mutual Learning*

This section introduces a Wittgensteinian account of education. As mentioned above, education and learning are not equal because while education is necessarily a bipolar concept involving both roles of teacher and student, learning could be unipolar concentrating on the role of the learner alone. Education is highly associated with teaching whereas learning is not necessarily associated with it. No doubt, intentionality is involved in both education and learning according to which one can talk about “teaching to” and “Learning from”. However, the other side of teaching should be a living being, but it is not the case in learning. One can learn from a thing as well as from an unintending living being. Thus, it is meaningful to say that “I learned from the river to be continuously in motion” or “I learned from the sect to be persistent”.

There has been a longstanding debate among the philosophers of education on the relationship between teaching and learning. Analytic philosophers of education raised a question in terms of achievement/task words. If one holds that teaching is an achievement word, then teaching necessarily implies the occurrence of learning. However, if teaching is held to be a task word, then teaching does not necessarily imply learning. The fact that not every teaching leads to learning, some hold that teaching is a task word. In other words, they turn teaching into a unipolar concept in which teachers are concerned merely about their roles in terms of giving lectures. However, no institution in the world will employ teachers, no matter how sophisticated they might be, in whose class all the students fail.

At the same time, teaching could not imply necessarily learning as some students might fail to pass their lessons. What teaching necessarily implies is caring about students’ learning rather than the occurrence of learning *per se*. When teachers care about students’ learning, they can not concentrate merely on their giving lectures, and this leads to their interactions with students which in turn leads to learning if not necessarily the learning of the whole class. Therefore, teaching necessarily implies care about learning whereas learning does not necessarily imply teaching. Regarding this difference, both education, being associated with teaching, and learning need to be dealt with.

Given the complexity of language games and knowledge structures, the mutual entrance of teacher and student into them would not be possible without the care of the teacher about the student's learning process. At the same time, regarding the mild creativity of students that can be involved in their learning process of a language game, then teachers might learn from their students, at least, in terms of their questions as well as looking for their failures and, at most, in terms of their hints and comments.

It is interesting to note that Wittgenstein's teaching method has been essentially dialogical in the sphere of mutual learning. Patrick Quinn compares Wittgenstein's method of teaching to the Socratic midwifery method with the difference that Wittgenstein, unlike Socrates, sometimes, did not know the answers to the questions he was raising for his students and himself was thinking along the students. Referring to the dialogical method, Quinn writes: "The uniqueness perhaps in Wittgenstein's case is that his dialogical approach defined the general pattern of his philosophy lectures where *his* thoughts and reflections constituted the learning material, which is what makes his approach so special." (Quinn, 2015, xix). Quinn states that Wittgenstein's sister, Hermine, has informed us that Wittgenstein, during his teaching in the elementary in the 1920s in Austria, used to employ the same method with the students as he was trying to lead them using questions to the correct answers (ibid). Quinn also gives a quotation from von Wright concerning Wittgenstein's teaching method that is worth mentioning here: "As might be expected, his lectures were highly 'unacademic'. He nearly always held them in his room or the college rooms of a friend. He had no manuscript of notes. He *thought* before the class. The impression was of tremendous concentration. The exposition usually led to a question, to which the audience was supposed to suggest an answer. The answers in turn became starting points for new thoughts leading to new questions. It depended on the audience to a great extent, whether the discussion became fruitful and whether the connecting thread was kept in sight from beginning to end of a lecture and from one lecture to another. Many members of his audiences were highly qualified people from various fields." (Von Wright, 1982, p. 29, cited by Quinn, 2015, xviii). Wittgenstein's dialogical teaching shows that the indications of his views that are going to be addressed below derive from an inner source and a practical commitment. This would be a case of convergent thought and action.

One of the important components of education in asymmetrical mutual learning concerns the aim of education. Teachers as well as education policymakers are concerned about the aim of education. This point needs

to be dealt with in more detail in a sub-section for two reasons. Firstly, there is confusion among policymakers of education about the role of science in drawing the aim of education in terms of happiness on which the Wittgensteinian view of language-game is instructive. The second reason is that Wittgenstein himself has dealt somewhat extensively with the concept of happiness.

5.3.1. The Good Life or Happiness as the Aim of Education

The most vital question in education concerns its aim. This is not only because education, as a set of actions, should be responsive to the question of its *raison d'être*. It is also important to take in mind that the aim of education shows, directly or indirectly, its implications on all the components of education, including curriculum, methods of teaching, evaluation, etc.

What philosophical inquiry has to say about the aim of education concentrates particularly on the meaning of life. Any answer to the question of the meaning of life would show its influence on the activities of education overall. The quest for the meaning of life occupied Wittgenstein's thoughts from his early endeavors in 1916 in his *Notebooks* till the end of his life appeared in his book *Culture and Value*. Even in his *Tractatus* he refers to his concern about the meaning of life ethics and the supernatural by emphasizing what cannot be said but can only be shown. The question of the meaning of life for Wittgenstein is associated with the question of what it means to be happy. Thinking about happiness is seen in his early work in *The Notebooks*.

In answering his preoccupation with the meaning of life, Wittgenstein finds a way in his confrontation with Tolstoy's *The Gospel in Brief* (Tolstoy, 1997) during his participation in the First World War. This influence appeared in his statements in the *Notebooks*.

It is interesting to note that happiness has been one of the main issues that have recently come to the fore in educational and psychological thoughts. In this section, I am going to compare Wittgenstein's concerns about happiness and the meaning of life with the recent educational concerns in this regard. In what follows, first I am going to give a brief account of the recent educational attempts and then refer to Wittgenstein's views, which can provide us with a comparison and evaluation of the recent attempts.

In the 1990s there was a complaint about the failures of formal education that led to what is called “standardization”. It was argued that if we look for higher standards in schools in learning the subject matters, this will lead to controlling violence, and delinquency and solving the social problems of students. Ironically, the movement of standardization led to more problems and violence because the high standard made the failed students anxious along with the feeling of worthlessness which, in turn, made them ready for revenge and more violence.

The failure of the standardization movement led to a new policy in education which is called the “enhancement agenda”. In this orientation, categories such as feelings, well-being, happiness, etc. come to the fore in the policy documents. For instance, in the Child's Plan (DCSF, 2007) one of the goals for 2020 is stated as follows: “to enhance children and young people's well-being, particularly at transition points in their lives” (Children's Plan Executive Summary, DCSF, 2007, p. 19) (cited in Cigman, 2009, p. 174).

According to Wittgenstein, happiness cannot be “described” or measured as a physical fact; rather, it involves the whole consciousness of the person toward the meaning of life. This wholistic view leads Wittgenstein to talk about the happy life in terms of harmony and from a transcendental perspective: “But we could say: The happy life seems to be in some sense more *harmonious* than the unhappy. But in what sense? What is the objective mark of a happy, harmonious life? Here it is again clear that there cannot be any such mark, that can be *described*. This mark cannot be a physical one but only a metaphysical one, a transcendental one. Ethics is transcendental. How things stand, is God. God is, how things stand.” (Notebooks, pp. 78-79)

This wholistic account of happiness and the good life makes a connection between ethics and art because the beauty of art, according to Wittgenstein, is also rooted in the whole: “The work of art is the object seen *sub specie aeternitatis*, and the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. That is the connexion between art and ethics. (Something good about the whole, but bad in details.)” (Notebooks, p. 83)

It seems that Wittgenstein sees happiness as something more complicated than the mere happy feeling in the shallow sense of the word. Happiness in its complicated sense goes beyond mere feelings as Wittgenstein associates it with “the life of knowledge”. Not only that but also, as far as feelings themselves are concerned, happiness goes beyond the mere happy feeling as it can embrace and swallow the misery of the world: “How can

a man be happy at all, since he cannot ward off the misery of this world? Through the life of knowledge. A good conscience is the happiness that the life of knowledge preserves. The life of knowledge is the life that is happy despite the misery of the world. The only happy life is the life that can renounce the amenities of the world. To it, the amenities of the world are so many graces of fate.” (Notebooks, p. 81)

The above-mentioned remarks show that Wittgenstein would have a critical view on the current attempts in education to take happiness the hallmark of educational endeavors. This is because of the wrong orientation toward giving an objective and descriptive account of happiness and, secondly, the shallow encounter with happiness by limiting it to feelings and in feelings to the happy feeling. Contrary to it, while Wittgensteinian views inspire that happiness is so important that it could be taken as the aim of education, however a more complicated account of happiness is needed. In this account, happiness is a wholistic matter and cannot be limited to a physical stance. In addition, it not only goes beyond feelings by associating with the life of knowledge but also goes beyond happy feelings and is compatible with the misery of the world.

5.3.2. Symmetrical Mutual Learning Between Science and Religion

In this section, at issue is the kind of learning that is at the center of this thesis, namely mutual learning between religious and scientific language games. To meet this purpose, reviewing the comparison between the two languages explained in the previous chapters is helpful. Having considered the borderlines between the two language games, the next step could be taken which is about the mutual learning between the two language games regarding the limitations as well as the dispositions of these them.

5.3.3. The Comparison Between the Two Language-games

In the previous chapters, it was explained that there are differences between the two language games. While the description is pivotal in the language game of science, quasi-propositions of religion are not indeed descriptive, rather they need to be understood in the context of a lifestyle. In other words, science deals with theory. However, religion is practical in tone instead of being theoretical.

Being fact-oriented, science has descriptive language whereas the language of religion is essentially metaphorical. One might say that metaphorical language is not restricted to religion but rather is common between science and religion. It is right that metaphors have an important position in science. However, using metaphors in science does not prevent a scientist from describing the facts concerned after using the metaphors to develop hypotheses. Developing metaphors in science is a tentative bridge toward the description of facts. On the other hand, in religious language metaphors are not used in this way because it is not a preliminary step for a description, rather it is as if the metaphor is the final step in this language so that one cannot go beyond it. This is because the supernatural is not observable at all by definition. Having said all this, we cannot conclude that, according to Wittgenstein, religious language is futile. Even though he has sometimes considered religious language as meaningless, in the final analysis, he does not take it as ridiculous, rather he talks about it respectfully. As it is stated previously, referring to religious and ethical language, Wittgenstein declares: "What it says does not add to our knowledge in any sense. But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it". (Lecture on Ethics, § 12)

Even though religion and science have two distinct types of language, when Wittgenstein talks about them in terms of language games, an important commonality appears. This commonality is that both religion and science are language games indicating two aspects of forms of human life. According to Wittgenstein, the relation among forms of human life and, hence, the relevant language games is horizontal rather than vertical. In the latter kind of relation, some language games are superior to others whereas, in the former, there is no superiority for some language games compared to others. For instance, scientism is based on the superiority of science to religion, art, and philosophy which Wittgenstein rejects as mentioned previously. However, in the horizontal relationship, every language game is no less, and no more, a language game compared to other ones. Thus, they are different aspects of human life. This perspectival relationship can be seen in this sentence of Wittgenstein: "Only from the consciousness of the *uniqueness of my life* arises religion-science-and art." (Notebooks, p. 79)

A proclaimed superiority of one language game to the other is the result of comparing the latter to the rules of the former. However, this result is fallacious by committing a sort of category mistake because every language game could and should be understood and evaluated merely by appealing to the rules of the same language game. Otherwise, religion might be

judged inferior to science by appealing to the rules of the science language game, in the same way, that science would be judged inferior to religion by appealing to the rules of the religion language game. Such a category mistake can be found in Wittgenstein's critique of Frazer's *Golden Bough* mentioned in previous chapters.

The horizontal relationship between scientific and religious language games as two different and, at the same time, necessary aspects of human life provide a background for mutual learning between them. In the next section, at issue is what could be learned in this mutual learning.

5.3.4. Dialogical learning between the two language-games

Regarding the horizontal relationship between the two language games of science and religion, each of them can learn important things. In what follows, some of these lines of learning are addressed. Before introducing the lines of learning, an introductory note seems to be useful concerning the preconditions of dialogue that Habermas has put forward in his concept of "ideal speech situation" that introduces the preconditions of the dialogical method.

Habermas, in dealing with the question of what makes mutual understanding possible has introduced the ideal speech situation that comprises three symmetries: "intersubjective symmetry in the distribution of assertions and disputes, revelation and concealment, prescription and conformity among the partners of communication." (Habermas, 1970, p. 371) Based on these symmetries, what is needed in a mutual understanding consists of an unrestrained consensus, stated in the first symmetry; an unimpaired self-representation, declared in the second one; and justice in terms of universal norms, represented in the third one. As Nancy Love has pointed out, a fourth element is also needed to complete the preconditions of mutual understanding. This fourth element is empathy in terms of which one should listen carefully to the interlocutors to understand them as well as attempt to speak clearly to be understood (Love, 1999, p. 62). These preconditions of mutual understanding show the suitable backgrounds for making mutual learning possible between science and religion.

Having mentioned the two preliminary notes, I am going now to introduce the inspirations of Wittgenstein's views on mutual learning between the two language games of science and religion as well as scientists and religious people.

The first line of learning is quasi-ontological. The concept of “forms of life”, as well as the associated language games, indicate a sort of pluralism about human life. I use the term quasi-ontological to avoid the tone of traditional philosophy that would be strange in the Wittgensteinian sphere. Anyway, regarding the plurality of forms in human life, both scientific and religious language games need to acknowledge this plurality. By acknowledging this plurality, both science and religion would see themselves within the limits of their relevant forms of life. This is an important piece of learning because realizing limits prevents one from the claim of omniscience and omnipotence as the negligence of limits leads one to the illusions of omniscience and omnipotence. It is worth noting that the pluralism that is involved in Wittgenstein's view is convergent because the forms of life constitute human life as an integrated whole. Thus, it should be understood differently from divergent pluralism or mere perspectivism in which there are separate unintegrated sides. As will be seen below, convergent pluralism would lead to a complementarity among the language games due to the integrity of the forms of life.

Admitting this quasi-ontological plurality would lead, in turn, to a quasi-epistemological commitment. The quasi-epistemological commitment is the second line of mutual learning. Again, I use the term quasi-epistemological with a Wittgensteinian caution. What is meant by that is to admit the legitimacy of different approaches to the world. When there are different forms of life, and the different associated language games, then it would be expected to have different ways of approaching them. As far as science and religion as two forms of life are concerned, there are two ways of approaching the world: one descriptive and the other metaphorical and mystical. Then, it would not be the case that scientific description-explanation is the only way to think about the world as it would not be the case that the religious metaphorical-mystical treatment of the world is the only proper way for dealing with the world.

The third line of mutual learning is ethical. A neighborhood among equals requires mutual respect and humbleness. About the horizontal relationship, both science and religion realize that they are equal neighbors and none of them is the only game in town. We have witnessed the arrogance of both religion and science in the past. When religion claims that it and only it can provide us with the real facts of the world because they are revealed by God the omniscient, the first kind of arrogance shows itself. We have witnessed this type of arrogance in the clash between the church and the scientists in the previous centuries. On the other hand, in recent

times, we have witnessed the arrogance of science in its reductive approach according to which everything should be viewed and understood merely using scientific apparatus. However, when scientific and religious language games take each other as equal neighbors, then humbleness would be the result. The above-mentioned symmetries arrive here because equality requires that the rights and duties of the interlocutors are defined in a reciprocal and just way. Thus, for instance, if science does not expect that it obeys religion, conversely it should not expect that religion obeys science in its relevant claims and preoccupations.

The fourth line of mutual learning stems from the previous one and still is ethical in tone. What is to be learned here is cooperation due to mutual needs. Accordingly, a scientist needs religion to meet the challenges of life's meaning because science cannot deal with the meaning of life. According to Wittgenstein, the mystery of the world is not something that science can touch even after being able to explain all the events in the world. On the other hand, religion needs science to have exact descriptions of the world that make living possible. This cooperation requires empathy to be fruitful. As mentioned above, empathy shows care for understanding one's interlocuter properly. Without empathy, both science and religion would trap into biases that prevent them from understanding each other which, in turn, would make cooperation impossible.

The fifth line of mutual learning is educational in its restricted sense. That is to say, if it is needed, science and religion should take each other as the teacher. In other words, each side should ask the other side about the components that belong to the other side but are occasionally put in it. It has been the case in the history of science that some scientists have attempted to provide people with their life goals, they have attempted to take the role of religion. Auguste Comte's suggestion of "the religion of humanity" is an exemplary case.

On the other hand, there have also been cases in the history of religion which some religious leaders have attempted to talk about the facts of the world for their audience by appealing to the sacred texts, to take the role of science. There are statements in religious texts that are not metaphorical-mystical like other statements which are so, rather they refer to the facts of the world. Take this example from the Quran about the genesis and development of the fetus: "Then we placed him as (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed; then we made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot, we made a (fetus) lump; then we made out of the lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh..." (The Holy Quran, 23:

13-14). The idea of language games, each with its characteristics, indicates that the occasional cases in each language game should be understood in terms of the relevant language game. Thus, regarding the meaning of life, scientists should take the role of students in religion. On the other hand, regarding factual statements, religious leaders should take the role of student scientists and check the relevant statements using scientific findings.

5.4. Conclusion

Wittgenstein's view on language games has inspirations for education and learning. The concept of language-game indicates the nature of learning. Contrary to strong constructivism that takes learning to be created, language-game requires that the child enter the pre-established sphere of language and knowledge. Even though creativity in learning is acceptable in terms of language-game, it could only be a mild sense of creation within the limits of language games' proper rules. As for critical thinking in learning, having considered learning as a kind of acculturation in terms of language games, we need to postpone critical thinking in education to the later periods instead of beginning it from early childhood. As doubt needs to be preceded by certainty, critical thinking needs to be preceded by acculturation. Critical thinking without acculturation is empty as acculturation without critical thinking is blind. It should be noted that this is not meant to be a clear-cut dichotomy, rather it can be an ongoing process in which each few steps in acculturation can be accompanied by a few steps of critical thinking and this process can go on. The idea is that we need to be immersed in something to be able to recognize and understand it and then assess it critically, not vice versa.

The idea of a language game does not only provide us with a certain meaning of learning as far as a language game is concerned. It also suggests mutual learning as far as the relationship among the language games is at issue. Mutual learning is of two kinds: asymmetrical and symmetrical. The former relates to education and teaching and the latter to the relation between the two language games of science and religion. It is interesting to note that the founder of language games, Wittgenstein, had a practical commitment to dialogical teaching and learning. An important component of education is the aim of education. As far as the aim of education is concerned, the language game of science cannot do the job. Instead, the language game of religion is what can do it properly. Wittgenstein himself

has addressed this point in terms of happiness and the meaning of life which can be expected to be met in religion. Looking for happiness in science as a descriptive and objective issue, as the advocates of positive psychology pursue it, leads to a category mistake.

The mutual learning between science and religion needs a pre-condition of equality and symmetry among the language games to meet what Habermas calls the “ideal speech situation”. Wittgenstein has held this equality and symmetry by introducing a horizontal relationship among the language games. Accordingly, no language game is superior to another.

In this thesis, the mutual learning between two language games of science and religion has been at the center of attention. Several lines of mutual learning are addressed in this regard. Firstly, as far as “forms of life” are concerned, science and religion need to learn a lesson of pluralism. However, as far as the integrity of “forms of life” is concerned, this pluralism is a convergent pluralism instead of a mere perspectivism. This pluralism, in the first stance, is a quasi-ontological one. It indicates that science and religion need to understand that they are caught within the limits of “forms of life” each with its limited realm of being. This prevents science as well as religion from the claims of omniscience and omnipotence, namely the claim of godhood that has tempted each of them from time to time.

The pluralism leads in the second phase to a quasi-epistemological pluralism. According to this view, both science and religion would hold that there are different ways of looking at things from which each of them is only a way rather than “The way”. Descriptive and metaphorical ways are two ways of dealing with the world that need to be juxtaposed with each other rather than substituted for one another. Thus, scientists should avoid the reductionism of religion as religious people should avoid all-inclusivism.

The third and fourth lines of mutual learning are ethical. In the third line, science and religion, having understood their neighborhood, need to respect each other. This mutual recognition prevents science from ridiculing religion, as it prevents religion from accusing science of being mundane. The fourth line of learning is empathy and cooperation. Empathy is the proper way to understand “the other” as it is, rather than being trapped in biases and prejudices.

Finally, the fifth line of mutual learning is education. In terms of this point, science and religion should take each other as teachers and instructors whenever it becomes necessary. Science needs to learn from religion in so far as it deals with the meaning of life and religion needs to learn from

science whenever it comes to account for the facts of the world as there are occasionally factual statements in religious texts.

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