

Smells like pragmatism: Wittgenstein's *anti-sceptical weapons*

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ABSTRACT: In the text the author tries to investigate Wittgenstein's notions of action, practice and pragmatism in his book *On Certainty*. An attempt is made to sketch the criterion of Wittgenstein's analysis of certainty and to define the crucial concepts such as world-picture, practice, certainty and justification. The analysis shows that Wittgenstein applies a specific form of pragmatic solution to the problem of justification, which after all, can and should be called a kind of *pragmatismus*. This is the subject of the first and the second part of the text. The third part shows the application of this pragmatic theory of justification to Wittgenstein's refutation of scepticism. The author suggests that his pragmatic analysis of certainty presents an adequate means for the refutation of scepticism. However, his anti-scepticism is situated in the tradition of common sense and ordinary language philosophy and epistemology (Moore, Chisholm, Lehrer, Austin, Grice, Strawson, etc.). In the conclusion the author applies this anti-sceptical solution to the so called rule-following problem (as stated in Kripke's work) and shows that there are some far reaching consequences of this interpretation of Wittgenstein's later work to his position on language, learning, ontology and knowledge.

KEY WORDS: Knowledge, justification, world-picture, practice, pragmatism, certainty, doubt, scepticism.

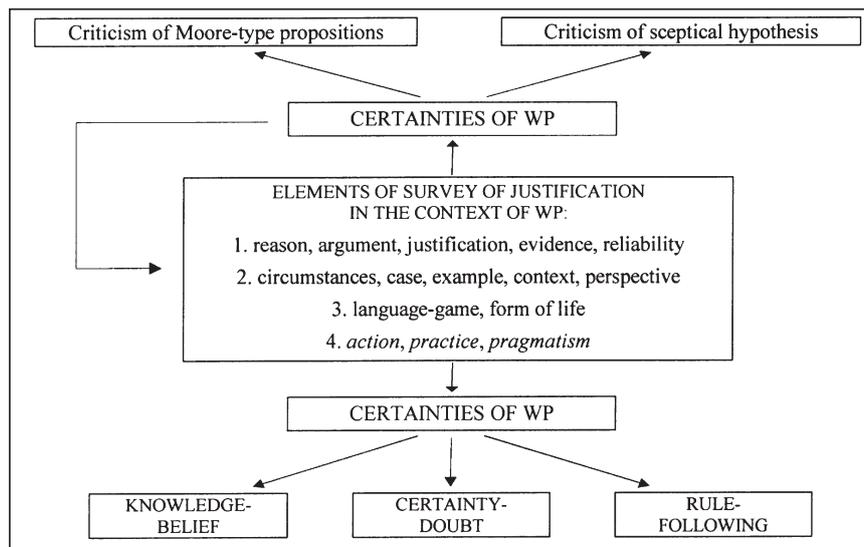
*So I am trying to say something that sounds like pragmatism.
Here I am being thwarted by a kind of Weltanschauung.*
(OC 422)

1. Wittgenstein's pragmatic analysis of certainty

[1.1.] G. E. Moore argued not just against idealism, but against Hume's scepticism as well, especially in his papers "Refutation of Idealism" and "A Proof of an External World" (1939). His positive account was presented in the paper "A Defence of Common Sense" (1925). The point of his defence was, generally speaking, clear enough because he was speaking of an ordinary man who insists that the validity of our everyday claims to knowledge is not open to serious doubt, enabling such an ordinary man to achieve knowledge (at least of so-called common sense truisms). In the *On Certainty* Wittgenstein tried to answer Moore's claims about an ordinary man with a right to knowledge. There is a possibility that Wittgenstein sometimes discusses Moore's text, and sometimes N. Malcolm's paper "Defending Common Sense", which Malcolm read to him in 1949. Wittgenstein's general point was that sceptics and idealists were claiming too little, and Moore was claiming too much. In opposition to the sceptics, Wittgenstein holds that the sceptics cannot give sufficient reasons for their doubts. In opposition to Moore, he argues that Moore's common sense propositions cannot be known, but are nevertheless almost absolutely certain, at least for practical purposes. We must ask here what is Wittgenstein's reason for such a claim. The fundamental reason is this: the use of the word 'knowledge' is reserved only for special occasions, certain context, circumstances, intentions or generally speaking for certain everyday epistemic situations. It does not mean that knowledge is relative, but that it seems to be so. There are some consequences of this view. The first consequence is that the general account or analysis of knowledge is *eo ipso* impossible. The second consequence is that even knowledge is impossible outside of certain everyday epistemic situations, so Wittgenstein was forced to speak of certainty in the same way as Moore and the rest of us speak of knowledge (especially when we wish to refer to empirical knowledge). In that and some other points, Wittgenstein's position is quite similar not just to Moore's, but also to Austin's.

[1.2.] In that context Wittgenstein offers an analysis of certainty, not of knowledge, and it is similar to a standard analysis such as this: S is certain that p iff: (1) p is true (p), (2) S is (subjectively) sure that p (SSp) and (3) S has a right to be sure (objectively) that p ($SRSp$). Here I use Ayer's analysis of knowledge because it is terminologically closest to Wittgenstein's vocabulary (Ayer, 1990: 31–35). I used the term *subjectively* in condition (2) because of the clear distinction between certain propositions for which ground must be available, and other propositions for which grounds are not and cannot be available (the distinction was made by Moravetz and followed by Klein, 1984: 117–122). On the other hand, in the assertion of condition (2) the word "subjectively" is always implicit or never expressed because of Wittgenstein's view on the nature of belief. He says that the concept of belief is internally linked with how people would act in certain circumstances and with

what people would say they believe. Using the “right to be sure” condition is an explicit commitment to a normative account of knowledge, familiar not just to common sense and critical cognitivist epistemology, but previously also to Kant (1964: 120). So, the question is what entitles us or what gives us the right to hold p . Wittgenstein tends to analyse the condition (3) in the following manner: the fact that S has the right to be sure that p can only mean that S is objectively sure that p . In Wittgenstein's case that means that: (3.1) p is for S practically indubitable in virtue of its direct or indirect grounding in certainties of the world-picture (*SRS p :CWP*). This analysis of certainty has been common to all interpretations of the *On Certainty* in the last two decades. Of course, they differ in many things, but in certain features the interpretations are almost identical (for example, we have strict epistemological, normative, pragmatic, educational, feminist and other types of interpretation). Furthermore, this analysis is especially interesting in the light of the satisfaction of the condition (3). The question is: From which source does S earn his right to be sure? And the answer is: S is objectively sure that p , which means that for S p is practically indubitable (this category because of its practicality is not subsumed under H. Frankfurt's *regress of indubitability*). The ultimate answer about practical indubitability of p for S lies within Wittgenstein's fundamental insight, which says that: (3.2) Practical indubitability is an intrinsic characteristic of the certainties of the world-picture (CWP). The indubitability is *intrinsic* in order not to hinge the propositions of the CWP, but rather to our actions and practices. In this way the whole of Wittgenstein's analysis of certainty (which can only be called knowledge under certain circumstances) stands up or falls down depending on the answer to the question: What kind of certainties are these CWP, so that they may have



this intrinsic certainty? In this text, I would like to try to lay down some elements of the answer to this question, and as it seems to me that the most crucial element is in fact Wittgenstein's category of action. Thus: (3.3) Epistemic category of *practice* is the end of all of our justifications, giving evidence and reasoning.

[1.3.] First we must try to introduce some order into Wittgenstein's notes. Thus, I propose a certain categorisation of paragraphs in the light of themes that are central to the book (following almost all commentators). Here we must sketch a general epistemic construction, which Wittgenstein was trying to explicate and describe.

THEME	SECTION
World-picture	83, 87–89, 92–97, 99, 102–105, 108, 117, 135, 136, 138, 140–147, 152, 156, 162, 167–169, 172, 185, 188, 208–210, 225, 233, 234, 235, 238, 247, 248, 262, 266, 274, 276–279, 292, 293, 312, 332, 333, 440, 492, 493, 512, 514, 517, 558, 600, 603, 609–611, 613, 629–631
Knowledge-belief	2, 6, 8, 11–14, 16, 23, 42, 84, 85, 89, 90, 112, 113, 141, 159, 161, 165, 166, 169, 170, 172, 173, 177, 179, 180–182, 218, 230, 241, 242, 243, 246, 253, 260, 263, 267, 272, 288, 289, 290, 291, 306, 313, 326, 327, 328, 347, 349, 351–353, 355, 357, 361, 364–367, 369, 376–382, 408, 415, 417–420, 424, 426–444, 459–469, 477–480, 482–490, 499, 500, 502–505, 510, 534–552, 555–557, 561, 564–569, 574, 576, 577, 582–593
Doubt-uncertainty	2, 4, 10, 19, 24, 56, 114, 115, 117, 120, 121–123, 125, 126, 127, 151, 154, 160, 219–224, 232, 247, 249, 255, 261, 280, 398, 310–312, 315, 316, 331, 334, 337, 338, 341, 343–346, 354, 356, 357, 392, 425, 456, 458, 480, 490, 495, 496, 519, 525
Certainty-indubitability	7, 8, 30, 47, 77, 111, 114, 115, 128, 129, 147, 174, 183–185, 194, 217, 233, 245, 250, 269, 270, 273–275, 284, 285, 298, 308, 331, 340, 342, 358, 394, 404, 416, 425, 470, 490, 492, 511, 519, 522, 524, 579, 608, 628
Moore-type propositions	1, 3, 4, 6, 10, 19, 20, 21, 25, 32, 35, 36, 40, 41, 52, 53, 57–61, 84–86, 91, 92, 93, 100, 112, 116, 125, 137, 151, 155, 171, 178, 202, 264, 268, 306, 325, 371–374, 386–390, 397–407, 412, 413, 423, 424, 451, 462, 481–482, 520–521
Possibility of error, rule and checking	5, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 25–27, 32, 43, 44, 51, 54, 66–77, 79–82, 98, 109–110, 138, 158, 163, 164, 194, 195, 300–302, 304, 309, 318–321, 367, 425, 494, 506–507, 572, 574, 597–599, 632–637, 648–667, 673–675
Sceptical hypothesis	19, 23–24, 35, 37–39, 54–56, 59, 75, 101, 102, 106–107, 118, 119, 134, 153, 157, 162, 190, 191, 203, 214, 215, 217, 218, 226–228, 237, 257–259, 279, 281, 282, 286, 314, 322, 383, 391, 420–421, 450, 472, 473, 497, 498, 513, 517, 558, 578, 594, 595, 600, 613, 614, 615, 616, 624–627, 632–643, 647, 676
Circumstances, situation	25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 34, 44, 46, 62, 111, 133, 176, 237, 255, 260, 326, 334, 335, 348, 349, 350, 445, 553, 552, 553, 554, 603, 620, 622
Arguments, justification, reliability, evidence, Rationality	18, 22, 23, 34, 46, 48, 66, 112, 137, 105, 130, 131, 132, 148, 149, 150, 175, 173, 188, 189, 192, 196–201, 203–206, 231, 243, 250, 252–254, 261, 270, 271, 279, 287, 294–296, 302, 303, 307, 315, 322, 323, 324, 336, 359, 432, 438, 444, 445, 452–454, 474, 483, 484, 491, 504, 508, 509, 515, 561–563, 571, 575, 577, 580, 599, 600, 604, 608, 612, 620, 669, 672
Language-game, form of life	3, 7, 18, 21, 24, 63, 62, 64, 65, 204, 255, 256, 283, 315, 317, 329, 344, 370, 392, 393, 396, 403, 446, 455, 457, 477, 492, 493, 501, 509, 512, 514, 519, 523, 524, 534, 554, 555, 558, 564, 566, 579, 593, 596, 599, 603, 609, 610, 611, 613, 617, 618, 619, 620, 628, 629–631, 637, 646
Action, practice, Pragmatism	9, 45, 47, 49, 110, 120, 124, 139, 140, 148, 196, 204, 212, 229, 232, 251, 297, 338, 339, 360, 362, 368, 395, 409, 410, 411, 414, 422, 431, 450, 475, 476, 501, 519, 524, 600, 601, 603, 609–611, 613, 629–631, 668–669

[1.4.] Now we can illustrate how complicated it is to defend such a construction of Wittgenstein's attempt. Firstly, because there are those themes that Wittgenstein considers not to be central, but marginal; and yet, they are crucial for the understanding of central themes. Secondly, it is very hard to differentiate the role of his arguments. For example, sometimes he uses irony to refer to the sceptical challenge, and sometimes the same figure of speech to refer to Moore's common sense truisms. Thirdly, the same crucial concepts appear in many different, sometimes even incompatible, roles during his struggle with Moore and the sceptic. The best way to show this is to give a preliminary categorisation mentioned above.

2. Analysis of *Praxis* and *Weltbild* in *On Certainty*

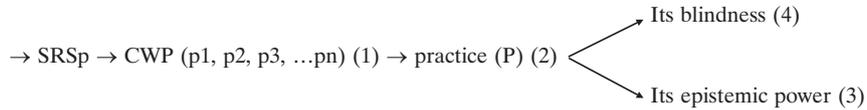
[2.1.] Now we must pay attention to the paragraphs that emphasise practice. In the OC, we can find at least thirty paragraphs in which Wittgenstein explicitly or implicitly discusses the category of practice. However, there are some differences in vocabulary, so that in some cases he speaks about:

- (1) "Way of acting" [action, act] (OC 110, 148, 196, 204, 232, 360, 368, 395, 409, 411, 431).
- (2) "Practice" [practical] (OC 120, 139, 451, 524).
- (3) "Doing" (OC 339, 363).
- (4) "Way of behaving" (OC 284), and even of
- (5) "Pragmatism" (OC 422).

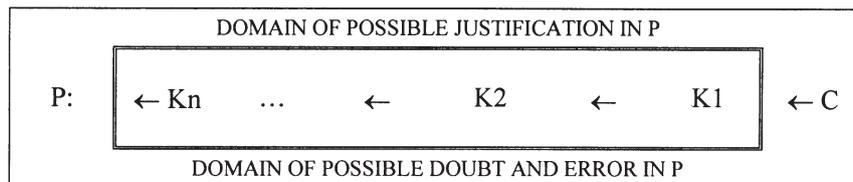
Here I must add that these differences are not just a symptom of the richness of vocabulary and epistemic language games, but are principally the symptoms of the richness of everyday epistemic situations and practices. However, what is more important is the fact that these paragraphs can be arranged in a manner that can clarify Wittgenstein's position on the nature of justification and knowledge. Let us suppose that the conditions (1) and (2) of *p*'s certainty for *S* are satisfied and that we are confronted with the question of satisfaction of the condition (3), or with the question, as was previously established – from which source do the certainties of WP emerge? So, let us suppose that *p* is true, that *S* is sure that *p*, and that *S* has some chain of reasoning, or some evidence, or something else which can serve as a reason for his right to be sure.

$$p \rightarrow SSp \rightarrow SRSp \text{ (right to be sure [reason])} \rightarrow ?$$

The question is where does the chain end. Interestingly, Wittgenstein's answer is simple. The chain continues as follows:



[2.2.] The chain stops at some element of CWP (but always at the whole WP) (1), and the whole WP (1) is rooted in our everyday practice (2), which reveals our WP and cuts the chain of justification (reasoning, giving evidence, rationality, language, meaning, etc.). There are two features of practice, which Wittgenstein emphasises greatly: its epistemic power (3), and its blindness (4). These characteristics are pivotal for his view. The former, because it reveals not just our epistemic or conceptual, but also and primarily our human limitations; and the latter, because it reveals the seriousness of our concept of indubitability for practical purposes which is positively situated in our WP. Let's take another way round and examine the solution. If some of our practices (2), are (3) and (4), then they show what we are convinced of (1) and that shows where the chain of justifications must end. From the outside, it is always the practice that is at the end of the chain, and from the inside, there is always a question of how close we are (under the variables of certain everyday epistemic situations) to the core or to our world picture. Here we can interpret the concept of 'everydayness' anthropologically, e.g. as a kind of home if we want to stress the non-propositional account of certainty and "hinge propositions" (Cavell, 1989). Finally, it shows why in any specific case we have a right to be sure, why we are sure and that certain p is in that virtue certain for us beyond all reasonable doubt for practical purposes. To conclude this part, if the circumstances of everyday epistemic situation are given and if we identify them, and then if someone questions our right to be sure, we can call it *knowledge* in order to say something like: "Your doubt is quite silly at the moment." Of course, there are some problems with the nature of the WP, with its change throughout the discoveries, with new knowledge which is not clearly grounded in it and finally with the certainties that turn out wrong (Glock, 1997: 76–81, 336–341). This interpretation, however, is compatible with Kober's interpretation (1996: 415–416). Kober thinks that the justification can be achieved by practice itself, thus practice is not just the end of a chain of justifications but also a justification itself. This is very important because there is a difference in saying: (1) That the practice is that which stops the chain of justification from the outside, and in saying: (2) That the practice is itself the last part in the chain of justification. In the scheme: C = certainty, K = knowledge and P = practice:



Within a practice P of a community, knowledge claim K1 can be justified by another knowledge claim K2, etc. On the other hand, practices have their internal ways of justification (PI 325). For example, the claim of competence in repairing something can be justified by actually repairing it (Kober, 1996: 416). Nevertheless, the certainty of P depends on our description of P in given circumstances.

[2.3.] In the previous part we have described four main elements: the world picture (1), practice (2), its epistemic power (3) and its blindness (4). Now it seems to be an appropriate time to summarise these elements of Wittgenstein's "survey" [or a "surveyable comparative representation" (Z 273)] of condition (3).

[2.4.] (a) WORLD-PICTURE. Sure evidence we accept as sure (OC 196), our not doubting the whole WP, is simply our way of judging and acting (OC 232), from their actions we can see what people are convinced of (OC 284–5), we act with certainty that knows no doubt (OC 360), the propositions of the WP are certain because they are the foundations of all our actions (OC 414), we show this knowledge by our actions, and sometimes it can be expressed in the form of knowledge (OC 431, 524, 609–12, 668–9). There has been some discussion of the nature of certainties of the WP or the so-called "hinge propositions". It is clear that these propositions only look like ordinary empirical propositions, but they are not propositions at all. They are rather something closer to rules, such as a rule of testing, or a rule of instruction (Stroll, 2002). Some commentators read even the concept of a rule as a norm, and a norm as evaluation (Kober, 1996; OC 308, 473, 634, 167). Another important point about the world-picture (CWP) is that it is acquired socially or communally because the society, and not the individual, is the primary knower (Caraway, 2002). However, the world-picture or the "hinge propositions" consist of four types: (1) trans-historical, (2) those that change with time, (3) personal propositions applicable to each person, and (4) person-specific propositions that are part of a subjective world-picture (Glock, 1997: 78). Wittgenstein made a variety of claims regarding the nature of these hinge-propositions or CWP. (1) They are certain for everybody. (2) They can under certain circumstances be wrong. (3) Trans-historical hinge-propositions are basic propositions. (4) Some of the hinge-propositions exemplify Gricean conversational implicatures, since their negation is nonsensical, and (5) they cannot be neither justified nor doubted, since their certainty is presupposed in all judging (OC 308, 494, 614; Glock, 1997: 78–79). However, CWP can be regarded as propositions, hinge-propositions, quasi-propositions, or even the body of a matrix of common knowledge. The last interpretation is the closest to Moore's category of common sense (Larm, 1997: 1–5). There is no problem with having the world-picture, but there is a problem with its change (Strawson, 1992: 68).

[2.5.] (b) PRACTICE-ACTION (AS THE END OF JUSTIFICATION). The end of justification is: ‘ungrounded’ way of acting (OC 110), giving grounds, however justifying the evidence, comes to an end... it is our acting which lies at the bottom of the language-game (OC 204), our action gives us a right to regard a reason as the sufficient reason (OC 212). Behind that, there are no reasons but only: practice, decisions, guarantees, slogans, conversions, persuasions, and names like “fool” or “heretic” (OC 609–11, 669).

[2.6.] (c) PRACTICE (ITS EPISTEMIC POWER). Practice eliminates doubts (OC 120), this is how we act (OC 148), by practice we learn the WP (OC 44), knowledge is displayed in practice and it is the direction of practice (OC 363, 395, 409–11).

[2.7.] (d) PRACTICE (ITS BLINDNESS). The practice speaks for itself (OC 139), our practice gives meaning to everything else [including language] (OC 229), children learn practices (to fetch books, sit in armchairs, etc.) (OC 476), and finally, it is a kind of pragmatism and we are being thwarted by a kind of *Weltanschauung* (OC 422). The blindness of practice is connected also with the concept of drilling the CWP and parallel practices into the members of epistemic community (in fact children) and that explains: why CWP cannot be doubted or justified (OC 110, 125, 243, 282, 307, 563), why CWP can be analysed as norms (OC 308, 321, 494), why it is nonsensical to claim the CWP explicitly [OC 237, 347–350, 409, etc.] (Kober, 1996: 437). Some commentators even read the “hinge propositions” as educational propositions (Moravetz, McGinn, Okshevsky and others).

[2.8.] This is how and in virtue of what we have the right to be sure. This is the way we work as epistemic beings. From this centre we can correctly explicate other themes from the OC such as: knowledge, belief, world-picture, doubt, certainty, Moore-type propositions, rules, sceptical hypothesis, situation, circumstances, perspective, community, context, form of life, language-game, holism, etc. It is impossible to go into these themes here, but we can mention, for example, the consequences of this analysis of Wittgenstein’s solution of the sceptical problem (following Kenny, 1975, 1987; Kober, 1996; Stroll, 1994, 2002; Glock, 1997, etc.). In that context, the epistemological or even the sceptical problem is solved (Kenny, 1975: 203–15, 1987). (1) Doubt needs grounds (OC 323, 458, 519). (2) Doubt must be directed at something and must show its practical consequences (OC 120, 247, 338, 428). (3) Doubt presupposes a language-game (OC 114, 306, 457, 458). (4) Universal doubt is impossible (OC 115, 160, 232, 310–315, 450). (5) Doubt presupposes certainties of a world-picture (OC 115, 125, 163, 337, 341, see Kober, 1996: 411–441; Glock, 1997: 336–341). This last insight is the most important but it is not new. In fact it is similar to the classical transcendental arguments against scepticism: “The sceptic’s doubts are incoherent, since for them making sense tacitly presupposes the conceptual framework which

they explicitly attack" (Glock, 1997: 340). In addition, we can say that it is now easier to approach other, specifically anti-sceptical themes such as the dreaming hypothesis (Malcolm; Kenny; Stroll, 2002: 143–146), alleged pragmatism (Putnam, 1996: 27–57) or even foundationalism. In the next section, we will return to this question.

[2.9.] However, I would not want to go as far as some commentators did and say for example that Wittgenstein was undoubtedly a pragmatist in the OC. On the other hand, something is clear, at least for me. I attempted to show that Wittgenstein tried to put his "linguistic" philosophy on certain non-linguistic grounds. If the analysis is correct, then it might uncover some disturbing consequences for the interpretations of Wittgenstein's philosophy. From the perspective of the OC (and the PI) it really is correct that Wittgenstein abandoned the so-called "semantic ascent" (or "linguistic turn", G. Bergmann, which M. Dummett recognised in Frege's *The Foundations of Arithmetic*, §62; for discussion see Glock, 1999). W. V. O. Quine seems to be right when in the last paragraph of his book *Word and Object* (§56) he accuses Wittgenstein of abandoning the semantic ascent. Yet, if we can positively label Wittgenstein's later position, we can call it the "pragmatic descent" or a descent into concrete situations, to examples, to practice or simply to activities, routines and habits of life. Of course, there is some evidence for this interpretation. Firstly, Wittgenstein called his position *pragmatismus*, and secondly, he used examples not just as illustrations of complicated theories, but also primarily as the very core of the philosophical practice. This is incompatible with the theory of "language game", but only at first sight, because a language game is essentially a social phenomenon and a kind of social activity (Krkač, 2002a, 2002b). Wittgenstein's solutions are nevertheless influential in current contextual-falibilistic epistemologies (see for example Williams, 2001: 254).

[2.10.] If we want to know whether Wittgenstein was a pragmatist and in what sense of the word, it will be best to look at his concept of philosophy. In this text, I am presupposing that for Wittgenstein philosophy was something like a practice of giving overviews. I am forced here to compress the discussion on the nature of philosophy.

(1) Philosophy is *critical* (TLP 4.11, 6.53), *therapeutic* (PI 133, 254–5; BT 407–10; Z 382) and *educational* or even self-educational (OC 549; Krkač, 2002c: 47–94) *activity*, *practice* and *skill* (TLP 3.324, 4.112; PI 118–9; RPP I, 115; OC 402; CV 6–7) of giving *surveyable comparative representations* as descriptions (TLP 4.11; PI 81, 92, 108, 131, 133, 189, 254–5, 599; Z 273) of the things in question (and not just of language use).

(2) Of course, and it is central to Wittgenstein's concept of the nature of philosophical task, philosophy makes us capable – of *seeing connections* [*Zusammenhänge sehen*] (PI 122), of *making overview* [*Übersicht*] and of appealing to *everydayness* (...as home, Cavell, 1989: 32–33). This *home* is something like the untouchable background which for Wittgenstein consists in a series of meta-

phors: *bedrock, the scaffolding of our thoughts, that which stands fast for all of us, rock bottom, the substratum of all my inquiring, unmoving foundations*, etc. (Stroll, 2002: 82).

(3) Therefore, not only do we have two concepts of philosophy: philosophy as a *therapy* and philosophy as *an overall understanding* (Kenny, 1987: 39), but rather three concepts – and the third was based on his *pragmatism*. However there is also a dominant critical characteristic of philosophy. “All philosophy can do is to *destroy idols*.” In addition, “that means not creating new ones – for instance as in the ‘absence of an idol’” (CV 131). Wittgenstein sometimes even professed to convert us to a new point of view (CV 61). However, in *Zettel* he tries to explain the difficulty of the nature of philosophical method: “People sometimes say they cannot make any judgement about this or that because they have not studied philosophy. This is irritating nonsense, because the pretence is that philosophy is some sort of science. People speak of it almost as they might speak of medicine” (Z 447–460).

Language game is essentially a social phenomenon and a kind of social activity, so it is clear that the meaning is grounded not just in a non-linguistic phenomenon, but also in the practice of “speaking a language” (language games as well as forms of life). Pragmatic descent was a methodological doctrine, which Wittgenstein did not apply in his early philosophy (TLP) but he was aware of its significance. In the middle part of his philosophy (or the transitional period) he tried to apply the pragmatic descent to the analysis of language and meaning, and finally, in his late philosophy he applied the doctrine to the areas such as religious belief, philosophy of psychology, aesthetics and epistemology. The application was gradual and it is most explicit in the OC. If we want to think about philosophy in this way, it seems that we are certainly committed to some kind of pragmatism. However, if we want to be sure about this, we must remind ourselves of the pragmatic maxim. There are a few, slightly different, formulations of the maxim. C. S. Peirce formulated the maxim this way: Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conceptions to have. Then our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of these objects. W. James formulated it thus: To develop a thought’s meaning we need only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce; that conduct is for us its sole significance.

[2.11.] Moreover, Dewey has argued that when one is confronted with incompatible goals, when one has to choose how to live and what to live for, what is at stake is not a difference of quantity (of good), but what kind of person one is to become, what sort of self is in the making, what kind of a world is making. Pragmatic outlook thus is not preoccupied with causes or calculations but with different ways of living. “Thus a knowledge of one’s own strengths and weaknesses will play a role in making a wise choice” (Putnam, 2001). Pragmatism in that light tends to see philosophy as art of learning, teaching, educating, and self-educating (Cavell, 1989; Putnam, 1999).

Finally, if we compare Wittgenstein's epistemic principles to the pragmatic maxim (in Peirce or in James or in Dewey), then we could say that it is a kind of *pragmatismus* after all. On the other hand, explication of this thesis is surely something of an "inclination to fight windmills", because it is impossible to say what needs to be said, it is only possible to show it in action (OC 400).

3. Did Wittgenstein refute scepticism?

[3.1.] Now we come to the central question: Is there a cash value of his pragmatism? Alternatively: did he refute scepticism? Wittgenstein thought carefully about epistemological question in all of his major works and both phases of his development. Nevertheless, the most important work is, of course, the OC. Some commentators think that there is a kind of continuity in his confrontation with epistemological questions, but we shouldn't take this kind of investigation very seriously, as it is a question of intellectual biography, and not a philosophical problem. On the other hand, some philosophers take the question of possibility of epistemology very seriously (even Dancy, 1985: Ch. 15). Nevertheless, if the task of answering the sceptic's challenge were the most fundamental task in epistemology, and if we failed to give an adequate answer, epistemology would surely be impossible. We cannot answer this question a priori or deduce it from some self-evident proposition. Instead, we must try to refute the sceptic and then see if epistemology is possible (or engage in some project, which is ignorant of the sceptical problem, as for example is naturalised epistemology).

[3.2.] On the one hand, Wittgenstein was attached to dogmatism when holding on to his philosophical solutions. Maybe it is the only constant of his philosophical method. However, we cannot be blind to his obvious open-endedness, especially in later works. The method was almost Socratic and works like dialogues of Plato. However, where are the characters of the play? For example, sometimes it looks to me as if there are at least four characters (actors) in his dialogue *On Certainty*. These are: Wittgenstein himself as quasi-Socrates, various common men, G. E. Moore (sometimes as N. Malcolm), a Cartesian sceptic, and even more actors, such as (sometimes) Wittgenstein from the 30's, W. James, B. Russell, and others. The fact is that during the late 40's he was reading Russell, James (again, because as a young man he had read *Varieties of Religious Experience*) and especially Moore and Malcolm. This evidence and an obvious influence of these philosophers gave him an idea of a combination of pragmatism and common sense. Thus, in the conceptual centre of the OC we have two groups of propositions: (1) *On Praxis* and (2) *On Weltbild* (shown above: 1–2). The combination of these two groups of insights is the core of his approach to scepticism.

[3.3.] In the TLP we can find some parts of his later, more systematic refutation of scepticism. He rejects scepticism as nonsensical (TLP 6.5–6.51). There are some consequences of this position: (1) Sceptic is not wrong, but nonsensical, so there is no point in engaging in discussion with him and (2) there can be an answer only if there is a question to be asked. Because there is no question, there is no answer, thus, any talk about scepticism must be nonsensical. If we take another way round, then it is clear that: (3) Certainty makes sense only where we can speak of something (later he will argue that certainty is at the bottom of a language-game). (4) If we can speak of something, then the proposition expressed can be true or false and there is some space for doubts. In the PI, he makes some steps towards the sceptical problem. He is talking about fire that will burn him if he puts his hand in it – and that is sure. In that case, we can see not the meaning of the word “certitude”, but rather what certainty in fact is [for real] (PI 474). Here we can see Moore’s border between the subjective and the objective in certainty, between theoretical and practical certainty. In the second part of the PI, it appears as if Wittgenstein was trying to correct his position from the TLP saying something like: there must be a kind of hypothesis where the doubt is, and that doubt must come to an end (PI II 180). Later he writes that a kind of certainty is a kind of language-game (PI II 224). Later he explicitly appeals to practice as the criterion of certainty (PI II 225). Thus, what is important is how certainty shows itself in our practice.

[3.4.] Finally, in the OC he develops an idea of certainty (for a general introduction see: Ayer, 1985; Kenny, 1975, 1987; Schulte, 1989; Morawetz, 1987). There are at least five distinctive elements that Wittgenstein uses as a point of departure in discussion with the sceptic. (1) The basis or reasons for doubt (OC 323, 458, 519). (2) The specific direction of doubt, because if doubt must show some practical consequences, then it cannot be universal. In other words, a doubt must be relevant for our lives (OC 120, 247, 338, 428). (3) That doubt can exist only inside of a language-game is a very important insight because Wittgenstein develops an idea from the PI (II 224), which is an improvement for the TLP and the thesis of nonsensical nature of sceptical doubts (TLP 6.5–6.51). Doubt also presupposes a language-game and it is a plain fact that if we presuppose that nothing is certain or that everything is uncertain or even open to doubt, then this also applies to the words we use. In one sense he is being ironical when he is asking: What is the way of introducing the doubt to a language-game? In other sense it is the fundamental question: How did we learn to doubt after we had learned something? But it is a psychological question why a child doubts this proposition, and not that one (OC 114, 306, 457, 458). (4) Universal doubt is impossible for different reasons. Firstly, because it must be stated in some language, and if it is, then we must be sure what the words of this language mean. In that way, doubt always presupposes something as certain. Wittgenstein uses

examples with children when they are accustomed to some part of world-picture (OC 115,160, 232, 310–315, 450). (5) The last insight is that doubt includes certainty. Again, it is an answer to a radical view from the TLP (6.5) because: “One cannot make experiments if there are not some things that one does not doubt.” “That is to say, the questions that we raise and our doubts depend on the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn.” “That is to say, it belongs to the logic of our investigations that certain things are in deed not doubted” (OC 115, 125, 163, 337, 341).

[3.5.] What should we say about this treatment of scepticism? It is in the tradition of common sense epistemology (starting even with Locke and the Scottish school and going all the way to Moore and Austin) to defend the possibility of knowledge of everyday empirical propositions. Therefore, what they are saying is simply that the sceptical arguments stemming from the differences in perception are not conclusive, because they contradict the certainties of our world-picture, and thus they must be wrong. Moore made a similar argument against Hume (Moore, 1959). On the other hand, when we are talking about the universal or global and radical scepticism, Wittgenstein refused the argument because of its lack of practical consequences. There are two kinds of universal sceptical argument that are directed not just against empirical propositions or knowledge based on perception, but also against knowledge based on self-evidence, evidence to memory, on self-consciousness, on reasoning, etc. These Cartesian arguments are based on the ‘malicious demon hypothesis’ and on the ‘dream hypothesis’. Wittgenstein implicitly discusses first one and explicitly the second one.

[3.6.] Here I would like to try to broaden the discussion of anti-scepticism in such a way as to include all of the ordinary language arguments against scepticism from the 50's (Wittgenstein, but also Austin, Grice, Strawson, etc.). However, there is also a long and parallel tradition of using transcendental arguments against scepticism (Wittgenstein, Strawson, and even Putnam in his famous “Brains in a vat”, 1981: 1–21). The examples given form only a part of that long tradition, but I can only mention some names, insights and concepts of knowledge here.

(1) Firstly, one says that knowledge claim is some kind of *guarantee* or *warrant* and a performative utterance (J. L. Austin, see Lehrer, 1978: 52–55, 1995: 27–28, Brusovich, 2002). In this way, sometimes called the “Performative theory of knowledge”, we must concentrate on how the speaker comes to be in a position to know and what the speaker's *authority* or *credentials* for claiming to know are.

(2) Secondly, one says that there are *conversational implicatures* of a sentence (statement) which cannot be inferred from the explicit literal statement, but can be inferred from *the way the statement was made* (choice of words, tone, etc.). The statement “I have two hands” is obviously true, so there must be some *special circumstances* to express such a statement. In normal circumstances, I am just wasting everyone's time (Grice).

(3) Thirdly, one says that our usage of the words like “normal”, “ordinary”, “commonly” and other similar words is in fact an appeal to *everyday situations*, *circumstances* and *everyday practices* as the final justification of our way of life and of the whole body of our *common knowledge* (L. Wittgenstein; see Glock, 1997).

(4) *Commonsensism* (G. E. Moore) is the view that we know most, if not all, of those *things which ordinary people think they know* and that any satisfactory epistemological theory must be true to the fact that we do know such things. Common sense beliefs are all beliefs that people generally hold in a certain historic period, and those beliefs that particular men hold and it is impossible for them not to hold those beliefs. Reid suggested that common-sense belief is every belief, which is: (1) universally held by mankind, (2) whose acceptance is reflected in the common structure of all languages, (3) whose contradictory is not merely false but absurd, and (4) which is irresistible, so that even those who question them are compelled to believe them when engaging in the practical affairs of life.

(5) R. M. Chisholm’s version of *critical cognitivism* exemplifies some features of commonsensism. He assumes *that we know certain facts about the material objects around other minds, the past, and ourselves* and that any satisfactory account of the criteria of knowledge must be adequate to this fact. Critical cognitivism goes beyond commonsensism in: (1) offering a positive account of how we know common-sense propositions, and (2) holding that there are just four sources of our knowledge: external perception, memory, self-awareness and reason. It asserts: (1) that we know facts about external world, other minds and the past, (2) that we have no other sources of knowledge, and, therefore, (3) our knowledge of external world, other minds and the past is yielded by these four sources.

(6) This tradition of thinking about knowledge in vocabularies of common sense (and critical cognitivism) and in terms of everydayness was flourishing throughout the entire 20th century. The next step, at least in epistemology and theory of justification, was contextualism. Contemporary *contextualist epistemologists* recognise their heritage in philosophies, visions and arguments of Reid, Moore, Wittgenstein, Austin, Grice, Chisholm, Strawson, etc.

The Cartesian Dream Hypothesis claims that one cannot distinguish the dream episodes from the veridical ones, and thus that for any moment *t*, one can never know with sufficient certainty that one is not dreaming. Consequently, nothing is absolutely certain (Descartes thought that *cogito [pense]* is the answer). Therefore, if we take the *cogito* seriously (as for example Husserl did in his *Cartesian Meditations*), then we cannot doubt our own existence, but the question remains how is it possible to know anything about the world from this point. Moore tried to answer differently by stating that he knows many things for certain (Moore: “Certainty”). To prove such things he must prove that he is not dreaming at the moment and he admits that he could not prove this. But, he said that if he knows that he is (for example) standing, then it follows that he is not dreaming at that very moment. T. Nagel situated Moore’s epistemology among heroic theories, which acknowledge the Great Gap and try to leap across it. “The fourth reaction is to turn one’s back on the abyss and announce that one is now on the other side.

This was done by G. E. Moore” (Nagel, 1986: 69). Finally, Moore stated that he knows that he is standing. The argument is valid if we allow a distinction between (1) knowing the proposition and (2) proving the proposition.

[3.7.] It is important that Moore thought that he had to answer the sceptic because the sceptic's doubts were serious. Wittgenstein thought that this doubt was not serious. There is an obvious reason for such a claim. “It is obvious that we do not always insist that people know they are not dreaming before we allow that they know something in everyday life... So it can easily look as if Descartes reaches his sceptical conclusion only by violating our ordinary standards and requirements for knowledge...” (Stroud, 1984: 40). Stroud is against such interpretation of the sceptical approach to knowledge and he finds this kind of refutation of scepticism in Austin (“Other Minds”, 1961, “Sense and Sensibilia”, 1962), Dretske (“Epistemic Operators”, 1971) and Nozick (*Philosophical Explanations*, 1981). The obvious fact is that from the perspective of everyday life and everyday epistemic situations, circumstances and context, these alternatives, such as the dream hypothesis or the brain in a vat hypothesis, are epistemically completely irrelevant. If someone cannot accept such reasons, as Stroud can't, then it is understandable that he tries to ask inappropriate questions about, for example, Austin's “procedures” which are in fact Wittgenstein's “practices”, and about Austin's “recognised ways” which are in fact Wittgenstein's “forms of life” (Austin, 1961: 55–57; Stroud, 1984: 46–47). Here we can recall Unger's distinction between absolute terms and relative terms and the theory of relevant alternatives. Generally speaking, (1) if someone approaches an interpretation of the sceptical question from the point of view of absolute terms, he will surely end in the Cartesian problem (with The Great Gap). (2) But if that someone approaches an interpretation of the sceptical question from the point of view of relative terms, he will have to presuppose a certain background of meaning of the terms in question, and of the relevant parameters of epistemic situation (and of course the relevant alternatives like “cleverly disguised mule” in famous F. Dretske's Zebra-case). Now, I cannot see why the latter approach is in any way worse than the former. Acknowledgement of the relevance of the context of an epistemic situation is very important. The revival of arguments from ordinary knowledge claims from the 50's (Austin, Wittgenstein, Grice, Strawson, etc.) is in fact a contemporary contextualism (Stine; Cohen; see Sosa, 1990: 171–182). It is not completely clear what Wittgenstein's approach to scepticism was. Of course, on the one hand his approach was similar to that of other philosophers of ordinary language. Some even suggested that he used the transcendental argument against scepticism (Strawson).

[3.8.] Let's go back to Wittgenstein's solutions now that we can see its *context*. His approach in the OC is similar to the one to scepticism in general in the TLP. The point is that the sceptic's challenge (“How do you know that

you are not dreaming right now?” or “I may be dreaming”, as Wittgenstein stated it) cannot be sensibly stated and therefore there is nothing to refute (Z 369; OC 350, 676). In Putnam’s words (from the argument that uses the sameness of reference for brains in a vat and thoughts of someone in the actual world, 1981: 13-14), if this is only a dream, then “This is only a dream” is false. And it is false, because if this is just a dream, then there is no reality, and if it is so, there cannot be language entry rules and language exit rules. However, there are some attempts of reconstruction of Wittgenstein’s objection to the Dream Hypothesis (Stroll, 2002: 145). From this argument, Wittgenstein rejects not only sceptical hypothesis, but Moore’s proof of an external world as well.

[3.9.] The last interesting detail is Wittgenstein’s insistence on the psychological dimension of certainty. In virtue of that he speaks about calm certainty and certainty which still struggles. This dimension is not about evidence or practice, but indeed about our assent to the whole of the world-picture. After all, this view of certainty was of almost no interest to contemporary philosophers. Wittgenstein suggested that this dimension is very important – thus we must think over the possibility of connection of this insight with psychology of attitude change (I have in mind the theories about rationalisations, changing of cognitive parts of attitude, etc.), because it is important to understand the changes in the world-picture. However, there is no strict argument from this dimension, even though Wittgenstein sometimes suggests that it is also psychologically impossible to doubt the certainties of the world-picture (cats like milk) and even some propositions that are obviously incompatible with the world-picture (cars don’t grow from the ground). After all, psychologically speaking, this is important for the explication of the phenomenon of being wonder-struck in situations in which the world-picture is even slightly changed. How men reacted when they discovered fire, when they invented the wheel, when they saw the New World, when they realised that it is possible to change the social and political order, when the first man landed on the Moon, etc. It is miraculous and frightening to see that the picture of the world is changing and that nothing would be the same again. In Wittgenstein’s metaphor, it is like a river that is changing its route and also changing the riverbed (which can be taken as our common place, our *everydayness as home*). What is changed or moved are not the parts, but rather the whole world-picture, the whole way of life. It is one thing to explain the change of the world-picture and corresponding practices, and quite a different thing to justify universal doubt in its certainties when there is no special reason to do so.

4. Conclusion: the connections between rules, practices as the applications of rules and world-picture (CWP)

We have showed:

- (1) what is the core of Wittgenstein's pragmatic position from OC which is the practice itself and certainties implicit to it (first part),
- (2) of what kind is this analysis of certainty as analysis of "knowledge" (of everyday hinge-propositions, second part),
- (3) and how he refuted scepticism on the basis of this position (third part).

However, there are some more general and far-reaching consequences of this position not just for the interpretation of his philosophy, but also for the interpretation of some of the central questions of philosophy. There are some lessons from the OC on the so-called rule-following problem. These consequences are mainly ontological, which means that they at the same time answer the question of learning the WP and the question of rule following. It is impossible even to sketch the rule-following problem here, but the fundamental consequence of all things previously said for this problem is that the WP can be learned only by means of practice as a rule-governed activity. "The propositions describing this world-picture might be part of a kind of mythology. And their role is like that of rules of a game; and the game can be learned purely practically, without learning any explicit rules" (OC 95). Pseudo-propositions of the WP can be learned through practice in forms of life. As the understanding of a rule is given by practice of its following, the knowledge of a world-picture is in the same manner implicit in practice of its learning. "It might be imagined that some propositions, of the form of empirical propositions, were hardened and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions as were not hardened but fluid; and that this relation altered with time, in that fluid propositions hardened, and hard ones become fluid" (OC 96). Pseudo-propositions are principles of judging, principles of action, etc. However, some are more fundamental than others are.

"The mythology may change back into a state of flux, the river-bed of thoughts may shift. But I distinguish between the movement of the waters on the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself; though there is not a sharp division of the one from the another" (OC 97). There is no strict distinction between the CWP, practice and the forms of life. "And the bank of the river consists partly of hard rock, subject to no alteration or only to an imperceptible one, partly of sand, which now in one place now in another gets washed away, or deposited" (OC 99). Thus, rules are incorporated in their applications as well as their understanding, so there is no problem of interpretation or understanding of a rule or a rule-following problem. However, from the point of view of significance of empirical propositions of the world-picture, the question is how the rule and the empirical proposition merge into one

another (OC 309). The answer is that it is the core of practice – that practice masks the distinction between rules and empirical propositions (OC 319).

Abbreviations

- TLP = *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*
 LP = *Lectures on Philosophy*
 BB = *The Blue and Brown Books*
 R = *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*
 PI = *Philosophical Investigations*
 CV = *Culture and Value*
 RPP = *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology I, II*
 Z = *Zettel*
 BT = *The Big Typescript*
 OC = *On Certainty*

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Miriše na pragmatizam: Wittgensteinova antiskeptična oružja

SAŽETAK: U tekstu autor nastoji istražiti Wittgensteinove pojmove djelovanja, prakse i pragmatizma iz njegove knjige *O izvjesnosti*. Nastoji se ocrtati kriterij Wittgensteinove analize izvjesnosti i definirati ključne pojmove poput slike svijeta, prakse, izvjesnosti i opravdanja. Analiza pokazuje da Wittgenstein primjenjuje specifičan oblik pragmatičnoga rješenja problema opravdanja, koji se na kraju krajeva može i treba nazvati nekom vrstom *pragmatizma*. To je predmet prvog i drugog dijela teksta. U trećemu se dijelu pokazuje primjena ove pragmatične teorije opravdanja na Wittgensteinovo opovrgavanje skepticizma. Autor sugerira da je njegova pragmatična analiza izvjesnosti prikladno sredstvo za opovrgavanje skepticizma. Međutim, njegov je antiskeptičizam smješten u tradiciju filozofije i epistemologije zdravoga razuma i običnoga jezika (Moore, Chisholm, Lehrer, Austin, Grice, Strawson itd.). U zaključku autor primjenjuje ovo antiskeptičko rješenje na tzv. problem slijeđenja pravila (kako je izložen kod Kripkea) i pokazuje da postoje dalekosežne posljedice ove interpretacije Wittgensteinova kasnog djela na njegova shvaćanja jezika, učenja, ontologije i znanja.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: Znanje, opravdanje, slika svijeta, praksa, pragmatizam, izvjesnost, sumnja, skepticizam.