Wittgenstein: the possibility of the transcendental game

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> Important here is the fact that the notion of "exterior" is expressed, in many European languages, by a word that means "at the door" (fores is, in Latin, the door of the house, Jueajen, in Greek, literally signifying "at the doorstep"). The exterior is not another determined space, but the passage, the exteriority that gives access to it - in a word: its face, its *eidos*. The doorstep is not, in this sense, another thing in relation to the limit; it is the experience , so to speak, of the limit itself, the being inside of an exterior.
>
> G. Agamben

1. Introduction

Recent efforts to re-interpret Wittgenstein's work have led, in some longitudes of philosophical commentary [1], to the development of several currents of analysis leading to the reinforcement, against a certain established tradition[2], of the wholistic dominant in the work of the Anglo-Austrian author.

The range of problems analysed in such work, oscillating between the study of propositional logic and ethics, philosophy of language and aesthetics, or between psychology and phenomenology, seem, in fact, to reflect the exploration of a conceptual lode kept in perspective from the existential disorder of the *Philosophical Diaries 1914-1916* and reaching up to the systematic dramaturgy of the *Philosophical Investigations*. In the course of these texts the consistency of the system erected by the philosophical tradition would suffer a dramatic blow, for such a system could not support a behaviour with therapeutical intentions able to read each detail of philosophical common speech under the lucidity and violence of a "direct light". Generally speaking, this light was to be focused upon the functioning of knowledge as representation, groundstone of this philosophical tradition ever since its Platonic foundations:

> "Socrates to Theaetetus: "And whoever has an idea, shouldn't he have an idea of something?" -Theaetetus: "Certainly." - Socrates: "And whoever has an idea of something, shouldn't he have an idea of something real?" - Theaetetus: "It seems that way." "(*Zettel*, 69)

Classical representation emerged, from its very beginning, as a sort of interface between two domains inaugurated with the Platonic-Aristotelian anthropological and ontological fracture: between "mind" and "world" as between "sign" and "referent",

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[1] Namely, the Anglo-saxonic space of authors like David Charles McCarthy (1991), particularly interesting because of his criticism of the English translation of the *Tractatus* made by Pears and McGuinness and where all the passages that more clearly defended the wholistic logical theory would be systematicaly sabotaged, or David Stern (1991).

[2] Represented today by authors such as Jaako Hintikka.

language stabilises itself in its denotative function, and the solid fixation of the concepts was needed so that the traffic of meaning between the transcendent and the immanent planes, i.e., the transcendental game, would be possible. As it creates the conditions of meaning, tradition engages theoretical discourse in an internalistic *voyage* which is to become the master project in the history of philosophy from its hellenic dawn. This voyage consisted of two main guidelines: a) the determination of the referent underlying each proposition, its body of meaning ("Bedeutungskörper"), the search for a desired "beyond the sign"; b) the recovery of the ego structure responsible for the enunciation, the attempt to present the "before the sign". The work of Wittgenstein, by questioning such "two worlds' mythology", has launched contemporary thought into a re-evaluation of philosophical discourse as a whole, and a revisiting of the foundations of theory.

The objective of this article is to illustrate the wholistic dominant in Wittgenstein and its importance in the progress of the denunciation of the fracture between two supposedly heterogeneous planes (planes that we shall simplistically name "interior" and "exterior"). In order to analyse the different aspects of this delation, we shall begin with the germinal core formed by the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, then take a look at the *Blue* and *Brown Books* as essential platforms to understanding the dialogue held between the two most important phases of their author's thought, and finally approach the subject of "how to follow a rule", central in the context of the *Philosophical Investigations*.

2. Logical wholism

At first glance, the literary core constituted by the *Philosophical Diaries* and *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* could be easily thought to represent an attempt to justify the process of denotation in language and a consistent summary of the logico-atomistic project of Frege and Russell, thus inscribed in the sort of ontological quest previously mentioned. The task of analytical decomposition of language, reducing each complex proposition to its simpler elements, would not only allow us to respond to a necessity for logical and linguistical order but would also lead us to some significant ontological consequences. To go back in the propositional structure - i.e., to disassemble a complex proposition in the elementary propositions of which it is a truth function (according to the "Extensionality Thesis" [3]) - would correspond, according to the Picture Theory, to a going back in the referent structure. The admission of the structural isomorphism between both planes - the "logical form" - would allow, in the *Tractatus,* to the formation of some correspondent pairs: "complex proposition" - "state of affairs"; "name" - "object". In this way, Frege and Russell's atomism would continue to participate in a *punctilistical* vision of reality and accept the principle according to which to reflect upon the referent means to catalogue its constituents, a task common to semantics (ontology) and to syntax (logic). Wittgenstein's somewhat different perspective resides precisely at the level of analytical decomposition: on the one hand, *Tractatus' "*world" is not a "sum" but a "totality", i.e., it is not the product of an eternally delayed inventory of constituent elements assembled as if in a mosaic, but rather the recognition of a given horizon (which presupposes an operation of mystical,

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[3] Cf. *Tractatus* §5.

ethical and a aesthetical proportions [4]); on the other hand, the need to attend to logic's self-sufficiency is consistently referred to, and that means refusing any ontological contamination of the logical analysis.

In relation to the prevalance of a wholistic perspective regarding the behaviour of language, it has to be considered the important role played by proposition 3.42 of the *Tractatus*, and its establishment of a relation of mutual implication between each proposition and the totality of the logical space:

> "The proposition extends itself through the logical space."

The German verb "übergreift" (here translated by "extends itself") reinforces the role of the proposition as a unifying principle, running through the entire logical system in a global form, as a foundational condition of any discursive articulation, while simultaneously requiring, for its own functioning and inteligibility, the coming together of the entire logical space, i.e., the proposition only acquires meaning from the moment it re-assembles the general system of logical coordinates in order to integrate itself within, constituting itself as a re-organisation of this space-system while simultaneously reflecting and pointing to this environment that circumscribes it and from which it derives its meaning:

> "Every now and then, one feels that in the elementary proposition one also speaks about every object." (*Philosophical Diaries*, 13.7.16).

On the other hand , the reinforcement of the self-sufficient character of logic is reflected, namely in:

a) the suspicion felt against the admission of logical constants;

b) the attempts to develop a strictly operationalistic interpretation of formal logic (for example, truth operations based upon the negation operation N (x) or the logical method of Truth Tables) as a defence against Frege and Russell's logical realism (eg. Russell's inventories proposing examples of elementary propositions, an attempt to justify language in an extra-logical way).

c) the importance granted to the extensionality thesis, which, together with the analytical operationalism made possible by the *Tractatus*' breakthroughs, would allow the analysis of llogico-linguistic behaviour as an automatic process and a priori formulation;

d) the possibility of a use theory of language within the *Tractatus*, according to which it would be possible to acknowledge the importance given to the

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[4] One has to mention in this context the "non- experience that something is" mentioned in proposition 5.552 of the *Tractatus*, i.e., the acknowledgement of the "What", the anticipated awareness (condition of Logic itself) that things exist, the *rumour* of the "world's substance" (*Tractatus* §2.0211), the elimination of all analytical temptations regarding the "aesthetical miracle" of the world as limited totality (cf. *Philosophical Diaries*, 20.10.16; one should attend to the importance given by Wittgenstein to the works of Angelus Silesius).

application of Logic ['Anwendung der Logik' [5]]; this possibility allows us to preview Wittgenstein's future evolution by reinforcing the pragmatic component of language, namely, when he identifies meaning with the trajectory that the sign makes among the subject's actions:

> "(When everything happens as if a sign has meaning, then it really has meaning.)" (*Tractatus*, §3.328)

In this sense and especially when one considers the underlying "use theory", "elementary proposition" and "world" must be read as transcendental structures, i.e., as constituents of language with a specific function without which speech development would not be possible. Thus, more than the search for a denotational or ontological justification for language, picture theory should be read as the moment where *Grammatology* outshines *Ontology*. More than frontier terms by which the "language's antennas" touch their referent, "elementary proposition" and "world" (concepts that are to be found at the end of atomistical analysis) become internal conditions of language itself, foundation elements of discourse's architecture:

> "It seems that the idea of the simple is already within that of the complex and that of analysis, in such a way that, independently of any possible examples of simple objects or of propositions that speak about simple objects, we come to this idea and we understand the existence of simple objects as a logical necessity - a priori." (*Philosophical Diaries*, 14.6.15).

According to this, it is possible to answer a question with an elementary proposition if one understands the elementary proposition on a strictly functional basis, and if it is taken as one of the conditions (or topics [6])of the discourse. The interpretation of the statute of language's terminal poles - "elementary proposition" and "world" - as transcendental structures of discourse (thereby delivering them from their ontological significance) points to the need to intertwine the *Tractatus*' picture theory with increasingly intense manifestation of a use theory [7] of language. Thus, more than the refusal of the past, Wittgenstein's interest in non-declarative discourse (intention discourse, anticipation discourse, and verification discourse) or the substitution of the concept "calculus" for that of "game", serving as metaphor for the explicitation of the linguistic proceedings, constitute nothing more than developments of a conception already present in the *Tractatus*.

It is as if Wittgenstein, by leading his investigations towards the clarification of the role of the elementary proposition (which, consequently, would point to the "world's substance"), would actually be looking for one of those "tacit agreements for the understanding of current language" referred to in proposition 4.002. To acknowledge the role of elementary propositions puts an end to the constant indefinition of propositions in general language, since the former behave as ultimate residues and supporters of the meaning. To this legitimisation the universe of complex propositions

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[5] Cf. *Tractatus* §5.557, 3.262, 3.326, 3.327.

[6] Cf. MacCarthy, 1991: 102.

[7] Cf. Riverso, 1970.

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answers back with another legitimisation because the propositional complex now emerges as the vital environment outside of which the simple does not survive:

> "The name only occurs in connection with the elementary proposition." (*Tractatus*, 4.23)
> "Only the proposition has meaning; a name only has denotation in connection with the proposition." (*Tractatus*, 3.3)
> "The totality of propositions is language." (*Tractatus*, 4.001)

Thus, more than the establishment of isolated links connecting each basic element of language to its worldly correlative, naming is the result of the balance of forces evident in the propositional complex [8] (hence the possibility of identifying the denotative function of language with its strictly narrative capacity...).

On the other hand, the atomistic path was still a participant in the "angelical point of view" that characterizes the entire metaphysical solipsism, i.e., the development of an activity that tries to keep "a foot outside and a foot inside" [9] language, to *fly over* the proposition and its referent, to compare them, to establish the exact causes why linguistic protocols miss their attempt to access the world, to propose the ultimate logical axioms, to reach the end simples that allow us to think the pictorial essence of language (to know what we are talking about when we are talking about something), to speak about objects and things, and to reconcile language and world in a conceptual embracement. Like the spectre of the angel that escapes from the surface of the "big mirror" where language and world assume common features, and finally reaches a Syrian point where the answers to all the major philosophical questions (supposedly, meaningful questions) lie. This desire to escape is naturally refused by Wittgenstein and the *Tractatus* is itself presented as the description of an itinerary along which scientific and logico-linguistic questions are followed but only to a certain extent. The book carefully delineates a "point of no return", one which, in fact, the philosophical tradition has not hesitated to ignore, but only to have lost itself. When the search for the limit (namely, the general form of elementary propositions) meets the limit of the search, the mode of investigation is no longer a conceptual but rather a mystical, ethical or aesthetic one. This was in fact the path taken by the *Tractatus* in its literary form.

3. The refusal of parallel processes

With the *Blue* and *Brown Books*, the time had come to consider psychologist and *egologist* tendencies within the philosophical tradition here named under the emblematic figures of Augustine and Descartes.

Mentalism, ontologism, mechanicism, abstractionism, contingentism, solipsistic privativism: these are the modern forms directly or indirectly subsdiary of the interior-exterior dualism of Cartesian extraction. These forms carry on such a dualism either through the idea of the words' internal meaning (the opposition meaning - expression) or through the relevance given to introspective analysis as an ideal platform for

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[8] Regarding the importance of the notion of "complex ", cf. *Tractatus* §5.5423.

[9] Cf. Maslow, 1961: 148.

psychological investigation. In this sense, a double target would be identified by the cathartic text of the *Books*. In fact, the text constantly stresses the parallel that exists between the concept of a non-corporeal "I" as the original source of all intentional propositions (the "will") and the notion of a parallel structure underlying each propositional expression, a mental act that dicovers behind the significant vehicle a constellation of meanings, pointing to an ontological organization of relationships [10]and to the sliding doors between language and reality. This ontological universe is indeed the condition of understanding. By attacking the suspicion of such hidden structures ("I", "meaning"...) , Wittgenstein dismounts the platform upon which the three major philosophical families - idealism, solipsism and realism – were built and developed. For these "families", the legitimacy of such a fracture was never a cause for concern.

In this way, Wittgenstein acted against a series of institutions directly or indirectly affiliated with Cartesian thought, noticing, not without some irony, how the origin of such prejudices could be traced back to the grammatical *witchcraft* of which language is prodigious:

> a) The usual treatment given to the concept of "understanding" and "meaning", presenting them as parallel processes to sign expression [11], derives from an incorrect attempt to develop a grammatical analogy. We simply try to put terms such as "to understand" or "to think" within the family of terms that denote bodily activities ("to speak", "to write ", ...) thus forcing consideration of the "place" where thought is produced, the physiological referent (the "mind") that allows us to hypostasiate that kind of parallel processes.

> b) The elaboration of the solipsistic illusion (implied, for instance, when one considers descriptions of "private experiences" [12]) derives from the grammatical privilege granted to the "first person" (characterised by a separation between the physionomical and the real "I"), i.e., to the inner inhabitant and voluntaristic centre of the body, a real ghost acting inside the corporeal machine whichfrom the Cartesian fission to its re-appreciation with Husserl, was always displaced to a domain exterior to subjectivity itself.

The antidote to such exaggerations and semantical deviations would reside precisely in the return to expression as first and ultimate criterion for "understanding" (and in fact for all the so-called "private sensations"). Wittgenstein's solution to the apories raised by the ancient dichotomical perspective would consist in erecting the

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[10] Regarding this tendency to consider the "mental act" of understanding as an invocation, activated by the sign's expression, of an entire constellation of "images and experiences of all tied tight" (as if the mind constituted an enormous warehouse "where we keep everything we remember before we express it"), it is important to consider the example of the sign "Napoleon" proposed by Wittgenstein (*The Blue Book*, p.39) as if "Napoleon" functioned as the label of a complex matrix that materialises in the mind each time this character is named.

[11] Cf.*The Blue Book*, p.3: " It seems that there are *certain definite* mental processes bound up with the working of language, processes through which alone language can function. I mean the processes of understanding and meaning. The signs of our language seem dead without these mental processes and it might seem that the only function of the signs is to induce such processes (...)."

[12] For example, "I can't feel his pain" (*The Blue Book, p.55)*.

language game as a fundamental structure and a gravity centre essential to meaning and comprehension. It is the language game and no longer the mental instance, that constitutes the primordial and original plan upon which all dichotomies (mental - physical, private - public, organic - inorganic, interior - exterior, soul - body), occur. Most of these were in fact developed to clarify particularly obscure points of the language game itself, such as for instance the strange function played by words like "I" or "understanding" or "meaning". They are attempts to stabilise a grammatical orthodoxy or mere wishes of invasion that intend to build notations more perfect than that of the ordinary discourse. And this latter "temptation" could be described as a sort of *spleen* that Wittgenstein reduces to a caricature:

> " Our ordinary language, which of all possible notations is the one which pervades all our life, holds our mind rigidly in one position, as it were, and in disposition sometimes it feels cramped, having a desire for other positions as well. Thus we sometimes wish for a notation which stresses the difference more strongly, makes it more obvious , than ordinary language does, or of one which in a particular case uses more closely similar forms of expression than our ordinary language.Our mental cramp is loosened when we are shown the notations which fulfil our needs." (*The Blue Book*, p.59)

It is thus possible to trace a parallel line between the positions of the *Tractatus* that defends the independence of the logico-linguistic mechanism from attempts at trying to extra logically justify this same mechanism, and the the *Books*' inquiries into the grammatical witchcraft responsible for the traditional quest for that which supposedly acts as fundament and basis for the fabrication of meaning, comprehension and meaning. The difference between the *Tractatus'* ideas and the conception assembled in both *Books* were nevertheless remarkable. Fundamentally, the criteria of manifestation of meaning, which the *Tractatus* presented as strictly internal to the logico-linguistic functioning (an autonomous and self-sufficient proceeding) became, with the extensively exaggerated Wittgensteinian *Kehre*, eminently external and pragmatical criteria, a further step in a process of continuous diurnalization of language, especially when analysed as a normative system. From the Picture Theory's mirror-like automatism one enters to the non-compendiable complexity of a living language, the constitutive support for our life forms, from the metaphor of the organism to the urban image:

> "Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods: and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses." (*Philosophical Investigations*, §18)

In fact, by promoting the translation of the linguistic proceedings into the image of a system or a calculus, philosophical analysis was making a totally unacceptable projection, one which indeed obscured the many asystematic features that compose much of the discourse's functioning, and it was precisely from such an amputation that philosophical analysis was itself developed as a theoretical, precise, rigorous and scientific investigation. Now, the defence and presentation of the ludical, performative character of language prevented its transformation into a theoretical object (at least,

according to the old concept of what "theory" mean) for a process that corresponded to the univocal and precise demands of classical analysis was no longer a game...[13]

When reading Wittgenstein, it is fundamental to bear in mind, while observing the linguistic phenomenon in a radically open way, that one is actually observing the *philosophizing's* transformation. Philosophy becomes a nomadic and strongly anti-theoretical activity. Through the presentation of concepts such as those of "language game" and "use-meaning", Wittgenstein inaugurated the generation of what Weitz (1973) named the "open concepts", notions that appeal to *family* relations and not essence ones, thus deviating from pretensions of unity or depth in the simple observation of the phenomena. Accordingly, concepts like "life forms", "family likeness", "drill" would evolve not as *omnivorous* formulations that intend to explain the logico-linguistic phenomenon, but rather as counter hypothesis, avoiding the false and pompous veil philosophically draped over the utter simplicity of language (reducing it, for instance, to a calculus...). A strictly descriptive function was also profoundly connected to this "new" wandering activity. Descriptions - "look and see" - would in any case be superior to explanations for what is exposed should be sufficient: there are in fact "family likenesses" common to the physiognomy of the different language games, strong marks of consanguinity that cannot be completely justified, a familiarity that emerges not of the *tranquillity* brought about by the identification of transitive characters but rather from the recognition of the diversity inherent to any linguistic system, an ethymological re-discovery, so to speak, of the "phenomenon", i.e., that which presents itself and *shines*:

> "And I want to give you the following rule of thumb: if you are puzzled about the nature of thought, belief, knowledge, and the like, substitute for the thought the expression of the thought, etc." (*The Blue Book*, 41-42)
> "Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain. For what is hidden, is of no interest to us." (*Philosophical Investigations*, §126). [14]

4. The autonomy of understanding

If the essence of the *Blue Book* led to the emergence of well circumscribed grammatical inquiries, the *Brown Book* was to lead into a more integral observation of the language game's global functioning. In this text, the language game would become a complex where the most various beams of rules of action, expression, understanding and meaning, would converge, in a constant connection to the life form that is reflected in that game (more than that: the life form that is brought into existence by the language

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[13] Cf. Fink: 1987: 17: " That which fulfils itself with lightness, (...) reveals itself to be rich and hard for the concept. And yet we are not able to formulate through concepts the pre-knowledge inherent to the knowledge we have of the game".

[14] The way Wittgenstein apparted himself from all pretentiously radical initiative in philosophy, converting philosophy to a more prosaic usage - a "skill", a special ability to "make the other see" -, would provoke an enormous disenchantment in the most direct of his masters - Berytrand Russell - who never ceased to pity this bizarre behaviour of once a so promising spirit: "The later Wittgenstein seems to have grown tired of serious thinking and invented a doctrine which would make such an activity unnecessary" (1959: 216).

game). As a first major exploration of the concept, the *Brown Book* is divided into two main distinct thematic blocks: the first part is devoted to pursuing the criticism of the traditional philosophical model, represented here by the figure of St. Augustine, whereas the second section deals with specific problems connected to the adoption of an alternative model, problems concentrated under the introduction of the operative concept "seeing-as" [15], a concept that denotes, from its very beginning, the perspectivistic, panoramic character of Wittgenstein's activity characterised by the constant attempt to attend to traditional problems and perplexities by examining them in their own original *environment*, i.e., by *staging* them.

Examining Augustine's texts, Wittgenstein initiated this series of reflections with the problem of initiation into the language game. The scene of "inheritance and instruction" that introduces the theme (in a way that would repeat itself at the beginning of the *Investigation*) establishes an important demarcation between the domains of "ostensible explanation of words" and "ostensible teaching of words". The first one is presented by Augustine as the process by which the child acquires linguistic competence and it evolves according to pedagogical schemes such as "This piece is the king" [16]; it depends, however, on a previous acquaintance with language, the participation in a complex language game. The second is developed at a more original level, the level of the initiation into that same game, a process which, more than to promote the establishment of denotative connections linking the name to the referent, pushes the child into the interior of a complex sphere of rules and action criteria, schemes that allow the progressive stabilisation of behaviour and the confident manipulation of the sign (its usage is its meaning):

> "Augustine describes the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange land and did not understand the language of the country; that is, as if it already had a language, only not this one. Or again: as if the child could *think*, only not yet speak. And "think" would here mean something like "talk to itself"." (*Philosophical Investigations*, §32) [17]

Placing the question on a pedagogical level is not without consequences. And these consequences start at the very level of philosophy's methodology, of how philosophical questioning is to be developed. Once the hypothesis of univocal formulations based on the safe denotative content of words (the classical binary relation name - reference) has been removed, one gets in its place a perspectivistic task and the new philosophical formulation is now based upon the strictly descriptive impetus that

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[15] The introduction of this concept must be analysed in the context of the discussion surrounding the so-called "Aha-Erlebnisse" particularly relevant in the Austro-German scientific communities connected to the Gestalt Psychology movement. It is also important to remember that, as a student in Vienna's Pedagogical Institute, Wittgenstein had a direct contact with it the gestalt mode of educational psychology taught by Karl Bühler, a central author of the Austrian Gestalt movements. The influence of Gestalt theories upon Wittgenstein's later work (evidently noticeable in Chapter 11 of the second part of *Philosophical Investigations*) constitutes a field of analysis not yet conveniently explored.

[16] Cf. *Philosophical Investigations*, §31.

[17] Or the repetition of models exploring the suspicion of hidden and parallel courses that accompany the expression of the words, in an echo of distant voices: "Well then, thought and speech are one and the same thing, for the inner speech that the soul makes in silence to iself has received the special name of thought" (Plato, *Sophist*, XLVI, 257d).

tries to invoke and assemble the general (pragmatic) contours of the language game - life form - that animate each one of the problems analysed by the philosophical tradition. It is at this point that the notion of "panoramic representation" ['übersichtliche Darstellung'] appears as a product, in a permanent re-creation, of this renewed philosophical activity ['Tätigkeit'], an activity that is to be performed through the simple juxtaposition of "situation portraits" justified only by fragile and ambiguous family likenesses. Philosophy adopts a state of indirect communication in the double objective of a *saying* that is, prioritarily, a *showing*.

In the context of this re-orientation of philosophical activity, transforming it in a sort of *pan-optical* [18] exercise, it becomes urgent to consider two high priority concepts, "aspect - seeing" and "aspect - shift", both of them conveniently integrated into Wittgenstein's theory of "seeing - as". Through the presentation of these concepts and through a complex series of examples [19], Wittgenstein would question the internalistic way of imposing common elements between the phenomena and the main logical postulates of this reasoning, namely the principle of identity, the principle of the excluded third, the Aristotelian *Hypokemeinon* and its categories, etc. At the same time, Wittgenstein tries out the possibilities of this new contextualistic way of observing the external, physionomical criteria that allow us to assert relations of similarity (but not identity) between phenomena, appealing to the *re-staging* of the cases from which those relations come:

> "To say that we use the word "blue" to mean "what all these shades of colour have in common" by itself says nothing more than that we use the word "blue" in all these cases." (*The Brown Book*, p.135)

It is then possible to establish a parallel between the theory of "use - meaning" and the capacity of "seeing - as". Just as the usage of a word means the mastering of a technique (an action performed upon the "toolbox" of the language game) so all experiences of "seeing - as" depend directly on an analogous mastering of apprehended techniques. Consequently, philosophical activity is to be redefined as a task of optical correction supplying us with different experiences of sudden "seeing - as" , and necessarily originating a new and augmented perception of the normative arsenal of the linguistic game, a perception that reflects itself in the renewed capacity to deal with such an arsenal [20].

According to such "family likeness" between the "use-meaning" of the words and "seing-as" *Erlebnisse*, and stressing that we are dealing here with a progressive *contamination* between both orders of phenomena, observations involving experiences of "seeing - as" appeared, throughout the second half of the *Brown Book*, as ideal platforms for the observation of those "peculiar sacramental acts" by which one promotes the installation of *magical* relations between names and things. Experiences of

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[18] Philosophy as a work of art? (cf. Rossvaer, n.d.)

[19] The identification of "pencil" (pp.127-129), "to search" (p.129), the attribution of the adjective "red" (p.130), "strain" (p.132), chromatic similarities (pp.133 and next).

[20] Never in an autocratic way but in *heterocentred* one: "The order, "Look at so and so", is of the kind, "Turn your head in this direction"; what you will see when you do so does not enter this order." (*The Brown Book*, p.176)

a sudden "seeing-as" constitute excellent replicas of the first denotation experiences (the child's experiences when it starts to learn its language) where a given term and, more than that , a precise usage, a determined behaviour, are connected to a perceptual organization, to an *aspect*:

> "Now when we propose to give the aspects of a drawing names, we made it appear that by seeing the drawing in two different ways, and each time saying something, we had done more than performing just this understanding action; whereas we now see that it is the usage of the the "names" and in fact the detail of this usage which gives the naming its peculiar significance." (*The Brown Book*, p.173)

It is in this context that Wittgenstein begins a long comparative movement between the grammar of "verbal understanding" (familiarity , "seeing as" ,...) and the grammar of "aesthetic understanding" and more precisely of "musical understanding". Based on the self- sufficient character of the musical expression, not translatable by words or images [21], and closely linking musical expression to verbal expression, Wittgenstein develops the criticism of the traditional conception of knowledge as a representation of something. This conception was in fact based upon a vectorized relation, an hierarchical balance between distinct planes: original - accessory, interior - exterior, meaning – expression, etc. Throughout the fascinating series of examples (*mises-en-scène*) of the *Brown Book* and by linking several moments of "seeing-as" to the theory of use - meaning of the words and to the aesthetic interpretation itself, one exhibits, in short, the autonomy of understanding, i.e., the refusal of the transitivity between different ontological planes that characterises the notion of " knowledge as representation", the refusal of a constant retroference able to go back beyond the sign or the expression in a never completely satisfied archaeological quest. On the contrary , understanding is, in the last analysis, founded upon an unsurpassable intransitivity, or rather, on a constant reference to the language game and to the life form that flows in each human action.

The pedagogical validity of the musical model is activated at the moment when its peculiar statute overrides the traditional idea of "understanding", i.e., when it becomes clear that the performance of the melody *is* the melody itself, the performative moment *is* the actual body of the musical sentence . Wittgenstein does not disassociate that which supposedly accompanies understanding from that which constitutes understanding, its manifestation, that which understanding effectively is. Going back to strictly linguistic domains, the expression of the sign *is* the sign and *the sign already signifies*. The solid frontiers of a classic semiology start to breakdown:

> "For understanding this sentence, we say, points to a reality outside the sentence. Whereas one might say 'Understanding a sentence means getting hold of its content; and the content of the sentence is *in* this sentence.' " (*The Brown Book*, p.167)
> "Just in this away we refer by the phrase "understanding a word" not necessarily to that which happens while we are saying or hearing that, but to the whole environment of the event of saying it." (*The Brown Book*, p.157)

Some years later, undergo in *Remarks on Colour*, the sovereignity attributed to the language game would suffer further developments. In a return to Goethe and takes

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[21] Cf. *The Brown Book*, pp.166-167.

psychology as the perceptive phenomena, the language game would be defended as the normative instance of all experiences, in the consciousness that "to look" also has a grammar.

5. Other ghosts: the body of rules

The main objective that guides Wittgenstein in his incursion on the theme of "rule following" is to be found in his previous positions and the problem can indeed be traced back to the "old" theory of truth functions proposed by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*. In fact, since the end of the Twenties, Wittgenstein was debating an essential problem mining his picture theory. Basically, the problem concerned the destruction of the model according to which complex propositions would be able to represent that which they represented "pictorially", i.e., solely on the basis of their "syntactic form". Throughout this period of maturation of ideas, Wittgenstein abandoned the self-sufficient character of complex propositions and attributed a heavier weight to the "environment" that surrounds the way in which these propositions have meaning. Decomposition of these complex propositions into more simple ones, thus establishing their referential connection to the world, would eventually be regarded by the author of the*Tractatus* as a "human activity regulated by rules".

It has to be remembered that, in the *Tractatus*, it was the pictorial or figurative relation that united the linguistic apparatus to reality in an almost instantaneous course of juxtaposition "complex proposition - state of affairs", "name - elementary fact". Only later (the transition occurred somewhere between 1933 and 1935, i.e., the period when Wittgenstein dictates the *Books*) would the idea of an automatic calculus be substituted by the wider metaphor of "language games" a shift which, according to Hintikka, , we can compare to the transition from "indoor games" to "outdoor games". All throughout this transition, Wittgenstein was in fact producing a double transformation:

- he abandons the theory of a "phenomenological language" and the correspondent phenomenological conception of rules according to which :

a) the rule is a part of "the world of my thought and of my experience, i.e., of my phenomenological world";
b) a mere physical entity (for example, lines on a paper or the drawing of an arrow) doesn't mean a thing until it is interpreted: "to understand means to experience the symbolic expression of a rule in a specific way" (Hintikka, 1989);
c) rules are a part of our immediate experience;
d) the intentional element is fundamental (an idea that Wittgenstein still regards as very important in his *Philosophical Remarks*: if one withdraws the intention element out of language, its entire function will collapse). The different meanings of a given picture (for instance, "red") are differentiated by means of a "mental comparison"; this punctual comparison connects the word with the case under analysis and it is based upon it that a given meaning of the term is illuminated and detached from the others;

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- he denies that a specific symbolical expression of the rule is essentially connected to the way in which this rule is followed, thus attributing the initiative to the language game:

a) "to follow a rule" only has meaning inside the given language game in the same way that certain problems only have meaning when properly inscribed inside the specific and well determined language game - its exportation to another environment implies the loss of significant coordinates and the fall into a totally inoperative deviation of meaning;

b) the symbolic expression of the rule is utterly insufficient and without any vinculative force outside the language game in which it is inscribed;

c) the only criterion that allows us to distinguish the correct and effective usage of a rule resides in the language game that involves and legitimates this very usage; to be guided by the symbolic expression of a rule is nothing more than a "move" within this language game, the ultimate instance that stipulates the legality of certain usages and the nonsense of others;

d) in this sense , Wittgenstein talks about "blindly following a rule" [22]: the trail that potentiates the legitimate behaviour is not to be found in the rule *tout court* but in the language game of which this rule is only an element.

Wittgenstein's previous positions were intimately dependent upon the idea of an "internal world of experience". The Wittgenstein one meets in the Thirties and afterwards was, as we have seen, completely against this "interiority myth" and constantly reaffirms his preoccupation in examining the different cases he was dealing with (cases that exemplified a specific linguistic competence), without any references or retroreferences: Wittgenstein prevents the observation of such cases (namely those that illustrate behaviours that are subject to a rule) either *upstream*, by denouncing the "interiority myth and by rejecting all speculations involving " psychical processes", as well as *downstream* - grammar does not answer to reality and the rules that constitute it are not found and deduced from the world emerging rather like conventions built *to one side* [23]. These cases are then to be analysed in a "laboratorial" state which allows us to observe the fundamental relations established between the linguistic environment, the symbolic expression of a rule and the act originated by both [24].

The moment when Wittgenstein abandons the previous theory is to be found, according to Hintikka (1989), in manuscript MS (116) written sometime between the years 1934 and 1937 and where we can read:

"May I also describe in a different way what the application rules say about the words in question, namely by describing the process that takes place when someone

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[22] *Philosophical Innvestigations*, §219.

[23] "We cannot deduce the cube's geometry from the contemplation of the cube. Rules do not come out of an act of understanding." (*Lectures*).

[24] To this double effort of prevention, both *upstream* as well as *downstream*, one has to connect the statement of *The Brown Book* that says that what is under consideration here is the overcoming of the realist and idealist models and their substitution by that which Bouveresse (1987) calls Wittgenstein's "minimal non-cognitivism".

understands (means) a word?
Previously I thought that grammar rules were an explanation of what I experience when I use the word. They were consequences or expressions of the properties that I momentarily experience when I understand the words."

Rules would be obtained when we start paying attention to what is experienced when we hear or understand a specific word. The deductivistic character of this previous position is clear: each word would have *behind* it or *beneath* it, so to speak, a "body of meaning" ['Bedeutungskörper']" that would be discovered during this learning, a process one could compare to the Platonic ascendant dialectics. The criticism of this body of meaning would occupy Wittgenstein in the first 138 paragraphs of the *Philosophical Investigations* after which (§§139-242) he would attack a more subtle but no less harmful conception: the "body of rules" ['Regelskörper'] thesis according to which each rule was regarded, similar to the "body of meaning" theory, as the visible peak of a pre-established vehicle responsible "in a mysterious and magical way" (Bouveresse, 1987: 33) for the expression's meaning, imposing upon the expression an exclusive and quite determined conduct. This was in fact, *grosso modo*, Frege's theory, for whom the apprehension of the "abstract entity" corresponding to each word and from which every word receives its meaning and its usage possibilities, could not be explained at all due to the mysterious character of this entity (it is neither a physical structure nor a mental one). "Picture" is the only term Frege finds suitable to name this entity. In this context, Wittgenstein writes about the need that we apparently feel to invoke such pictures (completely redundant and of no use whatsoever) every time we deal with a "superlative fact" [25].

Under this topic, we should also take into account Wittgenstein's considerations on the "harshness of logical obligation," or on "logic's inexorability" as if there was a "logical mechanism" making invisible movements behind the signs and imposing on them "from the inside out" a well determined course.

Going back to MS 116, the moment when Wittgenstein changes his thought is noticeable:

"In my previous exposition, grammar rules seem to be an explanation of what I experience when I use the word. They would be consequences or expressions of the properties I experience when I listen to the word.
But this must be a nonsense."

From this moment on, to follow a rule would no longer be identified either with the behaviour of following a predetermined formula as with the fact of accessing some specific experiences.

Wittgenstein wanted to delete this *detective-like* atmosphere involving the understanding of symbols as if everything could be explained by the fantastic discovery of a mysterious *Fundament* hidden under the words. However this depuration does not mean at any moment the abandoning of all pre-determination, which would constitute a fall into an extreme relativism. One still has an entire structure of necessary connections but of an exclusively grammatical type. It is, so to speak, an *historicised* necessity, contingent, unpredictable and with roots reaching down into "natural history" in the

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[25] "The *Regelsköper* mythology transfers to the rules the magical power initially attributed to meanings" (Bouveresse, 1987: 36).

course of which the grammatical links of our language games were constituted. This contingency is a consequence of the autonomous character of our grammar: all the connections are imposed within the grammatical body and they do not refer to any real or natural rhythms of the phenomena.

This grammatical autonomy however does not imply the "destitution of the referential language" or the idea of language's self- referentiality. In fact, Wittgenstein never really abandoned the idea of language's representative function. If the "second Wittgenstein" is easily identifiable with a certain "semantic abstinence" (Hintikka, 1989), the harmony between thought and reality is always safeguarded by the Austrian philosopher even if it now means an "intragrammatical articulation" and no longer a "metaphysical correspondence".

Grammatical autonomy does not mean "general irresponsibility" or absolute relativism. Suffice to mention, for instance, that Wittgenstein never wrote that Mathematics would be able to create facts that would not exist without it; he only stated that mathematics determined "the character of that which we call 'fact' ".

In this sense, Wittgenstein would recuperate the example preferred by the relativists, i.e., the semantics of colour concepts, but only to conclude that the autonomy of conceptual systems regarding the world does not mean the anullment of the autonomy and sovereignty of the world whereas relativism ended up attributing to the subject the entire power to conventionally organise the symbols. It is to be noted, for example, that we won't find two or more completely different conceptual systems based upon the same natural facts or the same characteristics of human nature. The differences that can emerge from the comparison between two different conceptual games that emerge from the same reference *soil* are not fundamental. The example of this can be taken from *Remarks on Frazer's The Golden Bough* where Wittgenstein contradicts the ethnocentricity of the famous British anthropologist:

> "I would like to say: nothing shows better our similarity with these savages as the fact that Fraser has a word so familiar to them as well as to us, as "ghost" or "spirit" in order to describe the visions of this people".

Meanwhile, in *Bemerkungen über die Farben,* reflecting upon the way we can imagine human beings with chromatic concepts radically different from our own, the conclusion is that this is an impossible task: an incommensurability between conceptual systems could only be conceivable if for every system there was a different world. The colour concepts of an hypothetical extraterrestrial would have to be, simultaneously, sufficiently apart from our own concepts (in order to be really different) and sufficiently close (so that we could at least acknowledge them as chromatic concepts):

"Because life would develop in a different way. That which interests us would not interest them. Different concepts would no longer be unimaginable. In fact, *essentially* different concepts can only be imaginable in this way. " (*Zettel*, §388)

As Bouveresse (1987) wrote, it is impossible to determine *a priori* "what can or cannot interest human beings in general" or the new concepts they can arrive at, since reality still holds a very important function: it is reality that ultimately decides whether a given concept is or not applicable (a linguistic Darwinism?...). From here it follows naturally the label of "sober realism" that Wiggins (1980: 133-134) pastes to

Wittgenstein's conceptualism: we create our grammar but we do not invent the reality that it allows us to describe.

Necessary connections and the essentialistic *burden* of the terms are taken of the plane of the object's properties and reviewed as structures of a grammatical order. The very tendency to make these grammatical contributions part of the other properties-ingredients of things is in itself a grammatical suggestion.

> " 'Essential' is never a property of the object but rather the character of the concept."(*Lectures*).
> "That which corresponds to a necessity in the world must be that which, in language, seems to be an arbitrary rule." (*Lectures*)

This does mean however that Wittgenstein adopted a pure and simple conventionalism. From the fact that the rule does not have a real correspondent cannot be inferred that nothing corresponds to it in reality. As we have seen, there is at least one validation at the level of the worldly plane, i.e., we can invoke reasons in favour of the applicablity, utility and even indispensability of the rule adopted in the given case, but this doesn't mean however that we should identify the rule with an essential "fact" susceptible of making it "true".

Here lies a fundamental distinction separating Quine from Wittgenstein: for the former, the elimination of the *Bedeutungskörper's* mythology implies the rejection of the very concept of necessity, whereas for the latter, the difference between "necessary propositions" and "contingent propositions" is irrevocable and is kept as the difference that separates the rules of the game (necessary propositions determine the meaning [26]) and the *moves* made according to those rules (empirical statements, contingent propositions correspond to an usage of meaning).

Moreover, Wittgenstein considers it "deceptive and, in a certain way, very dangerous" (*Lectures*) to qualify as "arbitrary" the rules of the mathematical game and, in consequence, the rules of any language game. This type of qualification denounces a certain "accomodation" to *hypostasiation* common, in general, to all language games. This is in fact a temptation that hinders the consideration of a founding structure harsher than reality itself and with a more superior natural organization - the grammar that rules our language and our ways of usage.

The fact that rules are applicable to reality constitutes the most intimate relation possible between the linguistic order and the *real* order and it is through this relation that the concrete reference enters the conceptual sphere:

> "The usage technique of a word gives us an idea of very general truths regarding the world in which the word is used, truths that in fact are so general that do not attract people's attention (nor even, and I'm sorry to say it, the philosophers'attention)." (*Lectures*)

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[26] In such a way that Wittgenstein would call the "meaningless ['sinnlos'] propositions" of the *Tractatus*, i.e., tautologies and contradictions, "degenerated rules" (cf. Bouveresse, 1987: 106).

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