On Paradoxicality of Experience in Wittgenstein's "Later" Philosophy

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> Es kann leicht so scheinen, als *zeigte* jeder Zweifel nur eine vorhandene Lücke im Fundament; so dass ein sicheres Verständnis nur dann möglich ist, wenn wir zuerst an allem zweifeln, woran gezweifelt werden *kann*, und dann alle diese Zweifel beheben.
> (TS227, 73: PU §87b)

1. The Status of Natural Knowledge

The common cognoscitive form of access to reality (conesquently *exceptis excipiendis*) constitutes, at first sight, a *definite* (*constant*) and *valid* (*not deficient*) contexture.[1] The standardisation of "ideal" knowledge is determined by its *ineluctable* and *enough* character. The way of being that makes up mankind takes root without our interference, in a word - *naturally*. Since we are aware, we accede to the world through this perspective, in such a way that it does not seem credible to pass to a different situation. The patrimony of *fundamental* or *foundational* structures that shapes "common sense", which presents itself as *legitimate*, manifests itself as the source of all *derived* or *appendicular* knowledge we can hold in our individual existence, also being, extensively, the *positum* of the various scientific disciplines.

Nevertheless we recognise, as much as it is possible for us to recognise, that we do not know a multiplicity of things, but this identification does not leave us perplexed, nor projects us to an immediate and complete acquisition of what we do not know. By the opposite, the recognition of ignorance regarding immense subjects is faced with naturalness because we do not need this. A distinct problem consists in a fall's possibility of *primary* or *basic* determinations. In effect, although habitually we do not tend for a perspicuous understanding of these, we could not be uninjured if it would produce a *deficiency* in its functioning, seeing that this would constitute a *convulsion* in experience.

Wittgenstein's remark that works for motto to the present speculation stresses an aspect that allows to call into question the solidity of natural empirical conformation, namely: "an existing gap in the foundations". Wittgenstein relates further a strategy that passes over all History of Western Philosophy: the conception according to which "secure understanding is only possible if we first doubt everything that *can* be doubted, and then remove all these doubts". At the beginning we do not find "faults" in cognitive configuration, but this does not mean they cannot exist, though inconspicuous. The discovery of these "gaps", dependent of an attention to the grounding of perspective disposal, motivates a continuous philosophical reflection. The efforts that are established to nullify the discovered problems constitute the other side of this investigation. Thus we are forced to admit that natural knowledge, in its foundations, in spite of it offer itself as

strong, is armed with a genuine *fragility*, conducive to an "amphiboly of representation".

2. The Meaning of Doubt

In circumscribing ourselves only to the well-known material of all Wittgensteinian commentators, we find in the book edited under the title *Über Gewissheit*[2], which consists in remarks written by Wittgenstein in 1949-51, the more concrete consideration of "doubt's" topic with regard to certainty and belief in knowledge's horizon. In MS172 it is initiated, precisely, the commentary to the position of Moore expressed in "A Defence of Common Sense" (1925), "Proof of an External World" (1939) and "Certainty" (1941), which serves as a platform to Wittgenstein's circumspection that finishes in MS177, the last lines he wrote. (Cf. ÜG, "Vorwort" [Anscombe, von Wright]; cf. also Stroll 1994, 8-10; see in addition Malcolm 2001, 70-75)

Considering the examples of Moore, or others, we verify, however absurd, we cannot exclude such possibilities (*e.g.* the earth has started to exist now). In fact the problem lies in the argumentation provided by individuation. In other words if a doubt is installed promoting a perplexity concerning fields of experience, in all its multiple diffusion, even its totality, determined, for instance, in its modal angle, what is evidenced is a radical lability, proportionate by the individual's representative indecisiveness. This makes impracticable a decision, in so far as any deliberation has the problematic form of this point of view. This ambiguity of perspective does not result, therefore, in an empirical *metamorphosis*, *i.e.* in the deposition in a new region of event, but in the acknowledgement of *paradoxical quality* of experience.[3]

In this direction what Wittgenstein carries out is a research of the grammar that *grounds* our access. He says:

> Die Frage des Idealisten wäre etwa so: "Mit welchem *Recht* zweifle ich nicht an der Existenz meiner Hände?" (Und darauf kann die Antwort nicht sein: "Ich *weiss*, dass sie existieren") Wer aber so fragt, der übersieht, dass /dass der Zweifel an einer Existenz (nur) in einem *Sprachspiel* seinen Platz hat./ Dass man also erst fragen müsse: Wie sähe so ein Zweifel aus? und es nicht so ohne weiteres versteht. (MS172, 8: ÜG §24)

Wittgenstein's critique to Moore depends, rightfully, on analysis of verbs like "to know" (*wissen*) or "to believe" (*glauben*). In MS174 we verify that the use of "I know" is incorrect when applied to phenomena like those at stake. When Moore says he "knows" this or that what he is referring to is not a particular and, much less, apodictic knowledge. Indeed what Moore "knows" is something that all we know; however it cannot be proved, demonstrating the double misleading employment of verb "to know". Wittgenstein writes:

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[1] It is not necessary to be thus. We could have an *indefinite* (*variable*) form; and being *definite* it could present itself as *invalid* (*deficient*), or being *indefinite* it could present itself either as *valid* or as *invalid*. And beyond this *fixed* formality it is still possible to project a *mutant* formality. This could manifest itself either *inclusively* or *exclusively*. In the first case it could appear either as *definite* or as *indefinite*, being able in each one to patent itself *inclusively* or *exclusively* either as *valid* or as *invalid*. In the second case (just concerning to value's attribution) it could appear either as *definite* or as *indefinite*, coming over *inclusively* either as *valid* or as *invalid*.

[2] A correspondence's synopsis of this text with MSS is presented in Pichler 1993.

[3] That is, the form of access passes to be identified as "amphibolic", remaining *definite* (*constant*), but giving rise in a *mutation of focusing* to an indecision in what concerns to its *validity* (*not deficiency*) or invalidity (*deficiency*).

Die /Wahrheiten,/ von denen Moore sagt, er wisse sie, sind solche, die, beiläufig gesprochen, wir Alle wissen, wenn er sie weiss. (MS174, 22v: ÜG §100)

Effectively Wittgenstein calls our attention for the "system" (*System*) of "convictions" (*Überzeugungen*) (cf. MS174, 22v: ÜG §102), advising that this net of presupposed ideas, this synthesis of general cognition, determines, at the most, the daily practice. It is "action" (*Handlung*) that must decide relatively to something subjected to doubt. This resolution cannot demand "certainty" (*Sicherheit, Gewissheit*) because an asseveration of this nature is impossible for us. Wittgenstein's proposal is based on a *reductio ad absurdum*, which has as a positive limit the norm of the "language-game". Wittgenstein refers:

Wer an allem zweifeln wollte, der würde auch nicht bis zum Zweifel kommen. Das Spiel des Zweifelns selbst setzt schon die Gewissheit voraus. (MS174, 25v: ÜG §115)

Empirical operations lay in a "practical harmony" (*praktische Harmonie*: Hofmann 2000, 255), to such an extent that a doubting movement can hardly eliminate *in integrum* the basic "presuppositions" (*Voraussetzungen*) or "preconceptions" (*Vorurteile*). Usually it always exists something that stands, a "substratum" (*Substrat*) (cf. MS174, 35r: ÜG §162) in which we still are located and that authorises us to think, *in limine* the "meaning" of the words we use. Wittgenstein states exactly:

Wenn ich also zweifle, oder unsicher bin darüber, dass das meine Hand ist (in welchem Sinn immer), warum dann nicht auch /über die/ Bedeutung dieser Worte? (MS176, 30r: ÜG §456)

Thus the set of *foundational* knowledge we possess shall pass to be identified not as something that we "know", but as something that we "believe" and that we should want "to believe". Wittgenstein says:

Das ich weiss, das glaube ich. (MS174, 37v: ÜG §177)

It is the reduction of "objective certainty" (*objektive Gewissheit*) to "subjective certainty" (*subjektive Gewissheit*) (cf. MS175, 1r-1v: ÜG §194) that mould up Wittgenstein's resolubility, mobilising a rotation from an apparent "knowing" to a clarified "belief". This *epistemological* belief should not be immediately confused with Wittgenstein's *religious* belief. Firstly, this "new method of philosophising" (see MS105, 46: WA1, 177, §1) does not impose as an indispensable condition this feature, and secondly, for Wittgenstein, decidedly, religiousness ought not to constitute simply a theoretical salvation, notwithstanding what is in cause is the sustenance of the very *praxis*.

In this way Wittgenstein's depurations have an identical practical result to the ones of Moore, but they involve an efficient, *irrefutable* intellection. The "therapeutic methodology" does not make an apology of "common sense" because this is incongruous in Philosophy. On the contrary, it diagnoses instability that unnoticeably is inherent to natural disposal, which can be raised in all its amplitude on the occasion of a philosophical examination like that we have debated, showing likewise the nonsense of this speculative intention, attempting to safeguard a *nature*. The following remark of Wittgenstein is elucidative:

Es ist immer von Gnaden der Natur, wenn man etwas weiss. (MS176, 42r: ÜG §505)

Even on the last day, when he wrote down his thoughts, he asks:

'Wenn ich /dieser/ Evidenz nicht traue, warum soll ich dann irgend einer Evidenz trauen?' (MS177, 10r: ÜG §672)

3. Grammar and Indeterminability

Wittgenstein's "grammatical investigations", although they give a resolution for actional *epoché*, they are permeable to a placing in a sphere of indetermination that suggests an *unsuitability* to experience. Really we cannot avoid the bewilderment imposed by problems like the ones we have submitted to analytical focus (had they been originated voluntarily [philosophically] or involuntarily). What we experience in these dubious situations is a lack of *power* to decide categorically the aporia; or else, it lacks *truth's criterion*. Wittgenstein's solution, which seems to be the only one possible, depends nevertheless on a progressive degradation of pathological intensity that happens *per se*. That is to say, difficult *philosophical* problems exist, they are passable to formulation, and no matter how much, as philosophers, we prevent ourselves from the fall into the "blind alley" (*Sackgassen*) of our language, they can present and melt away themselves by themselves, *innately*. If on the one hand the philosopher can be prepared to face these events, on the other hand he cannot help feeling an *impotence* to determine the *condition* we are in. This is dominated by "truth", in the words of Nietzsche, being preferable for us, according to him, a projection of "error", of "illusion", instead of an unfastening to *our* "will to truth" (*Wille zur Wahrheit*). In Nietzschean thought that is called to expression by "will to power" (*Wille zur Macht*). In this manner Wittgenstein's position would not escape to what is criticised in Nietzsche's philosophy from the beginning, so to speak from the criticism on Schopenhauer, as "resignationism".

Notwithstanding, Wittgenstein is the philosopher in all "resignational tradition" who better hold his ground. As a matter of fact he gives us the elements so that we could theoretically consolidate a community, developing a "truth's process of publicity" (*Wahrheitsprozess der Öffentlichkeit*: Hofmann 2000, 262). But furthermore Wittgenstein's indagation is guided *ab initio* (*i.e.* since the mystical remarks of *Logisch-philosophische Abhandlung* and of correspondent notebooks [MSS101-103]) by an *ethical* purpose: a continuous *suitability* to original request and a making known to the others what he saw.

For that reason an extension to exegetical views of authors like Stroll or Hofmann is feasible. The former, despite the conceptual distinction established between "epistemic" plan of "knowledge" and "non-epistemic" plan of "certainty" or "certitude", defending this last one as the corner stone of Wittgenstein's "foundationalism", restricts, as a consequence, his "analytical" ratiocination to *epistemological* range (cf. Stroll 1994, 145, 161). The later, a "continental" author, situates herself *epistemologically* too, concretely in a Kantian *Metaphysik der Sitten* (cf. Hofmann 2000, 137, 163). But it becomes clear along the *Nachlass* another dimension of Wittgenstein's philosophical task. He writes, for example, in 'Band IV, *Philosophische Bemerkungen*' from 1929-30:

Die Ergebnisse der Philosophie sind die Entdeckung irgend eines schlichten Unsinns und Beulen die sich der Verstand beim Anrennen an /das Ende/ der Sprache geholt hat. Sie, die Beulen, lassen uns der Wert jener Entdeckung /erkennen/. (MS108, 247: WA2, 302, §4)

This confrontation with "/the end/ of language" shall be *ethically* interpreted (cf. DB, "Vorwort" [Somavilla]). Wittgenstein's inquiry institutes a return to a ground we

must preserve as the directrix of our access to things. In doing this it constitutes a tension between an antisceptical philosophical perspective and an "insight" (*Einsicht*) that extravasates Philosophy (*metaphilosophically*), which is in the antipodes of the Nietzschean proposal and that is defined as a search for sense in a relation of *love*.

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