
The present philosophical literature on philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein tends to either stagnate by focusing upon issues particular to Wittgenstein’s philosophy or expand the boundaries of Wittgenstein’s thought to shed light onto other areas of study. One area that has largely been ignored is the realm of environmental philosophy.

I prepare the way for a solution to this by first arguing that Wittgenstein’s later philosophy of language shows ‘proto-ecolinguistic’ concerns, sharing much in common with the ecolinguistic thought of both Peter Mühlhäusler and Luisa Maffi. This reading, as well as the work of Mühlhäusler and Maffi, is a starting point for an opposition to a common trend in much of contemporary linguistics of adhering to a linguistic paradigm of universalizing linguistic atomism that gives an impoverished account of language. This impoverished account is argued to have potential environmental and ecological consequences which the universalizing atomistic paradigm is ill-equipped to address.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to serve as a starting point for a dialogue between the later thought of early twentieth century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein and the ecolinguistic thought of both Peter Mühlhäusler and Luisa Maffi. Until now, Wittgenstein scholarship has tended to either stagnate by focusing upon issues particular to Wittgenstein’s philosophy of language (Wittgenstein’s argument against a private language; ‘picture theory’ vs. ‘meaning-as-usage’; whether Wittgenstein’s thought should be divided into two or three periods; etc.), or has sought to expand the boundaries of Wittgenstein’s thought to shed light onto other areas of study (ethics, philosophy of religion, aesthetics, neuroscience, etc.). One area that has heretofore largely been ignored, however, is the realm of environmental philosophy.

Ecolinguistics, as forwarded by Mühlhäusler and Maffi, emphasizes the role of language in preserving the ecological and biophysical environments of communities across the globe. Both Mühlhäusler and Maffi move past the “metaphorical approach”\(^1\) to ecolinguistics, where the ‘ecological’ aspect of language is seen as how languages interact with one another in the same way that members of a biophysical ecosystem interact with one another. They also move beyond merely using the “policy-oriented approach”\(^2\) to ecolinguistics, where, in a unidirectional fashion, the influence of language upon the biophysical environment is examined. Both Maffi and Mühlhäusler, in other words, expand ecolinguistics to conceive of a language (and the culture connected to it) as both affecting and being affected by its surrounding biophysical environment. As a part of this, the preservation rather than the homogenization of minority

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\(^2\) Ibid.
languages—oftentimes only spoken by one hundred people or less, particularly in areas of high biodiversity—is of prime importance to Mühlhäusler and Maffi. Accordingly, these two thinkers recognize that languages develop alongside specific environments, and therefore these minority languages have developed specific ways of speaking and interacting with their surrounding biologically diverse environments.

The purpose of this thesis is to bring Wittgenstein and ecolinguistics together, arguing that Wittgenstein’s later philosophy of language shows ‘proto-ecolinguistic’ leanings, in particular sharing much in common with the ecolinguistic thought of both Peter Mühlhäusler and Luisa Maffi. In Chapter 2 I give a general overview of the field of ecolinguistics with special care taken to show why Mühlhäusler and Maffi should be seen as models for the rest of the field of both linguistics as a whole and ecolinguistics in particular. In Chapter 3 I give an overview of the thought of Wittgenstein, particularly his transition from conceiving of language as isolated, ‘passive,’ and universally atomistic to his later thought which views language as an active intersubjective activity which is necessarily bound to a form of life, a community of life, and, for humans in particular, a culture. This transition, I conclude, demonstrates ‘proto-ecolinguistic’ concerns, sharing much in common with the ecolinguistic thought of both Peter Mühlhäusler and Luisa Maffi. Ecolinguistics, moreover, gives us a starting point for an opposition to a common trend in much of contemporary linguistics of adhering to a linguistic paradigm of universalizing linguistic atomism that gives an impoverished account of language. This impoverished account is then argued to have potential environmental and ecological consequences which the universalizing atomistic paradigm is ill-equipped to address.
CHAPTER 2
OVERVIEW OF ECOLINGUISTICS

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I provide a background for my argument in Chapters Two by tracing the path of ecolinguistics in the past four decades. Throughout this account of the history of ecolinguistics I am critical of two things: (1) on a broad level, either the lack of an investigation, or the usage of an impoverished investigation, into some fundamental assumptions about language; and (2), to unpack my first critique, the lack of an investigation into how language, embedded in a ‘form of life,’ is influenced by, and influences its environment, forming what I will hereafter refer to as a co-influential helix (illustrated in figure 1.1).

![Figure 2.1: The co-constitutive helix between language, forms of life, and biophysical environment. Notice that each of these three areas of the helix are still interconnected to make one ecological whole.](image)

This second, more specific, criticism needs a bit of unpacking itself: for what I mean by
‘environment’ is influenced by, and influences, my critiques of ecolinguistics. My conception of environment is not merely a ‘cultural’ environment or ‘linguistic’ environment, etc., but is more akin to ‘surroundings.’ I am more sympathetic to an account of environment as anything in which language, and therefore humanity, is immersed. This – please note – does not preclude a ‘cultural,’ ‘linguistic,’ or ‘biophysical’ environment, but rather acknowledges the fact that language finds itself in, is used in, influences, describes, etc., a virtually infinite number of circumstances and events, and to not acknowledge this impoverishes any account of language by decoupling and taking away some part of language. Language does not occur merely in isolation, with ‘itself’ or in an atomistic world of ‘objects,’ but is much broader. Language is both an activity and a form of life. My argument, moreover, shares many things in common with the work of both Peter Mühlhäusler and Luisa Maffi, as well as the early 20th century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. My argument focuses on the way language is in a relation with the biophysical environment. This having been said, we will now move onto a genealogical account of ecolinguistics, starting with Alwin Fill’s 1998 synopsis of the field. This genealogical account will provide us with an overall framework with which to view the various conceptions of language and biophysical environment.

According to Fill, as of 1998 there were two ‘branches’ of ecolinguistics: (1) those who use an ecological metaphor to describe the workings of language, i.e. those whose work concerns how languages form an ‘ecosystem’ with other languages, and/or how these languages are also composed of speakers which interact with other speakers; and (2) a more ‘concrete’ or


policy-oriented approach, i.e. those\textsuperscript{5} who understand the word ‘ecology’ in its biological (as opposed to metaphorical) sense and/or explore the role of language as the root and/or an aggravating factor of environmental problems, as well as the possibility of a linguistic contribution to the solution of these problems.\textsuperscript{6} While Fill does note that the two branches are “complementary rather than mutually exclusive,”\textsuperscript{7} he later admits that in order to give a clear account of ecolinguistics as a whole, “it is advisable…to separate the two strands of research.”\textsuperscript{8}

Here I agree with Fill that the two branches are complementary; however, I would also like to disagree with Fill and argue that it is much more fruitful philosophically, linguistically, and practically, to collapse this distinction. This collapse, I argue, has been accomplished through the work of such scholars as Peter Mühlhäusler and Luisa Maffi, and shares much in common with a close reading of Wittgenstein’s conception of language, particularly Wittgenstein’s later conception of language. Bringing the work of Mühlhäusler and Maffi to bear on Wittgenstein scholarship is fruitful to both parties, as I shall argue later in this thesis.

With all of the above in mind, the course of Chapter 2 is as follows: first, I shall summarize the first branch of ecolinguistics described by Fill, namely those that use an ecological metaphor to describe the workings of language, providing commentary and critiques as I go; second, and in a similar fashion, I move onto summarizing and critiquing the second branch of ecolinguistics presented by Fill, namely the ‘policy-oriented’ approach; third, I give an account of the current state of ecolinguistics; and lastly I give an account of the work of Peter Mühlhäusler and Luisa Maffi.


\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 48.

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
2.2 ‘Ecology of Language’ as Metaphor

The first branch of ecolinguistics, namely the usage of an ecological metaphor to describe the workings of language, is the progenitor of the second ‘policy-oriented’ approach: ‘ecolinguistics’ (as a field) began with Einer Haugen’s 1972 work “The Ecology of Language.”

In this work, Haugen is critical of an approach to linguistics which only focuses upon the components of language, i.e. “phonology, grammar, and lexicon.” Haugen’s approach, in contrast, is one of ‘language ecology,’ or “the study of interactions between any given language and its environment,” where ‘environment’ is not understood to mean “the referential world to which language provides an index,” i.e. environment as the ‘physical’ world of objects broadly construed, but rather in the cultural sense of the word: “The true environment of a language is the society that uses it as one if its codes. Language exists only in the minds of its users, and it only functions in relating these users to one another and to nature, i.e. their social and natural environment.” Both aspects of this environment (‘social’ and ‘natural’) are addressed further by Haugen, but only insofar as to give a metaphorical description of language as ecology, i.e. languages as growing, developing, and reproducing in a certain cultural environment as well as competing with one another for survival in that same environment. In summary, while Haugen purports to shift the focus of linguistics away from language as some detached object of inquiry, he leaves out two things: (1) the ways in which the speakers of a given language actually interact

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10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., 58-59.
15 Ibid., 60-61.
with their surroundings and/or with each other; and (2) the role of language in this interaction, which is a major part of any account of language.\textsuperscript{16} For example, Haugen prefaces the body of his argument with the remark:

\begin{quote}
We cannot [in this article] enter upon all the possible aspects of the ecological problems of language. We shall have to take for granted certain familiar principles of the learning and use of languages: that a child internalizes whatever language variety or varieties it is functionally exposed to in the first years of its life; that the competence it acquires is different from that of every other child; that it has a greater passive than active competence, being able to receive and interpret signals which it would not normally be able to reproduce; that maturation leads to certain restrictions on the adult’s ability or willingness to learn new languages; and that societies are so organized as to impose other, more or less arbitrary restrictions on the actual learning of a language, by the reduction of contact from theoretical infinity to practical minimum.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

Moreover, Haugen illustrates his ecological metaphor of language by writing that there is, in respect to the power structures of countries, “no difference between the standard-creole relationships of the Caribbean and the standard-dialect relationships of Europe”\textsuperscript{18} and “the many types of diglossia and bilingualism induced by the conquest of one language group by another or the immigration of one group into the territory dominated by another are of the same nature.”\textsuperscript{19}

In other words, Haugen gives us an account of language which admittedly takes for granted certain things about language: that children learn languages in similar ways; that languages perform similar functions; and that all languages interact with their social environments and other languages in similar ways.

While most of these assumptions I will not here address, I would like to agree with Haugen’s emphasis on ‘practical’ and ‘functional’ in the quote above, as Haugen’s use of these terms shows that he conceives of language as an adaptive and changing process which interacts

\textsuperscript{16} I will unpack the second claim a bit more in the next chapter of this thesis.

\textsuperscript{17} Haugen, “The Ecology of Language,” 60.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 61.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
with its surroundings. However, more investigation into how language interacts with, informs, contributes to, etc., the daily activities and lives of its speakers is left to be desired by Haugen’s analysis presented in this paper. Haugen himself realizes this, going so far as to write as a projection for the future that “the analysis of ecology requires not only that one describe the social and psychological situation of each language, but also the effect of this situation on the language itself.”

Other linguists in the decade following Haugen took note of this projection. For example, Palmer 1974, Mackey 1980, Denison 1982, and Shaw, Turvey & Mace 1982, all approach linguistics using Haugen’s ecological metaphor. Joe Darwin Palmer, in his 1974 article “Language Ecology,” writes that “language ecology is a metaphorical conceit that enables us to organize our knowledge about the spoken and written manifestations of language. It gives us a set of questions that helps us know more about what we ought to do in the classroom, and about the political, social, cultural, and psychological consequences of language teaching.”

Despite this focus on the metaphor of ‘language ecology,’ Palmer, in the same way as Haugen, takes for granted some connection of language to its environment, predating his entire analysis of ‘cultural’ environments on this connection and this metaphor, going so far as to write “one might say that the teacher’s effectiveness [in teaching a language] is proportional to how well he understands his students’ culture, in the broadest sense,” without ever elaborating on what this ‘broadest sense’ means, in terms of how a culture’s physical surroundings (e.g. crops, forests, animals, buildings, waterways, etc.) might influence that culture.

Mackey, in his 1980 article “The Ecology of Language Shift,” appropriates the metaphor

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20 Ibid., 63.
22 Ibid.
to explain how languages shift, interact, and pass in and out of usage, language here
conceptualized as “a form of behavior – not animal, but human, traditional behavior – not racial
but cultural, in that it has to be learned as a trait or skill identified with a group of people”23 –
i.e., the focus of Mackey’s account of language is not on language as an ‘object,’ but rather on
language as a shared activity: “It is not what the people are, but what they do24.”25 Mackey
argues in favor of an “ecology of language shift”26 as opposed to some static account of language
as separated from its environments, for a “study of [the] interrelated sequences of causes and
effects producing changes in the traditional language behavior of one group under the influence
of another, resulting in a switch in the language of one of the groups.”27 Environment, please
note, is used in the same sense as Haugen above focusing upon the ‘cultural’ environment
without any extra attention given to the biophysical environment. The metaphor of ‘ecology’
comes into play quite nicely, argues Mackey, when looking at the actual processes of these shifts,
as “they are indeed the type of interrelated chains of causes and effects28 analogous to those we
find in the study of ecology.”29

Though correct in his analysis of language as a shared activity, in using the metaphor of
ecology Mackey ignores the actual role of the broader environment on a language, choosing

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24 This distinction itself could be collapsed by Wittgenstein’s later conception of language.
26 Ibid., 68.
27 Ibid.
28 Mackey’s conception of ecosystem is a bit outdated, as it is predicated upon competition rather than cooperation. This indirectly affects his overall analysis. Cf. Mühlhäusler 2003: 10: “in a healthy ecology 10% of the relationships are competitive and the remainder cooperative.”
instead to focus only on the ‘cultural’ environment: “Any language shift therefore will be
influenced by what is valued most by the culture and by what the people in the community want
most.” While this definitely does allow for an account of how the biophysical world influences
the development, usage, etc., of a language (e.g. how a culture which depends and has
traditionally lived in a particular forest might value preserving that forest) no special attention is
paid to this aspect by Mackey. The closest he comes is when dealing with the “rate and extent of
language shift,” noting that these are “made possible by intermarriage coupled with other types
of interethnic contact [and] depend on linguistic pressures within the environment, which include
the language-related needs of the community.” These needs, however, are still framed only in
terms of the ‘cultural environment’: for, writes Mackey, “by quantifying language-wise such
cultural needs as schools, newspapers, books, radio and television, and jobs, we [are] able to . .
produce an integrated picture of the language pressures upon the community.” In summary,
Mackey does not investigate, on a ‘deeper’ level, the broader biophysical environment (e.g.
landscapes, waterways, ecologies, etc.) within which a language finds itself and ipso facto does
not pay, in my judgment, enough attention to some fundamental assumptions about language.

Something similar also occurs in Norman Denison’s 1982 article “A Linguistic Ecology
for Europe?”. If we look first to Norman’s specific framing of the metaphor of ecology as
applied to linguistics, we read that

there is a sense in which all languages and varieties in an area such as Europe constantly

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30 I do, however, agree with the influence of culture on language, and vice versa, made by Mackey. See my account
of Peter Finke below.
32 Ibid., 72.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
act in supplementation of each other and in competition\textsuperscript{35} with each other for geographical, social and functional \textit{Lebensraum}; hence the metaphorical appropriateness of the term ‘ecology’ [to describe them]. However, the picture is greatly complicated by the fact that each language(-variety), far from being a separate, independent organism or species, is rather to be seen as a symbiotic conglomerate of conventionally (and individually!) learned and transmitted symbolic blueprints for use in the communicative behavior of a group-membership of greater or lesser delimitation and stability: a membership, moreover, which is in turn in large measure self-defined by its use of specific language or languages and varieties.\textsuperscript{36}

Denison, in using ecology as a ‘metaphor,’ sees it as a connection between two delineated realms, with “language, language tradition, and linguistic diversity”\textsuperscript{37} on one side and “other spheres such as architecture or the natural environment”\textsuperscript{38} on the other. Accepting this, Denison still relies on some fundamental, yet implicit, connection between the so-called ‘natural’ world and language through the spheres listed above as well as in his analysis of the ‘economy’ of language, i.e. the resource costs of any action of language management and/or conservation. This, perhaps, does not seem problematic at first glance; however, as I will argue later in this thesis, such a lack of a fundamental analysis misses the way in which the two ‘branches’ of ecolinguistics connect and influence one another, an area which cries out for a deeper investigation.

This lack of a deeper investigation is carried, in varying degrees, throughout the literature of ecolinguistics which uses ecology as a metaphor. In the 1990s there were many other arguments which built on the metaphor of linguistic ecology without returning to the fundamental question of the relationship of language to the environment. For example, at the beginning of the decade Weinrich writes that “for the more recent manifestations of system

\textsuperscript{35} Once again, as in Mackey, a view of ecological processes based on competition rather than cooperation.


\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 77.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 78.
theory . . . it is a self-evident assumption that one has to add to each concept of system the
environment of the system,” and yet Weinrich himself picks up this ‘self-evident assumption’
and runs with it in his appropriation of the metaphor of ecology of language. Liebert, in his 1993
argument for the sociohistorical dynamics of an economic and ecological relationship to the
linguistic usage and conceptualization of water as an environment, makes use of a similar
background assumption. Also in 1993, Adam Makkai’s book *Ecolinguistics: Towards a New
**Paradigm** for the Science of Language?* presents us with a similar position, writing that the
inspiration for his overall project was that

we are living in an age when humanity has, at long last, become aware of the importance
of both the macro-environment and the microenvironment we live in. The general cover
term for this New Age awareness, ECOLOGISM, has made its influence felt on
conservation both on sea and land; in both urban and rural sociology and economics; in
agriculture and in space exploration. We all tend to be aware nowadays that in addition
to the ECOLOGY OF PHYSICAL SPACE there is also an ECOLOGY OF MIND. We
live in ‘mind sets’, in more or less socio-psychologically premanufactured MODES OF
THINKING…

This is the only explicit part of the work which investigates the connection of language to its
‘physical’ surroundings. Makkai initially mentions the ‘macro and micro environment,’ i.e. the
‘physical’ surroundings, of a culture, but does so only in passing before moving onto a ‘socio-
psychological’ analysis of language and culture. Makkai, in other words, does not sufficiently
consider the broader environments in which languages and cultures find themselves – not only
‘physical,’ but biophysical as well.

Various contemporary texts also make use of the metaphor of ecology of language in
ways that mirror the other texts listed above, and similarly mirror a lack of in-depth analysis to

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the relationship of language to environment. For example, David Lightfoot, in discussing a child learning a language, writes that “we will see that there is a genetic component that interacts with environmental facts; nature combines with nurture,” where ‘environmental facts’ are understood in terms of ‘nurture’ – in terms of a particular cultural environment, rather than a broader notion of environment. This is further reflected in another passage from Lightfoot, where Lightfoot unpacks the above statement, saying that “[c]hildren are exposed to simple speech, what linguists call ‘primary linguistic data,’ that acts as a triggering experience and the initial genetic inheritance … blossoms into a mature phenotypical capacity (a biological ‘grammar’), depending on whether the children are raised in Toronto or Tokyo, in Bali or Baltimore. Nurture interacts with nature.” In fact, despite agreeing with Suzanne Romain and Daniel Nettle that “that biodiversity is encoded in the languages,” the body of the paper is an examination of the particular “history of English,” which is to say the particular cultural inheritances of English-speakers as encoded in language, without referencing the particulars of the biophysical environments surrounding English-speakers raised, e.g., ‘in Tokyo or Tokyo.’

Similarly, Carol A. Fowler and Bert H. Hodges, in their 2011 work “Dynamics and Languaging: Toward and Ecology of Language,” use the metaphor of an ecology of language to describe a “dynamic, social, interpersonal activity,” only handling in a cultural sense the term ‘environment’ despite noting, briefly, several articles about perception and environmental action,

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42 Ibid., 27.
44 Lightfoot, "The Ecology of Languages," 23.
e.g. psychologists Leslie Z. McArthur’s and Reuben M. Baron’s 1983 article “Toward an Ecological Theory of Social Perception.” If we look, then, to McArthur & Baron’s 1983 article "Toward an ecological theory of social perception," there does exist a sufficiently broad treatment of environment, albeit one which does not take into account language, or at least not in a way which treats language as anything different from what they term an ‘indirect or mediated perception,’ but rather mostly in terms of psychological ‘perception’:

Integral to the emphasis on dynamic stimulus information within the ecological approach is an emphasis on the active perceiver. Not only is the stimulus information provided by inert objects shown to become dynamic when perceivers are permitted active perceptual exploration, but also, it is assumed that the properties of the external environment will be more accurately detected when perceivers are allowed such adaptive exploration. The ecological approach emphasizes the intrinsic connection between action and perception, something that has been insufficient consideration in traditional theories of social perception.

Despite noting McArthur and Baron’s position above, Fowler’s and Hodges’ 2011 article does not make the connection of the ‘action and perception’ approach to environment-human relationships, it does not do so in a linguistic sense, but rather leaves language on the shelf, so to speak, while still arguing for the need of an ‘ecology of language’. In other words, the dots are there, somebody just needs to connect them. This, as I show later in this thesis, is something that Peter Mühlhäuser and Luisa Maffi do quite nicely.

Though I have heretofore been critical of a lack of foundational investigation of the connection of language to the environment, this is not to say that there has been no investigation

47 Ibid., 149.
into the subject in the same way I am approaching it in this thesis. Peter Finke, I argue, is one of the only users of the metaphor of ecology of language who adequately investigates language’s interaction with its broader surroundings; moreover, along with Mühlhäusler and Maffi, Finke ‘steps across the gap’ between the two branches of ecolinguistics. In his various works of the 1990s he pays special care to such a conception of language, writing at one point that culture, including language, “is a child of nature, and the cultural evolution is an offspring of the natural.”\(^50\)

Moreover, argues Finke, it is fruitful to apply “an evolutionary perspective on the relation between nature and culture”\(^{51}\) and that, methodologically speaking, “knowledge of nature helps us with a knowledge of culture.”\(^{52}\) This, argues Finke, is because “one of the most surprising findings of the research on the structure of cultures has been that we meet again certain organizing patterns familiar to us from their ecosystems: openness and dependence on an energy-serving environment, feedback-processes, states of equilibrium, even the triad of production, consumption and destruction.”\(^{53}\) While this seems reflective of a mere metaphorical usage of ‘ecologies of language,’ Finke, in a way which shows the full scope of what he means, writes:

> It should be helpful for linguistics, too, if more attention could be paid to the structural heritage of nature still presently exhibited in language. Complex nets of communication by a vast diversity of semiotic systems have been, and still are, important constructive and connective means in the natural ecosphere.\(^{54}\)

Finke’s particular usage of the ‘ecology of language’ metaphor, while functioning as a

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\(^{51}\) Ibid.

\(^{52}\) Ibid.

\(^{53}\) Ibid.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 88.
metaphor, still retains an emphasis not just on how linguistic ‘ecologies’ mirror ‘ecologies in nature,’ but also makes the additional move to say that such a move is not merely coincidental, arguing that the two ‘types’ of ecologies (linguistic and ‘natural’) influence one another. Whereas other authors in the field of ecolinguistics who use ecology of language merely as a metaphor rely on some implicit connection between linguistic and other ecologies, they seldom address it directly. Moreover, Finke is dead-on by grouping culture together with language in this respect, for both are influenced by, and influence, the worlds in which they find themselves, both the biophysical world as part of the surroundings of languages and cultures, as well as influencing other cultures, forms of life, languages, etc. The actions affected by and affecting language are part of culture and both influence the biophysical world. For example, in a way which arches over to the ‘second branch’ of ecolinguistics, Finke writes, in summary of his project, “to put it in one sentence: in order to protect or even restore the stability and richness of our natural ecosystems, one has to analyze, to influence and change our cultural ecosystems which are responsible for the damage.” For Finke, these ‘cultural ecosystems,’ their languages notwithstanding, are in a direct relationship with their surroundings -- with their environments.

Finke, however, is also critical of the second ‘branch’ of ecolinguistics described earlier in this chapter, writing: “In ecolinguistics, the mere analysis of talk on environmental issues – which is sometimes taken to be the subject of ecolinguistics – in my opinion falls short of the possibilities and necessities for a creative innovation of linguistics.”

In using the word ‘culture’ here, I am in agreement with Finke that “the concept of culture is as indispensable as it is difficult to explain,”(ibid., 86.), and yet I will try to do so in the next chapter of this thesis, relating it to the Wittgensteinian term ‘form of life.’

Ibid., 89.

Ibid., 88.
Finke is correct in general, there are certain scholars\textsuperscript{58} who, I show, do explore the full range of the co-influential structure of language and its surroundings. This dismissal of the second branch, while still making claims that would fall within its purview, is why Finke is not the best example of the correct approach to ecolinguistics, as I argue later in this thesis.

2.3 Ecolinguistics as Environmental Policy Analysis

The second branch of ecolinguistics described by Fill is the more ‘concrete’ or policy-oriented approach. In this branch the word ‘ecology’ is used in its biological (as opposed to metaphorical) sense and the role of language as an aggravating factor of, and possible solution to, environmental problems. As noted before, this branch was established upon the same ground as the first, yet soon departed from the mere metaphorical approach to ecology of language and instead looked at the ways in which language use could affect a given environment. In this branch there are several trends which fall short of recognizing the full scope of the co-influential helix of language and its surroundings. First, we see the lingering specter of a lack of deeper analysis of the co-influential structure of language and environment. Second, and more specifically, we see that while the entire second branch of ecolinguistics is correctly predicated upon the belief that language influences how we perceive and act on a biophysical environment, it sometimes misses the second move of the co-influential helix between language and biophysical environment, namely how the biophysical environment influences language. It is appropriate, then, to show on the one hand instances where there is a deeper analysis into the co-influential helix between language and environment, and on the other hand those instances in the literature where such an analysis is omitted or used only implicitly. I shall sketch the overall

trends of the second branch of ecolinguistics through the 1990s, followed thereafter by more contemporary works in policy-oriented ecolinguistics. This sketch will provide a background for my arguments for combining Wittgenstein’s later philosophy of language with the field of ecolinguistics in the conclusion of this thesis.

It was in the 1990s that the more policy-oriented approach first gained momentum in the literature of ecolinguistics. Wilhelm Trampe, in his 1991 article “Language and Ecological Crisis: Extracts from a Dictionary of Industrial Agriculture,” seeks to lay the groundwork for “a systematic linguistic debate about the phenomenon of ‘ecological crisis.’”59 For, argues Trampe:

In spite of the fact that since the beginning of the 1970s far-reaching agreement appears to have existed in the ‘community of linguists’ that language has a pragmatic character, no attempt has been made to establish systematic correlations between the material elements of the ecological crisis and the information components in the social arena, i.e. the form and context of perception and representation.60

And, importantly for the argument of this thesis as it shows the co-influential nature of language and its biophysical environment, we read: “A linguistics based firmly on the interrelationships between humans and the environment, as expressed through language and communication, will create insights which will above all show languages as life forms.”61 This last bit is marvelously put, for Trampe here does not focus merely on one part of the relationship between language and the biophysical environment, but rather notes that it is an ‘interrelationship’ between the two. Moreover, we see Trampe uses the term ‘life form’ in a Wittgensteinian sense:

A conceptual model of language as life form is not new. Wittgenstein writes: ‘to conceptualize language is to conceptualize a life form’…and in another passage he speaks of ‘language as part of an activity or life form’. To gain an adequate understanding of language thus also implies considering the types and forms of (pre)conditions for life in which it is newly created in each case and which make forms of communication possible. Forms of linguistic utterance are understood as constitutive

59 Ibid., 232.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid. 232.
parts of the general structure of our life-world. The life-form model proposed by Wittgenstein for language has its analogue in biological ecology in the model of the ecosystem.⁶²

This emphasis on Wittgensteinian ‘life-forms’ or ‘forms of life’ is carried throughout Trampe’s argument, with the only omission being a self-imposed lack of discussion on the “general tendencies in our culture of dealing with the environment.”⁶³ Given that this work by Trampe is a foundational article for the ‘second branch’ of ecolinguistics, and that it espouses a co-influential relationship between language and the biophysical environment, namely a ‘form of life,’ we might expect other works in this ‘branch’ to put forward similar arguments. However, the vast majority of the literature of the second branch ignores this grounding assumption, either completely or accepting it implicitly. What follows is a contrasting of those who argue in the same vain as Trampe and Wittgenstein.

As an example of an analysis which correlates with the co-influential helix between language and environment, Donal Carbaugh’s 1992 article “'The Mountain' and 'The Project': Dueling Depictions of a Natural Environment” presents us with an exploration of “a distinct interactional form of communication, verbal depictions of nature, which creatively invokes the basic dialectics (of what is, and ought to be), both within routine discursive performances, and within a distinctive cultural scene.”⁶⁴ For the purposes of our analysis of the second branch of ecolinguistics, we notice that Carbaugh, unlike Chawla, Kahn, Shultz (all discussed below), gives a clearer account of the co-influential nature of language, environment, and form of life:

Verbal depictions follow a general communicative form which goes something like the following: (1) for any physical place, there is a set of terms which could be used to make

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⁶² Ibid., 233.
⁶³ Ibid.
adequate reference to that place. This foregrounds the relationship between words and
the world, the classic referential functioning of language (2) give a specific context for
communication, however, one such term, or phrase, is chose rather than others. This
foregrounds the relationship between words and social context, the pragmatic functioning
of language. (3) The selection of a term occurs with other such selections of other
terms, which the speaker has made. This foregrounds the relationship between words and
other words, the sense-making function of language. (4) The system of co-selections, in
context, about a place, constitutes a verbal depiction of that place, and, in its use, in a
context, achieves specific and various outcomes, rather than others, through its potent
complex of socio-cultural messages.

Similarly, we see a deep analysis of both the fundamental characteristics of language and
how language engages in a co-influential helix with environments (biophysical and cultural) in
In agreement with Sapir and Whorf, Halliday writes: “Language does not passively reflect
reality; language actively creates reality. It is the grammar – but now in the sense of
lexicogrammar, the grammar plus the vocabulary, with no real distinction between the two – that
shapes experience and transforms our perceptions into meanings.” Moreover, argues Halliday,
“language is not a superstructure on a base; it is the product of the conscious and the material
impacting each on the other – of the contradiction between our material being and our conscious
being, as antithetic realms of experience. Hence language [provides] the theory that [human
beings] use to interpret and to manipulate their environment.” This last sentence, I would like

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65 See the discussion of Wittgenstein’s later conception of language in Chapter 3 of this thesis.
66 Carbaugh, “‘The Mountain’ and ‘The Project’: Dueling Depictions of a Natural Environment,” 127. While not
explicitly mentioning Wittgenstein, Carbaugh’s approach is compatible with Wittgenstein’s philosophy of language,
insofar as it correlates to Wittgenstein’s discussion of languages and forms of life, which in turn correlates to a more
robust ecologistics analysis. Wittgenstein will be discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.
67 Edward Sapir, Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture, and Personality (Berkeley, CA:
University of California Press, 1983).
68 Benjamin Whorf, Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf (Cambridge, MA:
70 Ibid.
to note, solidifies a recognition on Halliday’s part of the co-influential helix of language and biophysical environment.71

Ironically, in his critical response to Halliday, we see that Andrew Goatly, in his 1996 article “Green Grammar and Grammatical Metaphor, or Language and Myth of Power, or Metaphors We Die By,” uses a similar framework of co-influential helix between language and environment, even while disagreeing with Halliday on other points which follow from this foundational helix. In this article, Goatly repeatedly criticizes the use of transitive clauses: “This paper takes the position that ordinary language, especially the transitive clause, is inadequate to the representation of the world demanded by modern scientific theory, especially ecological theory, and suggests ways in which the grammatical resources of language can be used and developed to become more adequate.”72 Moreover, writes Goatly, “the literal and congruent [clause structures used in everyday language] are no more than conventionalized; that congruence represents an anthropocentric, not to say infantile, ontology/ideology, though in keeping with Newtonian dynamics.”73 While I shall not here be critical of Goatly’s analysis itself, I would point out that in this analysis, Goatly is certainly conscious of both movements of the co-influential helix. Goatly predicates his overall analysis of language on the proposition that language is “certainly grounded in our interaction with a real world.”74 They key word here is

71 The specifics, however, based as they are on Sapir and Whorf, are a bit different than a Wittgensteinian account of language. For more on this see Peter Mühlhäusler, Language of Environment, Environment of Language: a Course in Écolinguistics (London: Battlebridge, 2003).
73 Ibid., 220.
74 Ibid., 223.
‘interaction’ – for notice that Goatly does not frame this action as unilateral, e.g. ‘language is grounded in our action in the real world.’

Making similar use of the interactive helix between language and biophysical environment, though critical of the overall argument presented in Goatly’s 1996 article, Mary J. Schleppegrell writes that “the problem of language and ecology in this regard is not the human-centeredness of transitive clauses, but the paucity of information value of the word people.” Regardless of her disagreements with Goatly, Schleppegrell’s argument is still predicated upon the descriptive position that language and the biophysical environment are in a co-influential relationship.

Contrast what we seen thus far in Trampe’s, Carbaugh’s, Halliday’s, Goatly’s, and Schleppegrell’s respective works to Mary Kahn’s 1992 article “The Passive Voice of Science,” which is an example of the implicit acceptance of some impoverished background assumptions about language. The focus of Kahn’s article is to show how “scientists are unparalleled in their ingenious use of euphemisms to shield themselves from accountability and moral responsibility for their actions [toward other species].” Here Kahn relies on the assumption that language is in some way able to influence the environment, yet there is not discussion in her work of the ways in which the environment is able to in turn influence language.

Similarly, if we look to Beth Shultz’s 1992 paper “Language and the Natural Environment,” we see a similar focus on how language is, on the one hand, used to protect a

75 Goatly’s argument follows, contra Halliday, that everyday language is ill equipped to address ‘reality’ as now known by modern science. This argument, it should be noted, disagrees with Wittgenstein’s conception of the adequacy of everyday language, which will be addressed in Chapter Two of this thesis.


natural environment, but on the other hand can and is also used to exploit that environment, e.g.
“people who promote the protection of the natural environment also use the language of
exploitation.” The particulars of Shultz’s argument address three ‘harmful’ uses of language in
regards to the natural environment: first, “the use of apparently neutral words that have
connotations complimentary to exploitation whereas the reality they represent is very
different”; second, the use of euphemisms; and thirdly the “powerful device of calling neutral
or pleasant things by pejorative terms.” The rest of the paper teases out the implications of
these three, yet never addresses the ways in which the natural environment influences language
in the first place; i.e., the rest of the paper focuses on the movement of language to environment
rather than the countermovement of environment to language.

Saroj Chawla, in her 1991 work “Linguistic and Philosophical Roots of Our
Environmental Crisis,” advocates the position that there is “a close relationship between
language, philosophy (or world view), and our handling of the natural environment.”
Moreover, writes Chawla, there are two dimensions of reality when speaking of human beings’
relationship to the natural environment:

Objective reality is the natural environment – air, water, oceans, mountains, climate, etc.
Cognitive reality is human perception and creation. The creative dimension modifies
objective reality, ranging from building a hut to erecting a skyscraper, from using animal
power to building nuclear plants. Cognitive reality and language are closely related, for
the modification of objective reality is facilitated by language. Language has the power
to evoke images and complex ideas. Ideas, at first indistinct, gradually become definite

78 Beth Shultz, "Language and the Natural Environment," in The Ecolinguistics Reader: Language, Ecology and
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid., 110.
82 Saroj Chawla, "Linguistic and Philosophical Roots of Our Environmental Crisis," in The Ecolinguistics Reader:
and crystallize themselves…Languages can, therefore, be represented as the origin of most of human cognitive activity.\(^{83}\)

Here we see something close to one half of the co-influential helix of language and environment, for we see how human perception of the environment facilitates a modification of that environment. We also see how language influences how we perceive the environment and therefore how we act upon it, and yet there is no explicit mention of how language is connected to the objective environment in the first place. This is apparent elsewhere in Chawla’s article, as we read: “The language habits of the community influence our perception and experience; they predispose us toward certain choices of interpretation and action,”\(^{84}\) and yet no care is given to how these choices of interpretations and actions in turn influence the language of the community; only one movement in the helix is addressed in Chawla’s analysis.

Robyn Penman’s 1994 article “Environmental Matters and Communication Challenges” is another example of this type of reasoning. Penman’s purpose in writing this article is to answer the question “What could communication studies possibly have to offer in ‘saving our planet’?”\(^{85}\) In order to frame the conditions for a satisfactory answer, Penman appeals to how we ‘talk about the environment’ in two ways: first, the way of the “language planner/linguist [which] is to ask how adequate the language is to do the job the community of speakers needs”\(^{86}\); and second, “to ask how our way off talking constructs our ‘environmental’ reality.”\(^{87}\) “These two ways,” writes Penman, “reflect the dual role of language recognized by many discourse analysts:

\(^{83}\) Ibid.

\(^{84}\) Ibid., 254.


\(^{86}\) Ibid., 145.

\(^{87}\) Ibid.
that language is both constitutive and representative,”88 and, moreover, “[i]t is important to emphasize…that neither role exists without the other: language is constitutive of what it represents.”89 Here, I argue, we see a framework put into place by Penman for addressing of the co-influential helix of language and environment, yet no fleshing out of this framework ever occurs. Instead, Penman jumps from addressing this ‘constitutive and representative’ nature of language to policy analysis without any critical reflection on the framework itself. What I mean, more specifically, is this: Penman addresses how choices within a language influence the way we behave in and toward a given environment without addressing how the language as such is connected to, which is to say influenced by, that given environment. She lacks, in other words, a fundamental analysis of her assumptions about language in a similar way to what was discussed in the previous section of this chapter.

Throughout the 1990s, the trends outlined above continued: however, as time passed they slowly crept toward an intersection point between the two branches of ecolinguistics. At the end of his 1998 ‘state of the art’ synopsis of the field of ecolinguistics, Fill writes that “the task of investigating, documenting and perhaps saving the many endangered languages on this planet . . . would be worth the while of more aspiring newcomers to ecolinguistics.”90 This task, I argue, has been championed first and foremost by authors such as Luisa Maffi and Peter Mühlhäusler, whose work will be discussed below. Moreover, an analysis of the contemporary state of the field of ecolinguistics, while still containing the two branches above, seems to be slowly moving toward the type of work done by Maffi and Mühlhäusler; which, I argue, is evidence that the work of Mühlhäusler and Maffi is the intersection of the two branches.

88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
2.4 Contemporary Trends in Ecolinguistics

Other than the more ‘biocultural’\textsuperscript{91} turn in ecolinguistics by Mühlhäusler and Maffi, which shall be discussed below, there are various works in the second branch of ecolinguistics described above which continue the work of policy analysis. Arran Stibbe, for example has written various articles\textsuperscript{92} which deal with similar political and pedagogical issues described above while also recognizing the co-influential helix of language and environment.

A pair of authors, Jørgen Christian Bang and Jørgen Døør, in their co-authored book

Language, Ecology, and Society: A Dialectical Approach

argue in favor of a co-influential structure of language and environment, where this structure is seen as dialectic. This position is summarized in an introductory essay for the book by fellow ecolinguists and editor of the book, Sune Vork Steffensen, when he writes that

our language and our communicative interactions influence and are influenced by the way our societies are organized, which in turn influences and is influenced by our environmental surroundings, which in turn influence and are influenced by our language and our communicative interactions.\textsuperscript{93}

This dialectic, as conceived of by Steffensen, Bang, and Døør, is critical of the first branch of ecolinguistics, in that using the ecological metaphor causes us “to distinguish between ‘real’ and ‘unreal’ ecologies [and] reproduces the Cartesian dichotomy between culture . . . and nature.”\textsuperscript{94} This is problematic for Steffensen, Bang, and Døør, because “[t]hese Cartesian

\textsuperscript{91} The correlation between biological and cultural (including language) diversity. For more information, see section 1.4 below.


\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 8.
dichotomies in effect place human societies outside the biological order, as if human culture – or at least one part of this culture, namely language – can develop without any implications for our natural environments.” As an alternative to this ‘placing outside of,’ Bang and Døør “propose to view nature and culture as inseparable aspects of a complex and dynamic system.” The upshot of avoiding Cartesian dichotomies is for Steffensen, Bang, and Døør primarily of ecological importance and thus of importance to humanity’s surroundings of which they are also a part. In sum:

Some people seem to assume that since we are facing a biological catastrophe, the logic of the catastrophe is bio-logical. But from our point of view this is too simple a perspective . . . bio-logics exist in a dialectical interdependence with socio-logics and ideo-logics. If we want to change direction we need to reconsider our mental and social patterns as well.

Steffensen, in his review of Andy Clark’s 2008 book *Supersizing the Mind: Embodiment, Action, and Cognitive Extension*, is critical of the approach to ‘the extended mind hypothesis’ which holds that “the mind is necessarily brain-centered.” Steffensen writes that “language…is not seen by Clark as an activity performed by human beings doing things together . . . While the examples [given by Clark] are enlightening, none attempts to come to terms with how language serves us in its (and our) ecological settings.” And what, according to Steffensen, are these “ecological settings?” He writes:

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95 Ibid., 8-9.
96 Ibid., 9.
98 “Continuing the movement from the Cartesian res cogitas to the embodied mind, the extended mind hypothesis goes one step further: cognition is neither purely neutral (i.e. based on computations in the brain), nor purely a bodily phenomenon. Rather, it is considered to comprise neural, bodily, and worldly activity.”
99 Ibid. 677.
100 Ibid. 682.
The social character of languaging has both empirical and theoretical consequences. Our kinds of extended minds depend on social and phenomenal aspects of language. They give us an ecology in which, as communicators, we become parts of each other’s extended brain-body-world systems. As mind extends, an individual agent’s powers exploit other agents in the environment via linguistic activities. This is fully compatible with Clark’s hypothesis in that an individual agent interacts with human and non-human surroundings.

This argument is reminiscent of many of the articles of the first branch of ecolinguistics, but also places emphasis on many of the same points that Wittgenstein stressed some 60 years before, something which is of note for this thesis. Despite this echoing of Wittgenstein there is not one citation of or concerning Wittgenstein in the entire article.


primarily concerned with two major research areas: (1) environmental discourse analysis, often termed eco-critical discourse analysts or the language of ecology and environmentalism; and (2) language ecology and the interactions between humans, mind, and environment, often expressed through lexico-grammatical studies of how humans talk about and adapt linguistically to new and foreign environments, i.e. the ecology of language.

As stated earlier in this chapter, I am sympathetic to conceptualizing ecolinguistics in terms of these two branches, though it is more fruitful to investigate how these two areas overlap. This overlapping area between the two branches, which I shall argue below is the focus of both Maffi and Mühlhäusler, is omitted by Nash in his overview quoted above, but is rather conceptualized

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101 A word chosen by Steffenson to reflect the conception that language is always active.


and collapsed by Nash purely into the terms of environmental discourse analysis.104

The previous paragraphs of this section summarize a sizable portion of the contemporary corpus of ecolinguistics: namely, they pick up on Fill’s 1998 classification of the ‘two branches’ of ecolinguistics, then seek to reconcile them through looking at the bilateral movement of language to, and from, environment. Rather than looking at how languages behave, metaphorically, as ecologies, or at how languages can have an effect on the environment; contemporary ecolinguists look at the co-influential nature of language and environment. This being said, each of the aforementioned contemporary authors, while declaring this bilateral movement, still situates themselves in an area apart from the biophysical. To use Bang’s and Døør’s _Language, Ecology, and Society_ as an example, even though they “propose to view nature and culture as inseparable aspects of a complex and dynamic system,”105 they still analyze this ‘system’ based on culture, towards nature, rather than starting from our environments and surroundings and examining culture. My argument is that both positions (culture to nature and nature to culture) are required to understand the ‘complex and dynamic system.’ Moreover, the work of Peter Mühlhäusler and Luisa Maffi is closer to an analysis of both movements of the co-constitutive helix of language and environment.

2.5 The Intersection of Biological, Linguistic and Cultural Diversity

In 1998 Alwin Fill claimed that “the naming of natural phenomena is a topic which figures prominently in the research of [Peter] Mühlhäusler . . . He shows that discourse about environments can actually have an influence on these, particularly in the form that lack of

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104 Ibid., 410.
linguistic resources may contribute to environmental degradation.” Mühlhäusler himself, as summary points for his work, argues that “the ecolinguistics position is that the relationship between language and the world is a two-way process,” and that

In recent years there has been a growing realization of the importance of biological diversity, and even more recently the voices of those advocating linguistic and cultural diversity have become louder. However, the importance of linguistic diversity has not yet aroused widespread public concern; nor has the notion that ‘linguistic ecology’ needs the same amount of care as natural ecology. There are, however, a number of parallels between the two. First, all present-day diversity is the outcome of processes that took a very long time: millions of years in the case of biodiversity, at least 100,000 years in the case of linguistic diversity. And once genuine diversity is lost, it cannot be easily restored, in spite of progress in bioengineering and linguistic engineering. A second, equally important similarity is that linguistic diversity and diversity in the natural world are both functional. The 10,000 or so languages that exist today reflect necessary adaptations to different social and natural conditions. They are the result of increasing specialization and finely tuned adaptation to the changing world.

To unpack this a bit, Mühlhäusler writes in a later article that “the fit between a particular language and the environment in which it is spoken is the outcome of a long process of accommodation. With languages transplanted into a totally new environment (say an isolated uninhabited island such as Mauritius), they will initially be ill-suited to the task of talking about it.”

As for ecolinguistics’ relationship to the broader discipline of linguistics, Mühlhäusler describes for us the two dominant theories, broadly construed, about the relationship between language and world. First, the mapping or labeling view, which “maintains that we live in one world that consists of many parts and each language provides a different set of labels for the same set of parts. According to this theory, the differences between languages are only

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superficial and all languages are fully intertranslatable.”110  Second, the view that “most perceptions of the world and parts of the world are brought into being and sustained by languages.  Speakers of different languages, therefore, do not perceive the same world.  Instead, different languages emphasize and filter various aspects of a multi-faceted reality in a vast number of ways.”111

Throughout his various works, Mühlhäusler gives various reasons why this second view of language is the correct view of language, as well as why such a view of language is valuable. 112  “If we accept [the second view],” writes Mühlhäusler, “each language may be seen as a provisional interpretation of a world so complex that the only hope for understanding it is to approach it from as many different perspectives as possible.”113  Furthermore, argues Mühlhäusler, “if we regard each language as the result of a long history of human endeavors to gain knowledge of the world, we may begin to see why linguistic diversity is an invaluable resource rather than an obstacle to progress.”114

Mühlhäusler, in the same vein as Steffensen above, is also critical of the usage of language in linguistics, writing that “the subject matter of linguistics is not perceived as the activity of speaking but as an object termed ‘language.’  One of the consequences for this area of enquiry is that, while speaking always involves people, and a spatial, temporal situation, the abstract term language suggests an object that can be analysed as something self-contained,”115

110 Mühlhäusler, "Babel Revisited," 160.
111 Ibid.
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid.
114 Ibid., 161.
115 Ibid., 163.
which in turn leads to a “highly impoverished view of meaning.”\textsuperscript{116} As an alternative to this conception, Mühlhäuser puts forward that:

> [f]rom an ecological perspective meaning arises through the involvement of speakers with other speakers within a shared context of situation, and is shaped by their expectations, and their understandings of the world. Very importantly, meaning needs to be understood as part of ongoing discourses, not as located in decontextualized chunks of language, [as] different groups can mean very different things when using apparently identical linguistic materials or when talking about aspects of the same environment and that within the same language community, different norms for generating and interpreting meaning exist…Knowledge and talk about knowledge is brought into being by social forces not by immaculate perception…Language, because it depends on functional links with the outside world and because it is an inextricable part thereof, is thus an ecological phenomenon.\textsuperscript{117}

This means, summarizes Mühlhäuser, that “life in a particular human environment is dependent on people’s ability to talk about it.”\textsuperscript{118}

In regards to the ecological metaphor as used by the first branch of ecolinguistics, Mühlhäuser supports it, with some qualifications of his own. “The question of language diversity and language loss provides an illustration,” argues Mühlhäuser, “[and] such diversity is structured, and the wellbeing of individual languages depends on meaningful relationships with other languages in a linguistic ecology, and that maintenance of the functional links rather than the privileging and strengthening of individual languages is the basis of linguistic maintenance.”\textsuperscript{119}

As for the second branch, Mühlhäuser argues that “our ability to get on with our environment is a function of our knowledge of it and that by combining specialist knowledge from many languages and by reversing the one-way flow of knowledge dominating the world’s


\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{118} Peter Mühlhäuser, "The Interdependence of Linguistic and Biological Diversity " in The Politics of Multiculturalism in the Asia/Pacific, ed. D. Myers (Darwin, Australia: Northern Territory University Press, 1995), 155.

\textsuperscript{119} Mühlhäuser, Language of Environment, Environment of Language: a Course in Ecolinguistics: 11-12.
educational system, solutions to our many environmental problems may be found,“\textsuperscript{120} with this argument predicated on his overall conceptual understanding of language and world as discussed above.

Here is the intersection between the two branches of ecolinguistics as described by both Alwin Fill in 1998 and Joshua Nash in 2010: for, on the one hand, Mühlhäusler is concerned with the ecological metaphor to describe how languages interact with one another as useful to the overall project of preserving linguistic diversity; and, on the other hand, the structure of both linguistic and environmental policy and the epistemological-linguistic models and meanings and meaning shifts contained therein. Furthermore, even with both of these ‘branches’ aside, it seems apparent that Mühlhäusler takes the ecological aspect of ecolinguistics even further than many previous ecolinguists, providing an analysis of, and argument for, a \textit{direct} connection between language diversity and ecological/biophysical diversity. This is something that he has in common with ethnobiologist Luisa Maffi.

In the work of Luisa Maffi there is a similar concern for the co-influential helix between language and the environment, if even as a part of her larger project of preserving ‘biocultural’ diversity. In order to provide a background for her overall project, Maffi tells the story of a visit she once made to the Highlands of Chiapas, Mexico. On this visit, Maffi observed and helped as best she could at a Mexican Government Health Services clinic. She notes in her account of the visit that most of those at the clinic spoke their native language of Tzeltal "peppered with Spanish words."\textsuperscript{121} This, she notes, lead to various problems for the indigenous population of the Highlands:


I turned to a young man who was carrying in his arms his two-year-old daughter suffering from diarrhea; he had already struck me by telling me he had started out at dawn from his isolated household to get to the clinic—hour of walking, and now hours of waiting, with his sick child in his arms, hours of delay in getting treatment, a delay that might well prove fatal to her. With mounting anguish I asked him whether he knew of any plants or other local remedies for diarrhea, even if he had not tried to administer them to his daughter. He searched his mind, apparently in vain, then looked to another, slightly older man nearby, and started an animated discussion in Tzeltal with him. It became clear that between the two of them they were trying to dredge up and piece together scattered fragments of latent ethnomedical knowledge—knowledge perhaps only imperfectly learned, never correctly used, and now almost forgotten. I heard them question each other: "What's its name, the grasshopper thing?" The "grasshopper thing": yakan k'ulub watmal 'grasshopper leg herb' (*Verbena litoralis*), one of the commonest diarrhea remedies in the Highlands. They could hardly remember its name, let alone master its use.122

In this story we see the co-influential nature of language and environment, for language is here influenced by the environment (the herb) as well as the form of life of the people, as this form of life changed because of cultural and epistemic changes, which was in turn reflected in their *usage* of language as well. In the countermovement of this example language influences the environment in the form of *usage* of herbs or the lack thereof. Maffi herself draws a similar conclusion, commenting that the Chiapas incident was “the first time [she] became aware—and acutely so—of the relationship between language, knowledge, and the environment, of the breakdown of these ties under pressure of ‘modernization,’ and of the far-reaching implications of the breakdown for indigenous and other local peoples, and for humans at large.”123

As stated before, Maffi acknowledges that language is necessarily bound to a culture, which in turn is bound to a particular environment, which leads to all sorts of problems when these bindings are ignored. This is precisely the focus of her research, for, she writes:

> When external forces begin to undermine traditional societies, pushing them into the ‘mainstream’ – whether this process is propelled by dispossessing local people of their sovereignty over land and resources, trampling their cultural traditions, or promoting

122 Ibid., 2-3.

123 Ibid., 3.
linguistic assimilation (generally, all three occur at once and are mutually reinforcing) – local peoples generally end up losing control over, and ultimately contact with, their traditional natural and cultural environment.124

This is where Mühlhäusler and Maffi agree, for human understanding of and the attention humans pay to the co-influential helix of language and environment has certain practical consequences. A lack of attention leads to environmental degradation, as is also the charge leveled on language by the policy-oriented branch of ecolinguistics; however, both Mühlhäusler and Maffi agree that in order for this degradation to be avoided, we must expand our conception and analysis of language and environment to a more fundamental level. For, rather than focusing merely on the language of government policy or environmental activism, attention must be paid to how language is part of living in an environment for all of humanity — not just in the academic, economic, or political sphere, but rather in all spheres.

This is the particular strength of Luisa Maffi’s work as recognizes that language is a lived activity, and must necessarily be bound to social, geographical, topographical, environmental, spheres, rather than merely in the linguistic or cultural sphere(s). This is not to say, however, that Mühlhäusler does not address this as well. Mühlhäusler recognizes this, as was shown above, yet, unlike Maffi, does not focus as much on the forms of life of the linguistic communities, these communities being part of, and not separate from, their respective environments. So, we might say, Maffi gives us ‘the other side of the coin’ of ecolinguistics, the coin here being the co-influential helix between language and culture, this co-influential helix engaging in yet another such helix with environment. Maffi’s equal emphasis on language, culture, and the environment, then, separates her from the likes of Steffensen, in that she approaches the ‘coin’ from both sides, rather than the side of language and culture.

124 Ibid., 6.
This becomes even more evident elsewhere in Maffi’s works, where she writes that “for indigenous peoples, maintaining or restoring the integrity of their cultures, languages, and environments represents one interrelated goal,”\textsuperscript{125} and “indeed . . . the very distinction between ‘culture’ and ‘nature’ appears to be of little significance to indigenous peoples the world over.”\textsuperscript{126} This, moreover, is particularly interesting when one takes into account that the areas of our planet with the highest biological diversity are also the areas with the highest linguistic diversity: “research has begun to show that these different manifestations of the diversity of life are mutually supportive and, conversely, that diversity loss at one level goes hand in hand with losses at the other levels.”\textsuperscript{127} This co-dependence of diversity, argues Maffi, is not coincidental, but rather:

Much biodiversity found in places (including in habitats commonly thought of as pristine, such as tropical rainforests) is actually anthropogenic, that is, generated by humans through a variety of practices...that favor ecosystem regeneration and species diffusion. Through this close interdependence with nature, human societies necessarily developed and maintained detailed and accurate knowledge of their ecological relations and processes, and sustainable ways of extracting and managing natural resources.\textsuperscript{128}

Maffi has been vocally critical of what she sees as a glaring failure of laws, both international and otherwise, meant to protect indigenous peoples’ rights. Such laws, she argues, omit “explicit recognition of the role of language – specifically, in this case, indigenous and other local languages – in creating, encoding, sustaining, and transmitting most of the cultural knowledge and patterns of behavior that the related international instruments are intended to

\textsuperscript{125} Maffi, “Language, Knowledge, and Indigenous Heritage Rights,” 412.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 415.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 21.
I agree with both Mühlhäusler and Maffi, in that there should be greater care taken to investigate the multifaceted relationship of language to environment. Moreover, as both Mühlhäusler and Maffi have argued, I agree that culture is also influenced by language, and language, in turn, by culture. Here, however, I realize that more care needs to be taken when examining culture and its non-linguistic aspects.

2.6 Additional Considerations and Conclusion

To summarize and solidify my position in relation to Mühlhäusler’s and Maffi’s accounts of ecolinguistics and ecosystems, and in order to build a foundation for my conclusion to this thesis, I would like to elaborate upon a few things heretofore mentioned in passing. Language and culture are inseparable, as culture gives meaning to language and language helps frame culture. This is because they develop alongside a particular biophysical environment together.

As already noted, various authors in the field of ecolinguistics and biocultural studies have argued that “linguistic diversity [is] a major indicator for cultural diversity and the loss of ‘language richness’ [is] a proxy for the loss of ‘cultural richness.’” Language then is inseparable from human culture. Mühlhäusler and Maffi, moreover, have demonstrated that

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129 Maffi, "Language, Knowledge, and Indigenous Heritage Rights," 414. I shall not here address the judicial, ethical, etc., aspect of Maffi’s argument. This is not because I am unsympathetic to such aspects, but, because of time and topic constraints, would only here like to point to the implied framework of Maffi’s criticism: namely that environment, forms of life, and language are interrelated.

130 See Illustration 1.1

linguistic and cultural distinctiveness can develop also in the absence of mutual isolation.\textsuperscript{132} This means, for example, that in situations of “high concentrations of linguistically distinct communities coexisting in the same areas and communicating through complex networks of multilingualism”\textsuperscript{133} there exists a “phenomenon of ‘sympatric’ linguistic boundaries”\textsuperscript{134} which point “to the role of sociocultural factors, along with biogeographic factors, in the development of linguistic diversity.”\textsuperscript{135}

Language then, in the everyday usage of the term\textsuperscript{136}, can move between one culture and another; yet each culture, as a differing form of life, influences the usage of a ‘larger’ language. For example, a Spanish speaker born, raised, and living in Dallas, Texas, would be part of a different culture than a Spanish speaker born, raised, and living in the Chiapas Highlands of Mexico or the Atapuerca Mountains of Spain. This, it might be objected, involves separate dialects, and to this I agree; however—please note—to ignore the two speakers’ respective environments and the way they live their lives in those differing environments is to give an incomplete and impoverished account of the difference.

What, then, of the relationship between culture and the environment? There exists, I argue along with Maffi and Mühlhäusler, an inseparable link between a culture and its environment. Here, however, it might be objected that an environment could exist without a culture. The idea that any environment on earth is completely devoid of human influence and/or interaction, though held by many, is mistaken. Numerous scholars have demonstrated that the

\textsuperscript{133} Maffi, "Linguistic, Cultural, and Biological Diversity," 605.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{136} As opposed to Wittgenstein’s concept of ‘language-games’, which, however, is not to say that Wittgenstein doesn’t see English or German as separate language-games, only that each larger ‘language’ contains a virtually endless number of language-games. For more information, see Chapter Two.
human species has influenced all areas of the planet, to one degree or another.\footnote{Scott Friskics, "The Twofold Myth of Pristine Wilderness: Misreading the Wilderness Act in Terms of Purity," \textit{Environmental Ethics} 30, no. 4 (2008); Arturo Gómez-Pompa and Andrea Kaus, "Taming the Wilderness Myth," \textit{BioScience} 42, no. 4 (1992); Marilynne Robinson, "Surrendering Wilderness," \textit{The Wilson Quarterly} 22, no. 4 (1998).} More importantly for this thesis, however, since we as human beings must necessarily use language when discussing any environment, we still influence that environment through framing it using certain words, phrases, gestures, etc. This is especially apparent in the language of policy, economics, politics, religion, etc. The language(s) used in these framings, moreover, derive their meaning from a particular culture/form-of-life. The language we use to frame an environment reflects the ways we interact or intend to interact with that environment; thusly, when a certain environment is described as being ‘apart from human interaction’ there are certain cultural backgrounds at play. Here, I argue along with Maffi and Mühlhäusler, is the problem of linguistic and cultural homogenization: that environments and culture/language are separate, so any culture/language can ecologically interact with any biophysical environment without negative consequences, regardless of the time spent co-evolving to one another. This problem will be elaborated upon later in this thesis; however, suffice it to say that a viewpoint based on linguistic and cultural homogenization does lead to environmental degradation in many instances. This problem can be remedied by being especially mindful to the many ways that language, forms of life, and biophysical environments are engaged, especially in the avoidance of environmental degradation. This mindfulness is the main subject of ecolinguistics as espoused by Peter Mühlhäusler and Luisa Maffi, but is also something described by early twentieth century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, albeit without particular attention to environmental degradation.

Accordingly, in the next chapter I shall give an account of the philosophy of Ludwig
Wittgenstein, and shall argue that Wittgenstein’s concept of ‘form of life’ is always tied to the concept of ‘culture.’ By this I mean that there can be multiple forms of life within a particular culture, but also multiple cultures at play in a form of life. In this way the two terms are always engaged with one another. Understanding this, I argue, helps us in two ways: first, it gives us a clearer conception of what culture does, which, if omitted, would give us an impoverished account of culture and therefore language and environment; second, if ‘form of life’ and ‘culture’ are interchangeable, then literature which has been investigated separately from Wittgenstein’s philosophy of language can be brought to bear on Wittgenstein’s account of language. In summary, by holding the two terms to be virtually synonymous, there are benefits to both scholarship concerning culture as well as scholarship concerning Wittgenstein.

Following this overall account of the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, I shall conclude this thesis by arguing that the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein reflects the current state of ecolinguistics as outlined above, as well as how Wittgenstein scholarship can benefit greatly from an interaction with the field of ecolinguistics as outlined above.
Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein was born in Vienna on the 26\textsuperscript{th} of April 1889, the eighth and last child of one of the wealthiest families in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.\footnote{Ray Monk, \textit{Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius} (New York: The Free Press, 1990). 4.} In the earlier years of his life, writes his biographer Ray Monk, he was considered to be intellectually dull, exhibiting “no precocious musical, artistic or literary talent, and, indeed, did not even start speaking until he was four years old.”\footnote{Ibid., 12-13.} This trend continued into his early teens, where at the \textit{realschule} in Linz the young Wittgenstein was a poor student, in most subjects rarely earning above a C, only earning two A’s during this early school period – both in religious studies.\footnote{Ibid., 15.}

This, however, would soon change: in 1908, while a student of aeronautics at the Victoria University of Manchester, he was introduced to Bertrand Russell’s \textit{The Principles of Mathematics}.\footnote{Ibid., 29-30.} In reading \textit{The Principles}, Wittgenstein “became increasingly obsessed with the problems discussed by Russell,”\footnote{Ibid., 30.} this obsession eventually leading him in the summer of 1911 to visit the mathematician and logician Gottlob Frege at the University of Jena, who after “wiping the floor with Wittgenstein”\footnote{Ibid., 36.} over Wittgenstein’s proposed solutions to problems in mathematical logic, was still sufficiently impressed to recommend that the young Wittgenstein visit Russell in Cambridge.\footnote{Ibid.} So, on October 18, 1911, Wittgenstein, unannounced, met with Russell for the first time. Russell, years later, would write that “quite at first I was in doubt as to
whether [Wittgenstein] was a man of genius or a crank, but I very soon decided in favor of the former alternative.”  

This seems to be the opinion held by many about Wittgenstein. In Douglas P. Lackey’s 1999 “Baruch Poll of Great Philosophy in the Twentieth Century,” in which 414 philosophy professors were asked to give a list of the five most important books of philosophy in the twentieth century, Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* appeared on 179 of those lists, his *Tractatus* appeared on 24.  

Lackey comments on this trend, writing:

> The immediate, indisputable, and unexpected result is that there is a runaway winner in first place. Wittgenstein’s *Investigations* was cited far more frequently than any other book and was listed first on more ballots than any other book. The Investigations was cited by persons whose other selections were all logic books, by persons whose other selections were all phenomenology books, by persons whose other selections were all Asian books. It is the one crossover masterpiece in twentieth-century philosophy, appealing across diverse specializations and philosophical orientations.

While it would certainly be foolish to base our opinion of a philosopher only upon the opinions of others, the results of the poll at least point out that philosophers of diverse backgrounds find Wittgenstein’s writings interesting and influential.

And why is this? Wittgenstein’s philosophy is comparatively unique in that it addresses almost every aspect of philosophy, whether it be logic, ethics, metaphysics, philosophy of language, philosophy of religion, or epistemology. However, one area in which Wittgenstein’s potential influence has heretofore largely been ignored is in the field of environmental

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147 Ibid., 331-32.
philosophy. In this chapter I hope to remedy this, arguing that Wittgenstein, in transitioning from the early philosophy of the *Tractatus* to his later philosophy in the *Philosophical Investigations*, realized that environment, in the sense of both ‘biophysical’ and ‘cultural/religious,’ plays an enormous part in shaping language itself as well as the way we use language. The ‘early’ Wittgenstein saw a connection, of some sort, between language and the things which can only be ‘shown’ (e.g. culture, values, and religion). This connection is something which concerned Wittgenstein throughout his life, and was one of the reasons for his later disavowal of the theory of language presented in the *Tractatus*. I show that the development of Wittgenstein’s outlook on religion and culture paralleled his outlook on language, finally arguing that his outlook on culture and language expanded beyond the ‘boundaries’ given for them in the *Tractatus* to include the entirety of a language’s intersubjectively biophysical surroundings.

Wittgenstein’s Philosophy is usually divided into two periods: the ‘early’ philosophy epitomized in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*; and the ‘later’ philosophy contained in the *Philosophical Investigations, On Certainty*, and the various ‘Lectures’ and ‘Remarks’ grouped posthumously in the *Philosophical Occasions*. Accordingly, the path of this chapter is to start with the early philosophy of the *Tractatus*, arguing that Wittgenstein uses logic to show that the propositions of metaphysics, religion, logic, value, etc., are not ‘false’ propositions (as some have

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148 There are a few who deal with Wittgenstein and environmental philosophy, most recently Marcello Di Paola and Nigel Pleasants. See: Marcello Di Paola, "Wittgenstein Gone Wild," in *Nature and the Popular Imagination* (Malibu, CA: The International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature & Culture, 2012); Nigel Pleasants, "Nonsense on Stilts? Wittgenstein, Ethics, and the Lives of Animals," *Inquiry* 49, no. 4 (2006). These works, however, tend to focus on very specific parts of Wittgenstein’s thought, such as his take on the ‘other minds’ problem of epistemology. I focus more upon his overall linguistic project and how it relates to environmental philosophy.

argued), but simply cannot be given a truth value through comparison to the empirical world. I
then move on to Wittgenstein’s ‘transitional period’ between his earlier and later philosophy.
Following this transitional account, I then move to an account of Wittgenstein’s later philosophy
found in the *Investigations*, particularly his new account of language and how it is more ‘organic’
than the *Tractatus* account of language. Following this account, I then give a new account of
Wittgenstein’s conception of ‘forms of life’ as both cultural and influenced by their surrounding
biophysical environments. Lastly I do two things. First, I extend Wittgenstein’s arguments for
forms of life and communities of life to include the intersubjective character of all beings which
make up those biophysical environments. Next I argue that Wittgenstein’s later philosophy of
language can give a descriptive account of normative differences in regards to the ways in which
forms of life interact with their biophysical surroundings, but that Wittgenstein’s later philosophy
alone cannot give us a normative criteria for such interactions.

3.2 The *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and Wittgenstein’s Early Philosophy

Before beginning my overall analysis of Wittgenstein’s early philosophy as contained in
the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, it is fruitful for both an understanding of the work and an
understanding of the transition from Wittgenstein’s early thought to his later thought to give an
account of the methodology and structure Wittgenstein used to author the work. Ray Monk, in
his detailed biography of Wittgenstein, writes that for the young Wittgenstein who authored the
*Tractatus*, “functional design, stripped of any sort of ornamentation”\(^{150}\) was a principle to live by
“culturally and even ethically.”\(^{151}\) This principle of functional simplicity is reflected in the
*Tractatus* itself. Laurence Goldstein, to capture the conception of philosophy behind


\(^{151}\) Ibid.
Wittgenstein’s authorship of the *Tractatus*, writes that for this early Wittgenstein “philosophy [must be] precise, crystalline and pure.”152 This remark by Goldstein is seemingly in paraphrase of a remark made by the later Wittgenstein concerning his earlier work: “For the crystalline purity of logic was, of course, not something I had discovered: it was a requirement.”153 This last quote from Wittgenstein also sheds light onto the method of the *Tractatus*, namely that it is an investigation both *a priori* and *analytic*. When Wittgenstein asks the question ‘How can a statement—a bunch of words strung together—convey information about the world?’154 he already presupposes that there *is* language and *that* it can make claims about the world; i.e., Wittgenstein only seeks to break down this relationship into its simplest parts. This is evident in the *Tractatus* where Wittgenstein writes that “all propositions of our colloquial language are actually, just as they are, logically completely in order.”155 Similarly, in his *Notebook* entries from this period he writes “My whole task consists in explaining the nature of the proposition.”156 What he seeks, then, is not some constructed *solution* to logical problems, but rather a complete *description* of language and its relationship to the world. This account, as will be shown, is an account of how language gives us a ‘picture’ of the world.

The structure of the *Tractatus* is also unique in its absolute, yet functional, simplicity. Goldstein, to describe this ‘crystalline structure,’ writes that “the *Tractatus* has seven pivotal propositions, numbered 1 to 7; every propositions is assigned a decimal number according to its logical importance. Thus the second proposition of the *Tractatus* is numbered 1.1, showing it is

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a comment on proposition number 1; and, for example, proposition 3.1432 is the second comment on 3.143 which, in turn, is the third comment on 3.14” which is the fourth comment on 3.1, since Wittgenstein never passes ten sub-comments on any one comment.157 The renowned Wittgenstein scholar K. T. Fann, writing on the structure of the work, argues that “the Tractatus has been compared to many Western classics, but the one classic it resembles the most is the Old Master’s Tao Teh Ching. Both are composed of short oracular remarks which cover the whole range of philosophy in a short span.”158

While many scholars have focused on the importance of the Tractatus to mathematical logic and the importance of mathematical logic to the Tractatus,159 Fann, though not arguing against this relationship between logic, mathematics, and the Tractatus, focuses on something a bit different. Fann argues that “briefly stated, Wittgenstein’s theory of language in the Tractatus has two components: the ‘picture theory’ and the ‘truth-function theory.’ These two theories are designed to answer the questions: ‘What is the function of language?’ and ‘What is the structure of language?’”160 Given that in the Tractatus Wittgenstein defines language as “the totality of propositions,”161 Fann argues that the fundamental question about language that Wittgenstein seeks to answer in the Tractatus is “How are propositions related to the world [and] one another?”162

Expanding on Fann’s argument, my argument for this section is that on a basic level the

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158 Fann, Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy: 3, fn. 1.
159 E.g.: “It is quite clear that the [Tractatus] is principally the culmination of Wittgenstein’s adventure in mathematical logic.” Goldstein, Queer and Clear Thinking: Wittgenstein's Development and His Relevance to Modern Thought: 9.
160 Fann, Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy: 8.
161 Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus: §4.001.
162 Fann, Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy: 8.
early Wittgenstein saw language and the world as reflective of one another. This does not mean, please note, that Wittgenstein was some mystic who saw language as somehow engaged in a ‘direct’ causal relationship with the ‘physical’ world, unmediated by action.\textsuperscript{163} Rather, for Wittgenstein language is bound to a human being’s conception of the world and the way human beings act in this world is based on this linguistically framed conception. To understand, then, what Wittgenstein sees as this reflective relationship between language and world, it is necessary to understand what Wittgenstein means when he uses the term ‘world.’

The first aphorism of the \textit{Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus} reads “The world is everything that is the case.”\textsuperscript{164} This remark is expanded in the next sequential aphorism to say “the world is the totality of facts, not things.”\textsuperscript{165} So in order to acquire an understanding of Wittgenstein’s conception of ‘the world,’ we must investigate what he means by ‘facts’. Given that at the time Wittgenstein’s thought had been in the area of ‘pure logic’, and ‘empirical’ matters were not of primary concern to the picture of philosophy contained in the \textit{Tractatus},\textsuperscript{166} it seems that to understand his conception of facts we must take, along with Wittgenstein, a purely \textit{logical} route. This is to say, we must retrace Wittgenstein’s understanding of ‘facts’ and how they are \textit{a priori} related to the world in order to understand what is at the heart of the \textit{Tractatus}. This understanding will both 1) show that Wittgenstein was always concerned with the way language mirrored the world and 2) provide a point of departure with which we can compare the later thought of Wittgenstein on this interplay between language and world. Both points, I argue, are necessary if we are to have a complete account of Wittgenstein’s philosophy of language before

\textsuperscript{163} This lack of emphasis on ‘action’ is something that becomes key for the later Wittgenstein (see below).
\textsuperscript{164} Wittgenstein, \textit{Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus}: §1.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., §1.1.
us. This account, moreover, is also necessary for showing the compatibility of Wittgenstein’s later philosophy of language with the field of ecolinguistics.

Our investigation of Wittgenstein’s ‘facts,’ needs to take into account that Wittgenstein distinguishes between ‘the linguistic world’ and ‘empirical reality,’ which is to say (as Fann does) that “each of these, object, atomic fact, and fact, has its linguistic counterpart: name, elementary proposition, and proposition.”\textsuperscript{167} Any account of Wittgenstein’s \textit{Tractatus} therefore must start from either Wittgenstein’s conception of language \textit{as such} or Wittgenstein’s conception of ‘empirical reality.’\textsuperscript{168} My particular account will begin with language and its ‘propositions’ and make its way toward the world of ‘facts’ discussed in brief above then back again.

So, what are propositions for Wittgenstein? “Propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions,” he answers, “[and] an elementary proposition is a truth-function of itself.”\textsuperscript{169} Elementary propositions, then, are simply those propositions which cannot be broken down any further. Ordinary propositions—e.g. ‘Kierkegaard was a Dane’—are complexes of these elementary propositions. If, taking the example just provided, I was to tell my young nephew that ‘Kierkegaard was a Dane,’ he might ask me ‘What is a Kierkegaard?’ and ‘What is a Dane?’ I, in turn, would have to answer him by dividing up my initial proposition (‘Kierkegaard was a Dane’) into other, simpler propositions: ‘Kierkegaard was a philosopher’ and ‘A Dane is someone born in Denmark.’ But this process can continue, for after these specifications my nephew could ask me ‘What is a philosopher?’ and ‘What/Where is Denmark?’\textsuperscript{170}

\textsuperscript{167} Fann, \textit{Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy}: 14.

\textsuperscript{168} For a diagram of Wittgenstein’s division, see Fig. 2.

\textsuperscript{169} Wittgenstein, \textit{Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus}: §5.

\textsuperscript{170} This example has been adapted from Fann, \textit{Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy}: 10.
outlines this process himself in an entry in his *Notebooks* prior to the publishing of the *Tractatus*, writing that

> it is clear that components of our propositions can be analysed by means of a definition, and must be, if we want to approximate to the real structure of the proposition. *At any rate, then, there is a process of analysis.* And can it now be asked whether the process comes to an end? And if so: What will the end be?

For Wittgenstein, this ‘end’ must in some way be in contact with ‘the world.’

But can Wittgenstein give us an example of such an ‘elementary proposition’? In short, no – for Wittgenstein the *Tractatus* only gives us a *logical* rather than *empirical* account of language and the world. This is to say, Wittgenstein can show the logical *necessity* of such ‘elementary propositions’ to ground language to the abstract notion of ‘the world’ (i.e. the world independent of any specific details), but does not see the *necessity*, logically speaking, of giving an example, as he believes he can infer the existence of elementary propositions through logic alone. Instead, he writes that “the *application* of logic decides what elementary propositions there are. What lies in its application logic cannot anticipate.”

Such an ‘application’ is empirical, not logical in the *a priori* sense which Wittgenstein insists on dealing with in the *Tractatus*. This *a priori* sense of logic used by Wittgenstein, argues K. T. Fann, is clearly indicated in his conclusions about ‘elementary propositions’: ‘If we know on purely logical grounds that there must be elementary propositions, then everyone who understands propositions in their unanalysed form must know it.’ ‘It is obvious that the analysis of propositions must bring us to elementary propositions which consist of names in immediate combination.’ ‘An elementary proposition consists of names. It is a nexus, a concatenation, of names.’

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174 Ibid., §5.5562.
175 Ibid., §4.221.
What, then, are these names?

Wittgenstein initially defines names in the negative: a “name cannot be analysed further by any definition. It is a primitive sign.”\textsuperscript{177} In other words, returning to our example of ‘Kierkegaard was a Dane,’ words such as ‘Kierkegaard,’ ‘Dane,’ ‘Philosopher,’ and ‘Denmark’ are not the ‘names’ Wittgenstein is referring to in §3.26 of the \textit{Tractatus}. Names must refer to something simple, without parts; in this way they correspond to the same sort of simplicity logically demanded of ‘elementary propositions.’ They are connected to simple propositions, but also to something ‘in the world,’ something ‘simple’ in the world that Wittgenstein calls ‘objects.’ “The object is simple,”\textsuperscript{178} Wittgenstein writes, “[and] an atomic fact is a combination of objects.”\textsuperscript{179} Here then we see that names are the ‘simplest’ part of language, and ‘objects’ are the ‘simplest’ part of ‘the world’; they are ‘the surface of the mirror,’ so to speak, when talking about how language and the world mirror one another.\textsuperscript{180}

Returning, then, to the question of what Wittgenstein means by ‘the world,’ we see that “the world is everything that is the case,”\textsuperscript{181} that “the world is the totality of facts, not things,”\textsuperscript{182} and that “what is the case, the fact, is the existence of atomic facts,”\textsuperscript{183} and these atomic facts are ‘combinations of objects.’\textsuperscript{184} This, then, is the world analyzed by Wittgenstein by way of increasingly ‘simpler’ constituents. This analysis, moreover, can connected to language in a similar ‘hierarchy,’ for the simplest parts of ‘the world,’ namely ‘objects,’ are bound to the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{177} Wittgenstein, \textit{Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus}: §3.26.
\item \textsuperscript{178} Ibid., §2.02.
\item \textsuperscript{179} Ibid., §2.01.
\item \textsuperscript{180} See fig. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{181} Wittgenstein, \textit{Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus}: §1.
\item \textsuperscript{182} Ibid., §1.1.
\item \textsuperscript{183} Ibid., §2.
\item \textsuperscript{184} Ibid., §2.01.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
simplest part of language, what Wittgenstein calls ‘names’: “The name means the object. The object is its meaning.”185 Thus, if we move from the ‘simplest’ part of language, step by step, to the most complex (language itself), we see the reflectivity of language and world. Objects correspond to ‘names,’ which make up ‘elementary propositions,’186 these elementary propositions being the constituents of ‘propositions,’187 which make up language.188 In this way, we see that the corresponding levels of either hierarchy are reflective of one another, e.g. “the simplest proposition, the elementary proposition, asserts the existence of an atomic fact.”189

These two reflective hierarchies are summarily illustrated in figure 2.1 below:

![Figure 3.1: The reciprocity of the theory of language presented in the *Tractatus*, where the elements of language reflect the elements of the world in a ‘picture.’](image)

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185 Ibid., §3.203.
186 Ibid., §4.22.
187 Ibid., §5.
188 Ibid., §4.03.
189 Ibid., §4.21.
190 Adapted from Fann, *Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy*: 20.
But here, in keeping with our method of analysis, there is a glaring question to be asked, namely, ‘How are elementary propositions possible?’ It is here, then, that we arrive at the ‘picture theory’ of language mentioned briefly earlier in this section, for Wittgenstein answers the question of how propositions mirror the world by arguing that “the proposition is a model of the reality as we think it is [and] the proposition is a picture of reality.” Furthermore, argues Wittgenstein, “the elements [i.e. the propositions] of the picture stand, in the picture, for the objects.” In the same way that a picture or model represents or misrepresents an event or state of affairs by how well the elements of the representation correspond to the event or state of affairs, so too must the propositions stand in relation to one another in a certain way to accurately describe the facts. For example, if the event I want to accurately capture with a picture is a game of chess and I draw seven men standing in line at a Ferris wheel, I misrepresent it by virtue of both the colors, shapes, and textures I draw as well as the positioning and relationships of these elements to one another. “That the elements of the picture are combined with one another in a definite way,” writes Wittgenstein, “represents that the things are so combined with one another.” Moreover, he argues, “This connexion [sic.] of the elements of the picture is called its structure, and the possibility of this structure is called the form of representation of the picture.” These two passages, when taken together, point to something else about the ‘picture theory’: namely that for a group of names to be able to be called a proposition, it need not correspond to the facts of ‘the world.’ Remember, Wittgenstein is not concerned with ‘the empirical,’ only ‘the logical’; therefore “in the proposition a state of affairs is, as it were, put

191 Ibid., 15.
193 Ibid., §2.131.
194 Ibid., §2.15.
195 Ibid.
together for the sake of experiment.”196 There are definite ways or structures which elementary propositions must adhere to when put together to make propositions, but beyond that we are in the realm of ‘the empirical.’ This is Wittgenstein’s account of truth value, namely that propositions are true or false depending on how the state of affairs of which they are a ‘picture’ match the ‘empirical’ state of affairs – i.e. the world. The only ‘propositions’ which we can assign a truth value independent of the world are tautologies and contradictions, neither of which is ‘attached’ to the world, strictly speaking. For example, I know nothing about the nationality of ‘Kierkegaard’ when I only know that it is the case that ‘he was either a Dane or not a Dane.’197 This logical independence of truth value from the world is what makes tautologies and contradictions something different from a proposition in Wittgenstein’s strict usage of the term, since a proposition is true or false based on how its elementary propositions provide an accurate picture of the world.198 In sum, a proposition must be capable of being either true or false based upon how its ‘picture’ of the world corresponds to the world; otherwise it is what Wittgenstein calls ‘nonsense.’199 While this does seem to break Wittgenstein’s attempt at a purely logical account of the world, it is important to note that Wittgenstein is making no exact claim about the specifics of the world, only that for a proposition to be true or false it must match or not match the specifics of the world, whatever they may be. In other words, Wittgenstein is dealing with ‘truth value’ as a placeholder or variable for the actual truth value of a proposition and with ‘the world’ likewise as a placeholder or variable for the actual world, with its specificity.

Wittgenstein uses three terms regarding the way a proposition presents a picture of the

196 Ibid., §4.031.
197 Example adapted from Fann, Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy: 19-20.
198 Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus: §5.
199 Ibid., "Preface".
world: ‘sense,’ ‘senseless,’ and ‘nonsense.’ It might be tempting to conflate ‘senseless’ and ‘nonsense,’ as we use them relatively interchangeably in our everyday language – yet remember that Wittgenstein was striving for absolute simplicity, so we should at the very least pause to ask ourselves whether or not Wittgenstein would use superfluous terms in his ‘precise, crystalline and pure’ analysis. We must be careful not to think of ‘nonsense’ in the colloquial usage of the term, namely that a ‘nonsensical statement’ is false. Something which is purported to be a proposition—a group of words that appear to be a proposition—but is incapable of being assigned a truth value is described as ‘nonsense,’ which precludes ‘nonsense’ being false, since being false is to have a truth value.

Many of the early readers and commentators on the Tractatus took it for granted that ‘senseless’ and ‘nonsense’ were used synonymously by Wittgenstein. K. T. Fann argues that this misunderstanding was especially apparent in the earliest translations of the work where the original German unnsinnig and sinnlos were both translated as ‘senseless.’ Rudolph Carnap as well, in regards to the effects of conflating these two terms, writes in his “Autobiography” that earlier, when we were reading Wittgenstein’s [Tractatus] in the [Vienna] Circle, I had erroneously believed that his attitude toward metaphysics was similar to ours. I had not paid sufficient attention to the statements in his book about the mystical, because his feelings and thoughts in this area were too divergent from mine. Only personal contact with him helped me to see more clearly his attitude at this point.202 This remark by Carnap implicitly points to a key difference in the terms, namely how they relate to, for example, metaphysics, which, argues Wittgenstein, is outside of ‘the empirical.’ To glean, then, what Wittgenstein means by ‘sense,’ ‘senseless,’ and ‘nonsense’ we must return

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201 Fann, Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy: 25.
again to the *Tractatus*, particularly Wittgenstein’s delineation of what can be ‘said’ versus what can only be ‘shown.’

Given what has been said thus far about Wittgenstein’s conception of language, we may summarize Wittgenstein’s usage of the word ‘language’ in the *Tractatus* as synonymous with ‘descriptive language’: which is to say as Wittgenstein does that “the totality of true propositions is the totality of the natural sciences”\(^{204}\) and “what can be said [are] the propositions of natural science.”\(^{205}\) For the early Wittgenstein language *as such* only describes ‘the world.’ What then are we to make of Wittgenstein’s remark that the right method of philosophy, as a linguistic project, would be “to say nothing except what can be said, *i.e.* the propositions of natural science, *i.e.* something that has nothing to do with philosophy: and then always, when someone else wished to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had given no meaning to certain signs in his propositions,”\(^ {206}\) given the remarks above from Carnap concerning his erroneous assumption that Wittgenstein disdained metaphysics?

While my paper does not concern metaphysics *per se*, reconciling the above statement about metaphysics by the early Wittgenstein is of primary importance for understanding ‘sense,’ ‘senselessness,’ and ‘nonsense,’ which in turn are important for understanding Wittgenstein’s early conception of language and its relationship to the world.\(^ {207}\) Moreover, this early conception is important for understanding how the later Wittgenstein avoids viewing the natural sciences as some privileged way of looking at the world, something which will be discussed in more detail in section 5 of this chapter. In order to understand these three terms and how they related to the

\(^{204}\) Ibid., §4.11.

\(^{205}\) Ibid., §6.53. Emphasis mine.

\(^{206}\) Ibid.

\(^{207}\) A summary of the following discussion of ‘saying’, ‘showing’, ‘sense’, ‘senselessness’, and ‘nonsense’ is given visually by Fig. 3.
world, one must also understand that the word ‘say’ (as used in the *Tractatus* quotation above) is being used in a technical sense by Wittgenstein, and should be understood alongside his usage of the verb ‘show,’ as where Wittgenstein writes that “there is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical.”\(^{208}\) The account of language *as such* given in the *Tractatus* is concerned only with describing *how* the world is. Wittgenstein argues that “objects I can only *name*. Signs represent them. I can only *speak of* them. I cannot *assert them*. A proposition can only *say how* a thing is, not *what* it is.”\(^{209}\) However, since the things we can ‘speak’ of are ‘propositions of natural science,’ i.e. ‘empirical propositions’ that can be either true or false based on a comparison with the actual world, where then does that leave ‘propositions’ of metaphysics, ethics, philosophy, culture, and even *logic*? Such propositions cannot be true or false by comparison with the actual world for they are either normative claims (ethics, culture, value, etc.), and therefore apart from ‘descriptive’ language, or they are ‘outside’ of the empirical world altogether (as is the case with logic and metaphysics).

Does Wittgenstein, then, abandon these things ‘of which we cannot speak”? No, rather he introduces the notion of ‘showing,’ for when “philosophy limits the disputable sphere of natural science”\(^{210}\) it “will signify what cannot be said, by showing clearly what can be said.”\(^{211}\) In other words, if only those propositions that can be true or false by comparison to the world have a ‘sense’ (as we saw earlier), what, then, are we to make of the ‘proposition’ that ‘all propositions can be true or false’? Would not such a ‘proposition’ be apart from empirical comparison to ‘the world’? And yet such ‘propositions’ about logic must be necessary for the rest of propositions to

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\(^{209}\) Ibid., §3.221.

\(^{210}\) Ibid., §4.113.

\(^{211}\) Ibid., § 4.115.
have ‘senses!’ This, moreover, is true of the world itself, for given that “propositions can express nothing of what is higher” but can only describe the constituent parts of the world (which is to say that those parts are within the world), Wittgenstein argues 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. If there is a value which is of value, it must lie outside all happening and being-so. For all happening and being-so is accidental. What makes it non-accidental cannot lie in the world, for otherwise this would again be accidental. It must lie outside the world.

So, then, we arrive at Wittgenstein’s special account of those ‘propositions’ which have no ‘sense,’ are ‘inexpressible,’ yet ‘show themselves’ and ‘are the mystical.’ This account of propositions (which are part of language) is bound to ‘sense,’ ‘senseless,’ and ‘nonsense,’ in that senseless or nonsensical propositions can only be ‘shown’ to be true, but their meaning, when ‘said,’ is unable to give us a picture of the world which is comparable to the world, as they either address the limit of the world or the world viewed as a whole (see figure 2.2 below). We already have discussed Wittgenstein’s notion of ‘sense’ as the descriptive function of language, what then does Wittgenstein view as ‘senselessness’? Toward the end of the Tractatus Wittgenstein writes that

my propositions are elucidatory in this way: he who understands me finally recognizes them as senseless, when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it.) He must surmount these propositions; then he sees the world rightly.

What Wittgenstein is ‘showing’ us here is that the Tractatus itself has no ‘sense’; the propositions contained in it cannot be given a truth value through comparison to the empirical

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214 Ibid., §6.41.

215 Ibid., §6.522.

216 Ibid., §6.54. Emphasis mine.
world. More specifically, the *Tractatus* contains statements about ‘the limits of language,’ which here are ‘senseless.’ ‘Propositions’ about the limits, foundations, logic, etc., of language are ‘senseless,’ but what about ‘nonsense’? ‘Nonsense’ describes ‘whereof we cannot speak,’ propositions of the type which lie outside the empirical world; thus, writes Wittgenstein, “the solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies outside space and time (it is not problems of natural science which have to be solved).” This, to bring the work full circle, is stated explicitly by Wittgenstein in his preface to the *Tractatus* when he says that “the limit can, therefore, only be drawn in language and what lies on the other side of the limit will be simply nonsense.” This ‘limit’ is illustrated in figure 2.2:

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Figure 2.2: The relationship between language and world, on a meta-level, can be illustrated by (I) and (II) above. As in figure 2.1, the reciprocity of the *Tractatus*’ picture of language is apparent in the relationship between the limits of language and the limits of ‘the world.’ Such a limit is important for understanding the early Wittgenstein’s views on normative language (e.g. ethics, religion, culture, etc.).

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217 Ibid., §5.6.
218 In a related vein, in an entry in the *Notebooks* dated May 28, 1915 Wittgenstein writes: “Is it a tautology to say: *Language consists of propositions?* It seems it is.” Given our discussion of tautologies above, this quote also sheds light onto the ‘ladder’ metaphor used earlier by Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914-16*: 52e.
220 Ibid., §6.4312.
221 Ibid., "Preface".
222 Adapted from Fann, *Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy*: 24.
This summary of Wittgenstein’s early philosophy as contained in the *Tractatus* is significant for the overall project of this thesis in two ways. First, understanding the *Tractatus* is a necessary step in understanding the later philosophy of Wittgenstein. This will be elaborated upon later in this chapter. Second, the account just given sheds light onto some overall attitudes which remain common throughout Wittgenstein’s work, namely the importance of those things, to use the terminology of the *Tractatus*, ‘outside of language’ like culture, religion, and value. For Wittgenstein these types of things were of primary importance, which is evident in Wittgenstein’s reply to Bertrand Russell’s initial comments on the *Tractatus*:

> Now I am afraid you haven’t really got hold of my main contention, to which the whole business of logical propositions is only corollary. The main point is the theory of what can be expressed by propositions—i.e. by language…and what cannot be expressed by propositions, but only shown; which I believe, is the cardinal problem of philosophy.²²³

From this we see that Wittgenstein saw a connection of some sort between language and the things which can only be ‘shown’ (e.g. culture, value, and religion). This connection, I argue, is something which concerned Wittgenstein throughout his life, and is particularly useful as a comparative example of how Wittgenstein’s views change from his early thought to his later thought.²²⁴ Particularly, as I will show in Section 3 of this chapter, the development of Wittgenstein’s outlook on religion and culture paralleled his outlook on language. However, for now let us examine a key event which lead to a transition in Wittgenstein’s thought, namely his hiatus from philosophy from 1921 to circa 1929.

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²²⁴ As will be shown below, Wittgenstein’s solutions to the ‘problems’ of religion, culture, etc., are always linguistic (in both the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*); however, in his later thought there are no strict limits drawn between what can be said and what can be shown, but rather they are merely differing types of language-games.
3.3 The Transitional Period

The transition from the *Tractatus* to the *Investigations* is tied to events in Wittgenstein's life more than one might initially assume. The *Tractatus* (first published in 1921), though it expressed the culmination of his earlier period of thought, also marked the beginning of the end to his earlier period of thought. While the publication of the contents of his early philosophy might be an odd place to mark the ‘end’ of the earlier period of his thought, it makes more sense if one knows a bit about the timeline of Wittgenstein’s life just before and at this point. Accordingly, I shall give a brief sketch of such a timeline then elaborate on three key events below: first, Wittgenstein’s journey into isolation in the fjords of Norway in 1913, which I argue is representative of his early philosophy; second, Wittgenstein’s experiences as a soldier during World War I which both forced him to interact with other soldiers of various upbringings and also marked a religious turn of his philosophy; and third, Wittgenstein’s brief career as a primary school teacher in rural Austria in the early 1920s, which I argue is representative of why Wittgenstein transitioned away from the theories of language presented in the *Tractatus*. In contrasting these three events in Wittgenstein’s life, I argue, we can gain some insight into how Wittgenstein came to realize the limitations of the *Tractatus*’ purely *a priori* methods.²²⁵

In October of 1913 Wittgenstein departed for an isolated corner of Norway to work on the problems of logic left over from Bertrand Russell.²²⁶ He stayed there until around June of 1914.²²⁷ Later that year, following the outbreak of World War I, Wittgenstein (who was a citizen of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) joined the Austro-Hungarian army. He was captured by Allied

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²²⁵ I should note here that I am omitting an important event between these two periods, namely Wittgenstein’s service in the Austro-Hungarian army. This is not because an account of Wittgenstein in the Great War would not be fruitful, but only because of time constraints. For an excellent account of the relevance of Wittgenstein’s experience in the War and how it influenced his thought, see Monk’s chapter on the subject.


²²⁷ Ibid., 95.
forces on November 3rd, 1918 and served time as a prisoner of war for the next nine months.\textsuperscript{228} As a prisoner of war Wittgenstein decided that after being released he would either become an elementary school teacher or a priest.\textsuperscript{229} In 1920 Wittgenstein became the former, and around that same time the \textit{Tractatus} was put forth for publication.\textsuperscript{230}

Three events, his isolation in Norway, World War I, and his brief career as an elementary school teacher, helped bring about the transition from Wittgenstein’s early thought to his later thought. All of this is not to say, however, that he cleanly or suddenly abandoned his earlier thought \textit{altogether}, for as K. T. Fann argues, “it is clear from the paper ‘Some Remarks on Logical Form’ [written in 1929] \ldots that he still subscribed to the basic doctrines of the \textit{Tractatus}.”\textsuperscript{231} However, “almost as soon as he had sent it off to be printed he disowned it as worthless.”\textsuperscript{232} Fann argues, moreover, that this ‘disownment’ was due to the fact that the “new ideas which lead to the \textit{Philosophical Investigations} were forming in his mind.”\textsuperscript{233} But what lead to these ideas—to the change of thought found in the \textit{Investigations}?

In order to answer this question, it is helpful to skip ahead for the time being to make a few prefatory remarks about the \textit{Investigations}. Whereas the \textit{Tractatus} used \textit{a priori} methodology to arrive at \textit{a priori} answers to the foundational questions of logic and language, the \textit{Investigations} focuses on the \textit{a posteriori}—the ‘usage’ of language by speakers in the world.\textsuperscript{234} Wittgenstein, in his preface to the \textit{Investigations}, writes that the thoughts contained in this work “could be seen in the right light only by contrast with and against the background of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{228} Ibid., 161.
\item \textsuperscript{229} Ibid., 158-59.
\item \textsuperscript{230} Ibid., 193.
\item \textsuperscript{231} Fann, \textit{Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy}: 41.
\item \textsuperscript{232} Monk, \textit{Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius}: 272-73.
\item \textsuperscript{233} Fann, \textit{Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy}: 41, fn. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{234} Wittgenstein, \textit{Philosophical Investigations}: §43e.
\end{itemize}
my older way of thinking [i.e. the *Tractatus*].”\(^{235}\) It is a mistake, then, if we are to move toward an account of Wittgenstein’s later thought, to abandon the *Tractatus*’ *a priori* methodology and statements, but rather with this earlier work in sight we should move to the *a posteriori* outlook contained in the *Investigations*. Indeed, the seeds of such an *a posteriori* outlook can be seen in the *Tractatus*, particularly in section 6.211 where Wittgenstein writes, parenthetically, that “in philosophy the question ‘Why do we really use that word, that proposition?’ constantly leads to valuable results.”\(^{236}\) This last statement seems somewhat paradoxical, given that Wittgenstein repeatedly emphasized ‘the logical’ over ‘the empirical.’ However, remember that Wittgenstein doesn’t completely dismiss the ‘empirical’ (including ‘results’ and ‘usage’), but it is simply ‘not the focus’ of his analysis.

Why, then, the shift in methodology? As I mentioned earlier, the reason can be found in what occurred between the years of 1913 and 1929. According to an account from midway through this period by one of the earliest translators of the *Tractatus* and companion to Wittgenstein, Frank Ramsey, Wittgenstein “[said] he himself will do nothing more [in philosophy], not because he is bored, but because his mind is no longer flexible. He says no one can do more than 5 or 10 years work at philosophy. (His [*Tractatus*] took 7).”\(^{237}\) What, then, caused Wittgenstein to start philosophizing again after a hiatus from philosophy following the publishing of the *Tractatus*, and why did he almost immediately being to change his point of view from the one contained in the *Tractatus*? To answer this question, let us look more deeply at the three events listed earlier, beginning with Norway.

In October of 1913 Wittgenstein moved from Trinity College in England to the small

\(^{235}\) Ibid., "Preface".

\(^{236}\) Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*: §6.211.

fjord village of Skjolden in northern Norway. This was because, in the words of Ray Monk, “what Wittgenstein needed (or felt he needed) in 1913 was solitude.” Though not completely alone (he made a few acquaintances in the village), he was away from ‘society.’ Wittgenstein’s plan was to isolate himself in Norway and devote himself to the problems of logic left over from Russell and Frege. The countryside around Skjolden provided him with the same ‘crystalline purity’ which is reflected in the *Tractatus*: in Skjolden he was free from the kind of ‘bourgeois’ and ‘superficial’ relationships imposed on him at Cambridge; free instead to go for long, solitary walks in the countryside. It was here, moreover, where Wittgenstein did much of the work contained in the *Tractatus*.

In 1914, only a few weeks after returning from Norway to Britain, and barely following the outbreak of World War I, Wittgenstein volunteered for the Austro-Hungarian armed forces. His reasons for joining the war reveal something about his character prior to the war: an intense desire to take something difficult upon himself and to do something other than purely intellectual work. This reason, however, would soon change. In October of 1914 he read a book which shook him to his core: Tolstoy’s *Gospel in Brief*. He was ‘completely converted’ to the side of religion – which is of note, if we are to believe Bertrand Russell’s account of Wittgenstein before the war (including his trip to Norway) that Wittgenstein was more of an atheist than

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238 Ibid., 93.
239 Ibid.
240 Ibid., 93-94.
241 Ibid., 94.
242 Ibid., 112.
243 Ibid., 111.
244 Ibid., 115-16.
245 Ibid., 116.
Russell himself, an avowed atheist. This change of attitude about religion, I argue, is indicative of some of the metaphysical and religious overtones eventually published in the *Tractatus*, as well as Wittgenstein’s subsequent attitudes toward the usages of language as bound to a particular form of life.

Another important aspect of Wittgenstein’s military service during World War I was that it was somewhat of a shock to Wittgenstein, especially as opposed to the serene isolation he found in Norway. He was ‘forced into the muck’ of the common men of his military unit and was often bullied or simply ignored. This antithesis of isolation—the cramped trenches and barracks of one of the bloodiest wars in European history—is important for understanding the transition from the theory of language contained within the *Tractatus* to that of the *Investigations*. Such cramped and crowded conditions forced Wittgenstein to interact with other individuals of differing backgrounds than his own aristocratic and academic upbringing, which also forced him to recognize the multitude of ways that language, action, and culture interact with one another. Such a multitude of differing interactions provided a stark contrast to the crystalline account of language found in Wittgenstein’s early thought.

Also contrast the isolation of Norway with his brief career as a primary school teacher in rural Austria. In 1920, following his service, capture, and release during the war, Wittgenstein wrote to Bertrand Russell to announce that he was “to be an elementary-school teacher in a tiny village called Trattenbach. It’s in the mountains, about four hours’ journey south of Vienna.”

This village, writes Monk, “was small and poor. Those of its villagers who had jobs were

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246 Ibid.
247 This last point will be discussed in the next section of this chapter
249 Ibid., 193.
employed either at the local textile factory or in the neighbouring farms.”

Wittgenstein, for his part, requested such a place: after being offered a position in a larger town closer to Vienna, and upon seeing that town had a park with a fountain Wittgenstein remarked: “That is not for me, I want an entirely rural affair.” Perhaps Wittgenstein hoped to arrive at a place similar to the isolated and pristine beauty of Skjolden, and indeed Wittgenstein initially remarked that he had “found exactly the sort of place he had in mind.” yet this village in the mountains was far different than its Norwegian counterpart. Here, Wittgenstein soon realized, he actually had to interact with people – these interactions tending to highlight “the already obvious differences between Wittgenstein and the villagers.” A mutual distrust developed, after a time, between the villagers and Wittgenstein: Wittgenstein describing them as “uniquely despicable” in a letter to Russell. The villagers, in turn, were resentful of this “aristocratic and eccentric stranger” who was a brutal disciplinarian to many of their children. This last bit, though sad, is of interest to us here, for Wittgenstein’s penchant for punishing students not only for misbehaving but for ‘misunderstanding’ his lessons, particularly mathematics, is reflective of the problems facing his lofty, isolated, ‘crystalline,’ and purely logical theories when put to work in the ‘real’ world. In sum, writes K.T. Fann:

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250 Ibid.
251 Ibid.
252 Ibid.
253 Ibid.
256 Ibid.
257 Ibid.
The years Wittgenstein spent in teaching elementary-school children may be considered the most decisive factor in shaping of his later philosophy. The reality of teaching children how to read, write, calculate, etc….must have contributed to Wittgenstein’s later pragmatic view of language. How else does one find out whether a child knows the meaning of a word or not except by observing how the child \textit{uses} the word? And, doesn’t the explanation of the meaning of a word to children consist precisely in teaching them to \textit{use} the word?\footnote{Fann, \textit{Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy}: 43.}

This ‘meaning as usage’ brings us to the Wittgenstein’s later philosophy of language as principally contained in the posthumously published \textit{Philosophical Investigations}.

3.4 The \textit{Philosophical Investigations} and Wittgenstein’s Later Philosophy

The major difference between Wittgenstein’s later philosophy of language and his early philosophy of language is in his inclusion of the \textit{social} aspect of language rather than, as was the case in the \textit{Tractatus}, isolating ‘language’ and ‘the world’ from those people and things which actually inhabit these spaces. Wittgenstein’s later philosophy of language can be characterized in four ways: first, Wittgenstein’s transition from the ‘picture theory’ of meaning from the \textit{Tractatus} to ‘meaning as usage’; second, Wittgenstein’s notion of language as consisting of “language-games”; third, Wittgenstein’s concept of “forms of life”; fourth and lastly, Wittgenstein’s arguments against “private languages.” In this section I shall focus on ‘meaning as usage’ and ‘language-games,’ as they are more readily apparent from what we have discussed thus far. ‘Forms of life’ will be addressed in the next section of this chapter. Wittgenstein’s arguments against ‘private languages’ will be addressed primarily in this section, but also in section 5. All of these points are interrelated and overlap with one another, so an account of one will necessarily bleed over onto the others. This interrelatedness summarily means three things: first, the later Wittgenstein views language as an intersubjective activity; second that this activity is a
part of a form of life; and third that these forms of life are embedded in various environments. It will become apparent from these points that language simply cannot be truly isolated from its surroundings if it is to be an actual language; it must be part of the activities, customs, habits and culture of the speakers, which in turn are engaged with the other surroundings (ecosystems, objects, etc.) of that culture and that language.

Such a shift from ‘isolated’ language to ‘interactive’ language is first evident in the way in which the Investigations is written. Rather than the stark propositions and hierarchical structure of the Tractatus, Wittgenstein tells us that he has written down the contents of the Investigations “as remarks, short paragraphs, sometimes in longer chains about the same subject, sometimes jumping, in a sudden change, from one area to another.” Moreover, this time Wittgenstein includes examples to illustrate his salient points. Wittgenstein, at the very beginning of the Investigations, quotes Augustine’s account of learning a language found in his Confessions: “When grown-ups named some object and at the same time turned towards it, I perceived this, and I grasped that the thing was signified by the sound they uttered, since they meant to point it out.” Following this quote Wittgenstein writes that

these words, it seems to me, give us a particular picture of the essence of human language. It is this: the 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.

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260 Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations: "Preface".

261 It should be noted from the outset that some Wittgenstein scholars are critical of Wittgenstein’s reading of Augustine. Laurence Goldstein, for example, writes that “St. Augustine is a convenient scapegoat” for Wittgenstein to critique and that the theory Wittgenstein attacks never occurs in Augustine’s writings. In the same breath, however, Goldstein acknowledges that Wittgenstein uses Augustine as a counterpart to his earlier thought as contained in the Tractatus (See: Goldstein, Queer and Clear Thinking: Wittgenstein’s Development and His Relevance to Modern Thought: 40.). Here I will not differ, for it is irrelevant to my overall analysis where the ostensive definition theory of language originally takes place, but only that it stands as a foil for Wittgenstein’s later thought.

262 Augustine, Confessions, I. 8, qtd. in Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations: §1e.

263 Ibid.
This, we should note, is precisely the picture of language contained in the *Tractatus*, and that which Wittgenstein abandoned later in the *Investigations*.

As a counterexample to this conception of language, Wittgenstein invites us to imagine that

I send someone shopping. I give him a slip of paper marked ‘five red apples’. He takes the slip to the shopkeeper, who opens the drawer marked ‘apples’; then he looks up the word ‘red’ in a chart and finds a colour sample next to it; then he says the series of elementary number-words – I assume that he knows them by heart – up to the word ‘five’, and for each number-word he takes an apple of the same colour as the sample out of the drawer. –It is in this and similar ways that one operates with words.  

Wittgenstein then asks the question “but how does he know where and how he is to look up the word ‘red’ and what he is to do with the word ‘five’?” answering “I assume that he acts as I have described. Explanations come to an end somewhere.” Wittgenstein then asks rhetorically “what is the meaning of the word ‘five’?” to which he responds that “no such thing was in question here, only how the word ‘five’ is used.”

All of the above, from Augustine to the question of usage, is contained in §1 of the *Investigations*. This first aphorism sets the stage for the entirety of our discussion concerning Wittgenstein’s later philosophy of language; and while I agree with Norman Malcolm’s assessment that “any attempt to summarize the *Investigations* would be neither successful nor useful,” I also agree with Malcolm that “each of the investigations in the book criss-crosses

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264 Ibid.
265 Ibid.
266 Ibid.
267 Ibid.
268 Ibid.
again and again with every other one,”270 thus rendering the totality of the work holographic and therefore present to us from the beginning of the work. This is to say, all of the things which will be discussed in the rest of this section of this thesis are contained in and extend beyond §1.

Given this, we can now continue our account of the shift from the ‘static’ sense of meaning in the *Tractatus* to ‘meaning as usage’ contained in the *Investigations*.

In §40 of the *Investigations* Wittgenstein writes:

> Let us first discuss the following point...that a word has no meaning if nothing corresponds to it. –It is important to note that it is a solecism to use the word ‘meaning’ to signify the thing that ‘corresponds’ to a word. That is to confound the meaning of a name with the bearer of the name. When Mr. N.N. dies, one says that the bearer of the name dies, not that the meaning dies. And it would be nonsensical to say this, for if the name ceased to have meaning, it would make no sense to say ‘Mr. N.N. is dead’.271

While we can, in some instances, *explain* the meaning of a word by pointing to its bearer in a given context,272 this is, as Goldstein explains, “a far cry from saying that the meaning of a name is its bearer,”273 this being tantamount to saying that ‘five apples always means five apples *from this shop*’ as in the example above, rather than ‘five apples’ potentially having other meanings depending on circumstances and contexts. In other words, even though *in some instances*, the *Tractatus* picture of language holds true, it does so, argues Wittgenstein, only in “narrowly circumscribed areas.”274

For an example of such an Augustinian circumscribed area, Wittgenstein asks to imagine a language “meant to serve for communication between a builder A and an assistant B.”275 In this language

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270 Ibid.
272 Ibid., §43e.
275 Ibid., §2e.
A is building with building stones: there are blocks, pillars, slabs and beams. B has to pass him the stone and to do so in the order in which A needs them. For this purpose they make use of a language consisting of the words ‘block’, ‘pillar’, ‘slab’, ‘beam’. A calls them out; B brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such-and-such a call. – Conceive of this as a complete primitive language.  

Now, argues Wittgenstein, to say that this Augustinian, ostensive meaning type of situation is the *only* type of situation in which language finds itself or is used is the same as saying that “playing a game consists in moving objects about on a surface according to certain rules,” to which Wittgenstein would reply that “you seem to be thinking of board-games, but they are not all the games there are. You can rectify your explanation by expressly restricting it to those games.”

The ‘Augustinian’ conception of language is accurate only in certain situations, and there is no universal situation as was assumed in the *Tractatus*. For even if we assume that the sole employment of the stonemasons A and B is to build with blocks, pillars, slabs, and beams, they could not possibly use *only* these terms to communicate in other aspects of their everyday life, or even in the case of a new set of circumstances on their job site (e.g. an accident). And, moreover, how did A and B initially learn their respective roles on the job site if they only had access to the same vocabulary of four words? In sum, writes K. T. Fann, “ostensive definition can always be misunderstood, it presupposes context and training.”

What, then, is our alternative to the ostensive ‘Augustinian’ conception of language? To this Wittgenstein answers that “for a *large* class of the employment of the world ‘meaning’ – though not for *all* – this word can be explained this way: the meaning of a word is its use in the language.” We have here Wittgenstein’s overall project in the *Investigations* presented to us,

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276 Ibid.
277 Ibid., §3e.
278 Ibid.
for even the word ‘language’ here already presupposes action. Indeed, Wittgenstein has us look again at the example of Builder A and Assistant B:

We can also think of the whole process of using words in [this situation] as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language. I will call these games ‘language-games’ and will sometimes speak of a primitive language as a language-game.

And the processes of naming the stone and of repeating words after someone might also be called language-games. Think of certain uses that are made of words in games like ring-a-ring-a-roses.

I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the activities into which it is woven, a ‘language-game’. ²⁸¹

These ‘language-games’ are immensely important for understanding Wittgenstein’s later philosophy of language, for “the word ‘language-game’ is used here to emphasize the fact that the speaking of a language is part of an activity, or a form of life.”²⁸²  Wittgenstein’s entire project in the *Investigations* emphasizes this ‘active’ form of language rather than the ‘passive’ found in the *Tractatus*.²⁸³ Even the examples Wittgenstein gives to clarify whether or not there can be different language-games within a language (e.g. Spanish or Manx) are always some manner of activity:

- Giving orders, and acting on them –
- Describing an object by its appearance, or by its measurements –
- Constructing an object from a description (a drawing) –
- Reporting an event –
- Speculating about the event –
- Forming and testing an hypothesis –
- Presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams –
- Making up a story; and reading one –
- Acting in a play –
- Singing in rounds –
- Guessing riddles –
- Cracking a joke; telling one –

²⁸¹ Ibid., §7e.
²⁸² Ibid., §23e.
Solving a problem in applied arithmetic –
Translating from one language to another –
Requesting, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying.\textsuperscript{284}

Wittgenstein’s point here is that one could speak a particular ‘language’ (e.g., Spanish or Manx), but each time you speak that language the words and sentences which are employed in the activities will be \textit{used} in different ways. For example, what is the difference between the sentences ‘Batman fought the Joker,’ ‘Muhammad Ali fought Joe Frazier,’ and ‘The Archangel Michael fought the Devil, Lucifer’? How do I know that the first is fictional, the second historical, and the third part of a religious mythos? Would an English speaker born two hundred years ago be able to make such a distinction if we presented them with these three statements?

The answer to both questions involves what Wittgenstein calls our “agreement not in opinions, but rather in form of life”\textsuperscript{285}; i.e., we know which of these sentences is historical, fictional, and religious/mythical based on our shared background of education, culture, upbringing, surroundings, location, etc.

Thusly, in order to fully understand Wittgenstein’s later view of language, we must try to understand these ‘backgrounds’ – these ‘forms of life’.\textsuperscript{286} This term, ‘form of life,’ is only used explicitly three times in the entirety of the \textit{Investigations}, as well as being mentioned twice in \textit{Philosophy of Psychology – A Fragment}.\textsuperscript{287} All the instances of ‘forms of life’ by Wittgenstein in these two texts are as follows: “to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life”\textsuperscript{288};

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{284} Wittgenstein, \textit{Philosophical Investigations}: §23e.
\item \textsuperscript{285} Ibid., §241e.
\item \textsuperscript{286} “One could hardly place too much stress on the importance of this notion in Wittgenstein’s thought.” Malcolm, "Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations," 203.
\item \textsuperscript{287} A work from the same time period as the Investigations which was formerly (pre-2009) classified as ‘Part II’ of the Investigations due to what the editors of the 2009 edition saw as ambiguities in Wittgenstein’s notes on whether or not the remarks which make up Philosophy of Psychology was to be included for publishing with the remarks contained in the Philosophical Investigations. See: Wittgenstein, \textit{Philosophical Investigations}: xxi.
\item \textsuperscript{288} Ibid., §19e.
\end{itemize}
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“the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life”\textsuperscript{289}; “what is true or false is what human beings say; and it is in their language that human beings agree . . . this is agreement not in opinions, but rather in form of life”\textsuperscript{290}; “only those who have mastered the use of a language [can hope] . . . that is to say, the manifestations of hope are modifications of this complicated form of life”\textsuperscript{291}; and lastly, in regards to ‘objective certainty,’ Wittgenstein writes that “what has to be accepted, the given, is – one might say – forms of life.”\textsuperscript{292} All of these instances, when taken together, point to two things: 1) the general point that language for the later Wittgenstein is inseparable from these ‘forms of life,’ and 2) the reason for this inseparability of language from ‘lived activity’ is that there must be some criteria for ‘correct’ vs. ‘incorrect’ usage of a word or sentence in a language-game.

In his article on the \textit{Investigations}, the distinguished philosophy professor and close friend to Wittgenstein, Norman Malcom, writes in reference to the last usage of the term “forms of life that it, embodied in language-games, teaches us what justification is.”\textsuperscript{293} Forms of life teach us both what justification for the usage of a word is, as well as the correct justifications in our particular forms of life. This, I argue, is related to another comment by Wittgenstein in the \textit{Investigations} where he writes that “shared human behavior is the system of reference by means of which we interpret [a] language.”\textsuperscript{294} This does not mean, however, that only humans have forms of life, just that the only form of life that human beings can directly experience are their own forms of life. Wittgenstein writes that “if a lion could speak we wouldn’t be able to

\textsuperscript{289} Ibid., §23e.
\textsuperscript{290} Ibid., §241e.
\textsuperscript{292} Ibid., §345e.
\textsuperscript{293} Malcolm, "Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations," 203.
\textsuperscript{294} Wittgenstein, \textit{Philosophical Investigations}: §206e.
understand it,” meaning that human beings and lions possess different forms of life; training a lion to utter English words would not get us any further to linguistically understanding the lion because the lion does not have the same form of life as a human being. Wittgenstein has similar things to say about dogs and cats. It is also helpful to note that Wittgenstein’s concept of ‘form of life’ is, at least in the case of humans, always tied to the concept of ‘culture.’ By this I mean that there can be multiple forms of life within a particular culture, but also multiple cultures at play in a form of life, yet never one without the other. In this way the two terms are always engaged with one another.

Other than being a lived activity, for language to be capable of communication it must also be capable of being interpreted correctly. To explain this let us look to the Wittgenstein scholar Leonard Linksy’s account of how ‘forms of life’ provide us with criteria of correct usage in language-games:

Suppose we are asked why we call a certain activity ‘giving an order.’ Perhaps we are asked this question because certain features of this activity were unnoticed. We might then point them out in explaining our use of words. If this process is carried out long enough, we may finally reach the point at which we say, ‘But this is the way our language is used.’ And in doing so we appeal to customs and uses of our language which make the expression ‘to give an order’ apply in just this case. But now imagine the background of custom removed, and you will see that the possibility of distinguishing between a correct and an incorrect use of words has disappeared as well.

Forms of life, then, are shared behavior, shared networks of customs, values, habits, and activities which help frame a space of context for our words and language-games.

Here we have arrived at the nexus of the overall argument of this thesis and

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295 Wittgenstein, "Philosophy of Psychology -- A Fragment," §327
297 Ibid., §647.
299 See also: Nicholas F. Gier, "Wittgenstein and Forms of Life," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 10, no. 3 (1980).
Wittgenstein’s later philosophy of language, namely Wittgenstein’s arguments against a ‘private’ language, i.e. a language isolated from other speakers. By ‘isolated from other speakers’ I do not mean, e.g., a monolingual speaker of Cantonese on vacation by himself or herself in Wales, in which the speaker of Cantonese would still have originally been taught Cantonese by others in his or her homeland, but rather a speaker of a ‘language’ that is created without culture, upbringing, etc.: a language that “not merely is not but cannot be understood by anyone other than the speaker.”300 This is an important distinction, for my argument is that language simply cannot be truly isolated from its surroundings if it is to be an actual language; it must be part of the activities, customs, habits and culture of the speakers, which in turn are intersubjectively engaged with the other surrounding biophysical environment of that culture and that language.

To begin his investigations into ‘private languages’, in §243 of the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein writes:

> is it … conceivable that there be a language in which a person could write down or give voice to his inner experiences – his feelings, moods, and so on – for his own use? – Well, can’t we do so in our ordinary language? – But that is not what I mean. The words of this language are to refer to what only the speaker can know – to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language.301

It is fruitful here to draw a distinction between ‘personal’ and ‘private.’ The term ‘personal’ applies to the experiences, whether inner or outer, that happen to us. ‘Private,’ on the other hand, is conceived of in the terms outlined by Wittgenstein above: as immediate, private, and unable to be expressed to others; hermetically sealed inside one’s mind, if you will.

The course Wittgenstein takes to refute such a language, or even the possibility of it, begins with the question of whether or not the phrase ‘which only I myself can understand’ can

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even “be given a substantial meaning to begin with.”302 Wittgenstein ponders the question “how do words refer to sensations?”303 To this Wittgenstein would have us consider how a child could learn the meaning (usage) of a sensation-word (e.g. ‘pain’). The first way a child expresses pain is through crying; only after being introduced to the word ‘pain’ and other such pain-related words by a consoling adult does the child learn “new pain-behavior.”304 But “in what sense are my sensations private?”305 Or, to follow our example of ‘pain,’ can another person know that I am really in pain?306

Wittgenstein answers that “in one way this [question] is false, and in another nonsense.”307 It is false in the sense that many other people do know (in the everyday sense of the word) that I am in pain.308 It is nonsense in that to use the word know in the statement ‘I know I am in pain’ is senseless in all but a very few circumstances.309 ‘I know I am in pain’ means ‘I am in pain’ and it also shows that “it makes sense to say about other people that they doubt whether I am in pain; but not to say it about myself.”310 In other words, Wittgenstein is not referring to the immediacy of private experience, but to the intermediacy of language between such an experience and my account of it to others. I do not immediately have a concept of pain, only the experience of pain itself. The concept of pain is prepared and given to me by a

303 Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations: §244e.
304 Ibid.
305 Ibid., §246e.
306 I.e. ‘only I can really know.’
307 Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations: §246e.
308 E.g. they would see me wince, cry, or otherwise act on the pain.
309 For example, imagine that you are at physician’s office and they were to tell you that you were not actually in pain, that when your leg was hurting it was only a psychosomatic hallucination brought about through sympathy for your spouse who had recently been in a car wreck. Perhaps you would reply: ‘But doctor, I know that I am in pain.’
310 Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations: §246e.
specific language-game and form of life.

After examining this notion of privacy (as such), Wittgenstein turns to whether we could have a private language at all. We could not, as it turns out, arrive at a conception of a private language by thinking in terms of our actual languages, for in my language “my words for sensations [are] tied up with my natural expressions of sensation.”\textsuperscript{311} Wittgenstein therefore has us once again examine a child learning the usage of pain, only this time asks us to assume both that “human beings did not manifest their pains (did not groan, grimace, etc.),”\textsuperscript{312} and that a child-genius \textit{invented} a name for his pain. To this Wittgenstein responds: “When one says ‘He gave a name to his sensation,’ one forgets that much must be prepared in the language for mere naming to make sense. And if we speak of someone’s giving a name to a pain, the grammar of the word ‘pain’ is what has been prepared here;\textsuperscript{313} it indicates the post where the new word is stationed.”\textsuperscript{314}

Having arrived at the relationship between grammar (criteria for correct usage) and meaning in a private language, Wittgenstein invites us to imagine an instance in which one keeps a diary about the recurrence of a certain sensation. To this end I associate it with the sign ‘S’ and write this sign in a calendar for every day on which I have the sensation. – I first want to observe that a definition of the sign cannot be formulated. – But all the same, I can give one to myself as a kind of ostensive definition! – How? Can I point to the sensation? – Not in the ordinary sense. But I speak, or write the sign down, and at the same time I concentrate my attention on the sensation – and so, as it were, point to it inwardly. – But what is the ceremony for? For that is all it seems to be! A definition serves to lay down the meaning of a sign, doesn’t it? – Well, that is done precisely by concentrating my attention; for in this way I commit to memory the connection between the sign and the sensation. – But ‘I commit to memory’ can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connection \textit{correctly} in the future. But in the present

\textsuperscript{311} Ibid., §256e.
\textsuperscript{312} Ibid., §257e.
\textsuperscript{313} I.e. ostensive definitions make no sense outside of their language game (See the discussion of meaning-as-usage vs. static meaning earlier in this chapter).
\textsuperscript{314} Wittgenstein, \textit{Philosophical Investigations}: §257e.
Thusly we see two overlapping objections Wittgenstein has with this notion of a private sign ‘S’ standing in reference/description/definition to some inner (private) sensation/experience. First, there is the problem of memory: i.e. remembering incorrectly the relationship between the sensation and the sign in the future. Secondly there is no ‘criterion of correctness’ in a private language; no grammar for us to reference for a correct usage of the sign.

Language for the later Wittgenstein is necessarily an interpersonal activity. When you and I speak to one another, when you read the words on this page, context must be taken into consideration. And what is context? Context, for Wittgenstein, is who we are, where we are, when we are, and what we are doing: our shared forms of life. Context, having been ignored completely in the Tractatus is now the prime focus of the Investigations. This, I argue, is because Wittgenstein realized the virtually infinite varieties of ways that words, sentences, and expressions can be used by speakers of a language. And, as we saw above, these ‘usages’ will be judged as correct if they conform to the intersubjective criteria of usage (grammar). But, it should be noted, language is not only influenced by forms of life. For Wittgenstein, our linguistic inheritance will also affect the form of life and the way I act: “to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life.”

This co-influential nature of language and form of life is just as evident in another text from the same time period as the Investigations, Wittgenstein’s On Certainty. Focusing once more on childhood education as a reservoir for descriptions of language, Wittgenstein writes that

[a] child learns to believe a host of things. I.e. it learns to act according to these beliefs. Bit by bit there forms a system of what is believed, and in that system some things stand

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315 Ibid., §258e.
316 Ibid., §19e.
unshakeably fast and some are more or less liable to shift. What stands fast does so, not because it is intrinsically obvious or convincing; it is rather held fast by what lies around it.\textsuperscript{317} Given what was written by Wittgenstein in the *Investigations* about a child’s education, I do not think it a stretch to assume that these ‘beliefs’ are shaped linguistically, both in the sense of the spoken language and the form of life bound to such a language. These systems, moreover, necessarily lead to action, for “we can see from their actions that they believe certain things definitely, whether they express this belief or not.”\textsuperscript{318}

So, if forms of life influence language, and languages influence forms of life, it seems that it is necessary to understand what exactly a ‘form of life’ entails if we are to understand the later Wittgenstein’s account of language.

3.5 Culture: Forms of Life within Communities of Life

While Wittgenstein mentions the ‘human form of life,’\textsuperscript{319} it is a misstep to assume that there is only this broad, universal ‘human’ form of life. To understand the amazing variety of language-games one must understand how those ‘players’ of a particular language-game behave and act—their particular form of life—which would also be bound to their intersubjective biophysical surroundings as well.

Here I am careful to use both ‘intersubjective’ and ‘biophysical’ to emphasize two things. First, while Wittgenstein has been accused in the past of anthropocentrism toward non-human


\textsuperscript{318} Ibid., §248e.

\textsuperscript{319} Wittgenstein, "Philosophy of Psychology -- A Fragment," §1e.
subjects, and also while much of his later philosophy focuses on the human linguistic phenomena, he clearly does not see there being some anthropocentric hierarchy based on the possession of language. On numerous occasions Wittgenstein used non-human subjects as ways to refute common conceptions of language. A short example will illustrate this, namely §357 of the Philosophical Investigations where Wittgenstein writes that “we do not say that possibly a dog talks to itself. Is that because we are so minutely acquainted with its mind? Well, one might say this: if one sees the behavior of a living being, one sees its mind.” However, writes Wittgenstein, “if a lion could speak we wouldn’t be able to understand it.” Wittgenstein’s focus on human language, then, is only as a result of the necessity of a shared form of life for linguistic understanding. In short, Wittgenstein clearly views other living beings on equal ground as subjects—as beings that experience the world, have emotions, thoughts, etc.—to human beings.

This leads me to my second reason for choosing the terms ‘intersubjective’ and ‘biophysical,’ namely that Wittgenstein sees these subjects as bound together in a “community of life” with one another. One cannot easily isolate, e.g., an oak from those beings that interact with it, maintain a relationship with it, live beside it, etc. Though it is hard to say whether or not Wittgenstein would take issue with calling an oak a conscious subject, I would like to argue that it is still a subject in the sense that it reacts to those other beings which are in the communal relationship with it. I will speak more on this in Section 2.5; however, since Wittgenstein devotes much of his work to dealing human subjects, for now let us investigate the human form

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321 Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations: §357

322 Wittgenstein, "Philosophy of Psychology -- A Fragment," §327

of life as evident in religion, culture, and action.

There exists precedent for my argument: various scholars have looked at the ways in which particular cultures and religions influence the forms of life and language-games of the members of those cultures. Accordingly, I too shall look to both Wittgenstein’s writing on culture as well as his remarks on religion, because for Wittgenstein religion not easily distinguished from the culture within which it is embedded, nor is a given culture able to completely shake off the religious traditions within it. This, moreover, exemplifies Wittgenstein’s change in view from his early thought to his later thought, namely that there is no strict delineation between what can be said and what can be shown; only that there are differing forms of life and language-games. Though there are differing language-games, there is no meta-level hierarchy as given in the *Tractatus*.

For my account of culture and forms of life, I will follow William DeAngelis’ position on the role of cultural forms of life in framing language-games, as DeAngelis allows for not only a language’s human components and surroundings, but also non-human as well:

The idea here is that the surroundings – perhaps, the immediate situation, the cultural setting, or the form of human life within which an expression is made – play a very large role in bestowing meaning upon it. They are the ‘background against which’ it has its meaning. These, he suggests, are ‘inexpressible’. Wittgenstein does not say whether this background is inexpressible *in principle*. He may have thought this. More likely, he thought that the background of which he writes is so complicated and pervasive, so deeply embedded in the surroundings of any given expression, that its role is largely unconscious and unstated. If so, a natural consequence would be that an individual unfamiliar with the background against which certain expressions have their meaning – an individual from a wholly alien culture, for example – could find little or no meaning in these expressions and, hence, could not understand them.

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Here we see DeAngelis echoes several points made earlier in this Chapter concerning forms of life and their role in ‘framing’ language-games. However, DeAngelis makes the additional point that an individual from a *culture* differing from that of the language-game would not be able to understand that language. This culture, moreover, is identified as part of the *surroundings* of the language – which, I argue, is seen by Wittgenstein to include human components (human beings, culture, shared human activities, etc.), but also non-human, *biophysical* components (trees, rocks, bodies of water, dogs, lions, etc.).

For more on how these surroundings influence language and culture, let us turn again to *On Certainty* to read more of Wittgenstein’s thoughts on how children learn a language based on their surroundings: “When a child learns language it learns at the same time what is to be investigated and what not. When it learns that there is a cupboard in the room, it isn't taught to doubt whether what it sees later on is still a cupboard or only a kind of stage set.”[^327] This, for Wittgenstein, points out that such a language-game “proves its worth”[^328] in the actions of the child, namely that it teaches the child to act in an ‘acceptable way’ for his or her culture and its surroundings, to act as if “the stability of things [is] the norm.”[^329] This reinforces his remark in the *Philosophical Investigations* that “the given, is—one might say—*forms of life*.”[^330] Because this background, this ‘given,’ is bestowed upon a child by his culture through his learning of particular language-games, Wittgenstein wants to regard the human being, in the particular sense of a receptor of certain ways of thinking through the language-games of their culture, 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

[^328]: Ibid., §474e.
[^329]: Ibid., §473e.
[^330]: Wittgenstein, "Philosophy of Psychology -- A Fragment," §345e.
communication needs no apology from us. Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination.  

What Wittgenstein is getting at here is that certain background assumptions contained in language are “inexpressible (what I find mysterious and am not able to express), [and are] the background against which whatever I could express has its meaning.” For example, says Wittgenstein, “philosophers who say: ‘after death a timeless state will begin,’ or ‘at death a timeless state begins,’ and do not notice that they have used the words ‘after’ and ‘at’ and ‘begins’ in a temporal sense, that temporality is embedded in their grammar.” This example echoes another remark found in Wittgenstein’s Remarks on Frazer’s Golden Bough, where he notes that “a whole mythology is deposited in our language.”

Wittgenstein in On Certainty, after describing the child inheriting the background assumption of ‘the stability of things,’ writes that “this game proves its worth. That may be the cause of its being played, but it is not the ground.” But where do these ‘mythologies’ or ‘backgrounds’ come from – which is to ask, where is this ground? If man is, in regards to language, ‘in a primitive state,’ and “language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination,” then the answer must have something to do with the ‘surroundings’ spoken of earlier by Wittgenstein.

Indeed, this seems to be affirmed when Wittgenstein refers, in the Remarks, to “the
environment of a way of acting.”337 Wittgenstein explains this phrasing by writing that it was not a trivial reason, for really there can have been no reason, that prompted certain races of mankind to venerate the oak tree, but only the fact that they and the oak were united in a community of life, and thus that they arose together not by choice, but rather like the flea and the dog. (If fleas developed a rite, it would be based on the dog).338

And here, we have arrived at the ‘ground’ from which the ‘forms of life’ with their language-games originally sprang, namely the surroundings—the biophysical environment—in which humankind, with its actions, cultures, practices, thoughts, and language-games, has found itself in every day. With these various aspects of our ‘forms of life’ we find ourselves always in a ‘community of life’ with our surroundings – both human and non-human. This shows that Wittgenstein acknowledged that language developed alongside the particular intersubjective and biophysical environments within which the speakers of that language found themselves. The passage above, moreover, seems to imply that humanity, through our forms of life—including our language-games—also affects those environments. This, perhaps, is why Wittgenstein writes that he was “trying to say something that sounds like pragmatism,”339 namely that language-games, as bound to forms of life, necessarily lead to action in and on their environments. Rather than language being bound only to humanity it is bound to a ‘community of life’ with its surroundings.

3.6 Biophysical Communities of Life: Extending Wittgenstein’s Arguments

Thus far in this chapter I have sought to give an account of what Wittgenstein himself said regarding how language interacts with its intersubjective biophysical surroundings in a community of life. As noted above, however, what Wittgenstein saw as constituting a subject in

337 Wittgenstein, Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough: 16e.
339 Wittgenstein, On Certainty: §422e.
this intersubjective community typically involved humans and other large mammals. While he does include, e.g., the oak tree in the community of life, there is no evidence that he would include the oak as a subject in the same way that dogs, humans, or lions are subjects. This does not mean, however, that we cannot extend Wittgenstein’s argument to include other beings.

For Wittgenstein, dogs, humans, and lions are subjects in that they have unique forms of life which give meaning to their expressions. Wittgenstein is naturalistic in his view of how a human being learns a language and a form of life in that he views both language-games and forms of life as arising from the fact that ‘human beings are animals,’ meaning that language-games and forms of life often times do not arise out of conscious decisions, but out of something more basic to our species such as ‘instinct.’ Wittgenstein also argues against the possibility of a private language and for the view that language must be learned as part of a community. One might be tempted to argue that it is because trees cannot ‘speak’ that Wittgenstein would argue against including trees in the web of intersubjectivity which makes up a community of life, yet remember that Wittgenstein includes the oak tree in this community of life and also tells us that “if a lion could speak we wouldn’t be able to understand it.”

Lions, if we are to assign them the same attributes as Wittgenstein does to dogs and cats, are still capable of expressing themselves, though not in terms of any purely human language. We cannot understand them linguistically (in the sense of a specific human language such as English) both because we do not speak their language and also because even if we did we simply do not know what it is to be a lion or a dog. This may be true, and yet we share a broad form of life with them

340 Ibid., §475.
341 Wittgenstein, "Philosophy of Psychology -- A Fragment," §327
342 Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations: §357e
343 Ibid., §647.
by virtue of our shared lives with them in a community of life, just as we do with each other and
the oak tree. Remember that for Wittgenstein forms of life make up a larger community of life in
a particular environment. It is my argument that in terms of the community of life, and how this
gives meaning to our particular languages, one must take into account the intersubjectivity of all
members of a community of life rather than merely the human members. To understand the
meaning behind a language-game one must understand that beings in the world are not passive,
merely being named, but rather actively give meaning to what we say. They communicate with
us even if they do not speak in human language to us, and this communication is only possible
because they share, on a broad level, a form of life with us in our interconnected biophysical
communities of life.

While many examples can be called upon to illustrate this, I would now like to call upon
some particulars of the work of Chilean ecologist and philosopher Ricardo Rozzi as they
demonstrate well the intersubjective nature of communication within communities of life. In his
accounts of the Mapuche Amerindian groups of southern Chile and Argentina, Rozzi writes that
“this culture possesses a vital link with its environment and a capacity to communicate with the
birds and other living beings.”344 Even the ways the three main groups of the Mapuche define
themselves are bound to their biophysical surroundings: the Pewenche in particular define
themselves based upon the Monkey Puzzle tree (*Araucaria araucana*),345 with Pewen as the
name of the tree and *che* meaning ‘people.’346 Their language, moreover, “is called Mapudungun,

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345 Ibid., 24, 28.
the ‘language (dungan) of the land (mapu),’ which imitates the local sounds of the forest.”

To the Pewenche, the Monkey Puzzle tree (Pewen) has been key to their survival in the highlands of the southern Chilean Andes, with its seeds supplying both starch and “two essential amino acids, methionine and cysteine.” These amino acids are unique in that they contain sulfur, this sulfur originating from the volcanic systems of the area. This, argues Rozzi, demonstrates that “the Pewenche biophysical bodies, as well as their cultural identities are nurtured by these trophic, socio-ecological relationships, which can be understood from both the Pewenche and the scientific worldviews,” giving “profound meaning of the names Mapuche and Pewenche: this culture knows that the mapu (the land, including the volcanoes) provides the nutrients (e.g. sulfur) for the trees and the people.”

It is important to note that the Pewen are not passive in this relationship, in the sense that they are merely ‘sitting there’ as food repositories. The edible seeds of the tree fall from the ripe cones in March or April every year, though the exact date varies from year to year. This means that the Pewenche must ‘listen’ to the trees; i.e., they must communicate with them each year in order to receive the seeds. In this instance, the message is not linguistic in the sense of an auditory, written, or otherwise human-constructed message; no, in this instance the language being spoken is in essence biophysical, yet is still a message all the same. Moreover, some studies have surmised that if it weren’t for its relationship with the Pewenche and other

347 Ibid.
348 Ibid.
349 Ibid., 46.
351 Rozzi and Massardo, "The road to biocultural ethics," 246.
indigenous groups that have helped it thrive when otherwise it might have been ‘outcompeted’ by more broadleaved species.\textsuperscript{353} In this way the communicatory relationship is both communal and reciprocal, and therefore truly constitutes a community of life.

One could object here that perhaps such an intersubjective biophysical relationship of communication is only present in certain biophysical communities. While I do not deny that some human populations are more in tune with their biophysical surroundings (in fact this idea is important for the overall idea of this thesis), the intersubjective character of the human to other-than-human environment is still the same. First, let us consider the types of animals that Wittgenstein uses in his examples, as they are perhaps more familiar to us as well as harking back to examples used by Wittgenstein in his 	extit{Investigations}. It has been shown that dogs not only communicate with each other but humans as well, and that such a communicative relationship becomes more refined as either group lives in proximity with the other for longer amounts of time.\textsuperscript{354} Here communication is understood to mean “actions of one dog provide signals that change the behaviors of another dog or human.”\textsuperscript{355} When my dog goes to the backdoor of our house, sits, and then whines at me, I walk to the door and let her outside. Here I am in agreement with Wittgenstein that it is a mistake to say that she wishes/wants/intends/needs to go outside if I use these words in the sense that they indicate I can peer into her mind to know what she is thinking and therefore intends to convey to me. This is not because she is not on the same level of consciousness as me; I could not say this about another human being’s usage of language or communication, either, as we saw above. All we can effectively say here is that the

\textsuperscript{353} Ibid., 12.
\textsuperscript{355} Yeon, “The vocal communication of canines,” 141.
dog and I have certain patterns of actions and communicative habits that we have developed in
relationship with one another, for neither one of us would do these things if we had not lived
together for an extended amount of time. Thus, canine companion and I are engaged in a
particular form of life with one another, as well as all the other inhabitants of our particular
biophysical surroundings.

Oak trees, too, communicate with us. For example, there are two ways that I know it is
autumn in the northern hemisphere. First, I can look at a calendar, see that it is September 19,
and since I have learned that September, October, and November are called ‘autumn’ in my
language, I can conclude that it is autumn here in the northern hemisphere. The other way to
know that it is autumn is to take a walk in the park near my home. There are many oaks in that
park, and I notice that their leaves have started to turn brown, red, and yellow. Since I have
learned that in my language it is accepted to call the time of year in which leaves begin to turn
these colors ‘autumn,’ I know that autumn has arrived here. However, in a similar manner to the
Pewen and Pewenche relationship above, the oak leaves might not change color on September 1st
every year, and indeed, do not where I live in Texas. The oaks themselves react to a change in
their environment and communicate such a change to me through the changing of their leaves.
This communication might manifest itself in either a voluntary response by me (I might collect a
few leaves to press into a book) or involuntary response by me (my allergies might harshly
respond). In either case, the tree and I are bound together in a biophysical and intersubjective
relationship based on changes in our shared relationship with each other and the other members
of our intersubjective biophysical surroundings.

This view that human populations are always in an intersubjective relationship with their
biophysical surroundings, however, does not say anything about the relative weight of such
relationships. Here is as far as Wittgenstein’s philosophy can take us: for while it can give us a descriptive account of the normative differences in these relationships, it alone cannot give us a normative account for how such relationships should be constituted, should be acted upon, etc. For example, in the *Philosophical Investigations* he writes that “philosophy just puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything.”\(^{356}\) As a consequence of this we must look elsewhere for ethical criteria for our relationships to our biophysical surroundings. The ecolinguists give us a starting point for a dialogue between Wittgenstein scholarship and environmental ethics, particularly sustainability ethics.

3.7 Conclusion

In this Chapter I have argued that both the early Wittgenstein and the later Wittgenstein are concerned with the ways in which language interacts with the world. Moreover, as Wittgenstein grew older, he came to recognize the scope of this connection as including the ways in which humans interact with their environments, both human and other-than-human.

To my knowledge I am the only commentator on Wittgenstein that has tied the ‘community of life’ remark from the *Remarks* to Wittgenstein’s concept of ‘form(s) of life’ and culture. However, given the current surge in the field of ecolinguistics toward understanding and taking into account the biophysical and biocultural relationships between human beings and their environments, I believe that such a tie has only heretofore been overlooked by ‘traditional’ linguists and philosophers of language. This position is something that I shall tease out in the next chapter of this thesis, along with how recognition of such a tie, as found in Wittgenstein’s corpus, can open up new frontiers for Wittgenstein scholarship. Moreover, I shall argue, many

linguists which cling to the conception of language as presented in the *Tractatus* (e.g. Chomsky) are mistaken in their assumptions, as shown by both Wittgenstein and many of the ecolinguists (particularly Maffi and Mühlhäusler). These mistaken assumptions, particularly those omitting the intersubjective biophysical relationship between all beings in an environment, necessary have ethical implications, as I shall demonstrate using the work of Maffi and Mühlhäusler in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION: BENEFITS OF WITTGENSTEIN AS PROTO-ECOLINGUIST

There are two reasons why a dialogue between Wittgenstein scholarship and ecolinguistics should take place. First, because such a dialogue will help establish and support ecolinguistics as the logical next step in both linguistics and philosophy of language. By drawing on a well-respected member of the philosophy of language canon and showing how he transitioned from universalizing linguistic atomism to a more ecological view of language, ecolinguistics is clearly shown to be a fruitful destination for the study of language. Second, such a dialogue opens up fertile new ground for linguistics and philosophy of language in general, but Wittgenstein scholarship in particular. Wittgenstein scholarship has tended to focus on the same discussions of the ‘private language argument,’ ‘rule following,’ etc., and avoided such practical and ‘real world’ (as opposed to academic) considerations as are found in ecolinguistics.

There are two possible problems with classifying the later Wittgenstein as a proto-ecolinguist: first, his lack of specific discussion concerning language extinction, biodiversity loss, etc.; second, his descriptive methodology of philosophy. The first problem arises from a lack of textual evidence from the Wittgenstein corpus, a fact that can be explained by the historical context.357 So rather than speculate what Wittgenstein would have said had he been introduced to the problems of language extinction and biodiversity loss, it is more fruitful to examine what he did say alongside the work of Mühlhäusler and Maffi. Both problems are able to be overcome through a dialogue with ecolinguistics; however, the second problem is a better

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357 As discussed previously in this thesis, both the processes of massive losses of biological and linguistic diversity have fastly grown during the second half of the twentieth century, and the awareness about this massive extinction of biodiversity and languages arose mostly in the 1980s. Hence, there is a historical asynchrony, and Wittgenstein was not exposed this recent phenomenon, which is addressed by Mühlhäusler and Maffi.
way of framing the two benefits of classifying the later Wittgenstein as a proto-ecolinguist, for it
better accounts for and orients the theoretical considerations of both Wittgenstein and
ecolinguistics.

Remember that the later Wittgenstein views philosophy of language as a descriptive
enterprise, one that “leaves everything as it is”\textsuperscript{358} with regards to language-games. This does not
mean, however, that one merely catalogues these language-games with no active place in the
process. On the contrary, Wittgenstein once described the aim of philosophy as “show[ing] the
fly the way out of the fly-bottle.”\textsuperscript{359} There are still philosophical puzzles, rather than true
‘problems,’ to be solved – meaning that all the pieces are there, one just has to figure out how
they go together in order to dissolve the conditions which lead to confusion. Wittgenstein, in
summary, once remarked that a man could be “imprisoned in a room with a door that’s unlocked
and opens inwards; as long as it does not occur to him to \textit{pull} rather than push it.”\textsuperscript{360}

So what does this methodology have to do with ecolinguistics? One critique of reading
Wittgenstein as an ecolinguist is made by linguist Roy Harris and stems from Wittgenstein’s later
methodology. Harris’s critique is that Wittgenstein can’t account for how “you cannot in fact
keep morals \textit{out} of discourse about the environment or indeed about any kind of human
activity,”\textsuperscript{361} with Harris then supplying the solution in terms of language “as something in which
meaning is defined in terms of purely \textit{internal} linguistic values.”\textsuperscript{362} Harris takes it for granted
that language simply \textit{must be} isolated from ‘external’ values, and then uses a common sort of

\textsuperscript{358} Wittgenstein, \textit{Philosophical Investigations}: §124.
\textsuperscript{359} Ibid., §309.
\textsuperscript{360} Wittgenstein, \textit{Culture and Value}: 42e.
\textsuperscript{362} Ibid.
methodology of universalist atomism to ‘solve’ what he sees as a problem within philosophy of language. Though he at least allows for some value discourse, his overall conception of language remains atomistic with the elements of language having meaning inherent to those elements. I would here like to point out are two things: first, that Wittgenstein accounts for the fact that language is always pregnant with the values of the speakers by appealing to forms of life as contexts for meaning; and secondly that Wittgenstein, in transitioning from the pitfall of conceiving of language as ‘isolated’ from external influences (as Wittgenstein did in the Tractatus), gives us an already established framework with which to view much of the linguistic phenomena described by both Mühlhäusler and Maffi. Here we see that Wittgenstein provides us with quite a good starting point for philosophy of language joining with ecolinguistics, in that he does not separate language from culture, form of life, or the biophysical surroundings of that language. If the mainstream of philosophy of language were to use their universalist and atomistic conceptions of language, to try and do the same sort of environmentally practical projects as Mühlhäusler or Maffi, then they would have an inadequate theoretical framework for the task as I have demonstrated in this chapter.

Such environmentally practical concerns have also tended to be outside of the particular realm of Wittgenstein scholarship. Wittgenstein scholarship in recent years has tended to focus on re-examining Wittgenstein’s corpus without expanding it into new areas. Examples of this include: Jerry H. Gill’s 2008 article that focuses upon the difference in root metaphors used before Wittgenstein’s job as elementary school teacher and after363; Carlos Alberto Cardona’s 2011 article on ‘the last Wittgenstein’ found in On Certainty, and whether or not this Wittgenstein should be considered apart from the early and later Wittgenstein as normally

classified; and Brett Bourbon’s 2005 article on the preface to the *Philosophical Investigations*, and what the remarks made by Wittgenstein on the literary form of the *Investigations* and this literary form itself can tell us about Wittgenstein’s later picture of philosophy. It would be unfair, however, to say that all Wittgenstein scholarship is purely internal, for there are a few scholars who seek to integrate Wittgenstein into other disciplines, particularly neuroscience and psychology. As far as integrating Wittgenstein into discussions about the environment, however, discussion has been severely lacking. Even in the various ecolinguistic summary texts Wittgenstein has only been mentioned in passing with no in depth discussion of his thought or its overall relevance to the field of ecolinguistics.

This gap in the literature should be important to Wittgenstein scholars as well as other philosophers of language for multiple reasons. If Wittgenstein scholarship is to avoid growing stale and becoming dogmatic, one would hope that it would constantly be looking to expand its horizons. While this has been done in one direction towards psychology and neuroscience, if Wittgenstein scholarship is to be able to practically influence either environmental issues or language extinction due to these environmental issues, it stands to reason that both Wittgenstein scholarship in particular and philosophy of language in general should begin to address

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367 There are a few who deal with Wittgenstein and environmental philosophy, most recently Marcello Di Paola and Nigel Pleasants. See: Di Paola, "Wittgenstein Gone Wild?"; Pleasants, "Nonsense on Stilts? Wittgenstein, Ethics, and the Lives of Animals."

ecolinguistics more openly, as ecolinguistics has been working towards solutions for these two issues for decades now. It stands to reason that if Wittgenstein scholarship is going to have an impact on environmental issues, then Wittgenstein scholarship must also begin to form a dialogue with ecolinguistics. For example, such a dialogue could take the form of using the later Wittgenstein’s proposed methodology to observe the ways in which a community of language speakers interacts with the other members of their community of life. This descriptive methodology would be of the same type advocated by both Mühlhäusler and Maffi, in that it would involve immersion in the community’s form of life so as to be able to understand not only their language (in the sense of their lexicon), but also the ways in which their language-games are actually played. Moreover, this descriptive immersion by Wittgenstein scholars could and should also be coupled with the normative methodology used by Mühlhäusler and Maffi, namely to evaluate whether or not a language and its companion form of life are capable of, e.g., preserving biodiversity and ecological stability. Such immersion would be superior to, e.g., Chomsky’s proposed ‘objective observation’ of linguistic communities, where language cataloging is seen by Chomsky as synonymous with understanding the meaning of the words of a language, in that the immersion would better account for the cultural, biophysical, religious, etc., ‘backgrounds of meaning’ described by Wittgenstein. Moreover, such immersions would expand our knowledge of the many small, often indigenous, linguistic communities whose languages are slowly going extinct. Most importantly, by cataloging the forms of life which are bound to the speaking of these small indigenous, Wittgenstein scholarship could help preserve the languages by recognizing, against Chomsky but with ecolinguistics, that languages simply cannot be isolated from their forms of life and surrounding biophysical environments if they are to survive.
To try to isolate language in this way can lead to language extinction and environmental and ecological disaster.

This thesis contains a starting point for just such a dialogue between Wittgenstein scholarship and ecolinguistics, as I have shown that Wittgenstein himself had ecolinguistic leanings. It would certainly be fruitful to see Wittgenstein scholarship engage in analyzing how language interacts with the environment, using much of the literature already established in the discipline. Wittgenstein scholarship would be revitalized in a way not seen in years. Such a revitalization would also be beneficial to ecolinguistics. The more minds and resources which are put to work on solving the various problematic relationships between language, forms of life, and biophysical surroundings, the more likely it is that such problems will eventually be solved.

If we are to preserve the rich diversity of biophysical, cultural, and linguistic ecologies of our shared planet, then such problems must be solved. A threat to one of these diversities is necessarily a threat to them all.


