

Wittgenstein and the *Liberating Word* Aesthetic Remarks about Philosophical Attitude

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1. After the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein was interested to throw light upon the popular philosophy that is hidden in our ordinary language. He worked to deconstruct misleading images such as the internal/external image used to think of the human being, his activities and the operation of language, to disclose the myth of interiority, that is the interiority thought like a private solipsistic space and to move the idea of language from the reductive denominative conception towards the multiplicity of the *language games*. In this perspective, in *The Big Typescript*, we can read that philosophy is the capacity to receive a strong impression from a grammatical fact (Wittgenstein [2000]: 421). Like common speakers, according to Lichtenberg's words quoted from Wittgenstein, we do not think that speaking, without reference to something, is already a philosophy: our wrong philosophy is incorporated in all language. Seeing that we think articulating in a language, we can not think without thinking wrongly (Wittgenstein [2000]: 234). So, the philosopher works about himself to become aware about beliefs which are learnt unawares from his language. He passes through the unaware thinking in language to come to the aware thinking and speaking. The philosophy is a *look-through* the phenomena being always within them (Wittgenstein [1953]: § 90) and we can say that this is an aesthetic condition¹. We can look at the limits of the phenomena only inside the same phe-

¹ At this purpose Garroni says that *looking-through* is «something as looking inside a filter within the filter» (Garroni [1992]: 11). According to Garroni, if you do not stay essentially in the medium in which and for which a feeling, an emotion, a knowledge, an action are possible, we can feel, know, do anything (Garroni [1992]: 14). We must and can look at the phenomena just staying within them, because we are already involved in them before we can interrogate them. Therefore, Garroni says that there is «an originary cobelonging of question and experience», which is typical of aesthetics and of a critical philosophical thinking. In fact, he underlines that aesthetics is «a *looking-trough* within the *looking*» (Garroni [1992]: 26).

nomenon which we want to see. Therefore, we can describe them, but not explain them. As philosopher we *see as* a phenomenon appears and we are not interested to say *what is* a certain phenomenon. We must *look-through* the *language game* like something primary and the feelings are ways to think or interpret it (Wittgenstein [1953]: 219). Looking is not easy seeing; when we look, we are attentive, we take care of what we look, we protect it.

We feel what happens before we answer to it, but in the ordinary we answer automatically, according to obvious habits and so the answers seem to come before sensory involvement in the events. Who has the philosophical attitude is affected by the ordinary. The philosopher has the impression to do not understand just what is obvious (Wittgenstein [1953]: 60). He feels the sensation of dissatisfaction. The philosopher, as Wittgenstein displays, lives in revolt against an instinctive dissatisfaction with the language, which has become a source of confusion. The wrong analogies in our language provoke mental cramps. They involve restlessness and carry a permanent fight. Language shows problems to be solved, because men had and have the tendency to think so (Wittgenstein [2000]: 422), according to misleading image, myths, reductive and wrong ideas. Someone says that philosophy does not make progress: Wittgenstein thinks that the reason is that our language is always the same and, as a consequence, the philosophers always ask the same questions. In a certain sense, therefore, philosophy requires a renunciation, which is a renunciation of feeling (Wittgenstein [2000]: 407) and perhaps this is the reason that makes it difficult for many people: «it can be difficult do not use an expression as much as difficult to restrain one's tears or to vent one's wrath» (Wittgenstein [2000]: 407). We can see, for example, the difference between the philosopher and the man of science through a beautiful image: «I am not interesting to erect a building, but rather to see before me against the light the foundations of possible buildings». Therefore, «the philosopher grasps always the same stone» (Wittgenstein [1977]: 28). The man of science explains. The philosopher, instead, describes.

2. To choose the right word, that Wittgenstein calls *liberating word*, because it liberates us from dissatisfaction or mental cramps, it subverts an idea, renews a thought, liberates us from a belief, creates new knowledge, opens to the difference, means taking care of the language. «The philosopher», Wittgenstein writes, «strives to find the liberating word, that word which at the end allows us to grasp what up to then, elusive, always oppressed our consciousness» (Wittgenstein [2000]: 410). Wittgenstein continues saying that «the choice of our words is so important, because is the question to under-

stand exactly the physiognomy of the word, because just the thought perfectly aligned can lead on right tracks. The carriage must be placed accurately on the rails, so that it can continue to travel regularly» (Wittgenstein [2000]: 410). An explainable feeling lead this choice. When we find the *liberating word* we feel that the thinking travels regularly without mistakes. And so we feel sensations of pleasure and satisfaction. These aesthetic conditions always exceed what we can say about them.

We could be asked: «How do we choose the words?» or «How do we find the so called *liberating word*?». Just the philosopher for Wittgenstein, but we can add the poet too, can search and find it, because both can *look-trough* the words. They are the sensibility to listening to the language. The difference between the search of the philosopher and the poet is that the philosopher searches and finds the right word, the *liberating word*, in the ordinary language, bringing a word from the metaphysical use to an everyday one (Wittgenstein [1953]: § 116). Instead, the poet finds it in an extraordinary language, bringing ordinary words into creative space of ontological fullness. The *liberating word* of the philosopher, we can say, is a problem solving word, which renews the language and so the thought in function of a therapy against metaphysics. In fact, the same philosophy is, for Wittgenstein, like a psychoanalytic therapy. The *liberating word* of poet is a word searched through an aesthetic analyse just for aesthetic conditions. It has no other purpose: it is a search that moves in a disinterested aesthetic interest. The liberating poetic word does not mean to be therapeutic; but it creates knowledge, renews the language and opens to differences. Therefore, some philosophies talk with poetic language or create an indirect dialogue with it, for example, choosing words in poetic-metaphoric function.

Philosophy often thinks about metaphor and through metaphors, we can see this thinking through metaphors in some Wittgenstein's aphorisms like, for example, the quoted metaphor of the carriage, which must be placed accurately on the rails (Wittgenstein [2000]: 410) or that of the philosopher like someone that always grasps the same stone (Wittgenstein [1977]: 28). Philosophy, like poetry, *sees as* the phenomena. *Seeing as* means to construct images and images increase knowledge. The poetic-metaphoric function suspends the objective, real, view of the things to invent a new one that transcends the objectivity and the direct reference to objects. This means that we do not just see the world, we do not refer to it directly designating as we refer to an object. The scientific language refers directly to the world in a relation subject-object and marginally it makes so also our ordinary language when, in borderline cases, as Wittgenstein shows us (Wittgenstein [1953]: §§ 1-43), in which we need denominations to establish or re-

establish a lack of understanding. But rather we *see as* the world and what happens. We free the imagination beyond pressing constraints subject-object. We construct infinite possible worlds. Each of us, for example, construct through metaphor his unique interiority, his particular essence.

For centuries, philosophy has thought with concepts, which close *the* identity and so paralyse the thought. The concept answers to the wish of generality that philosophy inherited from the science (Wittgenstein [1958]: 26-29). It is absolute; it marginalizes the particular and leaves out the differences. As Nietzsche says,

Each concept is born by the fact that it puts as equal what is not equal. As it is sure that each leaf is never totally like another, so it is certain that the concept of leaf takes form because it leaves out arbitrarily these individual differences and it forgets what distinguishes, provoking then the idea that in the nature exists something that is “the leaf” outside the leaves, almost an original form like a model on which are woven, drawn, circumscribed, wrinkled and painted all the others, but by clumsy hands, so that no copy is correct and reliable like a true copy of the original form. (Wittgenstein [1873]: 223)²

The philosophy must prefer the metaphor because it keeps the unlike in the similar; it keeps the different in *an* identity and brings near the stranger in the distance without reduction and objectification. The metaphor is unique and holds what is not the same escaping every classification, unlike the great building of the concepts that «shows the rigidity of a regular Roman columbarium and it blows into the logic the strictness and coldness which are typical of mathematics» (Wittgenstein [1873]: 176).

3. In a paragraph of *Philosophical Grammatik* we can read that «the word has a soul» (Wittgenstein [1969]: 35). The words talk before our talking and therefore we cannot become owners of language. We can not possess language as we possess an instrument or a thing. We must ask ourselves listening to the words. They are able to speak in spite of our speaking and this means that language is rooted in the senses. The choice of words based on the listening to the words, as the poet teaches us so well, is an aesthetic choice; in the sense that it is a pursuit of pleasure and an avoidance of pain. Wittgenstein says that «many things may be said around a subtle aesthetics distinction - this is important» (Wittgenstein [1953]: 287). And he continues saying that «the first thing you might say, of course, could be this: “This word is appropriate, this other no” – or other things like that. But then it is still possible to question all those connections further

² We find the example of the leaf in the *Blue Book*, too (Wittgenstein [1958]: 27).

branching which each word gives rise. With that first judgment is not just at the head of anything, because what is decisive is the field of a word» (Wittgenstein [1953]: 287).

Wittgenstein describes the choice of the word talking about a lending listening to it and he describes this choice like an aesthetic analysis. In fact, as we can read in the *Philosophical Investigations*, he underlines that sometimes we choose the words as we compare them «second subtle differences of their perfume: *This* is too ... *this other* too ..., – *this* is the right word. – But I do not always have to make judgments, give explanations; most of the times I could limit myself to say: “Just do not go yet”. I am unsatisfied, I continue to search. Finally I get a word: “It is *this!*”. *Sometimes* I can tell you why. This is exactly here the aspect of the searching and this is the aspect of the finding» (Wittgenstein [1953]: 286).

All these evaluations are argumentations and so they are part of speech. We can say that they are permitted by the language. They must form in a given historical language, but the search of linguistic determination is always accompanied by indeterminate aesthetic conditions. The linguistic search is accompanied by vagueness: I can not explain all parts, all moments, of this search. Therefore, Wittgenstein writes that «most of the times I could limit myself to say: “Just do not go yet”» (Wittgenstein [1953]: 286). We feel this dissatisfaction and we can explain it with words. The explanations have an end. We perceive these limits, but we can say them. We feel an inexpressible: «the inexpressible», Wittgenstein says, «(which seems me full of mystery and I am not able to express it) is perhaps the background on which I could express what is meaningful» (Wittgenstein [1977]: 43). The search of the right word is always played in a public common dimension: on the way of a language. In this dimension the agreement can escape, cannot succeed, cannot be explained, but its conditions of possibility are based on an essential linguistic agreement. We can hereby remember the famous argument of the *Tractatus*: «The limits of my world are the limits of my language» (Wittgenstein [1921]: 5.6) The search of determination is linguistic with a background of aesthetic indeterminate, that is the inexpressible which we always feel when move us in the expressive. Therefore, each of us could be saying: «I express what I always want to express by halves! Indeed, even so, I can express perhaps only the tenth part. This must mean something. My writing is often just stammering» (Wittgenstein [1977]: 47).

The indeterminate which we feel when we are looking for the right word, «we do not perceive positively itself», as Garroni underlines, «but it feels like the negative perception of determination» (Garroni [2005]: 34). We perceive the indeterminate, like the rest of the determination, that is public. The determination is open and common, because it

takes form in the language. It is possible only thanks to the language, which however does not know forms of absolute determination. On this point, always Garroni goes on saying that «perception is not all sensitive, and its whole organization of the sensitive is not itself is a sensitive operation, in some way a “thought” or, if it wanted a “pre-thought”, in the sense that it is already prepared to correlate with some intelligence and some language» (Garroni [2005]: 35). We say that perception is already in a relationship with some language in the sense that it cannot leave the language to organize and therefore to manifest itself. And this is not all. Without non-sensitive conditions the perception would be only ambiguous; in substance, it would be deceptive and could not risk interpretations (Garroni [2005]: 35). Without the agreement in verbal language, that is without the possibility of a common area where multiple interpretations, relating to each other, enriching each other, the perception could not take form and it would not find any answer. We can say radically that it could remain amorphous, not perceived, not shared to dissolve the deception, in order to increase its meaning. In this regard, Giuseppe Di Giacomo writes that we are before «a condition which is not intellectual, in fact it does not depend by logical rules, but practical and aesthetic, without which it could not be possible our saying and knowing, and this condition is just given in what we say and experience each time» (Di Giacomo [1989]: 101-102). Our answers come always too late as to the pathos (Waldenfels [2011]: 50): the determination come always too late as the indeterminate that remains like a background of it. But the answers are necessary to make visible the pathos: «the “too early” of the pathos is able to come on the scene only through the “too late” of the answer» (Waldenfels [2011]: 50). Without determination, we could not perceive the indeterminate.

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