

# A RED ROSE IN THE DARK

SELF-CONSTITUTION THROUGH THE POETIC LANGUAGE OF  
ZELDA, AMICHAÏ, KOSMAN, AND ADAF

EMUNOT: JEWISH PHILOSOPHY AND KABBALAH

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THE POETIC LANGUAGE OF ZELDA,  
AMICHAÏ, KOSMAN, AND ADAF

DORIT LEMBERGER

TRANSLATED BY EDWARD LEVIN

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# Preface

Two pictures of a rose in the dark. One is quite black; for the rose is not visible. In the other, it is painted in full detail and surrounded by black. Is one of them right, the other wrong? Don't we talk of a white rose in the dark and of a red rose in the dark? And don't we nevertheless say that they can't be distinguished in the dark?<sup>1</sup>

Ludwig Wittgenstein developed a methodology for linguistic investigation in the twentieth century that significantly fashioned the conception of language. This methodology is not limited to the philosophy of language, and relates to many additional disciplines, such as psychoanalysis, art, and literary scholarship. The importance of his researches for the philosophical conceptualization of mental processes in general, and specifically those of self-constitution, is widely recognized. *A Red Rose in the Dark* seeks, for the first time, to apply Wittgensteinian

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<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 4th ed., ed. P. M. S. Hacker and J. Schulte, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and J. Schulte (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), para. 515.



methodology to the research of four important corpora in contemporary Hebrew literature. It will examine the process of self-constitution in these corpora, using Wittgenstein's universal insights. This interpretation offers an alternative perspective for sociohistorical study and highlights grammatical structures as reflecting mental processes, when historical and ethnic aspects are shunted aside.

*A Red Rose in the Dark* examines how poetic language facilitates distinguishing between different types of roses in the dark. The poet, like the philosopher in the above passage, selects words from everyday language and combines them with a light yet precise touch: sketching experiences that evade us in the everyday usage of language. Some of these experiences cannot be perceived empirically, and can be fashioned only by imagination. The genre of lyrical poetry is based on the act of imagination, since it focuses on self-reflection. It therefore invites the readers to such an experience, one that is likely to expand and enrich their selfhood, through "similarities and dissimilarities that are meant to throw light on features of our language."<sup>2</sup>

How can the poet's unique language be identified? How does a poetic corpus become a meaningful language-game in a certain cultural context? How does poetic identity come about, and how can its limits be delineated? These questions will be examined from an interpretive viewpoint influenced by Wittgenstein's insights—first and foremost, the following two arguments:

*Essence* is expressed in grammar.<sup>3</sup>

Grammar tells what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar.)<sup>4</sup>

Wittgenstein made a decisive and formative contribution to understanding the ways in which we fashion our selfhood in language, in various contexts. This constitution lends itself to a comparative

2 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 130.

3 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 371.

4 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 373.

examination of examples.<sup>5</sup> This is not a random sampling, and must be preceded by the selection of a certain order for the exploration of these phenomena. This is only one of many possible orders, but is necessary so that there will be sense to our examination. Focusing on language, however, will not resolve all the interpretive issues; at times, the reverse will be the case. Language so bewitches our understanding that we can be trapped in confusions, such as between an object and what denotes it, for example: between inner processes that are generated in the first person and those generated between individuals and that can be described in the second and third persons, and more.<sup>6</sup>

The book will explore self-constitution in the poetry of four twentieth-century Hebrew poets whose contribution to and importance for Hebrew literature needs no elaboration: Zelda, Yehuda Amichai, Admiel Kosman, and Shimon Adaf. My personal taste undoubtedly influenced the choice of poets, but in a manner that conducts a dialogue with cultural and universal characteristics. At a time when the place of poetry in Hebrew literature is in retreat, it is important, and fascinating, to examine how the genre of lyric poetry constitutes self, corresponding to the questions of identity that trouble its composer. The interpretive direction in the book is meant to provide accessibility to these corpora by focusing on self-constitution, based on the assumption of its relevance for many individuals, especially in the postmodern age. I will attempt to show how poetry enriches the possibilities of identity in a way that, on the one hand, blazes new paths to emotion and rational consciousness, and, on the other, arouses the criticism and

5 "Our clear and simple language-games are not preliminary studies for a future regimentation of language [. . .] Rather, the language-games stand there as *objects of comparison* which, through similarities and dissimilarities, are meant to throw light on features of our language. For we can avoid unfairness or vacuity in our assertions only by presenting the model as what it is, as an object of comparison—as a sort of yardstick; not as a preconception to which reality *must* correspond. [. . .] We want to establish an order in our knowledge of the use of language: an order for a particular purpose, one out of many possible orders, not *the* order. For this purpose we shall again and again *emphasize* distinctions which our ordinary forms of language easily make us overlook" (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 130–32).

6 "Philosophy is a struggle against the bewitchment of our understanding by the resources of our language" (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 109).

self-determination of the reader on various questions of life that always remain unanswered.

The questions I raised will be examined in three tracks, namely, the three ways of grammatical activity: poetic grammar, dialogic grammar, and mystical grammar. These are three “orders” that were formulated following Wittgenstein’s argument that grammar acts in all the ways needed by humans.<sup>7</sup> The familiar ways use the rules of syntax, logic, or empiricism, but truth be told, the rules of a language-game can be constituted in independent, creative, consensual, or controversial fashion. The objects of experience will likely function as grammatical rules that constitute expressions of pain, longing, or any other inner expression that becomes manifest in language and is common to those speaking the language-game in which this expression is constituted. At times lyrical poetry exposes various tensions by its focus on the speaker’s gaze, which often confronts the world.

Why poetry and not prose? Each of these poets also wrote in additional genres: Zelda wrote “impressions,” and attested to how natural she felt when she wrote prose and drama; Amichai wrote prose and drama; Kosman has authored many academic research works; and Shimon Adaf has written seven prose books and a wealth of essays of various sorts. I focus on poetry because of the relevance of the language-game of poetry for examining self-constitution. Poetry existed before distinct genres came into existence, and prose later split off from it.<sup>8</sup> Lyrical poetry developed as a consequence of “the distinction of

7 “The paradox disappears only if we make a radical break with the idea that language always functions in one way, always serves the same purpose: to convey thoughts—which may be about houses, pains, good and evil, or whatever” (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 304).

8 “The Greek word *poiesis*, which was first used to designate poetry in the first half of the fifth century BCE was in fact more akin to our idea of literary fiction than to that of poetry proper [. . .] Greek prose, which developed much later than the traditional poetic genres, specialized in [. . .] forms of non-fiction and identified itself, in a conscious contrast to poetry, as ‘the language of truth’. Well beyond the end of the classical period, the distinction of ‘fiction’ and ‘non-fiction’ coincided for all purposes with that between poetry and prose” (Margalit Finkelberg, “Poetry Versus Prose in Ancient Greece,” in *Wool from the Loom: The Development of Literary Genres in Ancient Literature*, ed. Nathan Wasserman [Jerusalem: Magnes, 2002], English abstract: pp. VI–VII).

‘fiction’ and ‘non-fiction,’” and Plato placed “nonmystical lyrical poetry at the apex of the genres.”<sup>9</sup> Aristotle reversed this hierarchy, and did not even include lyrical poetry in his *Poetics*, but in this book we return to the Platonic hierarchy. This is not for the purpose of determining what is ideal poetry, as did Plato, but because the focus of lyrical poetry on the inner world of the “I”-speaker is an “order” (in the Wittgensteinian sense) that directs us to the processes of self-constitution.<sup>10</sup> The boundaries between the genres have unquestionably become blurred since their division by the Greeks into mystical degrees, but I maintain that in these corpora we can see the dominance and distinctness of the poetics of reflective self-constitution.

The book begins by examining the poetic characteristics of poetic language, and in the first stage will therefore discuss poetic grammar. In the next stage, continuing Wittgenstein’s argument that language can also show and not merely say, I will clarify the ways of movement beyond the limits of language in the poems. And finally, I will explore the actual, dialogic plane that, by means of its varied tools, constitutes the ways in which the language of the poem acts as it strives, poetically, toward the limits of language. Wittgenstein viewed his philosophical investigations as an expression of inner dialogue.<sup>11</sup> This insight also captures the quality of lyrical poetry: the speaker’s inner dialogue might create and conduct a dialogue in the soul of the reader as well.

Self-constitution is problematic, both substantively and methodologically. Since the self is dynamic and cannot be “frozen” and scrutinized from the outside, it is unclear how a person can clarify the features of his selfhood and consciously choose how to fashion them. The methodological difficulty results from the question of how a person can formulate his individual characteristics in public language. In light

9 Finkelberg, “Poetry Versus Prose,” p. 39.

10 In terms of the “map of genres—epos, lyric, and drama—that is accepted to this day [. . .] [we see that] nonmystical speech, that is limited solely to the ‘I’ of the author, represents the lyrical genre” (Finkelberg, “Poetry Versus Prose,” p. 40).

11 “Nearly all of my writings are private conversations with myself. Things that I say to myself tête-à-tête” (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value: A Selection from the Posthumous Remains*, ed. Georg Henrik von Wright, trans. Peter Winch [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1998], p. 77).

of the fact that the very expression is part of self-constitution, then the use of common language a priori includes both linguistic and spiritual conventions.

Despite these two pitfalls, we succeed in expressing ourselves, in formulating our personality traits, and in employing judgment and selection in the use of language. The book will demonstrate how lyrical poetry is especially suited to contend with this complexity, since it offers a certain answer to these two problems, because its two main characteristics are reflective self-examination and the formulation of a unique individual expression.

The examination of the four processes of self-constitution in the poetic language of lyrical poetry includes a number of possible features of such self-constitution: the process can be retrospectively and comparatively examined and described; it is more distinct in poetic language, in which special attention is paid to individual expression; and finally, lyrical poetry, as a genre devoted to the self-examination of the speaker, at times while detached from the world, can illuminate self-constitution better than other genres.

Wittgenstein's insights, which guide my research, combine the cultural and the universal. Form of life is a universal possibility of controlling language, and the masters of this create possibilities of expressing and constituting identity. Notwithstanding this, Wittgenstein also used the "form of life" concept to denote a set of specific cultural conditions of which we must be aware in order to understand what is said in the language of that culture. I attempted to look at the poets I chose in this integrative way. Twentieth-century Hebrew poetry possesses a specific, and intriguing, characteristic, namely, the revival of Hebrew and its transformation from a language reserved for religious rituals to a living and lively everyday language. The revival of Hebrew that began in the nineteenth century included its influence on fashioning consciousness (especially in the context of immigration to the Land of Israel). It was only in the twentieth century, however, that Hebrew poetry became an integral part of the public consciousness.

It is accepted in scholarly research to view the emergence of the *Likrat* group, which included Yehuda Amichai, as the transition from

the fashioning of collective consciousness to the expression of individual consciousness in Hebrew literature. Zelda's poetry, however, is no less distant from the "poetry of the Palmach generation" than from that of Amichai, and it, too, focused on individual self-constitution. Zelda and Amichai wrote in the same period, in Jerusalem; each came from a religious home, and both were masters of the Hebrew language, with its wealth of language-games. These lines of "family resemblance" justify a comparison that reveals profound and intriguing differences between the two corpora.

Admiel Kosman and Shimon Adaf, too, share a "family resemblance": both grew up in religious families and exhibit a command of all the strata in Hebrew; both are critical of traditional conventions in a manner direct yet complex and sophisticated, poetical, and existential. Each in his own way fashions a different, and unique, poetical voice rich in expressions and ideas that exemplify an identity that is both clearly Jewish and universal.

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Mention should be made of a feature common to Wittgenstein's thought and the corpora chosen for this book: on the one hand, Wittgenstein stressed that language can be understood only within the context of the form of life in which it acts. On the other hand, the concept of form of life is also interpreted as denoting universal categories of thought. I will show how the works of these four poets all reflect this complexity: Hebrew, which is renewed with their help as well, is created and understood on the context of a concrete reality, while at the same time the questions and problems with which the poems wrestle are universal, both in their formulation and in the response to them—questions of suffering, loneliness, love, and the individual's alienation from the world cross all the corpora.

Two factors influenced the selection of the poems: Wittgenstein's statement that "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world" applies to both the poet and the reader, who feels how his world expands and his identity is enriched in the encounter with the masters of language. "Grammar is not accountable to any reality"<sup>12</sup> opens the

12 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar*, ed. Rush Rhees, trans. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), p. 184.

possibility of poetic language influencing our identity. The various types of grammar created in the language of poetry (which will be detailed below) create a dynamic essence that accompanies our lives in various settings, whose nature and “point” it illuminates.<sup>13</sup>

My decision to analyze self-constitution in the poetry of Zelda, Amichai, Kosman, and Adaf under the influence of Wittgenstein’s concept of grammar came primarily from the desire to refrain from theoretical categorization. Chana Kronfeld was the first, in the spirit of Wittgenstein’s concept of “family resemblance,” to suggest refraining from categories in her book *On the Margins of Modernism* (1993). The concepts of “family,” “game,” and “thread” exemplify how final limits for a concept cannot be defined, with the consequent inability to provide a complete definition for a literary movement such as “modernism.”<sup>14</sup>

Wittgenstein did not often relate to aesthetic judgment in his writings, but scholarly research from the middle of the 1990s to the present contains many discussions of the methodological characteristics that can be gleaned from his work in order to propose a methodology for such judgment. In the aesthetic expanse, I will focus exclusively on literary works, from a perspective that examines the linguistic processes that take place within them and create its uniqueness. This singularity also includes a series of tensions characteristic of verbal language and its relationship with the world. Wittgenstein addressed the confusion and questions that arise from the action of language in all manner of ways, often simultaneously, such as how is an inner process described, or when it seems to a speaker that a certain picture blocks, or even prevents, his use of a word. His relating to these issues reflects his awareness of the tension that always arises due to the simple fact that the sense of a disparity between language and a person will always remain. We can never even want to “interpose”<sup>15</sup> between the two, let

13 “So I am inclined to distinguish between essential and inessential rules in a game too. The game, one would like to say, has not only rules but also a *point*” (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 564).

14 Chana Kronfeld, *On the Margins of Modernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 28–30.

15 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 245.

alone cancel this gap. This, for me, is the focal point emphasized in what Wittgenstein says about pain: unlike the prevalent position that pain fuels creativity or kindles the creative urge, we could say, influenced by Wittgenstein, that the gaps between language and other things in our world fuel the need to again and again formulate and verbalize. And thus the need to bridge the break between the given language within which we live our lives, on the one hand, and, on the other, the desire to be precise regarding personal meaning and our individual will.

A historical-cultural perspective is not relevant to this book, which seeks to focus on the question of the relationship between language mechanisms and the expressions of universal existential questions. Such a discussion is not exempt from exploring questions from within the culture in which they were written; these, however, will be examined from an existential linguistic viewpoint.

xvi I therefore propose a possible mode of judgment that is not based on existing models, but rather unites three types of Wittgensteinian grammar, all of which are based on grammatical expression: poetical grammar, mystical grammar, and dialogic grammar.

I will show, for each of these language-games, how the creative process acts in each of these ways. Each of the latter reflects the desire to contend with the gap that will always remain in the encounter with the poem, between what is evident in the poem and what is explicitly verbalized, between the eternal craving and the momentary sense of realization. Generally speaking, each of the grammar types to be examined might also be characteristic of expressions in everyday statements, but the combination of the three types is especially characteristic of poetic language. The book's methodology offers a literary examination that describes poetry as functioning in a number of ways concurrently, and therefore reflects aesthetic worth, alongside ethical (dialogical) and (self- and socially) critical value.

Each in its own way, the corpora I choose in order to exemplify the actual meaning of aesthetic judgment are milestones of the longing for a complex Jewish identity. This identity cannot be classified in any sociological category, but rather begins from the starting point of



individual will. This will is motivated by the relationship between poetical language and events and things in the world, and not by dictates or conventions, although at times this expression takes form when facing conventions, or in opposition to them.

The first three chapters of the book present the theoretical basis for my interpretation and comparison of the corpora of poetry, and each of the following four chapters is devoted to an analysis of a specific poet's work.

It is my pleasurable duty to thank the individuals without whom this book could not have been written.

This research had its beginnings in my PhD dissertation, which was submitted to Bar-Ilan University in the Program for Hermeneutics and Culture Studies. The program was founded and headed for many years by Prof. Avi Sagi, an outstanding intellectual and unparalleled teacher, whose inspiration is evident in many studies, including this book. I am grateful to him for the encouragement and support he has given to this day. I am also grateful to Prof. Dov Schwartz, who, as head of the Interdisciplinary Studies Program, encouraged my research and was always willing to offer advice that expanded my research directions.

My PhD dissertation was supervised by Prof. Tamar Sovran and Prof. Avidor Lipsker, who greatly enriched my knowledge. Prof. Sovran introduced me to the study of language, and her insights and advice accompanied, and still accompany, my scholarly and personal path in unparalleled fashion.

I am indebted to my students in the Program for Hermeneutics and Culture Studies, who for more than a decade have added challenge to my research. Their enthusiasm and active participation in class and in their diverse studies, and the active dialogue they conduct with my studies, have been of mutual benefit.

A singular component of this book is the dialogue I conducted with two of the poets whose work I examine. My thanks to Prof. Admiel Kosman, who always found time to engage in dialogue that expanded my horizons and warmed my heart and combined the forte of the scholar and poet with rare openness. My special thanks, more than

## Preface

words can express, to Shimon Adaf, who is peerless both as person and poet, for the riveting dialogue that, time and again, took me to the boundaries of language and beyond, and deepened my understanding of the beauty and truth of poetry. Special thanks to my devoted and exacting translator Edward Levin, for hearing the inner voice of the text, which he deftly conveyed into English.

Last, but not least, my thanks to the members of my family—Momi, Yehonatan, Rivki and Shira, Daniel and Noa, and Adi and Michael—for their endless love, understanding, and support.

# Poetic Grammar: Three Aspects of Aesthetic Judgment

Essence is expressed in grammar.<sup>1</sup>

Grammar tells what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar).<sup>2</sup>

One of the central and new elements of the linguistic turn in Wittgenstein's thought was his methodical directive to completely refrain from theoretization and to focus on the comparative examination of the ways in which language works.<sup>3</sup> Wittgenstein was consistent in this, despite the presence of metalinguistic expressions here and there in his books, which we could understand as cognitive expressions meant to clarify a certain issue. Wittgensteinian terms such as "picture," "language-game," "rule," and "form of life," for example, are still the subject of scholarly research, are given new interpretations time and

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1 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 371.

2 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 373.

3 "We may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. All *explanation* must disappear, and description alone must take its place [. . .] These are, of course, not empirical problems; but they are solved through an insight into the workings of our language" (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 109). "The language-games stand there as *objects of comparison* which, through similarities and dissimilarities, are meant to throw light on features of our language" (*Philosophical Investigations*, para. 130).

again, and do not disappear after Wittgenstein finished clarifying some question. His consistency is therefore expressed in the absence of a coherent “method” or “theory,” while the terms that he proposed, as well as his unique formulations, continue to intrigue us.

Wittgenstein formulated the motivation for his investigations differently than Hegel.<sup>4</sup> While the latter sought to show the similarity between things that seem different, Wittgenstein suggested comparing language-games and concentrating specifically on heightening the differences between them. Since we cannot find a commonality for language-games in any context, it is similarly impossible to present a shared basis for poetic works. At best, we can speak of a “family resemblance.” Such a study depicts a network of similarities that reflects such a resemblance of language-games:

Consider, for example, the activities that we call “games” [. . .] What is common to them all?—Don’t say: “They *must* have something in common, or they would not be called ‘games’”—but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all.—For if you look at them, you won’t see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, affinities, and a whole series of them at that [. . .] And we can go through the many, many other groups of games in the same way, can see how similarities crop up and disappear [. . .] And the upshot of these considerations is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: similarities in the large and in the small. I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than “family resemblances”; for the various resemblances between members of a family—build, features, color of eyes, gait, temperament, and so on and so

4 “Hegel seems to me to be always wanting to say that things which look different are really the same. Whereas my interest is in showing that things which look the same are really different. I was thinking of using as a motto for my book a quotation from *King Lear*: ‘I’ll teach you differences’” (*Recollections of Wittgenstein*, ed. Rush Rhees [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984], p. 157).

forth—overlap and criss-cross in the same way.—And I shall say: “games” form a family.<sup>5</sup>

The characteristics of the term “family resemblance” enable us to understand Wittgenstein’s methodical avoidance of definitions and generalizations. This said and done, a certain tension is to be found between this abstention and Wittgenstein’s desire to indicate the differences between situations or between language-games, since his description contained the locating of a “network of similarities.”<sup>6</sup> The tension can be resolved by proposing a methodology based on the locating of both differences and similarities; in this spirit, I wish to connect Wittgenstein’s discussions of aesthetic judgment to an examination of the ways in which poetic identity is established.

Wittgenstein proposed a number of features regarding aesthetic judgment, and our discussion of the language-games of the poets to be examined in the current work will be based on “family resemblance” on three planes: the poetic, the mystical, and the dialogic. Each of these three has its own characteristic rules of grammar, which constitute its nature, such that “*essence* is expressed by grammar.” But how is “essence” expressed, if Wittgenstein opposed the possibility of articulating it, and how can we suggest a comparative methodology to formulate aesthetic judgment?

Wittgenstein’s later investigations, and especially his book *Philosophical Investigations*, were highly influential on scholars in England and the United States who explored aesthetic judgment.<sup>7</sup> In his *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein formulated modernist features, such as refraining from theoretization and focusing on examining the ways in which language works. This orientation continued in the research of his thought as a whole, and serves as the basis for the study of *Philosophical*

5 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 66–67.

6 The series of terms that Wittgenstein coined in his discussion can be considered to be “tools” needed to analyze differences in reality in general, and especially between different uses of language; see the detailed discussion below.

7 For an extensive discussion, see Benjamin Tilghman, *Wittgenstein, Ethics, and Aesthetics: The View from Eternity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991).

*Investigations*, specifically.<sup>8</sup> Wittgenstein stressed the significance of external criteria in order to be able to speak of meaning, and the need to set forth one of many possible orders in order to conduct a comparative examination of language-games.<sup>9</sup> Poetic creations and aesthetic judgment come into existence within the cultural context, and constitute the language-games that are to be studied within their context:

The words we call expressions of aesthetic judgment play a very complicated role, but a very definite role, in what we call a culture of a period. To describe their use or to describe what you mean by a cultured taste, you have to describe a culture.

What we now call a cultured taste perhaps didn't exist in the Middle Ages. An entirely different game is played in different ages. What belongs to a language game is a whole culture. In describing musical taste you have to describe whether children give concerts, whether women do or whether men only give them, etc., etc.<sup>10</sup>

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Even if we will never be able to relate to all the cultural characteristics that encompass the work or the aesthetic judgment, the terminology of such judgment has a distinct role. "Poetic grammar," "mystical grammar," and "dialogic grammar" are examples of terms that enable aesthetic judgment, and that will be applied in the analysis of poetic word-games. Wittgenstein did not clearly distinguish between aesthetic judgment in general and that of a specific artistic realm.

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8 "We may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. All *explanation* must disappear, and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light [. . .] from the philosophical problems" (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 109).

9 "An 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria" (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 580); "Our clear and simple language-games are not preliminary studies for a future regimentation of language—as it were, first approximations, ignoring friction and air resistance. Rather, the language-games stand there as *objects of comparison* which, through similarities and dissimilarities, are meant to throw light on features of our language" (*Philosophical Investigations*, para. 130).

10 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief*, ed. Cyril Barret (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 8.

The choice of the term “poetic” denotes a focus on the language-games of poetry, but is certainly valid for other literary genres as well. The examination of the language-games of poets aims to present different possible contemporary identities that do not fit into categories prevalent in the Israeli literary expanse. Definitions such as “religiosity,” “Easternism,” or “modernism” overlook the complexities of identity to be found in these corpora, while, in contrast, the methodological terms that were inspired by Wittgenstein allow us to more clearly delineate the uniqueness of the poets we will discuss in contemporary Hebrew literature. The theoretical principles that will be set forth in the introductory chapters will guide our study of the thematic moves reflected in these poets’ works, along with an examination of the grammar that makes this possible.<sup>11</sup>

Like every language-game, poetic judgment is based on rules that can be retrospectively described after their use in the judgment process.<sup>12</sup> Notwithstanding this, if these rules were not learned at some time, aesthetic judgment could not be conducted. Learning the rules improves the quality of the aesthetic judgment, but the nature of this judgment is also dependent on the capabilities of the judge. These features form the underpinning for the central argument of the current book: that grammatical rules that establish the poetical qualities of a literary work can be identified within the work. Aesthetic judgment therefore contains an examination of relevant rules, a description of the thematic move that is grammatically fashioned, and, finally, an indication of the manner of functioning within a certain culture.

11 “Rule” is a central term in *Philosophical Investigations*; see below.

12 “(1) Lewy says: ‘This is too short.’ I say: ‘No. It is right. It is according to the rules.’ (2) I develop a feeling for the rules. I interpret the rules. I might say: ‘No. It isn’t right. It isn’t according to the rules.’ Here I would be making an aesthetic judgment about the thing which is according to the rules in sense (1). On the other hand, if I hadn’t learnt the rules, I wouldn’t be able to make the aesthetic judgment. Learning the rules actually changes your judgment. [Although, if you haven’t learnt Harmony and haven’t a good ear, you may nevertheless detect any disharmony in a sequence of chords]” (Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations*, p. 5).

I will therefore offer the term “poetic grammar” as a metaphorical “ladder.”<sup>13</sup> The significance of such a ladder is that the poetics of a work are embodied in grammatical rules that, according to Wittgenstein, enable examination and judgment. Wittgenstein drew a sharp distinction between philosophical discussion and poetic expression, while believing that the two types of expression should be drawn closer, so that philosophical writing would be characterized by poetic elements:

One should write philosophy only as one writes a poem. That, it seems to me, must reveal how far my thinking belongs to the present, the future, or the past. For I was acknowledging myself, with these words, to be someone who cannot quite do what he would like to be able to do.<sup>14</sup>

6

Wittgenstein formulated an analogy between poetic and philosophical writing: poetry, like philosophy, can yield self-consciousness and an awareness of the sources of influence that fashion man’s personality (the past’s tradition, the present’s circumstances, and one’s aspirations for the future). In this manner, a person can correctly assess his abilities and limitations. Wittgenstein’s proposal to write philosophy as a poem is based on poetry’s ability to cause a person to come to know himself, while at the same time the very words by means of which this reflective thought occurs attest to man’s limited ability to know himself.

Poetic language functions in this context as the driving force for self-knowledge, but actually we do not know what is special about poetic language so that it makes this journey of discovery possible. If we apply another suggestion by Wittgenstein, to examine whether

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13 At the end of his *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein used the metaphor of a ladder to argue that the sentences of a book must function as stages of understanding, and that after this understanding has been attained, the ladder is superfluous: “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)” (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961], para. 6.54).

14 Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 28.



certain words at a certain juncture effect something of significance for the person who understands them, we can say that he saw the function of poetic language as enabling the reader to see the meaning of moments of life in different periods.

Wittgenstein's philosophical writing was indeed characterized by poetic elements of two types: the first includes the features of Wittgensteinian language itself—abbreviation, conciseness, figurativeness, and dialogic nature. The second type (listed below) comprises the manner in which “things are done” in poetic language.<sup>15</sup> Austin's terms, which describe the ways in which language actions are performed, will aid us in resolving the questions that Wittgenstein addressed in his depiction of poetic language: What generates poetic language? What does it make possible, as opposed to everyday language? How does it stimulate the reader's emotions, and what questions does it arouse?<sup>16</sup> Examining poetic grammar means clarifying the grammatical ways that make poetry possible, from one (or more) of the following aspects:

1. The ability of an aesthetic work *to effect a person's reflective introspection* of his life by arousing sentiment that causes the reader to scrutinize his life, in the past, the present, or in regard to his future will.

15 Inspired by Austin's well-known book: John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

16 These questions were formulated in accordance with three of Austin's terms—“locutionary act,” “illocutionary act,” and “perlocutionary act”—as he defined them: “The act of ‘saying something’ in this full normal sense I call [. . .] the performance of locutionary act” (*How to Do Things*, p. 94); “‘illocutionary’ act, i.e. performance of an act *in* saying something, as opposed to performing of an act of saying something (p. 99); “There is yet a further sense in which to perform a locutionary act, and therein an illocutionary act, may also be to perform an act of another kind. Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them; and we may then say, speaking of this, that the speaker has performed an act in the nomenclature of which reference is made either, only obliquely, or even, not at all, to the performance of the locutionary or illocutionary act. We shall call the performance of an act of this kind the performance of *perlocutionary* act or *perlocution*” (p. 101, emphases in the original).

2. The ability of an aesthetic work *to express individuality, and to effect a change in aspect*, to show something else.
3. The ability of an aesthetic work *to present a symbolic structure that cannot be directly verbalized*, but can only make itself “manifest.” The “logical form” can be interpreted in two ways: form as the inner, hidden, structure of the work, or form as a symbolic array that represents the ineffable.

The theoretical detailing of these aspects requires a clarification of how Wittgensteinian aesthetic judgment can be described, in light of the fact that he placed aesthetics, along with logic, ethics, and belief, beyond the bounds of language.<sup>17</sup> Continuing in this vein, throughout his thought, Wittgenstein based his philosophical investigations on the manner in which language works in different contexts, and not on judgment grounded in external or substantive criteria. It therefore would seem that any move in language, including poetic-aesthetic language-games, can be judged in the context of the language-game in which it is created.<sup>18</sup>

8

## 1. Examination and Judgment of Aesthetic Language: The Fundamental Tension

Art is a kind of expression. Good art is complete expression. The work of art is the object seen *sub specie aeternitatis*; and the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. This is

17 “Logic is not a body of doctrine, but a mirror-image of the world. Logic is transcendental [ . . . ] It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words. Ethics is transcendental. (Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same.) [ . . . ] There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical” (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, para. 6.13, 6.421, 6.522).

18 Aesthetic judgment was never a central concern in Wittgenstein’s investigations, but despite Wittgenstein’s few direct references to the issue, Garry L. Hagberg already identified elements of aesthetic judgment in Wittgenstein’s philosophical writings (“Wittgenstein’s Aesthetics,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2007). Hagberg drew parallels between the way language works and the act of poetic creativity. He asserts that this similarity must be expressed in judgment, and therefore we cannot speak of the causes of creativity, while we can examine a poetic work and indicate its innovativeness and, accordingly, its creativity.

the connexion between art and ethics. The usual way of looking at things sees objects as it were from the midst of them, the view *sub specie aeternitatis* from outside.<sup>19</sup>

Wittgenstein used the Latin expression “*sub specie aeternitatis*” to present the goal of a work of art: making it possible to view the world from outside it, as a whole, as complete. In ordinary language, states of affairs are portrayed in a certain context, “from the midst of them.” A work of art, in contrast, can show the boundaries of language by showing the rules that enable the expression of a certain content and, consequently, that of the wholeness of content and form.

What is the meaning of sensing “the world as whole,” and how does a work of art produce such a feeling? Is this a feeling of holistic merging with the world? A sense of wholeness in the encounter with or the creation of a work of art, because the artist or observer/reader can formulate the rules for himself? Does a work of art allow us to disregard verbal language, and accordingly creates a sense of wholeness (due to the possibility of avoiding the distinctions, boundaries, and definitions that language requires)? Does a good work of art generate a sense of “connection to life” and thereby touch upon the “wonder” at the world’s existence?<sup>20</sup>

19 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914–1916*, ed. Georg Henrik von Wright and Gertrude E. M. Anscombe, trans. Gertrude E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), p. 83.

20 Aesthetic judgment that is based on the work’s effect on the viewer/reader as a criterion of the work’s quality was formulated by Ray Elliot, following Wittgenstein: “This may be thought sufficient reason for understanding aesthetic contemplation, in Wittgenstein’s aesthetic, as resulting in an experience of wonder at the existence of the object; which is also wonder at the existence of the world, since (a) the object *is* my world; (b) it is seen together with the whole of logical space; and (c) every object is capable of being seen in this way. This wonder belongs to the aesthetic ‘significance’ we have been looking for. Since aesthetic contemplation involves the contemplation of the world as a limited whole, and ‘the feeling of the world as a limited whole is the mystical feeling’ (*Tractatus*, para. 6.45), aesthetic contemplation involves the mystical both as a feeling of the oneness of the world, and of wonder at its existence” (Ray Elliot, “Wittgenstein’s Speculative Aesthetics in Its Ethical Context,” in *Beyond Liberal Education: Essays in Honour of Paul H. Hirst*, ed. Robin Barrow and Patricia White [London: Routledge, 1993], pp. 159–60). This viewpoint was followed and developed by Malcolm Budd,

Wittgenstein's assertion "Good art is complete expression" presents the quandary at the basis of the review of poetry in the current book. On the one hand, he describes a feeling of certainty regarding the existence of good art that embodies a certain type of completeness, while, on the other, the descriptive words of aesthetic judgment are not suitable for detailing the nature of this completeness, since a description of wholeness requires an external perspective, while our vision is limited to seeing only certain aspects, and not the entirety of the aspects. Throughout his thought, Wittgenstein set forth two major reasons for the lack of such a possibility.

The *first reason* is that aesthetic expression cannot be described, because of the positioning of aesthetics beyond the boundaries of language. This argument appears in Wittgenstein's early thought, in which he formulated the boundaries of language. In the first stage, he placed logic beyond these bounds, and in the second stage, he compared ethics to aesthetics, and stated that both lie beyond the bounds of human expression. Notwithstanding this, in his diaries, which were written during those years and contain many parallels to *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein expanded his discussion of aesthetics, and asserted that art is a type of expression, and that good art is complete expression. Taking these two statements together and the tension that this produces inspires the current discussion: on the one hand, good art exists in the world and therefore can be assessed; on the other hand, its inherent ability to present the world as total completeness does not actually exist in language (since this ability cannot be verbalized, continuing the parallel of ethics—that cannot be verbalized—to aesthetics), which focuses on objects and not on comprehensive introspection from without.

The *second reason* for the problematic nature of aesthetic judgment is the absence of dedicated terminology. A speaker can indicate the distinctness of an aesthetic object and portray its influence on him, but such a discussion is based on first-person certainty. The discussion of first-person certainty and its consequences is one of the most studied

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"Wittgenstein on Aesthetics," in *Aesthetic Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 252–77.

topics in Wittgenstein's thought and is basic to our inquiry: on the one hand, the speaker's affinity to the aesthetic object, and the latter's effect on him, occur in the emotional plane and cannot be described empirically. On the other hand, the terms of emotion (such as "pleasant," "moving," and the like) are public, general terms and expressive tools at the disposal of the speaker, and do not express the uniqueness of his aesthetic experience. In summation, the possibility of aesthetic judgment, according to Wittgenstein, is in doubt, in terms both of the ability to describe the features of the aesthetic object itself, and of the ability to depict its influence on the speaker and his examination of it.

Despite these difficulties, attempts have been made to describe Wittgenstein's notion of aesthetic judgment. Like the effort made in the current book, they can be explained by citing two "Wittgensteinian" reasons: the first is the importance of aesthetics in our lives, and especially for Wittgenstein.<sup>21</sup> The second reason is the centrality of the aesthetic aspect in Wittgenstein's philosophical writing, so that the uniqueness of his writing is evident. The care he took regarding the quality of the expression of his ideas includes aesthetic features such as metaphors, the use of dialogue, and additional aesthetic means; his concern for the aesthetic also finds expression in his editing and reediting of his writings.

In his book on metaphor in Wittgenstein's writings, Jerry Gill finely showed how the choice of metaphors is not an attempt to create a second-order language, to which Wittgenstein was explicitly opposed; rather, the metaphors are intertwined within and throughout his investigations as a philosophical method.<sup>22</sup> This methodology is based on the use of metaphor for different purposes, after the attainment of which it

21 Many scholars teach of the importance of aesthetics in Wittgenstein's life. See, e.g., Budd, "Wittgenstein on Aesthetics"; Garry L. Hagberg, *Art as Language: Wittgenstein, Meaning, and Aesthetic Theory* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); Peter B. Lewis, ed., *Wittgenstein, Aesthetics, and Philosophy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); and Richard Allen and Malcolm Turvey, eds., *Wittgenstein, Theory, and the Arts* (London: Routledge, 2001).

22 Jerry H. Gill, *Wittgenstein and Metaphor* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1996).

is no longer necessary.<sup>23</sup> Gill lists uses such as substitution, constitution, and metaphor, and examines the metaphorical usages in Wittgenstein's three central works.<sup>24</sup> The problematic nature, throughout Wittgenstein's writing, of the discussion of the aesthetic aspect remains, since, in actuality, everyday language cannot be absolutely distinguished from aesthetic language.

The presumed "solution" is to be found in *Philosophical Investigations*, in which Wittgenstein stressed that the language of logic is based on the mechanisms of regular, everyday language, which, he maintains, has the potential to serve all human needs.<sup>25</sup> Aesthetic judgment is a common practice, and therefore, despite the perception of aesthetics as existing beyond language, it can be formulated in routine expressions. The use of super-concepts must be truly humble, just like the use of words that denote ordinary objects. Aesthetics, or aesthetic judgment, certainly can be thought of as "super-concepts." The question arises: what is the meaning of the "humble" or routine use of terms that are meant to organize a certain praxis, and not only denote some object?

A possible direction to resolve this question can be found in Wittgenstein's few discussions of "poetics." In his later writings Wittgenstein took note of the fact that we use poetic means in everyday language as well, in several ways. For example, poetics can be expressed in a "poetic mood," that recalls the mimetic criterion set forth by Aristotle:

Schiller writes in a letter (to Goethe, I think) of a "poetic mood." I think I know what he means, I think I am familiar

23 Gill, *Wittgenstein and Metaphor*, pp. 150–51.

24 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*; Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*; Gertrude E. M. Anscombe and Georg Henrik von Wright, eds., *On Certainty*, trans. Denis Paul and Gertrude E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969).

25 "The sense in which philosophy of logic speaks of sentences and words is no different from that in which we speak of them in ordinary life" (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 108). "We are under the illusion that what is peculiar, profound and essential to us in our investigation resides in its trying to grasp the incomparable essence of language. That is, the order existing between the concepts of proposition, word, inference, truth, experience, and so forth. This order is a *super-order* between—so to speak—*super-concepts*. Whereas, in fact, if the words 'language,' 'experience,' 'world' have a use, it must be as humble a one as that of the words 'table,' 'lamp,' 'door'" (*Philosophical Investigations*, para. 97).

with it myself. It is the mood or receptivity to nature & one in which one's thoughts seem as vivid as nature itself.<sup>26</sup>

A second method of poetic use depicts the way in which an imaginary picture is created, as a spontaneous occurrence:

"If I shut my eyes, there he is in front of me."—One could suppose that such expressions are not learned, but rather poetically formed, spontaneously. That they therefore "seem just right" to one man and then also to the next one.<sup>27</sup>

A third sort of poetic use consists of transmitting a message by means of a picture, instead of words:

I might get an important message to someone by sending him the picture of a landscape. Does he read it like a blueprint? That is, does he decipher it? He looks at it and acts accordingly. He sees rocks, trees, a house, etc. in it. (The situation here is one of practical necessity, but the means of communication is one that has nothing to do with any previous agreement, definition, or the like, and that otherwise only serves quasi-poetic purposes. But on the other hand normal speech also serves poetic purposes.)<sup>28</sup>

Beyond the fact of Wittgenstein's clarification of the incorporation of poetic language in regular language and the use of poetic means for the needs of "normal speech," and vice versa, I wish to emphasize the importance of Wittgenstein's repeated use of the picture. Not only can it replace words; it does not need agreement or definition, which are

26 Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 75.

27 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, ed. Georg Henrik von Wright and Heikki Nyman, trans. C. G. Luckhardt and Maximilian Nyman, trans. C. G. Luckhardt and M. A. E. Aue (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), vol. 2, para. 117.

28 Wittgenstein, *Remarks*, vol. 2, para. 447–48.

necessary when we use words.<sup>29</sup> This means that, despite the combination of routine and poetic language, poetic language retains its uniqueness in Wittgenstein's later writings as well.<sup>30</sup> This singularity also retrospectively sheds light on the picture in *Tractatus*, and justifies our reliance on Wittgenstein's early works in formulating the methodology of aesthetic judgment.

An additional direction in his early writings illustrates the distinctiveness of the aesthetic perspective in the sense of "the world as a whole." This singularity lies in the possibility of aesthetics to generate experience enveloped in the sense of the miraculous:

Aesthetically, the miracle is that the world exists. That there is what there is. Is it the essence of the artistic way of looking at things, that it looks at the world with a happy eye? Life is grave, art is gay. For there is certainly something in the conception that the end of art is the beautiful. And the beautiful is what makes happy.<sup>31</sup>

14

The encounter with the aesthetic produces an experience of wholeness and completeness—as if the entire world merges with and is included in the work of art. We can speak of two opposing experiences in this context: a work of art is likely to arouse joy and wonder at the world's very existence or, alternately, a sense of "the end of the world." In both instances, the world is epitomized by a somewhat general experience in which the work of art expresses or creates a feeling of "the world as a whole." While Wittgenstein portrays an experience of wonder and happiness, a literary work can also be used to illustrate the opposite general experience, of the "end of the world." Children or adolescents are more readily inclined to perceive a certain experience as fateful and

29 "It is not only agreement in definitions, but also [ . . . ] agreement in judgments that is required for communication by means of language" (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 242).

30 For a comprehensive discussion of Wittgenstein's various uses of the term "picture" throughout his writings, see David Egan, "Pictures in Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy," *Philosophical Investigations* 34, no. 1 (2011), pp. 55–76.

31 Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914–1916*, p. 86.



determining the nature of the world for them. An outstanding example of this appears in the classic work *Winnie-the-Pooh*. When Piglet runs and falls, his balloon explodes, resulting in his thinking that the world came to an end: “he thought that the whole world had blown up.”<sup>32</sup> The sensation of “the world as a whole” is possible in the variants of both an experience of joy and wonder and a negative experience of terror and incomprehension of events.

The possibility of “seeing as a whole” is problematic because it cannot be verbalized. Later, in his book *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein centered the philosophical problematic around the difficulty of seeing things “es an Übersichtlichkeit”:

A main source of our failure is that we don’t have *an overview* of the use of our words.—Our grammar is deficient in surveyability. A surveyable representation produces precisely that kind of understanding which consists in “seeing connections.” Hence the importance of finding and inventing *intermediate links*.<sup>33</sup>

15

The parallelism between Wittgenstein’s early and later thought is evident: it is not only the work of art that cannot be described as a whole; this same difficulty exists for grammar. Wittgenstein’s writings exhibit methodological continuity on this point because, despite the transition to describable phenomena in *Philosophical Investigations*, the

32 “While all this was happening, Piglet had gone back to his own house to get Eeyore’s balloon. He held it very tightly against himself, so that it shouldn’t blow away, and he ran as fast as he could so as to get to Eeyore before Pooh did; for he thought that he would like to be the first one to give a present, just as if he had thought of it without being told by anybody. And running along, and thinking how pleased Eeyore would be, he didn’t look where he was going . . . and suddenly he put his foot in a rabbit hole, and fell down flat on his face. BANG!!!!??\*!! Piglet lay there, wondering what had happened. At first he thought that the whole world had blown up; and then he thought that perhaps only the Forest part of it had; and then he thought that perhaps only *he* had, and he was now alone in the moon or somewhere, and would never see Christopher Robin or Pooh or Eeyore again” (Alan Alexander Milne, *Winnie-the-Pooh* [New York: Penguin, 2009], pp. 83–84). I am grateful to my student Naphtali Yisraeli for the reference.

33 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 122.

desire and inability to comprehensively describe from the outside remains.<sup>34</sup> After explaining the tensions underlying the discussion of aesthetic judgment in Wittgenstein's writings, his methodological goal can be put as follows: a description of poetic grammar should explore the ways in which this grammar functions. I will suggest three possible ways that can be described and evaluated, while not ruling out the existence of additional ways of functioning that create poetic grammar.

## 2. The First Aspect: A Poetic Work as Driving Reflective Introspection

The works of the great masters are stars which rise and set around us. So the time will come again for every great work that is now in the descendent.<sup>35</sup>

Scientific questions may interest me, but they never really grip me. Only conceptual & aesthetic questions have that effect on me. At bottom it leaves me cold whether scientific problems are solved; but not those other questions.<sup>36</sup>

We feel that even when all possible scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched.<sup>37</sup>

Wittgenstein contends that classic works of art are both eternal and of dual aspect: in a certain period, they might illuminate our world as stars, while in periods of decline they "await" the time in which they can once again shine. Beyond the constant quality of these works, they also have a cognitive facet that is dependent on reality. This aspect is

34 Notwithstanding this, Marjorie Perloff pointed to an exceptional passage in Wittgenstein's thought in which he argues for the possibility of perceiving the world "sub specie aeternitatis," not only by means of a work of art. That is, the work of art is the default for such a perception, and para. 122 is not a wish, but a realistic possibility. See Marjorie Perloff, *Wittgenstein's Ladder: Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 79.

35 Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 23.

36 Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 91.

37 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, para. 6.52.

embodied in the communicative feature of poetic grammar: the work might influence people, but not necessarily. Its effect depends on the period and on the individual. By proposing to write philosophy as poetry, Wittgenstein attests of himself that an aesthetic work is capable of generating reflexive introspection in his life. This introspection comes about by arousing sentiment that causes man to examine his life in the present, or as regards his will for the future. How, then, does poetic grammar enable the creation of such introspection that is dependent on the period and the individual?

Wittgenstein bound together conceptual and aesthetic questions, and those two types together with “problems of life.” Such problems are insoluble, nonetheless—and perhaps because of this—they repeatedly ignite his consciousness. Throughout Wittgenstein’s thought, there is constant tension between two types of inquiry: “scientific” investigation, which relates to the regulative nature in which language works; and “conceptual and aesthetic investigation,” that pertains to the meaning of life, and that generates “subjective enthusiasm towards life.” Wittgenstein asserted that aesthetic and cognitive questions warmed his heart, while he was indifferent to scientific ones. The ability of poetic language to arouse feeling stands in opposition to scientific inquiry, which does not touch upon the problems of life; nonetheless, scientific language and poetic language share the same linguistic mechanism. Furthermore, the way in which we understand ourselves is verbalized in language. Consequently, the way how poetic language effects reflective introspection and formulates a response to life’s questions is closely linked to the manner in which meaning is understood, in its simple, ordinary sense:

The idea of the human soul, which one either sees or doesn’t see, is very similar to the idea of the meaning of a word, which stands next to the word, whether as a process or an object.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, ed. Georg Henrik von Wright and Heikki Nyman, trans. C. G. Luckhardt and Maximilian A. E. Aue (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), vol. 1: *Preliminary Studies for Part II of the Philosophical Investigations*, para. 979.

When we attempt to understand an abstract idea such as “the human soul,” we would be well advised to think of the distinction between “meaning” and “word.” Meaning is illusory, since, on the one hand, it cannot be separated from the word:

People say: it’s not the word that counts, but its meaning, thinking of the meaning as a thing of the same kind as the word, even though different from the word. Here the word, there the meaning. The money, and the cow one can buy with it. (On the other hand, however: money, and what can be done with it.)<sup>39</sup>

On the other hand, since use is generally not dictated, a number of meanings can be attributed to every word, and therefore a specific meaning is not a necessary component of the word.<sup>40</sup> Bar-Elli portrayed different possible uses or interpretations, as a sort of reservoir of possibilities that he called “rich use.”<sup>41</sup> This reservoir exists virtually, in the consciousness of the speaker, from which he instinctively selects a certain interpretation. This description, however, does not explain Wittgenstein’s express distinction between “meaning” and “word.” In the following citation, for instance, Wittgenstein clearly distinguishes between the two, being compelled to use the word “meaning”:

39 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 120.

40 This ensues first and foremost from the rules paradox, which is one of the most extensively researched issues of Wittgenstein’s philosophy; “This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be brought into accord with the rule. The answer was: if every course of action can be brought into accord with the rule, then it can also be brought into conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here” (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 201).

41 Bar-Elli proposes the expression “rich use”: “The concepts of use [. . .] are rich and replete with meanings to the extent of the horizons of concepts and meanings that they contain [. . .] action and use are always perceived *in a certain way*, which itself is teeming with meaning and conceptuality” (Gilead Bar-Elli, *The Fathers of Analytic Philosophy: Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein* (Tel Aviv: Goryn, 2009), vol. 3: *Wittgenstein: Language, Mind, Reality*, p. 162 (Hebrew, emphasis added)).

When I pronounce this word while reading expressively, it is completely filled with its meaning. “How can this be, if meaning is the use of the word?” Well, what I said was intended figuratively. Not that I chose the figure: it forced itself on me [. . .] But if a sentence can strike me as a painting in words, then it is no more astonishing that a word uttered in isolation and without purpose can seem to carry a particular meaning within itself.<sup>42</sup>

Wittgenstein explicitly related to the possibility of distinguishing between “meaning” and “word,” employing metaphors such as “soul,” “character,” “face,” and “picture”:

Though one would like to say every word can have a different character in different contexts, at the same time there is a single character it always has—a face. It looks at us, after all.<sup>43</sup>

These metaphors denote the word’s unique “character” that creates a sort of meeting with the reader that leads him to understand the word in a certain manner.<sup>44</sup> This stance resembles that of Charles Sanders Peirce, the founder of modern semiotics, who argued that every sign possesses qualia, quality that is indefinable but constitutes the foundation and source of the process of understanding and interpretation.<sup>45</sup> Bar-Elli noted Wittgenstein’s use of metaphors to denote a fixed aspect of the use of words, which remains in all instances, the perception of which is dependent on experiential and psychological factors.<sup>46</sup> I wish

42 Wittgenstein, “Philosophy of Psychology—A Fragment,” part 2 of the 2009 edition of *Philosophical Investigations*, henceforth *PPF*, para. 265, 267.

43 Wittgenstein, *PPF*, para. 38.

44 An additional example of the claim that a word also embodies a fixed meaning, like a face: “The familiar face of a word, the feeling that it has assimilated its meaning into itself, that it is a likeness of its meaning” (Wittgenstein, *PPF*, para. 294).

45 See Charles Sanders Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, ed. Justus Buchler (New York: Dover, 1955), pp. 80–87. Susan Langer, whose views I will relate below, already incorporated Peirce’s concept of the sign in the formulation of Wittgenstein’s aesthetic judgment.

46 Bar-Elli, *Wittgenstein*, p. 131.

to differ with Bar-Elli's claim that these factors, too, are components of the concept of "use," and are not external to it. Wittgenstein showed differences in the use of the same words in order to illustrate introspective processes. In such processes, a word can be experienced in different ways, with an expanse of *spontaneity* that cannot be anticipated even in the framework of "rich language." This expanse expresses the new and the "spontaneous," and, in practice, establishes a language-game, since expression in language can exist only within the context of a "language-game":

We don't notice the enormous variety of all the everyday language-games, because the clothing of our language makes them all alike. What is new (spontaneous, "specific") is always a language-game.<sup>47</sup>

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The "inner," as Sandra Laugier finely showed, is logically dependent on the concept of the "outer," but this does not allow us to negate the existence of the "inner"; the opposite is the case.<sup>48</sup> The fact that at times the "inner" seems hidden from us, or concealed "behind" an outer expression, does not justify the reduction of the "inner" to the "outer."<sup>49</sup> Wittgenstein argues that, actually, these are two different (and legitimate) uses of language.<sup>50</sup> Wittgenstein coined the term "gappy space" to illustrate the existence of an irreducible gap between the "outer" and the "inner" (which he expressed also in his

47 Wittgenstein, *PPF*, para. 355.

48 Sandra Laugier, "The Myth of the Outer: Wittgenstein's Redefinition of Subjectivity," in *Perspicuous Presentations: Essays on Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology*, ed. Daniele Moyal-Sharrock (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 151–71.

49 "(As one can sometimes reproduce music only in one's inward ear, and cannot whistle it, because the whistling drowns out the inner voice, so sometimes the voice of a philosophical thought is so soft that the noise of spoken words is enough to drown it and prevent it from being heard, if one is questioned and has to speak)" (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, ed. Gertrude E. M. Anscombe and Georg Henrik von Wright, trans. Gertrude E. M. Anscombe [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981], para. 453).

50 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 304.

discussion of pain, in *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 245).<sup>51</sup> I will show that the personal interpretation of a literary work is established within that gappy space. A gap exists between the continuity of events (past-present, and the anticipation of the future) in the speaker's life and the encounter with the work. If a significant meeting occurs, in which one or more aspects of the work function as a "significant face" for the reader, then reflective introspection regarding the reader's life is possible. In order to understand the possibility of some type of change, we must explain the metaphorical field created by Wittgenstein that centers around the term "aspect" and contains a range of its applications.

### 3. The Second Aspect: Conscious Change as the Key to Aesthetic Judgment

But the application, after all, is completely different in aesthetics and descriptive geometry. In aesthetics isn't it essential that a picture or a piece of music, etc., can change its aspect for me?—And, of course, this is not essential for that topological demonstration.<sup>52</sup>

21

The ability of an aesthetic work to change the person who experiences it is depicted by Wittgenstein as "essential." For our purposes, one of the features of poetic grammar is its ability to effect change. The preceding discussion spoke of the intent of the reader/observer to comparatively examine different times in his life. Such an exploration is possible, *inter alia*, because an aesthetic work is characterized by a broader range of meanings, or perspectives, from which it can be interpreted. First, however, we must understand how Wittgenstein describes the nature of the introspection that would enable a person to discern the change that occurs in his consciousness.

51 "One language-game analogous to a fragment of another. One space projected into a limited extent of another. A 'gappy' space. (For 'inner and outer')" (Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, para. 648).

52 Wittgenstein, *Last Writings*, vol. 1, para. 634.

Wittgenstein speaks of two uses of the wording “to see.”<sup>53</sup> One type of usage relates to seeing something and describing it, while the other is expressed in a comparative view of things. He claims that the object of seeing is totally different in every instance, even if two people are seemingly looking at the same object. The “first looker” might create an exact copy of the two faces, while the second would emphasize the similarity between the two faces to which the first relates.

On the one hand, Wittgenstein compares seeing (*Sehen*) to interpretation (*Deuten*). We can see the same illustration in different ways, meaning that seeing is actually interpretation. On the other, he argues that seeing is a passive situation, while interpretation is an active effort.<sup>54</sup> In the interpretive process we create hypotheses that are liable to prove false, while seeing is a process of direct impression. This comparison reflects the connection between Wittgenstein’s study of language and aesthetic judgment: he compared the image that arises as a result of the meeting with the word with the visual image (between seeing an object [such as a prism, for example] and interpretation of a word). The image aroused as a result of a meeting with words is “interpretation,” while one that is brought about by a visual encounter is direct.<sup>55</sup> The term “poetic grammar” that I propose in this chapter as a methodological “ladder” comprises two ways of seeing in the process of interpreting poetry: at times what happens is portrayed “by itself,” while in other instances a comparison will be conducted between poetic events, either to describe a change, or to compare different poems (by the same or different poets).

Wittgenstein also demonstrated what is common to the two types of seeing by arguing that words have physiognomy, based on which the self-meaning of the word can be understood. The importance of “physiognomy” (along with the fixed nature of the word, as mentioned above) lies in its being the basis for the individual process of examination and judgment:

<sup>53</sup> Wittgenstein, *PPF*, para. 111.

<sup>54</sup> Wittgenstein, *PPF*, para. 117.

<sup>55</sup> Wittgenstein, *PPF*, para. 117.



Meaning—a physiognomy.<sup>56</sup> The familiar face of a word, the feeling that it has assimilated its meaning into itself, that it is a likeness of its meaning—there could be human beings to whom all this was alien. (They would not have an attachment to their words.) And how are these feelings manifested among us?—By the way we choose and value words.<sup>57</sup>

The visual imagery of meaning (image—*Ebenbild*) directs the viewer to normative seeing, in the framework of which the word appears as possessing a certain fixed physiognomy, and seeing of this sort is likely to establish an interpretive path. Continuing in this vein, it could be said that action in accordance with a rule is the basis common to seeing and interpretation. Action in accordance with a rule is not conducted by itself, but is always part of the praxis of social customs and institutions:

An intention is embedded in a setting, in human customs and institutions. If the technique of the game of chess did not exist, I could not intend to play a game of chess.<sup>58</sup>

Meaning for Wittgenstein, therefore, is not a substantive concept, it rather is revealed in the language-game, in the context of a certain form of life:

The word “language-game” is used here to emphasize the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life.<sup>59</sup>

Interpretation—that is, an action of imparting meaning—is conducted within this framework. This is not the cryptological uncovering of meaning but application. The verbal application of a rule is done within

56 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 568.

57 Wittgenstein, *PPF*, para. 294.

58 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 337.

59 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 23.

the framework of a certain praxis, and cannot be private.<sup>60</sup> At this juncture, Wittgenstein's discussion of the multimeaning nature of language joins the possible multiplicity of aspects in the process of understanding the meaning of a specific situation. Although meanings and rules are always understood within the context of the underlying form of life, a number of understandings are always possible in the interpretation of a given situation.

A number of perspectives are possible even within the context of an individual's interpretive view; furthermore, change is made possible and is perceived by a comparison between them. Accordingly, when a poetic work influences the reader and fosters ferment within him, in practice, it leads him from one perception to another. Wittgenstein calls the range of viewpoints "aspects," and creates a "semantic field" of aspect terms that constitutes the variations of use within the context of aesthetic judgment (and in general). His four basic terms are: "noticing an aspect," "'continuous seeing' of an aspect," "an aspect's 'lighting up,'" and "the change of aspect."<sup>61</sup> These terms will be examined in detail below, in the chapters that analyze the poetry. At this point, I wish to explain their contribution to understanding the action of "poetic grammar": the ability of an aesthetic work to express a certain aspect, on the one hand, and, on the other, to effect change in the aspect is dependent on the preparedness of the reader or viewer. This fitness includes the ability to distinguish between observation and description, and to identify an act of imaging in the poetic work. Such identification means spotting the creativity that comprises aesthetic examination and judgment:

I learn the concept "seeing" along with the description of what I see. I learn to observe and to describe what I observe. I learn the concept "to have an image" in a different context [. . .] the concepts are thoroughly different. The concept of

60 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, para. 201–2. This approach is prevalent in the study of Wittgenstein's thought on rules; other approaches, however, also exist, and I will present them in the chapters on Zelda and Adaf.

61 Wittgenstein, *PPF*, para. 113, 118, 129.

imaging is rather like one of doing rather than receiving. *Imagining might be called a creative act. (And is of course so called.)*<sup>62</sup>

The parallel that Wittgenstein draws between the act of imagining and creativity leads to the conclusion of his discussion of the aspect-changing action of poetic grammar, using his distinction between “taste” and “creativity.” Wittgenstein deemed such a distinction necessary to describe two different ways in which language works, with no causal relationship between them. Man’s having aesthetic tastes is not connected to his creativity. Nonetheless, we can compare taste and creativity, and thereby understand the sum total of language actions in the process of aesthetic judgment:

The faculty of “taste” cannot create a new organism, only rectify one that is already there. Taste loosens screws & tightens screws, it doesn’t create a new original work. Taste rectifies, it doesn’t give birth [. . .] The most refined taste has nothing to do with creative power [. . .] I cannot judge whether I have only taste, or originality as well. The former I can see distinctly, but not the latter, or only quite indistinctly. And perhaps it has to be like that, & you see only what you have, not what you are [. . .] Taste can delight, but not seize.<sup>63</sup>

Creativity means making something new that was not there before. Taste, in contrast, is an ability that refines aesthetic sensitivity, but is based on something already in existence. Wittgenstein illustrates this with a house that he built. As, however, regards his writing, he wonders whether it can be defined as creative or only as possessing taste.<sup>64</sup> He suggests an intriguing psychological distinction: that a person can see what he possesses, but not what he is; accordingly, an individual cannot

62 Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, para. 637 (emphasis added).

63 Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 67.

64 “You can as it were restore an old style in a new language; perform it afresh so to speak in a manner that suits our times. In doing so you really only reproduce. I have done this in my building work” (Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 68).