

ON THE CRITICAL RECEPTION OF SØREN KIERKEGAARD'S PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS BY LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

ANDRII SYNYSIA

Abstract. The article analyses how Kierkegaard influenced the work of Wittgenstein and substantiates the idea that the reception of the Danish thinker's writings by the Austrian philosopher was critical. The reason for the critical reception lies not only in their different philosophical traditions and historical periods, since some ethical and religious issues interested Wittgenstein no less than Kierkegaard. However, while acknowledging the latter's authority in these matters, Wittgenstein's interpretations differed significantly. The arguments made by Kierkegaard in addressing existential issues were not always convincing for Wittgenstein. The article discusses the main differences between their views on the interpretation of the paradox of thought, the role and place of the principle of individuation in philosophical systems, the specificity of the subjects, and faith as their defining characteristic. It thereby highlights the contradictions within a number of parallel concepts of their philosophical works, such as the stages on life's way and the forms of life. While not denying the importance of Kierkegaard's reasoning for understanding certain aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophy, the author emphasizes the importance of a critical reception for their substantiation.

Keywords: Søren Kierkegaard; Ludwig Wittgenstein; paradox of thought; principle of individuation; subject; faith; stages on life's way.

INTRODUCTION

Researchers often emphasize the similarity in the philosophical views of Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein and the significant influence of the former on the religious, ethical and aesthetic considerations of the latter. For example, Anne-Marie Søndergaard Christensen states that “there are substantial similarities between Wittgenstein's and Kierkegaard's views of philosophy”¹, and Brad J. Kallenberg maintains “that Wittgenstein's subject-involving method of philosophy comes close to

¹ Anne-Marie Søndergaard Christensen, “The Philosopher and the Reader: Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein on Love and Philosophical Method”, *European Journal of Philosophy* (2019): 2.

Andrii Synysia ✉

Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Lviv, Ukraine; e-mail: andrii.synysia.edu@gmail.com

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Kierkegaard's 'truth as subjectivity' and 'reduplication'²; Daniel Watts generally goes beyond the philosophy of religion and seeks to analyse Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations, in order to show "how Kierkegaard's work not only anticipates Wittgenstein's on this score but also can help to advance on-going debates about rules and rule-following"³, etc.

In his early and late period, Wittgenstein definitely appealed to the works of the Danish thinker, especially when it came to the question of philosophy of religion. It would, however, be incorrect to conclude that he simply developed Kierkegaard's reasoning on these topics. My point, which will be substantiated further, is that the reception of Kierkegaard's work by Wittgenstein was critical. The Austrian philosopher significantly rethought the heritage of the Dane, repeatedly entering into discussion with him and formulating a fundamentally different philosophical and ethical conception. To substantiate this position, I shall consider the theoretico-methodological presuppositions of both thinkers' philosophising and the historico-philosophical aspect of the issue, investigating their views on the paradox of thought, the principle of individuation, the nature of the subject, faith and the related mental states, and I will compare their thoughts on human life and its development.

THEORETICO-METHODOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS FOR PHILOSOPHIZING

During Kierkegaard's life, his works were mostly known in Denmark. But as a result of translations into European languages in the second half of the nineteenth century, and especially with the emergence of ideas of existentialism in Europe in the 1920s–1930s, the Danish thinker gained considerable popularity in intellectual circles. His reflections on human nature, personality, and the philosophical truths of Christianity proved to be interesting for representatives of different philosophical traditions and schools, due to their original view on these topics. Wittgenstein, who had repeatedly experienced existential crises at different times in his life, was also interested in these thoughts⁴ and reflected upon them critically. In addition, Kierkegaard's philosophical ideas were an important source for improving Wittgenstein's own ethical or religio-philosophical arguments.

However, interpreting the views of the Danish thinker was not easy. The difficulty lied in the fact that Kierkegaard often used pseudonyms, which gave him the opportunity to express opinions that did not always coincide with his own views. These were just

² Brad J. Kallenberg, "Wittgenstein: 'I can't believe... or rather can't believe it yet' ", *Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 84 (2018): 172.

³ Daniel Watts, "Rule-Following and Rule-Breaking: Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein", *European Journal of Philosophy*, 25, no. 4 (2017): 1159.

⁴ See an analysis of his diaries 1930–1932, 1936–1937 from the perspective of Kierkegaard's writings in: Yusuke Suzuki, "Wittgenstein's Relations to Kierkegaard Reconsidered: Wittgenstein's Diaries 1930–1932, 1936–1937", *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook*, 2011, no. 1 (2011): 465–476.

alternative thoughts that could come true under certain circumstances. "The poetized author has his definite life-view..."⁵, Kierkegaard asserted (even if he did it, ironically, under the name of Johannes Climacus), distancing himself from the considerations given in the pseudonymous works. He thus argued with himself, made different points of view on a particular problem on the basis of the *either/or principle*, and left the choice to the reader. The autonomy of the different points of view was caused by an attempt to grasp a particular issue from the so-called "stages on life's way" (aesthetic, ethical and religious), appealing to different systems of argument. Even in this case we can see some difference to the approach of Wittgenstein, who, on the contrary, sought to find a single substantiated point of view on a separate issue, even if he had to investigate insignificant aspects of a particular problem in order to do this.

In methodological terms, Wittgenstein thought analytically rather than synthetically, like Kierkegaard did when exploring human existence or seeking to understand what self as an integrity (and not a set of psychological states) means. The Danish thinker was interested in the holistic phenomena of human existence (despair, faith, love, fear) and the human beings themselves as well as their unique and specific life. Under the pseudonym of Johannes Climacus, he strongly criticized the possibility of exploring human existence in terms of abstraction: "In the language of abstraction, that which is the difficulty of existence and of the existing person never actually appears; even less is the difficulty explained"⁶. In other words, abstract language cannot be a suitable means of identifying and describing real-life phenomena. Anyone who uses such a language (including, in particular, scholars who resort to abstract theorizing, that is, use formulas, mathematical theorems, and laws), actually ignores the problems of human existence. But in this way they do not disappear. With respect to this, Kierkegaard's approach is compatible with the thinking of analytic philosophers who seek to be clear in their definitions and to explore specific manifestations of a particular phenomenon at the individual level rather than at the abstract class level. Although, again, Kierkegaard's methodology fits in with the best examples of the continental thinker's methodology, his research is speculative, based on self-reflection, finding meaning in the realm of thought, appealing to human, especially religious issues. According to his theoretico-methodological position, philosophy has sufficient methods to know the nature of human being. It should study the phenomena themselves, not investigate their linguistic forms of expression.

For its part, the philosophical method chosen by Wittgenstein is to analyse the language. One could affirm that Wittgenstein offered different approaches to language learning in the early and the later period, and accordingly, like Kierkegaard, different perspectives on a particular problem. But the evolution of Wittgenstein's views differs: there is a change of the subject of research, but not of methodology. At first he focused on formalized (ideal) language, and then increasingly moved to the study of natural

⁵ Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), ed. and transl. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, p. 627.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

language. In any case, according to his approach, language remains the decisive tool for knowing the world and human nature. And if Kierkegaard's language is full of metaphors, allusions, and irony, Wittgenstein, on the contrary, sought to clarify the essence of the issue, to find out all the peculiarities of language use, to demonstrate that "a whole cloud of philosophy condensed into a drop of grammar"⁷.

Apart from belonging to different philosophical traditions and using different philosophical methodologies, the distinction between the views of Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard arises from the fact that the former was not a religious thinker, while one of the key moments of the latter's work was the search for true Christian experience. Therefore, when it comes to Kierkegaard's influence on Wittgenstein, this mostly concerns the philosophy of religion. Similarities can be found, in particular, when interpreting the nature of the individual, his or her existential foundations, social behaviour and the general activity of the subject, possibilities of cognition, attitude to didactic authority, etc. However, a more thorough analysis of their views also shows a significant difference between their interpretations. And we can assume that the answers to these questions were of interest to Wittgenstein, not only in connection with reading Kierkegaard's works. They were interesting to him as such, and the options offered by the Danish thinker did not always suit Wittgenstein's solution, so his reception was often critical and, as will be demonstrated further, he interpreted certain questions quite differently.

HISTORICO-PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECT OF THE ISSUE

In order to make a reasonable explanation, one must also pay attention to the fact that Wittgenstein, as an analytic thinker, preferred practical philosophy and did not systematically study the history of philosophy. For the most part, he formulated his views in the process of philosophical conversations with his contemporaries, teachers like Moore, Russell, or Frege, and students – Anscombe, von Wright, Malcolm and others. In 1931, Wittgenstein enumerated not only philosophers but also scholars among those who had influenced his worldview:

I think there is some truth in my idea that I really only think reproductively in my thinking. I don't believe I have ever *invented* a line of thinking, I have but that it was always provided for me by someone else & I have done no more than passionately take it up for my work of clarification. That is how Boltzmann, Hertz, Schopenhauer, Frege, Russell, Kraus, Loos, Weininger, Spengler, Sraffa have influenced me⁸.

⁷ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), transl. by Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe, p. 222.

⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), ed. Georg Henrik von Wright, transl. by Peter Winch, p. 19.

This influence was definitely much broader than just a philosophical one. Wittgenstein does not mention Kierkegaard here, as he only became interested in Kierkegaard's work shortly afterwards, during the anthropological turn of his research.

With regard to earlier thinkers, the analysis of his writings proves among them were ancient, medieval, and modern authors. Wittgenstein was, first of all, well versed in Plato's philosophy; he quoted *Theaetetus* in *Philosophical Investigations* (§ 46) and discussed the subjects of *Cratylus*, *Charmides*, *Philebus*, and the *Republic* in "The Big Typescript" and the "Manuscripts"⁹. Despite the fact that during the fall of 1948 Wittgenstein declared, in a private conversation, that he was "a one-time professor of philosophy who has never read a word of Aristotle!"¹⁰, this does not mean that he was not influenced by the Aristotelian tradition of philosophizing. Moreover, as Roger Pouivet argues, the Austrian philosopher belonged to this tradition¹¹. I have defined this kind of analytic tradition of philosophizing as external¹², paying attention to the fact that the research of semantic aspects of language, the development of the method of analysis, and the interest in the results of scientific research have determined the subject of philosophical studies for many thinkers in the past, and not just for the representatives of contemporary analytic philosophy. As to what medieval thinkers are concerned, Wittgenstein was mostly interested in Augustine of Hippo – he begins the *Philosophical Investigations* (§ 1) with a quote from the *Confessions*, followed by a critique of it. From the early modern philosophers, Wittgenstein studied Spinoza (as evidenced by both the mathematical structure of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and some considerations of the eternity and contemplation of the world *sub specie aeterni*¹³) and Kant. (However, Kant's logico-epistemological conception was primarily used by Wittgenstein in order to assert his own correctness and, in general, to analyse not the reason but the language¹⁴). Therefore, to my mind, even this far from complete list of authors demonstrates the depth of Wittgenstein's philosophical interests and proves that the influence of Kierkegaard's ideas on him will be extremely difficult to distinguish. It will also be very difficult to assess the influence of one or another author (if possible at all).

As for the traits of Wittgenstein's reception of Kierkegaard's ideas, they can be found in three ways: 1) from the memoirs of Wittgenstein's colleagues; 2) from his own mentions of the Dane; 3) based on the interpretation of philosophical works.

⁹ Wolfgang Kienzler, "Wittgenstein reads Plato", in *Wittgenstein and Plato*, ed. Luigi Perissinotto, Begoña Ramón Cámara (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 25–47.

¹⁰ Maurice O'Connor Drury, "Conversations with Wittgenstein", in *The Danger of Words and Writings on Wittgenstein*, eds. David Berman, Michael Fitzgerald, John Hayes (Bristol: Thoemmes, 1996), p. 158.

¹¹ Roger Pouivet, "Wittgenstein and the Aristotelian Tradition", in *A Companion to Wittgenstein*, eds. Hans-Johann Glock, John Hyman (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), pp. 667–681.

¹² Андрій Синиця, *Аналітична філософія* (Львів: ЛДУФК, 2013), с. 74.

¹³ See, e. g.: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1922), transl. by Charles Kay Ogden, p. 187 (§ 6.45).

¹⁴ See: Andrii Synytsia, "Reception of I. Kant's Logico-Epistemological Ideas in Analytic Philosophy" in Z. M. Atamaniuk, Ye. R. Borinshtein, N. P. Hapon, Yu. A. Dobrolyubska, [etc.], *Modern Philosophy in the Context of Intercultural Communication* (Lviv-Toruń: Liha-Pres, 2019), pp. 162–165.

The analysis of the memoirs left by Wittgenstein's colleagues gives only a general idea of Wittgenstein's interest in the work of the Danish thinker. In one of his letters from 1919, Bertrand Russell thus mentioned that Wittgenstein "reads people like Kierkegaard and Angelus Silesius"¹⁵. This gives rise to the search for Kierkegaardian motives already in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Recalling the first years of Wittgenstein's stay in Cambridge after his return in 1929, Henry Desmond Pritchard Lee wrote that Wittgenstein even "learned Danish in order to be able to read Kierkegaard in the original..."¹⁶ This again indicates his keen interest in Kierkegaard's philosophical ideas. Maurice O'Connor Drury reported that after a meeting of the Moral Sciences Club (tentatively dated in 1929-1936), Wittgenstein, being familiar with such works of the Danish thinker as *Either/Or* and *Postscript*, made the following statement: "Kierkegaard was by far the most profound thinker of the last century. Kierkegaard was a saint"¹⁷. But in a letter to Norman Malcolm, dated February 5, 1948, Wittgenstein himself confessed that he had never read Kierkegaard's *Works of Love* and added: "Kierkegaard is far too deep for me, anyhow. He bewilders me without working the good effects which he would in *deeper* souls"¹⁸. This certainly does not mean that Wittgenstein did not seek to understand Kierkegaard's thinking and compare his own views with the views of the predecessor.

For example, in an interview with members of the Vienna Circle on December 29, 1929, Wittgenstein put it this way:

Everything we may say can only be nonsense, *a priori*. Nevertheless, we run up against the limits of language. Kierkegaard also saw this running up and even referred to it very similarly (as running up against the paradox). This running up against the limits of language is *Ethics*¹⁹.

This passage clearly draws a parallel between what Kierkegaard defines as an attempt to overcome the paradox (which inevitably arises when the basics of faith are explained by reason) and what Wittgenstein defines as a way of understanding ethical issues. The specifics of this method can actually best be learned by interpreting the thoughts of both philosophers.

THE PARADOX OF THOUGHT

This paradox, one of the most important issues for Kierkegaard, was of interest to Wittgenstein primarily because of his intention to understand what was beyond logic

¹⁵ Bertrand Russell, *The Selected Letters of Bertrand Russell: The Public Years, 1914–1970*, ed. Nicholas Griffin (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 198.

¹⁶ Henry Desmond Pritchard Lee, "Wittgenstein 1929–1931", *Philosophy* 54, no. 208 (1979): 218.

¹⁷ Maurice O'Connor Drury, "Some Notes on Conversations with Wittgenstein", in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Personal Recollections*, ed. Rush Rhees (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1981), p. 102.

¹⁸ Norman Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 106.

¹⁹ *Ludwig Wittgenstein und der Wiener Kreis. Gespräche, aufgezeichnet von Friedrich Waismann*, hrg. von B. F. McGuinness (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), s. 68.

(beyond language). The paradox was the complexity that did not have an unambiguous solution within the formal language, but the solution of which was extremely important for understanding the nature of things.

Kierkegaard alias Johannes Climacus explained the idea of the paradox of thought as follows:

[...] the ultimate paradox of thought: to want to discover something that thought itself cannot think. This passion of thought is fundamentally present everywhere in thought, also in the single individual's thought²⁰.

The paradox determines the passion of thought. But passion is always destructive. Therefore, in a paradox, thought is exhausting itself, because it cannot know what is unknowable. In this way one opens the possibility for faith, essentially paradoxical. Faith is manifested at the level of a particular individual, not of common entities. The paradox of faith is that "...the individual is higher than the universal..."²¹. In other words, the individual's experience is more valuable than the depersonalized experience of the crowd that we capture in the form of knowledge. Faith is also a part of the subjective experience and is connected with the comprehension of paradox. However, the nature of the paradox is such that it cannot become part of knowledge, that is, be described in words. Its essence does not contain any logic. Wittgenstein explained this situation by contrasting wisdom (knowledge, thinking) and faith. In 1946 he wrote: "Wisdom is passionless. But faith by contrast is what Kierkegaard calls a passion"²². In other words, to overcome the paradox we need passionate faith, not a passionless mind.

Wittgenstein clearly understood that paradox, furthermore, is an integral feature of the existence of religious experience. The paradox is very often manifested in the inability to justify knowledge. Moreover, in religion, any rational justification only pushes away true faith. Faith requires no rational explanation, "believing means submitting to an authority"²³. The authority decides what is right and what is not. One must simply accept it, however paradoxical (contradictory) it may seem. Sometimes some persons will rebel and express doubt, but will than again find the object of faith convincing to themselves. Such an understanding of faith and its paradox may be consistent with Kierkegaard's thinking, except in the fact that, in Wittgenstein's view, "life can educate one to belief in God ..." ²⁴. Therefore, one can learn religious faith. This raises the question of whether its status is ontologically necessary. Does this not mean that the truths of religion are the result of teaching, not of discovery? Wittgenstein analysed the foundations of religion from the standpoint of reason and sometimes questioned them. He has repeatedly pointed to the wide variety of language

²⁰ Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), transl. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, p. 37.

²¹ Søren Kierkegaard, "Fear and Trembling", in Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling; and, The Sickness unto Death* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), transl. by Walter Lowrie, p. 152.

²² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 53.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 45. Ca. 1944.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 86. A remark from 1950.

phrases we use for convenience in the communication, although they do not mean anything in themselves. For example, Wittgenstein, thinking of the other person, stated: “My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul”²⁵. And immediately added: “I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul”²⁶. As the analysis of language does not lead to the level of human existence (to the level of the unspeakable), the Austrian philosopher turns to the works of Kierkegaard, hoping to move on in this matter. But the approach proposed by the Danish philosopher was not particularly satisfying. As Drury mentioned, Wittgenstein commented upon the method and results of Kierkegaard’s philosophical searches: “When I read him I always wanted to say: ‘Oh, alright I agree, I agree, but please get on with it’”²⁷. This was obviously referring to finding more arguments and getting new results. In addition, one should not forget that, unlike Kierkegaard, who developed his philosophical considerations in line with Christianity, Wittgenstein did not have a holistic approach to the analysis of religious issues. Gorazd Andrejč distinguishes between the grammaticalist, instinctivist, existentialist, and nonsensicalist conceptions of religion²⁸ in the Austrian thinker’s writings. And this, at least, means that Wittgenstein analysed the issue of religion much more broadly, though less holistically than Kierkegaard.

THE PRINCIPLE OF INDIVIDUATION AND THE BASICS OF ONTOLOGY

When he reasoned about thinking, Kierkegaard implied not the abstraction but the thinking of a particular person; it is therefore clear that the principle of individuation plays an important role in his philosophy. Kierkegaard attached particular importance to the singular (unique), contrasting it with the universal – one of the key features of Hegel’s rationalism in philosophy. In thinking of individual humans, Kierkegaard generally used four different terms, the hierarchy of which (from lowest to highest), is according to Gregor Malantschuk, as follows: *Exemplar* – *Individ* – *Individualitet* – the single individual (*den Enkelte*). A person like *Exemplar* is just a member of a crowd; the *Individ* is formed in a certain natural environment and depends on its heredity; one manifests himself as *Individualitet* when making conscious self-choice; finally, in the status of “the single individual”, one opens his or her life as justified by the will of God²⁹. In general, such a hierarchy of individual human hypostases demonstrates the gradual transition of humans from being unconscious and

²⁵ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 178.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Maurice O’Connor Drury, “Some Notes on Conversations with Wittgenstein”, pp. 102–103.

²⁸ Gorazd Andrejč, “Wittgenstein on Religion: The Four Conceptions”, in Gorazd Andrejč, *Wittgenstein and Interreligious Disagreement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 19–64.

²⁹ Gregor Malantschuk, “Notes to ‘Individual’”, in *Søren Kierkegaard’s Journals and Papers*, vol. 2, ed. and transl. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, assisted by Gregor Malantschuk (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), pp. 597–598.

incomprehensible (characteristics of biological organisms) to the self-awareness of the person and towards spiritual perfection in God.

For his part, Wittgenstein did not use different terms to refer to individual humans, but rather discusses different aspects (levels) of *human being*, namely: natural – an objective knowledge about the world, and spiritual – a subjective, unique life experience (ethical, aesthetic or religious). These experiences are unspeakable (without logical form) – they form, external to the facts, spiritual (value) experience of the person. According to Wittgenstein, a human being is a self-contained creature capable of reproducing social behaviour that usually requires interaction with other people. And indeed, “a human being can encourage himself, give himself orders, obey, blame and punish himself; he can ask himself a question and answer it”³⁰. One might imagine that a person could express his or her personal experience in a particular private language, but no one else could understand it. In other words, it would not be possible to communicate the information to another person using such language. From the standpoint of language-game theory, Wittgenstein thus identified language as a social phenomenon. It can only exist within a particular community that will determine the criteria for the correct use of particular language expressions.

Like Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein emphasized the importance of the individual, but made it a defining ontological principle rather than merely an existential one. In the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* he stated the following: “... the possibility of every single thing reveals something about the nature of the world”³¹. According to him, the world is a set of facts, the simplest of which – the atomic facts – have fixed certain particular states of affairs that are in reality. The description of the simplest state of affairs is to ascribe a certain characteristic to a single object. In this way, language becomes a picture of the world and has a direct reference to reality. And therefore, by investigating the language (a set of signs combined by certain rules of grammar), you can also learn something about the external world and understand what is happening in it. In other words, one thus can discover the logic of the actual world, in order to try to outline the transcendental world of ethical values and truths that each person individually reveals.

While human existence, according to Kierkegaard, precedes the division of experience into rational and sensual, and is the only true reality, the ethical and the logical, according to Wittgenstein, complement each other. The world of logic ends where the scope of our language ends. “*The limits of my language mean the limits of my world*”³², – this aphorism from *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* informs only about the limits of the logical world. But there is still ethical knowledge that is of a completely different nature. It is unspeakable, but it is sometimes more important than it can be expressed because it provides the basis for our understanding and for how we form thoughts in words. The ethical knowledge can only be experienced mystically,

³⁰ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 88.

³¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, p. 59 (§ 3.3421).

³² *Ibid.*, p. 149 (§ 5.6).

because it exceeds the possibilities of language. Therefore, when we try to express it in words, we formulate what is nonsense. As Wittgenstein remarked: “In ethics you always try to say something that does not and never can affect the nature of the matter”³³. We simply cannot determine the meaning of the concept of good or say something concrete about the existence of values that would really capture their nature. That is, according to Wittgenstein, the ethical (unspeakable) also includes religious experience. The world of the ethical (and therefore the religious) is full of certain meanings; the world of logical tautologies, by contrast, contains nothing new and therefore valuable. Wittgenstein concluded that: “The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is and happens as it does happen. *In* it there is no value – and if there were, it would be of no value”³⁴. The absence of values in this world is due to the fact that everything in it is accidental. But values are a certain non-logical necessity. Their presence is already indicated by our intention to go beyond language. However, any attempt to go beyond these limits makes research unscientific.

THE SUBJECT AND THE NATURE OF FAITH

Reflecting on the metaphysical foundations of the individual, both thinkers encountered the traditional problem of classical philosophy, which Wittgenstein also expressed in a slightly different way than Kierkegaard did. The point is that for Kierkegaard, the subject is first and foremost a person connected with God. In absolute terms, to find oneself, one must distance oneself and follow what God commands – that’s what biblical Abraham (the main character in *Fear and Trembling*) does in the story of the binding of Isaac. The subject becomes a stranger to himself. He renounces the rational foundations of his actions and hopes no longer for himself but for God’s mercy. For his part, Wittgenstein does not find, in the factual world, the concept of the subject (philosophical I) as something identical to concrete entities. According to him, “the subject does not belong to the world but it is a limit of the world”³⁵. And more clearly he repeats this view further: “The philosophical I is not the man, not the human body or the human soul of which psychology treats, but the metaphysical subject, the limit – not a part of the world”³⁶. Therefore, in a certain way the subject also disappears as something concrete, but this happens in the world, not in the transcendental. This subject is clearly not simply a theoretical descriptive construct that we can replace, discard, or transform. The subject is connected with human existence, and therefore the issues of the meaning of life, the transcendental, values, mental states and so on.

³³ Ludwig Wittgenstein und der Wiener Kreis. *Gespräche, aufgezeichnet von Friedrich Waismann*, p. 68.

³⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, p. 183 (§ 6.41).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 151 (§ 5.632).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 153 (§ 5.641).

Wittgenstein deprived the subject of a certain inner space, sought external criteria for manifesting the inner world of the subject in certain social practices, stated that “the world and life are one”³⁷. In the later period, he analysed not the impersonal metaphysical subject, but specific forms of life and their manifestations within a particular speech community.

Wittgenstein paid particular attention to the concept of faith, which is one of the defining characteristics of the subject (person). And to make more sense of this concept, he again turned to the Kierkegaard's works. However, he did this from a philosophical standpoint. Kierkegaard, as we know, interpreted the concept of faith as a religious thinker. He actually rejected its philosophical foundations. Any epistemological or ontological assumptions about it will only distort its true understanding. Moreover, it would be a mistake to reduce faith to a certain volitional impulse, feeling, form of belief or case of knowledge. It is rather something transcendental, dependent on the grace of God. Kierkegaard preferred to talk about faith in a poetic, metaphorical form, referring to Bible plots and speaking as their interpreter. In “Fear and Trembling”, he thought of faith as elevating human above earthly cares and inspiring not only believers but also those who put their hopes in them. It is no coincidence that, having received faith, Abraham becomes convinced that whole peoples will be blessed with his help. Faith gives hope for eternal youth in thought and in deeds. Faith gives confidence and overcomes the doubts of the reason; it sometimes even contradicts the reason (though it is unspeakable). It is not subordinated to reason – on the contrary, faith is above reason, even if it seems absurd. It is much more difficult to believe than to understand, because the reason gives us rational arguments not given by faith. In Kierkegaard, faith becomes a clear religious determination – it becomes the highest passion, a miracle³⁸, while for Wittgenstein, “believing is a state of mind”³⁹. Religious faith is a form of belief. It is not an emotion like fear or hope. In order to better understand the nature of faith, one must first begin with a study of the human psyche. A state of faith or doubt, hope or fear, pride, etc. could be interpreted as relevant behavioural responses of a person to someone or something.

Therefore, faith must not necessarily be associated with anything religious. In 1937 Wittgenstein wrote: “... the historical accounts in the Gospels might, historically speaking, be demonstrably false and yet belief would lose nothing by this...”⁴⁰. This kind of thought would be hardly acceptable from a religious point of view. It is not just the Gospel, but any source of religious belief that could theoretically be false. Wittgenstein simply modelled a similar situation. He was interested in what faith in general is and how a believer differs from a non-believer. He analyzed the matter in the neutral terms of science, and realized that in the terms offered by religious figures, many definitions would simply remain unclear to him.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 151 (§ 5.621).

³⁸ Søren Kierkegaard, “Fear and Trembling”, p. 128.

³⁹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 191.

⁴⁰ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 32.

STAGES ON LIFE'S WAY AND FORMS OF LIFE

Many things will remain unclarified even when trying to find terminological parallels in the views of these thinkers. In particular, Kierkegaard's stages on life's way can be compared with Wittgenstein's life forms⁴¹. In the case of the Danish thinker we are, however, dealing with the spiritual evolution of the individual, whereas the Austrian philosopher does not insist on any progressive transformation. He wrote: "What has to be accepted, the given, is – so one could say – *forms of life*"⁴². In our lives, we adopt a certain set of rules and fulfil a certain social role. These rules are rooted in experience and are manifested in language games as paradigms for action. Forms of life determine the authenticity of language games. Changing the form of life requires a fundamental change in all the rules set by the speech community. It cannot be carried out by a person alone. Whereas the transition from one stage on life's way to another is the result of the individual's choice. As a result of a spiritual crisis (caused by fatigue from the constant search for something new or simply lack of novelty, as in the case of aesthetics; or anxiety caused by an infinite number of responsibilities that are difficult to fulfil, as in the case of ethics, and which can only be countered by faith), the individual changes the view of things. This perspective is described in the story of Abraham and his son Isaac. According to it, the ethical and the actual cannot be interchanged. From an ethical point of view, Abraham intended to kill his son, and religiously, he sacrificed Isaac to God. Abraham cannot be called a tragic hero like Agamemnon, because he is no longer within the bounds of ethics and does not subordinate the individual (personal) to the general (public). Such a change of view certainly does not go without a trace. It gives rise to fear without which the person will no longer be as before. However, it must be stated that if the fear of the Lord is combined with the desire for something higher, then it will be a God-pleasing act, but if the person does not aspire to anything, then the fear will be more harmful as a source of envy.

For Wittgenstein, fear is not something worth appreciating. He remarked: "Not funk but funk conquered is what is worthy of admiration and makes life worth having been lived"⁴³. Fear in itself is not a reliable foundation for building a religion, because it is a negative emotion, and one will instinctively seek to get rid of it. It is better to build religion on trust. Fear is rather the basis for superstition⁴⁴. Thus, Wittgenstein's views on the nature of fear and its purpose are also different from what Kierkegaard suggested.

In general, a change of view means the development of a new system of value relations to the world, or, in Wittgenstein's terminology, a new system of rules that must be followed. The Austrian thinker defined a change of view as a change in aspect-seeing. He wrote: "And I must distinguish between the 'continuous seeing' of an aspect and the

⁴¹ Charles L. Creegan, *Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard: Religion, Individuality and Philosophical Method* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 112.

⁴² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 226.

⁴³ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 38.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

'dawning' of an aspect"⁴⁵. The author meant that sometimes we may have a system of views on a particular thing or state of affairs, although it is possible that it will be altered by certain external or internal factors. Sometimes such a change will only be a *dawning of an aspect* – it will be too remotely reminiscent of Kierkegaard's *leap of faith*, as some kind of instant insight. However, it can be quickly changed. The fact is that what we perceive is only a set of signs to which we independently give certain semantics. We can change the aspect-seeing, revert to previous interpretations, or suggest new ones. Our life is an interpreted stream of perceptions. Our lives consist of interpretations of perceptions. In the ethical sphere, these interpretations form the life-world of human, set their mood and well-being. Wittgenstein remarked that "the world of the happy is quite another than that of the unhappy"⁴⁶. The transition from the aesthetic to the ethical, or from the ethical to the religious stage of human existence, in some ways manifests itself as a change in the aspect-seeing, which gives the opportunity to interpret the existing situation in another way, to become more satisfied with one's position and therefore, happier. Wittgenstein's *happy human* can be compared to the Kierkegaard's *knight of faith*, a person who can be happy despite external troubles, because "the knight of faith... is the paradox, is the individual, absolutely nothing but the individual, without connections or pretensions"⁴⁷. Faith is what enables him to remain happy.

Thus, the present study suggested that Wittgenstein's reception of Kierkegaard's philosophy was critical in many matters. The Austrian philosopher constructs a different system of argumentation because he is not satisfied with the arguments offered by Kierkegaard. He is influenced by many authors, whose reasoning has been largely used to confirm his own position. In particular, he was interested in the paradox of thought in connection with the investigation of what goes beyond logic, rather than justifying the foundations of faith. The individual, according to Wittgenstein, is an important ontological principle, not just an existential one. He exhausted the subject in the world (its limits), not in the transcendental, and interpreted faith as a mental state, not as a religious phenomenon. The Austrian thinker viewed life in its various forms, not as a result of spiritual evolution from the aesthetic, to the ethical, and further – to the religious. His philosophical conception has a different ontological basis and does not directly correlate with Kierkegaard's position. Given the originality of his own concept, Wittgenstein was critical in investigating other thinkers' ideas. And even in existential matters of religion and ethics that were not decisive for his work, while acknowledging Kierkegaard's authority, Wittgenstein also disagreed with him. This can be interpreted as a proof of the strength of their philosophical concepts, and as an openness to dialogue, as well as to the synthesis of the ideas of continental and analytical thinkers, for the sake of the progress of philosophy.

⁴⁵ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 194.

⁴⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, p. 185 (§ 6.43).

⁴⁷ Søren Kierkegaard, "Fear and trembling", p. 149.

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