

## Wittgenstein's word vs. children`s world

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Abstract:

The usual understanding of Wittgenstein's philosophy is the firm division between early Wittgenstein from the Tractatus and later Wittgenstein from the Philosophical Investigations. The "early Wittgenstein" was concerned with the logical relationship between propositions and the world, and he believed that by providing an account of the logic underlying this relationship, he had solved all philosophical problems. The "later Wittgenstein", however, supposedly rejected many of the assumptions of the Tractatus, arguing that the meaning of words is best understood as their use within a given language game. But there are no „two Wittgensteins“, as there is no sane individual divided into two completely different subjects. There is only one Wittgenstein, always concerned with the relationship between language and the world. When in Tractatus he left one big part of the world outside language, all of his future efforts were directed to integrate that gap, to understand that world of silence. „Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent“ (7) - he says at the end of Tractatus. But this silence didn't stop bothering him. Not even „the early Wittgenstein“. Because just before uttering that final judgment on the destiny of the world, Wittgenstein nevertheless knew „the sense of the world must lie outside the world“ (6.41). The world has sense, just it doesn't fit in the words. So, in this paper we will examine the child words and child worlds through Wittgenstein`s philosophy of language. What about children's language and their structure of the world, especially their sense of the world? Does children`s senseless language mean a senseless world? We have all heard children how construct meaningless sentences. Very often, for example, many children frequently are using the phrase „yesterday, when I was an adult“, which from merely linguistic perspective is not just incorrect, but also meaningless. But, in the endless children's world, it has perfect sense. Thus, doesn't learning the rules of language means learning regimes of truth in a Foucauldian sense? If Foucault was right that power relationships in society are expressed through language and practices, then how we should up bring children through language in order not to narrow down their world, and to subside them to the regimes of truth embedded in the language norms of grown-ups? Because children's worlds are far wider than Wittgenstein words.

Key words: Wittgenstein, Foucault, philosophy for children, philosophy with children, lanquaque

## Introduction

This paper challenges the traditional interpretation of Wittgenstein's philosophy as consisting of two distinct periods and proposes an alternative view that his interest in the relationship between language and the world is a recurring theme throughout his work. This paper investigates the implications of this view for understanding the child's world and their use of language. By drawing on Wittgenstein's notion that the meaning of words is best understood in terms of their use within a given language game, the paper examines how children construct their sense of the world through language. It raises questions about whether senseless language implies a senseless world and whether learning the rules of language means learning regimes of truth, as Foucault has argued. "Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society." (Foucault, 1979, p. 93). Ultimately, the paper concludes by exploring the implications of this discussion for how we ought to bring up children through language, so as to avoid restricting their world and subjecting them to the regimes of truth embedded in the language norms of adults.

## Wittgenstein, Children and Foucault

Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* is well-known for its statement that "whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." This statement has frequently been understood as Wittgenstein's rejection of the possibility of philosophical discourse since many of the most important questions in philosophy concern precisely those things that we cannot speak about. However, it is crucial to recognize that Wittgenstein did not simply abandon these questions. Rather, he dedicated the rest of his life to examining the relationship between language and the world to find a way to address them.

One of Wittgenstein's critical insights in his later philosophy is that the meaning of words is best understood in terms of their use within a particular language game. This implies that the meaning of a word is not something that can be comprehended in

isolation but rather depends on the context in which it is used. Wittgenstein believed that the task of philosophy was not to provide a theory of meaning but rather to investigate the ways in which words are employed in different contexts.

Drawing on Wittgenstein's ideas, this paper turns to the issue of the child's world and their use of language. As Wittgenstein famously wrote in his *Philosophical Investigations*: "The meaning of a word is its use in the language" (§43).<sup>1</sup> For Wittgenstein, this meant that the task of philosophy was not to provide a theory of meaning, but rather to investigate the ways in which words are used in different contexts. In the context of children's language acquisition, this insight suggests that we must pay close attention to the language games in which children participate and the ways in which those games shape their understanding of the world. It considers the question of how we ought to bring up children through language to avoid restricting their world and subjecting them to the regimes of truth embedded in the language norms of adults. If Foucault's notion that power relationships in society are expressed through language and practices is correct, then learning the rules of language implies learning regimes of truth in a Foucauldian sense. Discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise." (Foucault, 1977, p. 170). This paper argues that children's worlds are more extensive than Wittgenstein's words, and we must be careful not to impose limiting regimes of truth on their sense of the world through language.

## Conclusion

This paper proposes that Wittgenstein's philosophy of language offers a useful framework for thinking about the sense of children's worlds. It contends that language is not only a tool for communication but also a way of constructing and restricting our sense of the world. To bring up children in a manner that respects their sense of the world, we must be mindful of the regimes of truth embedded in language norms and strive to establish environments for the flourishing of children's worlds. By doing so, we can help children build a sense of the world that is not confined by the language norms of adults.

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