

THE GENESIS OF *Sprachkritik* AND FORMATION
OF PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE IN AUSTRO-
HUNGARIAN PHILOSOPHY: ITS INFLUENCE ON
LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN'S THOUGHT.

LA GÉNESIS DE LA *Sprachkritik* Y LA FORMACIÓN
DE LA FILOSOFÍA DEL LENGUAGE EN LA
FILOSOFÍA AUSTROHÚNGARA: SU INFLUENCIA
EN EL PENSAMIENTO DE LUDWIG
WITTGENSTEIN

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Abstract

This article examines the special features of the atmosphere in Habsburg's Vienna, which led to the formation of such a direction in philosophical thought as a critique of language (*Sprachkritik*) and the influence its representatives such as Karl Kraus and Fritz Mauthner on the later Ludwig Wittgenstein's views on language. I argue that *Sprachkritik* was inextricably connected with *Sprachkrise* (crisis of language), *Sprachkrise* was a strongly Austrian phenomenon due to special socio-cultural-political reasons and which led to the consideration of the very phenomenon of language from a new point of view. Here I claim that Ludwig Wittgenstein, a 'product' of Habsburg's Vienna, was strongly influenced by the intellectual atmosphere of the critique of language reigning in it. In Roberto Poli's (1997: 16), scholar in sociology and philosophy, words, the "language-world relationship was a central element of the intellectual debate of those years: suffice it to mention Rainer Maria Rilke and Hugo von Hofmannsthal among writers, and Fritz Mauthner and Ludwig Wittgenstein among philosophers."

Keywords: philosophy of language, critique of language, Wittgenstein, Vienna.

Resumen

Este artículo examina las características especiales de la atmósfera en la Viena de la época Habsburgo, que llevaron a la formación de una dirección en el pensamiento filosófico como la crítica del lenguaje (*Sprachkritik*) y la influencia de sus representantes como Karl Kraus y Fritz Mauthner, sobre las opiniones posteriores de Ludwig Wittgenstein sobre el lenguaje. Sostengo que *Sprachkritik* estaba inextricablemente conectado con *Sprachkrise* (crisis del lenguaje), *Sprachkrise* fue un

fenómeno fuertemente austriaco debido a razones socioculturales-políticas especiales y que llevó a considerar el fenómeno mismo del lenguaje desde un nuevo punto de vista. Aquí afirmo que Ludwig Wittgenstein, siendo un «producto» de la Viena de los Habsburgo, estuvo fuertemente influenciado por la atmósfera intelectual de la crítica del lenguaje que reinaba en ella.

Palabras clave: filosofía del lenguaje, crítica del lenguaje, Wittgenstein, Viena.

Introduction

Analyzing modernist projects for the reform of the language and the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein in particular, many researchers first of all turn to the intellectual atmosphere of Vienna at the turn of the 20th century, emphasizing its importance for identifying the prerequisites for the formation of the philosophical views of this thinker. Thus, C. Schorske, A. Janik (2001), S. Toulmin (Janik and Toulmin, 1973), Hobsbawm (1994), and K. Nyiri (1987) - experts in the field of the modern era, whose views were greatly influenced by the philosophy of Wittgenstein, consider it necessary to identify the connection between the philosophy of early Wittgenstein and the spiritual activities of some other representatives of Austrian culture (Haller, 1981, 1986, 1986a; Smith, 1978). I used in my research the most prominent historical works on the period of the end of the Habsburg Empire: (Schorske, 1980), (Nyiri, 1981, 1982, 1987), (Mulligan, 1990), (Hobsbawm, 1994), (Janik and Toulmin, 1973), (Kenny, et al., 1982). It is important to develop a theme about the relationship of a thinker's life to his thought, to reflect on the nature of contextualism and how philosophical problems intrude into cultural history (Janik and Toulmin, 1973, p. 3). Contextualism here is understood by authors as a historical inquiry into the origins of Wittgenstein's problems in their actual setting. Haller (1986b) described three distinctive features of Austrian philosophy of that time: a critique of language, a search for a scientific method, and empirical verification of the particular. Vienna had a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional character in the context in which Wittgenstein lived and wrote. For the Viennese intellectual elite of that epoch, the question of the causes of the deep moral and cultural crisis, which found its expression, including the sphere of language, was fundamentally important. As a kind of external reason for this interest, one could name a very specific situation about the

language that developed in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which affected intellectuals. It was the absence of a single language of communication; as a rule, in Vienna people thought and spoke simultaneously in German, Czech, Hungarian, and Hebrew. This also influenced the formation of a certain range of philosophical problems, where the theme of language became dominant. The ambivalent linguistic situation largely contributed to the development of projects for the purification of natural language in philosophy and literature (Kraus, Wittgenstein), the creation of a new language in music (Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School (Leibowitz 1947)) and, indirectly, to the idea of rejecting decoration, unnecessary decor in architecture and design (A. Loos).

Vienna in the *fin-de-siècle* represented a unique combination of philosophical, sociological, political, psychological, and cultural ideas, this city was a locus of intellectual innovation in all spheres of knowledge and arts.

Linguistic line and the origin of Sprachkritik

Returning to the formation of new philosophy in Austria, let us take note of the peculiarities in the field of linguistic philosophy. As Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote in *Tractatus*: “All philosophy is ‘Critique of language’ (but not all in Mauthner’s sense).” (4.0031)

The Austrian phenomenon – the progressive movement of linguistic awareness can be considered using dual methodology: (1) referential language criticism, based on the ontological theory of meaning, and (2) demonstrative language criticism, based on a pragmatic theory of meaning.

In his article Wittgenstein and Austrian Philosophy, Rudolf Haller wrote: ‘Austrian philosophy is largely characterized indeed, in opposition to all transcendental and idealistic tendencies, by its *realistic* line’ (Haller, 1981 cited in Nyiri, 1981, p. 94).

Karl Kraus

I argue that there were two of the most important senior contemporaries in Vienna who had the greatest impact on Wittgenstein’s ideas. There are Karl Kraus and Fritz Mauthner. I focus on the ideas and influence of Wittgenstein, each of them in more detail.

Wittgenstein mentioned K. Kraus¹, along with philosophers, physicists, and mathematicians, whose ideas had a significant impact on the formation of his philosophical outlook. The idea of a *critique of language* later formed the basis of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, where he wrote: “All philosophy is “Critique of language” (but not at all in Mauthner’s sense).” (4.0031). Kraus had been the major Viennese publicist and writer of the early 20th century, he seems to be the figure that, in one way or another, unites all representatives of Viennese modernism. In 1899 Karl Kraus who started his literary activity and later, at the beginning of the 20th century, played a special role in Austrian spiritual life, explained the extraordinary revival of interest in literature by political reasons-forced emigration of the Austrian liberalism in the realm of art above all. Kraus draw attention to linguistic issues in his periodical *Die Fackel*,

1 The founder of one of the directions of the philosophical and linguistic doctrine of *critique of language*. Fritz Mauthner was the first who proposed this term. Janik and Toulmin distinguished 3 main directions in the ‘critique of language’ by their representatives: Kraus, Mauthner and Wittgenstein. See, also, Kühn (1975), *Gescheiterte Sprachkritik: Fritz Mauthner, Leben und Werk*.

which he turned into one of the first periodicals in the field of literary, cultural, political, and social criticism. If in the first decade of the journal's existence, Kraus still invited other authors to publish their works in it, then since December 1911, only he had been the only employee and at the same time the publisher of *Die Fackel*. His magazine became for him a kind of platform for language criticism, which he carried out throughout his life. Kraus's journal was a tool to expose any corruption wherever Kraus found it. Kraus was the first to connect the crisis phenomena in his contemporary language with the disintegration of the values of society. Critique of language (under the title *Teaching Language*), carried out by Kraus in numerous articles of *Die Fackel*, became for him, in fact, a criticism of morality, with which language, as he believed, is directly connected. Moreover, Kraus attributed the concept of language, along with the concepts of morality, religion, and nature, to the categories of the *primary source* of the universe (the term *Ursprung*, which means origin or *primary source*, appeared at about the same time among the representatives of the Marburg School of neo-Kantianism. According to Kraus, language has an inherent truth, therefore it is the 'last guarantor' of the preservation of all spheres of humanities, including non-linguistic, for example, values. He believed that communication with concepts in their original meaning is carried out through the word. At the same time, spelling and grammar are understood by Kraus not just as a system of rules, but also as a kind of ethical imperative. Vienna for Kraus was a good platform for the destruction of the world; the most difficult, but the most perfect school. In any case, Kraus was shrewd in identifying and criticizing the decadent tendencies associated with the crisis of European consciousness. He was not satisfied with the diagnosis of the *Decline of the West* and believed that "only general surgery can save society." (Janik and Toulmin, 1973, p. 4)

He focused his attention on literature, theater, and music, and sharply criticized the tastes of the bourgeoisie, which, he believed, reflected the duality of morality that existed in society at his time.

Turning to literature and music was a way to reveal the crisis of moral consciousness. Kraus possessed extraordinary satirical talent, manifested primarily in his impeccable command of the language of controversy, and, also, in the fact that many of his works are very difficult, if not impossible, to translate into other languages. He skillfully manipulated the words of the German language, discrediting his many opponents. Kraus's writing style and his special construction of sentences repeated, exaggerated, and ridiculed, errors in their argumentation. He wrote: "I control the language of others. But my language does whatever it wants with me." (Schorske, 1980, p. 67) Kraus lived only from his works and built his life exclusively around work. The main philosophical concept that Kraus develops - the concept of *primary source*, is at the same time 'practical'. In his works, polemics and satire turned into a weapon, which he directed against everything superficial and inhuman in human behavior and thought, thus returning to the 'primary source' of all values and achieving the regeneration of culture as a whole. On the one hand, Kraus saw language as means of manipulating a person, his judgments, and worldview. But on the other hand, he believed that a 'pure' language is possible, reflecting world connections, representing a kind of 'mirror' of the world, which reveals and eliminates lies, being used correctly. However, it is hardly possible to find in his texts an explanation of the ultimate goal of all his activities, and even more so the developed 'concept' of this activity. Rather, his work itself is a critique of the language, and it appears as such an activity. There are so many resemblances with Wittgenstein's ideas. I highlight, first, all three of them: *critique of language, pure*

or ideal language as a mirror of the world, and philosophy and critique of language as an activity. Critique of language runs through all of Wittgenstein's work. The second one relates more to the first period of *Tractatus*, we can find this idea of language mirroring the world throughout the whole text: in 4.121 "Propositions cannot represent the logical form: this mirrors itself in the propositions. That which mirrors itself in language, language cannot represent."; in 5,511 "How can the all-embracing logic which mirrors the world use such special catches and manipulations? Only because all these are connected into an infinitely fine network, to the great mirror;" and in 5.512; 5.514 "These rules are equivalent to the symbols and in them, their sense is mirrored." The third idea – critique of language as an activity is represented in the least Wittgenstein's book, not only related to critique itself but to the whole philosophy and thinking.

Language in its historical state, according to Kraus, has degraded, turning only into a means of transmitting messages (although by its nature it is a reflection of reality, so, it has great potential). Criticism of language here manifests itself in the form of criticism of the press: the media, primarily the press, stood between the person and the word and operating with words as a commodity, assumed the functions of religion and literature, thus shaping the consciousness of a person. While the means of direct communication, that is, the press, as well as overly aestheticized literature, discredited the word as a carrier of ethical meaning, satire became, according to Kraus, the only possible method of 'showing' reality. The satirical image, as Kraus built it, helped to break through the original meaning of words, freeing the essence of the word from the 'ornamental' layers of time - signs of lies and deceit. So, the criticism of language becomes for Kraus at the same time a criticism of morality, trying to awaken memories of the original meaning of words, filled with ethical content. Kraus wrote that satire,

gave moral guidelines to a person and partially performed religious functions. The press was Kraus's main target. His main discontent was that the press, as he believed, was taking on an unusual role for it, far from its main function - objective news coverage. Kraus's *Die Fackel* magazine aimed to fight the press, undermine public confidence in it, and reduce the damage caused by the press. *Die Neue Freie Presse* (New Free Press) - the main Viennese newspaper where every journalist dreamed to be published - was the special object of anger of Kraus. This was because the high standards of journalism here were sometimes reduced only to the point of view and self-presentation of the author, which could be anything but objective. Janik and Toulmin (1973, p. 83) noted that "the fear of official censorship made this newspaper a hidden spokesman for the regime, and its elegant articles have always leaned towards industrial interests." Kraus's satirical change of the name of this Viennese newspaper to *Neue feile Presse* (New Prostitution) underlined its corruption. However, even though Kraus made fun of politicians, his criticism of society "was never exclusively political." (Janik and Toulmin, 1973, p. 79) The sphere of politics is connected, as he believed, only with superficial problems, while the roots of the modern crisis lie in the spiritual ill health of society. Kraus's resentment about contemporary journalism reached its height when the news was presented exclusively through the prism of class interests. "The hypocrisy of the press was due to greed, it sold itself to the interests of the industry, distorting the facts for money." (Schorske, 1980, p. 129)

Analysis of the 'critique of language' by K. Kraus sheds light on some prerequisites for the emergence of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, who undoubtedly experienced a direct impact from the ideas of his predecessor, also linking language with ethics. Like Kraus, Wittgenstein excludes language in everyday use from

productive analysis; he believes that being illogical, language cannot adequately reflect reality. Wittgenstein's ideal, logically verified model of language largely corresponded to Kraus's ideas about it as a *primary source*. However, unlike Kraus, Wittgenstein denied language as the way to express ethical and religious truths and experiences. Sentences, according to early Wittgenstein of *Tractatus*, can only describe facts but are not able to reflect ethical meanings. Ethics is a form of life, not a system of normative sentences about it; it can be 'shown' by the example of moral behavior. And the main example of the unity of ethics and aesthetics for Wittgenstein was the work of Kraus, primarily his theory of satire as a direct embodiment of the critique of language. Wittgenstein's ideal language mirrors the structure of the world, while moral behavior 'shows' ethics. Wittgenstein's theory of 'showing' can thus also be seen as having been developed under the influence of Kraus's ideas. But, in addition, the literary image, built by Kraus as an image of a word that fell into the context of an ethical vacuum, significantly influenced not only the theory of 'showing', but was also a literary source of his concept of 'silence': the sphere of the ethical must be protected from verbal rationalization. For Kraus ethics and ethical understanding are not a system of rules and norms expressed in language, but activity. This allows concluding that his ideas are close to those of Wittgenstein and even about a certain influence of Kraus's ideas on the formation and development of Wittgenstein's early views.

Ethics cannot be expressed. Ethics are transcendental. (Ethics and aesthetics are one.) 6.421.

The first thought in setting up an ethical law of the form "thou shalt [...]" is: And what if I do not do it? But ethics has nothing to do with punishment and reward in the ordinary sense. This question as to the consequences of an action must therefore be irrelevant. At least these consequences will not be events. For there must be something right in that formulation of the question. There must be some sort of ethical reward and ethical punishment, but this must lie in the action itself. 6.422.

As Russell wrote in his Introduction to *Tractatus*, the whole subject of ethics, is placed by Mr. Wittgenstein in the mystical, inexpressible region.

The totalities concerning which Mr. Wittgenstein holds that it is impossible to speak logically are nevertheless thought by him to exist and are the subject matter of his mysticism. The totality resulting from our hierarchy would be not merely logically inexpressible, but action, a mere delusion, and in this way the supposed sphere of the mystical would be abolished (Wittgenstein, 2010 [1922], p. 19).

Impact of Fritz Mauthner's ideas on Wittgenstein

The next important figure in the Austrian philosophy of language was Fritz Mauthner (1849-1923). He is remembered for his book *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache (Contributions toward a Critique of Language)*, published in 3 parts and continued in 1903. Wittgenstein acknowledged him in *Tractatus*.

All philosophy is "Critique of language" (but not at all in Mauthner's sense). Russell's merit is to have shown that the apparent logical form of the proposition need not be its real form. 4.0031².

Janik and Toulmin (1996, pp. 119, 121-133) say that Wittgenstein took several ideas from Mauthner's book. In this part, I describe in detail the views of Mauthner and their impact on Wittgenstein's ideas. Mauthner was one of the first philosophers, who recognized the limits of language.

Cloeren (1988, p. 255) in his analysis of the origin of the critique of language wrote that Mauthner developed his approach in the tradition of British empiricism and

² Alle Philosophie ist „Sprachkritik“. (Allerdings nicht im Sinne Mauthners.) Russell's Verdienst ist es, gezeigt zu haben, dass die scheinbare logische Form des Satzes nicht seine wirkliche sein muss. 4.0031

early German analytic thought, he was influenced by Hume, Lichtenberg, and Mach. Mauthner was prominent for his clear proclamation of philosophy to be a critique of language. For Mauthner philosophy has become a new epistemology and the science of sciences. He insisted on the rejection of the notion of objective knowledge of the world. By the means of the critique of language, he also rejected metaphysics, positivism, idealism, materialism, and scientism. According to Mauthner, these directions of thought are meaningless. For Mauthner's radical critique of language, even though all scientific propositions are hypothetical and uncertain, objective knowledge is unreachable. Critique of language liberates from beliefs, and superstitions, both religious and scientific.

Mauthner's philosophical concept took shape late and were set out in his work published posthumously in 1925 – *Die drei Bilder der Welt – ein sprachkritischer Versuch* (*Three pictures of the world*). His doctrine does not assert relativity or plurality of worlds. There is only one world, but our knowledge of it is articulated from three points of view. Mauthner (1925, pp. 23, 136) claims that we have three different and conflicting points of view from which we pass judgments upon the same world. There are three categories of language that help us to understand the world (Mauthner, 1980 [1910], vol. I, p. 17).

The following pictures of the world *cum grano salis* (Mauthner, 1997 [1924], vol. III, p. 362) are in the order of experience:

(1) The adjectival world is the world of everyday language and material objects, the world of sensory expressions of sensory actions. This is the only real-world experience.

There is an adjectival world, the only world, which we experience immediately through our senses; all our sensations, all our sense-data (*Sinnesdaten*) are adjectival; beyond that, all our mental perceptions, our value-judgments, all that we call right, good, beautiful, etc., are adjectival too. This adjectival world falls apart into individual impressions, and does not pattern itself into units; one could call it punctiform (*pointilliert*). (Mauthner, 1980, p.18)

(2) Substantial world (*substantivische Welt*), corresponding to the metaphysical needs of a person; all phenomena in this world, symbols of the unknowable; such are the gods, spirits, and myths. This is a world reminiscent of the world of Plato's ideas.

(3) Verbal world (*verbal Welt*); it is not being, but only becoming; we get to know him we cannot since we only cognize what has already happened, being that has already become, and not becoming itself. Both memory and soul belong to the verbal world.

There is no stuff, nor any power, nor anything lasting which would have the office of remembering. Memory is no *nomen agentis*... Memory is an activity, is a deed (*ein Tun*), is a motion (Mauthner, 1925, p. 142f).

Mauthner's philosophical concept of the world very resembles the worldview of the Italian Renaissance philosopher Lorenzo Valla. The origins of this idea lie in Aristotle's writings on categories. Valla reduced Aristotle's ten³ categories to three: substance, quality, and action – corresponding to a noun, adjective, and verb.

Mauthner's philosophical doctrine was expounded by him in *Contributions toward a Critique of Language*, on which he worked for 20 years. The basic aspects of Mauthner's philological concept are as follows. Language is like a craft; it is the craft of communication. A word is just a label object or action. Therefore, there should be

³ 10 Aristotle's categories of that which exists: (1) substance; (2) quantity; (3) quality; (4) relatives; (5) somewhere; (6) sometimes; (7) being in a position; (8) having; (9) acting; and (10) being acted upon (1b25–2a4).

no superstitious worship of the word. Mautner wrote that in the area of philosophical problems of the linguistic cycle, he is close to the skepticism of Hume and Schopenhauer. Rejecting the cognitive capabilities of the language, Mautner, as he admits, is adjacent to the medieval nominalists and the tradition of English skepticism. The critique of language is a critical philosophical study of the functioning of language. The processes of speaking and thinking are parallel. Language is a specific social phenomenon, through which a person is associated with society. Language is similar to the rules of the game: the one who started playing must obey the rules. However, in terms of language, there is nothing that before it would not have been in feelings, - so Mauthner repeats the motto of sensationalism, proposed by J. Locke. In feelings nothing is eternal or stable, everything is changeable. Therefore, language takes from the senses only subjective because there is nothing else in feelings. Our language is dependent on the randomness of feelings. With the help of language, we cannot penetrate the essence of things themselves and do not know if there is any. The grammar and logic that lay down the laws, according to which words and things are connected are also random. Their laws are nothing more than the rules of a game of words and things. Parts of speech do not match reality. Mauthner, going from Locke's thesis of sensationalism, follows the path of approaching subjectivity and skepticism of Hume.

Language notations are just conventional symbols, behind which nothing stands; for example, there are the words like 'truth,' 'god,' 'soul,' 'devil,' etc. All nouns are misleading, but some nouns are more misleading than others. Mauthner used a special term *Gedankendinge*, all nouns are things- in thought. Not all nouns or things-in-thought are pseudo concepts.

[...] many of our philosophical concepts are such pseudo-concepts, that is substantial concepts, to which nothing in reality corresponds, or (to express it better), from which no adjectival effect originates; for this is the danger in pseudo-concepts: that they are not abstracted from any reality (Mauthner, 1980, vol. I, p. cxxix).

For example, the term *final-cause* is a pseudo-concept because there is no experience corresponding to it in a way that would be similar to the correspondence of *red* color with a *red* object that has and possesses this quality. So, the basic criteria to distinguish pseudo-concepts from 'normal' nouns – is experience. Pseudo-concepts could be eliminated from our language without compromising the ability to interact with objects of the real-world experience. Instead of meaningless worshipping God, people need godless mysticism. We don't know much, and we will never know because of the limitation of our language to the world's sensory phenomena. What we do not know, we must be silent. The wise should generally be silent. These maxims of Mauthner in the XX century will be repeated by Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Mauthner's three pictures of the world have resemblances, also, with some other philosophers, for example, Ernst Cassirer, who recognized the most important role of language in the perception of the world by man and in interaction with it, he claimed that humans live in the world of symbolic forms, which they created as a universe of symbolic meanings.

These three pictures of the world are three points of view implicit in language. A person may choose one point of view and follow it in his/her attempt to interact with the world, to understand and explain it. Mauthner believed that the difference between science, art, and mysticism as the different forms and ways of human knowledge could be explained in this manner through three different approaches or points of view described him as three worlds or pictures of the world. Science corresponds to the

verbal point of view, art to the adjectival one and mysticism to the substantival (Mauthner, 1997 [1924], vol. III, p. 336; *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*, vol. III: 102). But all these three languages of three pictures of the world are insufficient. Mauthner claimed, that there is nothing better, than natural language. “None of the three pictures can be correct because each of them is burdened with the curse of its specific picture language; their unification will probably not be possible because the unification of the three languages – so far at least – has not been possible except in our ordinary language” (Mauthner, 1925, p. 167). Mauthner wrote that these three languages should complement each other because truth is not in any of these three languages exclusively. “They (languages) must help each other to orientate ourselves a little in the one world (Mauthner, 1997 [1924], vol. III, p. 365).

The most interesting point in Mauthner’s ideas, which undoubtedly had an impact on the formation of early Wittgenstein’s ideas is the following. Mauthner wrote: “Philosophy is the limit of language itself, the limit concept, the *limes*; it is critique of language of human language [...]” (Mauthner, 1982, vol. III, p. x) Critique of language points to the limits of language, it cannot transcend them. Denoting the limit of language, we can assume that there is something beyond this limit. Thus, critique of language leads to mysticism. Mauthner said that only the great skeptics were at the same time mystics (Weiler, 1970, p. 291). The whole subjects of ethics and aesthetics are placed by Wittgenstein in a mystical, inexpressible region. Mystical is beyond the limits of the world and language and it cannot be said, it can only be shown:

There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical, 6.522.

Our human language is only suitable to serve a practical need in our interaction with reality. When we try to speak about things that are not related to experience, then

we put words in a position that they are not suitable for. And the result of it is misleading. The only way is silence. Only this is not misleading. Wittgenstein wrote at the very end of *Tractatus*:

The right method of philosophy would be this. 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. This method would be unsatisfying to the other—he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy—but it would be the only strictly correct method, 6.53

Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent, 7.

Mauthner was not so laconic in his writings as Wittgenstein, which, I believe, helps us to understand Wittgenstein's ideas more clearly. I present a long quote from Mauthner's book *Wörterbuch der Philosophie* because it is important to show his thoughts and one of the first mentioning of the term *language games*:

I shall attempt again to say the unsayable (*das Unsagbare zu sagen*), to express with poor words what I have to give devout infidels (*fromme Ungläubige*) in nominalistic mysticism, in skeptical mysticism...The world does not exist twice. There is no God apart from the world, nor a world apart from God. This conviction has been called pantheism... Why not? There are after all but words. In the highest mystical ecstasy, the Ego experiences that it has become God...Why not? Shall I quarrel about words? For a decade I have been teaching: the filling of the Ego is a delusion. The unity of the individual is a delusion. If I am not me, yet exist, then I am entitled to believe of all others: they only appear to be individuals, they are not different from me, I am one with them, they and I are one. Are these mere philosophical world-sequences? Games of language (emphasis by me)? No. What I can experience (*erleben*) is no longer mere language. What I can experience is real. And I can experience, for short hours, that I no longer know anything about the principle of individuation, that these ceases to be a *difference* between a world and myself. 'That I become God.' Why not? (Mauthner, 1980, Vol. II, pp. 383-4).

This mystical experience is unsayable and inexpressible, anything we try to say will be misleading. Mauthner's critique of language not only leads to mysticism but becomes mystical. He wrote:

And because thinking is language, this new philosophy is, out of the death-wish of thought, a suicide of language. [...] Critique of language must teach liberation from language as the highest aim of self-liberation (Mauthner, 1982, vol. I, p. 713).

It is interesting and unusual, what Mauthner says about laughter. We can only laugh at inexpressible. “Pure critique is but an articulated laugher.” (Mauthner, 1982, vol. III, pp. xi, 632)

Returning to the impact of Mauthner’s ideas on Wittgenstein I would like to emphasize some similarities that have not been mentioned, yet. Earlier I have written only about the similarities and resemblances between the ideas of early Wittgenstein (period of *Tractatus*) and with ideas of Mauthner. There is the main difference between early Wittgenstein of *Tractatus* and Mauthner of *Beiträge* in the approach to language. The first was a *logician* (Malcolm, 1958, p. 86). Mauthner, on the contrary, believed that only ordinary language and its use should be the subject matter of philosophical interest, not a logical construction. Wittgenstein in *Tractatus* considered the structure of thought to be adequately expressed only by logic, symbols of logic, not in natural language because it is inaccurate, vague, and uncertain.

Man possesses the capacity of constructing languages, in which every sense can be expressed, without having an idea how and what each word means—just as one speaks without knowing how the single sounds are produced.

Colloquial language is a part of the human organism and is not less complicated than it.

From it is humanly impossible to gather immediately the logic of language.

Language disguises the thought; so that from the external form of the clothes one cannot infer the form of the thought they clothe, because the external form of the clothes is constructed with quite another object than to let the form of the body be recognized.

The silent adjustments to understanding colloquial language are enormously complicated. 4.002

Mauthner wrote that four persons helped him to get rid of *Wortaberglaube*⁴:

Ernst Mach - from metaphysical mystification, Friedrich Nietzsche – from historical

⁴ This notion is translated as a superstition in relation to the word, language hoax.

mystification, Otto Ludwig – from poetical mystification, and Otto von Bismarck⁵ from political and juridical mystification of words. Otto Ludwig's critique of Schiller pushed Mautner to the idea of the historical relativity of the ideal of linguistic beauty. And from the second 'untimely thinking' of Nietzsche, who argued that history has no laws, Mautner did the conclusion that the history of the language does not have laws, either. Mautner met Mach in 1872. After listening to one of his popular lectures, Mautner asked him a question. On Mach advised Mauthner to read his lecture given in November of the previous year (1871) – „*Die Geschichte und die Wurzel des Satzes von der Erhaltung der Arbeit*“ (*Principle of preservation of work. Origins and root of it*); this lecture made a deep impression on him and had an influence on his thinking (Nyiri 1987: 91). Mauthner borrowed numerous examples of 'critique of language' from Mach, however, there were fundamental differences in the perception of language between both thinkers. Mach considers language as a means of transmitting thoughts. And according to Mautner, no thinking is possible without speech, i.e., without words. Or more precisely: there is no thinking there is only speech. Thinking is nothing but speech, from the point of view of its exchange value. And since our thinking is just speech, in any science we are spinning around descriptions, without reaching explanations. For Mauthner speech, or language, is not a means of understanding the world, the value is not true, but only imaginary, like the rule of the game, which becomes stricter since more players are involved, but which promotes neither change nor understanding of the world. Mauthner's central idea,

⁵ Wittgenstein had read Bismarck's '*Gedanken und Erinnerungen*' and admired it greatly. The evidence is written by Wittgenstein in his letter to Norman Malcolm on 5.2.1948.

"I read in Grimm's fairy tales and in Bismarck's "*Gedanken und Erinnerungen*" which I admire greatly. I don't mean, of course, that my views are Bismarck's views. It's written in very excellent, though rather difficult German, as the sentences are very long. Otherwise I'd recommend you to look at it."
Letter 380 in *Letters and Documents*, ed. by McGuinness (2008, p. 423)

that the world is unknowable in the mirror of language, and nothing matches the words in the real world, was primarily influenced by Mach. Mach wrote that scientific terms, that we use to group and collect phenomena are arbitrary formulas, so a theory is not able to explain anything. Mach saw a theory as a conductor from one phenomenon to another. And when a theory performs its task, people do not need it anymore. In Mach's lecture of 1871, mentioned above, he wrote, that a theory is like dry leaves falling away after they have been given the ability to breathe the body of science.

Conclusion

Karl Kraus and Fritz Mauthner were philosophers who stood at the origin of the critique of language the phenomenon that originated at the edge of the 19th – 20th centuries in Habsburgs Vienna. Viennese special socio-cultural environment and its specific intellectual microcosm influenced and rather shaped Wittgenstein's ideas on language and its critique. This *Zeitgeist* influenced the whole of Wittgenstein's life and thoughts. As Roberto Poli (1997: 16) wrote, discussing the features and subject of Central European philosophy, the "language-world relationship was a central element of the intellectual debate of those years: suffice it to mention Rainer Maria Rilke and Hugo von Hofmannsthal among writers, and Fritz Mauthner and Ludwig Wittgenstein among philosophers." Karl Kraus was the founder of the philosophical *critique of language*, he was the thinker who emphasized the *practical* character of language, not theoretical, *language as an activity*; believed that language represents a kind of *mirror* of the world; distinguished expressible and inexpressible, pointed out the transcendental character of ethics, influencing Wittgenstein's concepts of *showing* and

silence. Mauthner was also one of the first philosophers, who recognized the *limits* of language. Philosophy for Mauthner is the limit of the language itself. He insisted on the liberation of language from beliefs, and superstitions, both religious and scientific, by its critique. He distinguished different pictures of the world as three approaches or points of view on the world. Also, Mauthner was the thinker who first introduced the concept of 'games of language'. And in his writings, as Kraus, Mauthner distinguished unsayable and inexpressible calling it mystical from sayable clear. This distinction by drawing the limits of language influenced Wittgenstein's thought directly.

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