

## SOME REMARKS ON THE RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE IN THE SELECTED TEXTS BY LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

*This article is intended to show that only the comprehensive analysis of the scientific legacy of a particular writer is the way to understand it. Creating an alphabetic and conceptual dictionary of L. Wittgenstein's language, providing and analysing all his texts that are currently available, would give a chance for a more complete overview of his writing legacy. It is concluded that the author has devoted a fairly substantial part of his speech to religious issues, often writing passionate and authentic texts.*

**Key words:** religious language, L. Wittgenstein, scientific legacy, texts.

1. L. Wittgenstein's texts as a subject of analysis of *Culture and Value* contain L. Wittgenstein's notes which characterize his way of thinking and practicing philosophy:

*"Each sentence that I write is trying to say the whole thing, that is, the same thing over and over again & it is as though they were all views of one object seen from different angles"*<sup>1</sup>.

For the linguist who analyses the semantics of his writing, it is a challenge to build a corpus of the texts created by L. Wittgenstein that would allow the complete overview. I assume that the smallest text is a sentence, while the largest is a book, taking into consideration that one word may be a sentence and a book may be a collection of volumes. L. Wittgenstein's texts, which a researcher studying his scientific findings should take into account, include a sentence, a set of sentences and a book. Within the lifetime of the author, one of his books (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*) was published and, after his death, another (*Philosophical Investigations*) and some others, most of which are the collections of the notes that L. Wittgenstein had not intended to issue. The published writings included, among others, the text of his lecture (*A Lecture on Ethics*), students' notes of his lectures and his letters<sup>2</sup>. A subject of analysis in this article will include the selected notes of L. Wittgenstein, excerpt from his twelve texts: *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*; *Philosophical Investigations*; *Notebooks 1914-1916*; *On Certainty*; *Lectures on Religious Belief*; *A Lecture on Ethics*; *Remarks on Frazer's "The Golden Bough"*; *Culture and Value*; *Remarks on Colour*; *Zettel*; *Denkbewegungen. Tagebücher 1930-1932, 1936-1937* (*Movements of Thought. Diaries 1930-1932, 1936-1937*)<sup>3</sup> and selected letters (cf. The list of L. Wittgenstein's texts). The present article contains within the theolinguistic studies. Theolinguistics is an area of linguistic study whose subject is a religious language, i.e. a way of speaking about God and the attitude of a human towards God. The aim of the research is to show how the sacred sphere manifests itself at the level of a certain artist's language. In each of the 12 analyzed texts written by L. Wittgenstein, there are references to the sacred sphere, with the biggest number of such passages being within the text of *Denkbewegungen. Tagebücher 1930-1932, 1936-1937*. These statements sparkle with various meanings relating to religious issues.

2. A hypothetical *Conceptual Dictionary of Wittgenstein's Language (CDWL)*.

One way to understand deeply the semantics of texts of any writer is to create an alphabetical dictionary of lexemes used by the author, giving all quotes and meanings, and on that basis, to develop a conceptual dictionary<sup>4</sup>. In the case of L. Wittgenstein's texts, creating such a lexicographic study would be a major

<sup>1</sup> L. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, edited by G. H. von Wright, Blackwell Publishers Ltd. Oxford, 1998, p. 9 [Ludwig\_Wittgenstein\_Culture\_and\_Value\_Revised\_E.(BookZZ.org)...].

<sup>2</sup> Cf. The list of L. Wittgenstein's texts and their discussion, e.g. [in] R. Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein. The Duty of Genius*, Vintage Books, London, 1991; J. Bremer writes: *The last part of the Tractatus, A Lecture on Ethics and Talks about Freud are quite homogeneous studies, while others are written in a form resembling a collection of aphorisms. Secondly, it should be mentioned that the legacy of Wittgenstein, covering about 30,000 pages of the manuscript has been published only in a small part* (a translation from Polish), cf. *Ludwig Wittgenstein i religia (Ludwig Wittgenstein and Religion)*, Wyższa Szkoła Filozoficzno-Pedagogiczna, Kraków 2001, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> The article presents the English translation of the Polish text translated from the German original. A page number corresponds to a page in the Polish text. This also applies to texts such as: *Bemerkungen über Frazer's "The Golden Bough"*, *Remarks on Colour*, *Zettel*.

<sup>4</sup> In this way, Jan Kochanowski's vocabulary is studied in Poland. The Institute of the Polish Language at the Polish Academy of Sciences (IJP PAN) has already finished an alphabetical dictionary of this Renaissance poet and currently a thematic dictionary is being developed. The idea of such dictionaries is different from a useful and somehow valuable

challenge due to the language of his texts – written both in German or English, translated in parallel from German to English, with listeners of his lectures and students also being the creators of his books and making their own contribution to the author's original thought. It raises questions about the true meaning of his utterances. Another problem are different variations of the same thought of the philosopher, for example in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and *Notebooks 1914-1916*. Next issue is to provide the definitions of philosophical concepts of the texts by L. Wittgenstein and other lexemes used by him in different studies. Philosopher L. Wittgenstein is known to have dealt with logic, mathematics, metaphysics, religion, mythology, ethics, and art. His texts also included remarks on, among others, Freud's psychoanalysis or the state of contemporary culture. Additionally, he wrote a lot about his physical or mental condition, the external circumstances of life and relationships with other people. Attention should be drawn to the metatextual expressions of the author, i.e. those which relate to his own texts, scattered throughout his various works, cf. an example sentence:

"Aside from the good & genuine, my book the *Tractatus Log.-Phil.* also contains kitsch, that is, passages with which I filled in the gaps and so-to-speak in my own style. How much of the book contains of such passages I don't know & it is difficult to fairly evaluate now". *Denkbewegungen. Tagebücher 1930-1932, 1936-1937:30*<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, a semantic grid of a hypothetical *Conceptual Dictionary of Wittgenstein's Language* would be very complex<sup>6</sup>.

3. The concept of RELIGION in a hypothetical *Conceptual Dictionary of Wittgenstein's Language*.

Based on the analysis of language data excerpted from L. Wittgenstein's texts, the concept of RELIGION consists of 13 conceptual categories.

1. RELIGION

1.1. RELIGION. DOCTRINE. FAITH

1.1.1. GOOD AND BAD SPIRITUAL BEINGS. HOLY PEOPLE

1.2. RELIGION. ORGANISATION

1.2.1. RELIGION. CLERGY. LEGISLATION

1.2.2. LAITY

1.3. RELIGION. CULT

1.4. RELIGION. CONDUCT. TEACHING OF CONDUCT

1.5. RELIGION. FEELINGS

1.6. RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

1.7. HOLY BOOKS. HOLY PLACES. RELIGIOUS TEXTS

1.8. MYTHOLOGY. SORCERY

1.9. AGNOSTICISM. ATHEISM. FIGHT AGAINST RELIGION

Here are the selected words and sentences from L. Wittgenstein's texts (1-11) included into the conceptual categories.

1. RELIGION

1.1. RELIGION. DOCTRINE. FAITH

*an unshakeable belief* (LRB:1); *a believer in God* (RC: 106); *a Judgment Day* (LRB: 2); *Resurrection* (LRB: 1); *Religion teaches that the soul can exist when the body has disintegrated.* (PI, 1958: Part II, iv)

*How things stand, is God.* (N 1914-1916, 1.08.1916)

*God does not reveal himself in the world.* (TL-P: 6.432)

*You can't hear God speak to someone else, you can hear him only if you are being addressed.* (Z: 717).

*Now how the world is, is the mystical, but that it is* (TL-P: 6.44)

*There is indeed the inexpressible. This shows itself; it is the mystical.* (TL-P: 6.522)

1.1.1. GOOD AND BAD SPIRITUAL BEINGS. HOLY PEOPLE

*God* (TL-P 3.031); *Jesus* (C: 239); *a wafer* (C: 239); (C: 239) *Augustine* (PI: 618)

1.2. RELIGION. ORGANISATION

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lexicographic study: HJ Glock, *Słownik Wittgensteinowski (Wittgenstein's Dictionary)*, translated by M. Hernik and M. Szczubiałka, Spacja, Warsaw 2001.

<sup>5</sup> A page in the Polish issue given.

<sup>6</sup> The idea of developing conceptual schemes that can contain the entire vocabulary of a certain language or a particular creator has been known for a very long time and been implemented for various languages. R. Hallig and W. von Wartburg, the creators of the conceptual framework for the French language that could be used to present the vocabulary of other languages, write: Wir glauben, mit dem Begriffssystem, das wir hier vorlegen, für die Lexikographie eine Grundlage geschaffen zu haben, welche die Darstellung des "Wortschatzes als Gesamtgefüge" ermöglichen könnte, unabhängig davon, welcher Sprache, welcher Mundart oder welcher Epoche dieses Wortgut angehört, (in: ) *Begriffssystem als Grundlage für die Lexikographie. Versuch eines Ordnungsschemas*, Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Berlin 1963, s.75. The structure of RELIGION of the texts by L. Wittgenstein which is presented in this article differs from the structure from *Begriffssystem als Grundlage für die Lexikographie. Versuch eines Ordnungsschemas*.

### 1.2.1. RELIGION. CLERGY. LEGISLATION

Christianity (LRB: 3); pastor (F: 16) Luther (PI: 589)

### 1.2.2. LAITY

Catholic (C: 239)

### 1.3. RELIGION. CULT

Christmas (Letter: 124)

*I have occasionally queer states of nervous instability about which I'll only say that they're rotten while they last, & teach one to pray.* (Letter: 106)

*For when we speak of God and that he sees everything and when we kneel and pray to him all our terms and action seem to be parts of a great and elaborate allegory (...)* (LE: 4-5)

*Bless you!* (Letter: 91)

### 1.4. RELIGION. CONDUCT. TEACHING OF CONDUCT

*Third experience of the same kind is that of feeling guilt and again this was described by the phrase that God disapproves of our conduct* (LE: 5)

### 1.5. RELIGION. FEELINGS

*(...) the experience of absolute safety has been described by saying that we feel safe in the hands of God* (LE: 5)

*For we see now that we have been using describe the experience of wondering at the existence of the world by saying: it is the experience of seeing the world as a miracle* (LE: 5).

### 1.6. RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

*religious statements* (LRB: 4)

*In a religious discourse we use such expressions as: "I believe that so and so will happen", and use them differently to the way in which we use them in science.*" (LRB: 3)

*"God's eye sees everything" – I want to say of this that it uses a picture* (LRB: 11);

*God knows what my lectures will be like.* (Letter: 99)

### 1.7. HOLY BOOKS. HOLY PLACES. RELIGIOUS TEXTS

*Bible* (Letter: 39); *the Epistles* (LRB: 4); *Adam* (LRB: 7); *Noah* (LRB: 7); *Lourdes* (LRB: 5); *"Prayers & Meditation"* by Johnson (Letter : 38)

### 1.8. MYTHOLOGY. SORcery

*And magic is always based on the idea of symbolism and language.* (F: 16)

### 1.9. AGNOSTICISM. ATHEISM. FIGHT AGAINST RELIGION

*blasphemy* (LRB: 6)

*If I even vaguely remember what I was taught about God, I might say: "Whatever believing in God may be, it can't be believing in something we can test, or find means of testing". You might say: "This is nonsense, because people say they believe on evidence or say they believe on religious experiences". I would say: "The mere fact that someone says they believe on evidence doesn't tell me enough for me to be able to say now whether I can say of a sentence "God exists" that your evidence is unsatisfactory or insufficient".* (LRB: 5).

*I hope Fate will let me stay with you some day, & I'm sure I'll enjoy it hugely, I also hope that then I might be useful in discussion (now I'm too stale).* (Letter: 110)

The above list of citations shows that L. Wittgenstein was interested in religion in both its doctrinal and organizational dimensions, and a religious cult. I believe that the full excerpt material from texts (1-11) would only complement the image<sup>7</sup>.

Most important, prototypical issue, being in the centre of all consideration within the concept of RELIGION refers to "ineffable", including the sacred sphere, holiness, religious revelation, and a sense of numinosum<sup>8</sup>. This issue is particularly pronounced in a less well-known text by L. Wittgenstein, i.e. *Denkbewegungen. Tagebücher 1930-1932, 1936-1937*, which was released in 1997 in Innsbruck. The value of the notes contained in *Denkbewegungen. Tagebücher 1930-1932, 1936-1937* lies in the fact that they performed a function of not only "showing", but also "expressing" the spiritual reality. This text makes readers look at the entire work of L. Wittgenstein in a completely different way. Prayers, which sporadically appeared in the other texts by L. Wittgenstein (1-11), are very common in *Denkbewegungen. Tagebücher 1930-1932, 1936-1937*. This includes imploring prayers: *May God grant me what is*

<sup>7</sup> Full excerpt of the material and creating an alphabetical and conceptual dictionary of L. Wittgenstein's language could only be performed by a team consisting of a philosopher, theologian and linguists proficient in English and German.

<sup>8</sup> "To, o czym mówimy i co usiłujemy poniekąd sprecyzować, a mianowicie sprowadzić do uczucia, żyje w każdej religii jako coś, co dla niej jest najbardziej skrytym i bez czego nie byłaby ona w ogóle religią". R. Otto, 1993, Świętość. Elementy irracjonalne w pojęciu bóstwa i ich stosunek do elementów racjonalnych, przeł. B. Kupis, Wrocław, s. 33. The English translation: What we are talking about and what we are trying to somehow specify, namely to amount to a feeling, is alive in every religion as something that is the most mysterious for it and without which it would not be a religion at all.

necessary. (DT: 49)<sup>9</sup>; *May I not become completely base and also not mad! May God have mercy on me.* (DT: 165) or prayers of praise: *To God alone be praise!* (DT: 243). The author of the analyzed text reflects on the nature of God: *I understood what it means that belief is bliss for a human being, that is, it frees him from the fear of others by placing him immediately under God* (DT: 163).

The author contemplates the human existence: *A human being lives his ordinary life with the illumination of a light of which he is not aware until it is extinguished. Once it is extinguished, life is suddenly deprived of all value, meaning, or whatever one wants to say. One suddenly becomes aware that mere existence – as one would like to say – is in itself still completely empty, bleak. It is as if the sheen was wiped away from all things.* (DT: 207)

L. Wittgenstein, the author of *Diaries*, analyses his behaviour in a religious context:

*Today God let it occur to me – for I can't say it any other way – that I should confess my misdeeds to the people in the village here.* (DT: 155)

He criticizes his work in a religious context: *My writing is lacking piety & devotion again.* (DT: 171). These topics also appeared in the eleven aforementioned texts, but *Denkbewegungen. Tagebücher 1930-1932, 1936-1937* contains statements, in which the author comes across as a religious being experiencing deep afflictions associated with his religion.

*Sustain my intellect pure & unblemished! I would like to be deep; – & yet I shy away from the abyss in the human heart!!* – (DT: 183)

*I don't have a belief in a salvation through the death of Christ; or at least not yet. I also don't feel that I am on the way to such a belief, but I consider it possible that one day I will understand something here of which I understand nothing now, which means nothing to me now [...] (DT: 202-203)*

*Today I feel a bit sick, chilled. I thought: "Does God want to put an end to me before I could do the difficult thing?"* (DT: 151)

As may be presumed, his utterance dated on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1937 expresses his doubts about the existence of God: *Let me confess this: After a difficult day for me, I kneeled during dinner today & prayed & suddenly said, kneeling & looking up above: "There is no one here". That made me feel at ease as if I had been enlightened in an important matter.* (DT: 193)

The next day, L. Wittgenstein wrote: *I'm reading in the N. T. & I don't understand many & essential things, but much I do understand, after all. I feel much better today than yesterday. Would that it stay.* (DT: 195)

The author complains about his spiritual suffering:

*Have been sleeping quite badly for a few nights & feel dead, can't work; my thoughts are dim & I am depressed but in a glowering way. (That is, I am afraid of certain religious thoughts.)* (DT: 235)

*I hope that the present sadness & agony will consume the vanity in me. But won't it come back very soon when the agony ends? And shall it therefore never end?? May God prevent this. In my soul there is winter (now) like all around me.* (TD: 205)

According to him, the cause of his spiritual agony is religion:

*To get rid of the torments of the mind, that is to get rid of religion.* (TD: 199)

In all his texts, L. Wittgenstein considered the issue of the limits relating to what is possible to be expressed. He was convinced, not quite rightly, that *Language disguises the thought* (TL-P 4.002). The author devoted a fairly substantial part of his speech to religious issues, often writing passionate and authentic texts. Is that why he was looking for answers to the question about the limits of language in order to find the kind of language game that would convince others to believe in God? I do not know. What is certain is that he was eagerly searching for his way to God, suffering, and his texts prompt readers to formulate their own questions regarding it and polemics with the author.

J. Bremer writes: *For Wittgenstein, philosophising meant expressing his own life programme, and his philosophical method is also acceptable for non-believers. It does not refer to a common assessment of arguments for and against the existence of God, but is a search for a way out of the conceptual confusion. That is why Wittgenstein was first interested in grammar and pragmatics of words used in the language of faith, ethics, religion. This is the actual meaning of therapeutic conception of philosophy, expressed in the slogan: Leave everything as it was*<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> The translation of *Denkbewegungen. Tagebücher 1930-1932, 1936-1937*, comes from: *Movements of Thought: Diaries 1930-1932, 1936-1937*, (in:) Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Public and Private Occasions*. Ed. by James C. Klagge and Alfred Nordmann. Published in the United States of America by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> *Filozofowanie oznaczało dla Wittgensteina wyrażenie własnego programu życiowego, a jego filozoficzna metoda jest do zaakceptowania również przez osoby niewierzące. Nie odwołuje się ona bowiem do powszechnej oceny twierdzeń za i przeciw istnieniu Boga, lecz jest poszukiwaniem drogi wyjścia z pojęciowego pomieszania. Dlatego Wittgensteina interesuje najpierw gramatyka i pragmatyka słów używanych w języku wiary, etyki, religii. Taki właśnie jest sens terapeutycznej koncepcji filozofii wyrażającej się w hasle: pozostawić wszystko jakim było. J. Bremer, SJ, *Ludwig Wittgenstein a religia. Wprowadzenie (Ludwig Wittgenstein and Religion. Introduction)*, Wyższa Szkoła Filozoficzno-Pedagogiczna Ignatianum,*

It should be emphasized, though, that language games of the Holy Books, outstanding word masters such as Rainer Maria Rilke, Khalil Gibran, or religious certificates of ordinary people devoted to God have shifted these language limits incomparably closer to INFINITY.

This article was intended to show that only the comprehensive analysis of the scientific legacy of a particular writer is the way to understand it. Creating an alphabetic and conceptual dictionary of L. Wittgenstein's language, providing and analysing all his texts that are currently available, would give a chance for a more complete overview of his writing legacy<sup>11</sup>.

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"Movements of Thought, Dairies 1930-1932, 1936-1937" first published as Denkbewegungen: Tagebücher, 1930-1932, 1936-1936, edited by Ilse Somavilla (Innsbruck: Haymon Verlag, 1997). In: Ludwig Wittgenstein. Public and Private Occasions. Ed. by James C. Klagge and Alfred Nordmann. Published in the United States of America by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003.

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Kraków 2001, p. 139. Cf. also M. Świerczyński, *Mistycyzm "wczesnego" Wittgensteina ("Early" Wittgenstein's Mysticism)* [in] *Wittgenstein w Polsce* (Wittgenstein in Poland), edited by M. Soin, IFiS PAN, Warsaw 1998.

<sup>11</sup> Some parts of the article was translated by Angela Paszkot.

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Матеріал надійшов до редакції 11.03. 2015 р.

***Сєрадська базюр божена. Деякі нотатки щодо релігійної мови в обраних текстах  
людвіга віттгенштайна.***

*Висвітлення комплексного аналізу наукового доробку окремо взятого автора – це шлях до його розуміння. Створення алфавітного та концептуального словника мови Л. Віттгенштайна, аналіз його текстів, які наявні, дасть можливість загального уявлення його творчого доробку. Зроблено висновок, що автор приділяв значну увагу релігійним питанням, створюючи емоційні та аутентичні тексти.*

***Ключові слова:*** релігійна мова, Л. Віттгенштайн, науковий доробок, тексти.

***Сєрадская Базюр Божена. Некоторые записи касательно религиозного языка в избранных текстах  
Людвига Виттгенштайна.***

*Освещение комплексного анализа научных трудов отдельно взятого автора – это путь к его пониманию. Создание алфавитного и концептуального словаря языка Л. Виттгенштайна, анализ его текстов, которые есть в наличии, даст возможность общего представления его творческих работ. Сделан вывод, что автор уделял большое внимание религиозным вопросам, создавая эмоциональные и аутентичные тексты.*

***Ключевые слова:*** религиозный язык, Л. Виттгенштайн, научный труд, тексты.