

## Foreword

Jean-Pierre Cometti and Fabrizio Desideri

Until very recently aesthetics has not been considered a main access route to the understanding of Wittgenstein's philosophy, of the challenges and issues that Wittgenstein's work brings up, from the *Tractatus* on. At best, aesthetic problems have been regarded as a significant, although secondary, aspect of the core of Wittgenstein's philosophy. An aspect related to his Viennese education within his "very musical" family and linked with his pessimistic critique of European Civilization. Aesthetics, then, has mostly been seen as one of the many areas where philosophical work was required, where philosophy, understood as a form of therapy, could help release one from metaphysical enchantments and linguistic misunderstandings. This, however, prevented interpreters from considering whether and in how far Wittgenstein's philosophy could contribute to a radical redefinition of the conceptual field of aesthetics, in relation both to ethics and to language. Even recent and very influential interpretations of Wittgenstein's thought have mostly focused on ethics rather than on aesthetics.

In tune with the renewed international panorama of studies and conferences devoted to the Viennese philosopher, in this issue of *Aisthesis* we assume that the relationship between Wittgenstein and aesthetics is conclusive and central, both to an understanding of Wittgenstein's philosophy and in order to promote a radical re-conception of aesthetics. Hence, the title chosen for the current issue: *Wittgenstein on Aesthetics / Aesthetics on Wittgenstein*. Our aim is not only to understand whether and in how far the problem of aesthetics is determinant and central for Wittgenstein, but also to see how aesthetics itself can be radically reshaped through the subtle and articulated filter offered by Wittgenstein's thought.

The essays collected in this issue all stem from talks delivered at the International Conference, *Aesthetic preferences, language games and forms of life: from Ludwig Wittgenstein*, which was held on 23-25 January 2013 in the Aula Magna of the Faculty of Ed-

ucation at the University of Florence. It has been a memorable Conference, thanks to the generous participation of many eminent foreign scholars. It certainly has been the first Italian conference devoted in its entirety to the relationship between Wittgenstein and aesthetics.

Contributions are here published in the same order they were presented at the Conference. With fruitful variety of approach, the entire thematic spectrum of the relationship between Wittgenstein and aesthetics is covered: 1) the question of the presence of specific aesthetic issues in Wittgenstein's works: from aesthetic judgment to the concept of the beautiful (J.-P. Cometti, G. Tomasi, G. Matteucci); 2) the question of the aesthetic paradigm as the key to understanding Wittgenstein's philosophical research as a whole as well as the philosopher's unmistakable style (F. Desideri, S. Säätelä, S. Borutti, F. Valagussa); 3) the issue concerning the crucial difference between showing and saying and the thin boundaries between sense and nonsense (V. Sanfélix, L. Distaso, M. De Iaco); 4) the peculiar, but extremely relevant, question concerning the relationship between music and language (J. Schulte, A. Arbo); 5) the question of the expressive character of the work of art and of the linguistic nature of poetry, considered as a vantage point for the pursuit of the analysis of linguistic facts, as well as the issue of the literary form of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, with its deeply romantic character (M.W. Rowe, G. Di Giacomo); 6) the controversial issue of "seeing-as" and of its role within theories of depiction and pictoriality (K. Stock, A. Voltolini, E. Caldarola, E. Terrone).

This issue of *Aisthesis*, entirely devoted to Wittgenstein and aesthetics, is programmatically inserted in the Research Project (coordinated by Fabrizio Desideri) *Estetica e naturalismo. Genesi dell'atteggiamento estetico e origini antropologiche dell'arte / Aesthetics and naturalism. Genesis of the aesthetic attitude and anthropological origins of art*, local Unit Research of PRIN Project 2009 *Al di là dell'arte. Crisi del concetto di arte e nuovi modelli di esperienza estetica / Beyond the Art. The Crisis of the Concept of Art and the new Models of aesthetic Experience* (coordinated by Luigi Russo).