

# DEBATE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TRACTATUS AND THE INVESTIGATIONS

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**Abstract :** The relationship between the two phases of Wittgenstein's philosophy is a matter of controversy. On the common subject matter of both the periods, Wittgenstein thoughts were similar and different in various aspects. The philosophy presented in the Investigations begins with the criticism of the ideas of the Tractatus, but some of the basic assumptions of the Tractatus philosophy remain in the Investigations, that is the reason of occurrence of the controversial debate on the relationship between the Tractatus and the Investigations. There are many interpretations available on these two different ways of philosophies that they are complementary or negation of each other. These interpretations demand a careful observation to know the exact relation between the early and later Wittgenstein philosophy. The Aim of this research paper is to do critical examination and evaluation of these interpretations.

**Keywords:** Wittgenstein's Philosophy, The Tractatus, The Investigations

## I. Introduction

The Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus and the Philosophical Investigations are two major books which are presented two phases of Wittgenstein's philosophy. The subject matters of these work of Wittgenstein has common. In both the periods of philosophical contemplation, the main goal of Wittgenstein was to highlight the exact nature of philosophical problems. In this context, he presents a new concept of philosophy. According to him the reason for the philosophical problem is the misunderstanding of the logic of language and the philosophical problem should be resolved by the correct understanding of the structure and functions of the language (Wittgenstein, 1953, PI, sec. 92). In this general conceptual background, he searches for the function and structure of the language and presents the method of solving philosophical problems. The nature of philosophical problems and the method of solving philosophical problems due to changes in the views of later Wittgenstein in relation to the structure and function of language are different from his earlier ideas. This is the reason why he criticizes his earlier concept of the language in his later philosophical work and declares his earlier concept as superstitions (Dwivedi, 1977, p. 6). But at the same time, he places his concept of philosophy and some basic concepts into his later philosophical contemplation. There are similarities and differences between the two periods of Wittgenstein's philosophy. This is the reason why this dispute arises in which sense they can seem to be related.

Three interpretations can be seen primarily on the relationship between the Tractatus and the Investigations. By examining the logic and assumptions of these interpretations, it can be known that which of the explanation is appropriate. It is also necessary to see why any of these explanations should be accepted in the context of Wittgenstein's ideas. Apart from this, it can be seen if there is a possibility to present any other view on the relationship between the philosophies of both periods. In addition to this, an effort has been made to establish a new approach. In this new approach, it would be possible to demonstrate the unity of Wittgenstein's philosophy without the denial of the ideas of the Tractatus and the Investigations.

## II. Discussion on the debate between the Tractatus and the Investigations

One opinion on the relation between the Tractatus and the Investigations is that both are complementary to each other. According to this opinion, later Wittgenstein's philosophy should be accepted as an extension of early Wittgenstein. On the relationship between two phases of Wittgenstein's philosophy, Charlesworth commented that the Tractatus and the Investigations make sense only when they are seen as complementary (Charlesworth, 1961, p. 76). It means according to this interpretation, both the periods of philosophies are making a single system of Wittgenstein philosophy and without consideration of both periods of thinking, it cannot be possible to present Wittgenstein's philosophy comprehensively. Another assumption can be applied to this interpretation that both the periods of philosophical works are incomplete. There is a need to make a single system of Wittgenstein's philosophy which can be made by combining the incomplete thoughts of the Tractatus and the Investigations.

On the basis of this view it does also mean that the Tractatus and the Investigations are incomplete in itself because without seen as complementary, they are not present complete ideas of Wittgenstein's philosophy. The basis of the logic of supporters of this opinion can be easily identified. These arguments are based on the fact that Wittgenstein has never called the Tractatus totally wrong (Anscombe, 1959, p. 78). Secondly, many of the Tractatus ideas cannot be misconstrued, and if Wittgenstein dismisses the Tractatus and many considerations of the Tractatus do not involve in the Investigations.

There are many contradictions in this view due to the avoidance of various facts. It is true that many considerations of the Tractatus are accepted by Wittgenstein in his later work but it does not mean that the Investigations are incomplete. Wittgenstein never said that the Investigations are incomplete in themselves. According to Wittgenstein, the Investigation should be deemed to be contrary to its old ideas (Wittgenstein, 1953, PI, p. X). It means there are also many thoughts of his philosophies which are negated to each other. In the Investigations, Wittgenstein rejects the notion of language of the Tractatus and declares it a pre-conceived idea (Dwivedi, 1977, p. 4). Then it cannot be said that to understand Wittgenstein's philosophy it is necessary to see the Tractatus and the Investigations as complementary. But there is an important fact we can find that Wittgenstein never rejects the Tractatus completely. On the basis of this fact, it is also implied that the Tractatus and the Investigations are different but they are not wrong, especially in the context of his later work the Investigations is complete in itself and the Tractatus is contrary of his later philosophy but it is not totally wrong.

The second opinion is that the philosophy of both periods is the prohibition of one another. According to this viewpoint, Wittgenstein was rejected the philosophy of the Tractatus by its later philosophy. This interpretation can be seen by the comment of Hartnack who assert that there is no continuity in both the periods and they are negating of each other (Hartnack, 1965, p. 49). It means there is no continuity in Wittgenstein's philosophy and only one of them can be considered for the exact philosophy of Wittgenstein. By this viewpoint, it can be also implied that the philosophy of early Wittgenstein was wrong and in his later work Wittgenstein refute earlier ideas. Then there is no possibility to accept that the Tractatus was correct in itself, only later thought of Wittgenstein should be accepted complete philosophy of Wittgenstein's. Arguments on behind this assertion are based on the comment of Wittgenstein on his later work in the preface of the Investigations.

He wrote that his later thought can be understood by in the light of his early work and the Investigations can be seen against and contrast of the Tractatus (Wittgenstein, 1953, PI, p. X). The Concept of language is also rejected by Wittgenstein in his later work and he declares the concept of language presented in the Tractatus was a superstition. Wittgenstein also rejects the philosophical method of solving philosophical problems of the Tractatus. On the basis of these facts, this interpretation asserts that the Tractatus and the Investigations are negating to each other. It is true that Wittgenstein was rejected his notion of language of the Tractatus and presented an entirely different concept of language in his later work.

On the relationship between two phases of Wittgenstein's philosophy, this interpretation going with the extreme view and does not understand Wittgenstein view in the right way. It is true that Wittgenstein rejects the notion of language of the Tractatus, but there are many linkage points can be search between two periods. The concept of philosophy is a continuity point which is unbroken lines lead from the Tractatus to the Investigations. There are not only differences or contrast of thoughts between both the periods of philosophy, but there are also similarities. It means this interpretation cannot be accepted due to ignorance of similar thoughts of both the periods. But it can be said that there are important differences between the Tractatus and the Investigations, which cannot be ignored by scholars of Wittgenstein's philosophy.

In contrast to both above mention views, the third view is that the philosophy of both the periods of Wittgenstein is neither complementary nor the negation of one another. According to the third view, both expansion and denial of the Tractatus are found in the later philosophy of Wittgenstein. This approach asserts that the Investigations as a correct philosophy of Wittgenstein. But according to this view, the Tractatus was not completely correct. In his later work, Wittgenstein rejects the notion of language and the method of the Tractatus, but the concept of philosophy of both the periods is an unbroken line between two phases (Fann, 1969, preface, xiii). According to this view, there is continuity and discontinuity can be search between the Tractatus and the Investigations. It means there is also an expansion of the Tractatus which is presented in the Investigations, especially in the context of Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy.

It means in his later work, Wittgenstein wanted to make an improvement of his earlier thoughts which is based on the notion of nature and task of the philosophy of the Tractatus. On the relationship between two phases, there is an important comment of Dwivedi can be seen, he wrote that "Wittgenstein rectified this mistake in his later work, hence the Tractatus cannot be regarded to be wholly wrong" (Dwivedi, 1977, p. 6). It means the Investigations were the right approach of philosophical thinking of the Wittgenstein and the Tractatus as an incomplete work can be considered. It is also mean that there is a logical gap between the Tractatus and the Investigations. The relation between the philosophies of both periods cannot be established without filling this logical gap.

It seems to be that the third view is a balanced view of the relationship between the early and later phases of Wittgenstein's philosophy. There are similarities and differences of both the periods which cannot be ignored. But there are other problems occurred when it says that there is both the contrast and continuity are appears. If Wittgenstein intention was only to make an improvement of his old thought then why he did not ignore and refuted his earlier thoughts. It is also meaning that there is no reason to study of the Tractatus because by his later work Wittgenstein presents his wholesome philosophy completely and the correct part of the Tractatus was also included in the Investigations. It can be said in this interpretation that there is a logical gap in both the periods and it is necessary to see that in which sense they can be acceptable in it and can be linked. It means third interpretations also cannot be acceptable but comparatively and other interpretation it is most valuable and presents a right way to think on the relationship between two phases.

There are problems in above mention views on the relations between the Tractatus and the Investigations. It is not right to say that the Tractatus and the Investigations are complementary to each other, and it is not right to say that both are contrary to one another. We have seen that there is a balance in the third interpretation of the relationship between the Tractatus and the Investigations because it takes into account the similarities and inequalities of both periods. According to the third view, both the periods of philosophy are incomplete and demand possible interpretations to fill the logical gap between them. This possible interpretation will be based on two different tasks of philosophies in both periods. With the help of this possible interpretation, we can accept that there are ideas of both the periods are complete and right in it. But the method was different due to different approaches and purpose.

In the Tractatus, Wittgenstein found that philosophy does not relate to natural sciences (Wittgenstein, 1922, T. 4.111). This new conception of philosophy is a link which leads us from the Tractatus to the Investigations. What the mistaken idea of the Tractatus which called superstitions by Wittgenstein is the concept of language. There are two different approaches can be seen in the early and later Wittgenstein's philosophical thinking. In the Tractatus, Wittgenstein starts a presupposition of the nature of philosophical problems and presents a method to solve them on the basis of this. But in the Investigations, he searches actual functions of the language first and then he throws light on the philosophical problems in this context (Shukla, 2018). It means there is a sharp difference between the Tractatus and the Investigations on the philosophical method. But as we have seen that there is an Expansion exists in his later work on the conception of philosophy. It means according to the concept of philosophy and various purpose of the philosophical task can be identified and on the bases of this, we can say that there is both the periods of philosophies are right. It also means that these two works are based on two different approaches of philosophy.

### III. Conclusion

Debate on the relationship between the early and the later Wittgenstein philosophy is showing that there is a logical gap between the two phases. These different approaches can be considered for to linkage

between two phases of Wittgenstein's philosophy. We have seen that any interpretation on relations between the Tractatus and the Investigations is not fully satisfying. The Tractatus and the Investigations have similarities and inequalities, both cannot be considered to be complementary to each other, nor can both be said to be prohibited on one another. The third view gives attention to all aspects of the Tractatus and the Investigations, but it leads to the conclusion that another interpretation is possible on the relationship between the Tractatus and the Investigations. This possible explanation of the relationship between the Tractatus and the Investigations are based on the argument that there should be a special approach that will simultaneously accept the similarities and inequalities of the philosophy of both periods. This is possible only when the actual meaning of Wittgenstein's philosophy can be identifying with this view. A new approach of unity can be identified by someone to most satisfying interpretation on the relationship between the early and later Wittgenstein's philosophy. It also means that there is a possible unity of both periods.

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