

## THE HUMAN AND THE ANIMAL. CONSIDERATIONS ON THE RECENT WRITINGS OF W. WELSCH AND THE ONES OF L. WITTGENSTEIN<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.-** The first part of this article analyzes some unpublished writings of Prof. Wolfgang Welsch (Jena), where he tries to identify the human "proprium" (in contrast to the animal) by means of the Evolution Theory. The second part, in general along the same lines as the previous one, proposes a possible evolutionist interpretation of Wittgenstein's philosophy from its outside.

**Keywords.-** *evolution, anthropic circle, the human, the animal, brain, reason, transcendentalism, biological conditioning, evolutionist philosophy.*

In November 2004 Prof. Wolfgang Welsch gave two conferences at the Fine Arts Circle in Madrid, whose content, in my opinion, belonged to a crucial stage of his thinking. There he proposed ideas that he has been developing till date. These pages are written from the recollections of that first encounter<sup>2</sup>.

In the title of the vast majority of his works published till then, there are words which could be understood as a response to an inner philosophical disposition: *Widerstreit, Auswege, Grenzgänge, Undoing, Beyond*; and the less categorical case: *Transversalität*, which, anyway, Welsch understands as the contemporary critical form of reason. Prof. Welsch probably practiced by then Nietzsche's virtue of "Redlichkeit", which he keeps praising even today: the good habit of not letting one single day go by without considering at least one idea against oneself's most dear thoughts (M3, 5). (Not to mention against those of somebody else.) Moreover, he probably felt already that untenable tension of the limits of that closed world of anthropocentrism or – as he prefers to call it

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<sup>2</sup> I refer to the manuscripts of both conferences and to other two pieces of writing where Prof. Welsch developed the content of the previous two later on.

The two papers from November 2004 given in Madrid are: (M1) "EPISTEMISCHER ANTHROPOZENTRISMUS. Genese, Versionen, Kritik der Denkform der Moderne", 28 pp. (Yet unpublished). (M2) "INWIEFERN HEIDEGGER -BEI ALLER KRITIK- DER MODERNEN DENKFORM VERHAFTET BLIEB. (Onto-Anthropologie statt Human-Anthropologie.)", 24 pp. (A version of the latter, without the final pages – precisely where Welsch proposed his evolutionist points of view about the future, has appeared in Spanish as "HEIDEGGER: ANTROPOCENTRISMO ONTOLÓGICO", in: Félix Duque, ed., *Heidegger. Sendas que vienen*, 2 vols., Madrid: Ed. Pensamiento, 2008, vol. 1, 84-113.

The other two manuscripts are: (M3) Critique of Tomasello: "Just what is it that makes homo sapiens so different, so appealing?" (10 pp.). Published in the meanwhile with the same title in: *DZPhil*, Berlin 55 (2007) 5, 751-760. (M4) Conference given in Bamberg on May 4, 2010: "Wie aus Natur Kultur hervorging" (15 pp.). (In the process of being published.)

due to its in a way new, semantic connotations, after the Copernican Revolution – modern "anthropism", which constitutes since at least 250 years ago, clearly after Diderot, the "Kokon" of thinking, or rather its "Gefängnis", "Gummizelle", "Huis clos", its "Lähmung", "Satttheit", "Erstickung", "Trivialität", all this combined with a shocking "Selbszufriedenheit" (M3, 25, 2ss.).

Not even transversal reason was able to make that modern bloc fall to pieces: neither the denseness typical of the enlightened self-indulgent transcendental subjectivity nor the trap of the never ending postmodern weakness of thinking. (On the other hand, evolutionary, evolutionist reason might be able to do it...) And with regard to aesthetics, to the theory of art, which Welsch has always understood primarily as original Aristotelian "*aisthesis*", theory of sensibility: its determined orientation towards the senses already involved a biological aspect which updated the basic conditions in which the human being really feels, once outside the anthropic circle of how he can or must feel. Postmodern transculturality was not the solution for either reason or sensibility. It rather involved a tangle in its own ups and downs, in a new circle: that of the innumerability of its different games. The only thing that a myriad of colors does is to hide in a more sophisticated way the paleness of the ghost, but the problem keeps being there. For Welsch "die Leitfrage der Philosophie ist, wie es sich im Ganzen verhält" (M4, 14), thus one ought to start from a new general conception of the human being, which shed light on his action and on his world of actions, already darkened by all kinds of splits, not only by that of reason/sensibility, nor for those of identity/difference, unity/plurality, and so on, but, summarizing them all, by that of the human/the animal.

One ought to consider new essential questions in order to go on thinking meaningfully in whatever field. For instance, defining again the concept of knowledge by going beyond the anthropic circle and the split which gives birth to it (let us say, like a kind of schizoid reaction): the contrast and the parallelism between human subjectivity and natural objectivity. And for that one ought to think about how to define again that specifically human, beyond subjectivity, reason, language and so on, given that all of them are semantically adulterated by an essentialist tradition that is completely unacceptable in the light of scientific developments. The human being is neither a spirit imprisoned in a body nor reason in sensibility. Nor language in its games. It is rather body, sensibility, innocent game, or at least one ought to look at it from this point of view, if only in order to try to see from a different perspective: there are many characteristics considered till date as typical of human beings which do not seem to be just human any longer. However, if in principle we cannot turn to a special nature of the human being, how could we then explain those achievements and developments that so clearly differentiate him from other creatures? These are difficult questions that seem to lead to a single way out, unique but splendid: the theory of evolution, and more than that, its data. This path led to a new question: do evolutionist achievements still apply to human beings and can they provide criteria for a new essential comprehension of the human being and of human knowledge? And one hypothesis: given that human beings have emerged from a long 7 million year old history, one can only understand them by taking evolution into account; an objective understanding of human beings is only possible because the evolution of their cerebral conditions

belongs to the evolutionary development of the world, that is, because the human being and the world have developed together<sup>3</sup>. It was about taking "homo sapiens" seriously and moving away from the notion of "animal rationale" (and "homo animalis") of the metaphysical (or wildly scientific) tradition.

Prof. Welsch's writings indicate that approximately since 1998, when he took up the chair of "Theoretical Philosophy" in Jena, he has been looking for less theoretical exits out of his philosophical world: genesical and genetical pathways, evolutionary ones in any case<sup>4</sup>. But neither evolutionist speculative nor essentialist explanations, like the ones he blames on Tomasello in 2007. "Allein genetische Befunde und Überlegungen vermöchten aus der Sackgasse herauszuführen"<sup>5</sup>. Ways out, I insist, of the cul-de-sac of modernity and postmodernity, of modern anthropocentrism and the disconcerting postmodern transcultural spectrum of splits, differences, indifferences, weaknesses, rhizoms, self-legitimizations, stories, games and so on, that he had masterly described in his "transversale Vernunft". *Auswege*, or *Undoings*, not only of reason but also, as we will see, of sensibility, thus aesthetics is liberated from old cultural bonds and provided with a new sense of future<sup>6</sup>. These ways out of

<sup>3</sup> These were the approach and aims of the research group "Interdisziplinäre Anthropologie: Fortwirken der Evolution im Menschen - Humanspezifika - Objektivitätsschancen der Erkenntnis" (EHO) (vom BMBF gefördert), that Prof. Welsch created and run from 2006 to 2009 and whose results will be published in the Spring of 2011.

<sup>4</sup> His stay in Stanford in the year 2000 seems to have been a crucial period for that evolutionary move. That is also true of the intellectual experiences of his solitary walks of those days along the Pacific beaches, where, before the contemplation of the sea, fish, birds, continuous movement, vital sonority, only prevailed – *quasi* mystically – a thought: "wir alle sind zusammengewachsen" ("all of us have grown up together"). Cfr. "[Reflecting the Pacific Ocean](http://www2.unijena.de/welsch/)" (<http://www2.unijena.de/welsch/>)

<sup>5</sup> M3, 10; DZPhil. 55,5, 758.

<sup>6</sup> Given that we are not going to refer to it later on, it is worth drawing attention to it. In a paper (29 pp.) presented at the *XVI International Congress of Aesthetics* (Rio de Janeiro, July 2004), which can be found in his web page (<http://www2.uni-jena.de/welsch/>), titled "Animal Aesthetics" and based in principle on Darwin, Welsch insists on the "turn to transhuman aesthetics" that he had already been suggesting for a few years. If the human in general can only be understood from a wider context than the strictly human one, also aesthetics, that is, the human sensibility lying at the root of that "Sinneslehre". How? "Taking into account, for instance, our place in the cosmic and natural environment, or our primordial connectedness with the world, or the non-human layers of our existence", he writes while referring to an article of his published four years earlier ("Art Transcending the Human Pale - Towards a Transhuman Stance", 2001) (1, cfr. 18). Not the refined aesthetics of a Picasso, for instance, but "the aesthetic attitude as such" has originated in the animal kingdom and cultural evolution has polished it in us. Let us say that the original basis of aesthetics goes far beyond Classic Greece, although it honours its Greek etymology: sensation (elemental property of animals, feelings-based beings in opposition to rational beings), that is, animal sensibility and the basic sensible pleasure that it produces are the fundamental conditions of aesthetic taste and judgment, of aesthetic intellectual and emotional capacities. It is clear from an evolutionist perspective that hedonism is the basis of aesthetics. The pre-aesthetic analysis of the development of pleasure and the tracking down of its neuronal base can provide us with a better understanding, a genealogical and genetical understanding, of aesthetic constitution. (cfr. 15)

Welsch develops what he means by aesthetic constitution years later in "Von der universalen Schätzung des Schönen" (Melanie Sachs & Sabine Sender, eds., *Die Permanenz des Ästhetischen*, Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009, 93-119), let us say with him, in terms of a "neuronal grammar" of beauty and of the universality of its experience. He sets out the neuronal base – and around it the neuronal explanation – of general patterns of beauty and universal types of the experience of beauty: in landscapes and bodies or in the

*Sackgassen* or liberations from *Gummizellen* are escapes to a new *Lichtung* less empty than that of Heidegger, much more hectic than the entranced wait for Being in it: one enters the bright darkness of genes, the multi-million evolution from the wild to the human, while overcoming any rationally essentialist, anthropic and considerably sweetened *Selbstzufriedenheit*.

Broadly speaking, could one summarize the evolution of Wolfgang Welsch's thought like this? This is how I imagine it, at least. He has still published little of what he has done after his *evolutional turn*, that is, since approximately 2000, but much will soon be put out. When Prof. Welsch was in Madrid, I was working on the concept of the "the animal" in the late Wittgenstein, that of *Über Gewissheit*. And both Welsch's critique to modern thought as "anthropy", whose genesis he analyzed in the first conference, and his "Andeutungen" about evolutionism that curiously can be found at the end of his second conference (about Heidegger's unsurpassed humanism) were very close to my own ideas. That proximity is the most important requirement to understand somebody. I hope to have done it so far and keep on doing it in the following pages.

### I. The human. (Welsch's path to the human "proprium.")

The issues raised by such an intellectual evolution, even if it were only imaginary, are both extremely interesting and highly topical, on the one hand, and extremely important in order to continue being able to think in philosophy (or stop doing it), on the other. Whether or not Modernity exaggerated with its humanism, the question "what is man?" keeps being basic and central to philosophy (and not only to philosophy, of course). Everything continues depending on it: however, not in a circular way anymore (they get their data from the circle of thinking), but in a (evolutionist) line. Nowadays one has more than metaphysical data so as to finally begin raising it in a meaningful way. Thus the task of seeking that characteristic, distinctive, peculiar, essential, specific or typical of the human being is fundamental. That is what Welsch set himself to do.

(anthropic imprisonment)

Welsch does think that Modernity exaggerated. Its principle is what he calls the "anthropic axiom", as we have already said (formulated by Diderot in his *Encyclopedia* in 1755 and epistemologically legitimized by Kant in the *Critique*

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great beauty which leaves us astonished (Taj Mahal, Mona Lisa, Beethoven's 9th symphony, for instance). Every one of those aesthetic experiences (and preferences) has a characteristic cerebral basis, which depends on the permanence of the corresponding genetic set. They are experiences configured and selected in the process of phylogeny, and the general trite thesis of neuroaesthetics (seriously and not so seriously) applies to all of them: beauty is strictly speaking *brain-happiness*. Welsch writes about this idea the following: "Sie könnte trivial erscheinen - ist es aber nicht. Man überlege nur einmal, wie anders man Kunstaussstellungen und Museen nutzen wird, wenn man dieser These vertraut. Man wird sie nicht mehr als Andachtstempel ansehen oder als Sonntagnachmittagspflicht aufsuchen, sondern man wird sie als Training- und Fitnesszentren für das Gehirn nutzen: zum Zweck des Beetzungsumbaues, zur Erzeugung neuer Verbindungen, für Integralerregungen. Oder einen Sonatensatz wird man nicht mehr als historische Kuriosität nachforschen, sondern man wird ihn auf das hin abhören, was er mit unserem Gehirn macht..." (110-111).

of *Pure Reason* in 1781<sup>7</sup>). Commenting on the latter, Welsch leaves clear that to be beaten: "All unsere Gegenstände sind grundlegend durch die apriorischen Formen des menschlichen Erkennens (Anschauungsformen und Kategorien) bestimmt. Daher können wir in unserer Erfahrung nur menschlich geprägten Gegenständen begegnen und darüberhinaus auch andere Gegenstände (Ding an sich, Gott, etc.) nur menschlich gefärbt imaginieren. 'Wir können nicht anders als zu antropomorphisieren' - 'Wir machen alles selbst'. - Die Welt ist eine menschliche und darin eine geschlossene Welt. Der Mensch bildet das Mass der Welt" (M1, 1). It is odd that those moderns, despite their revolutionary illusions, did not notice the imprisonment that it involves, and it is even more strange that those who followed continued and continue being unaware of it, if not self-indulgently aware of it. How are not they fed up with (and feel "Sattheit" of) so much conceit, when the unfortunate human being is manipulated by life and fate against his will, despite all his volatile transcendental epistemology. It is life that imposes concepts, Wittgenstein said (it is the world that enforces them, we could now say from an evolutionist standpoint). Or it is power, ideology, fashion,... and many other things. But everything is obvious, only the modern "*lumières*" were obsessed and blind enough to reduce all of it to a transcendental subject. It is obvious that the world is my world, but also that the world is not my world.

Since the Enlightenment, modern thought has indeed withdrawn into itself: there is nothing that is not conditioned by either thinking or human sensibility, by either transcendental logic or the human being's transcendental aesthetics. Nobody is free from that axiom, not even those that do not accept it, states Welsch, while quoting (and justifying it) Nietzsche, Frege, Husserl and Foucault. And especially Heidegger, to whom he dedicated the second conference given in Madrid (M2). This imprisonment in the anthropic way of thinking is impoverishing, it even brings thought to a halt, we insist together with Welsch.

*Anthropos* becomes the answer to everything: "The answer to all questions is always known: 'it is the human being'. That triviality oppresses thinking instead of encouraging it" (M1, 25).

(evolutionary exit)

However, it is possible to leave this impoverishing modern imprisonment, thinks Welsch. In order to do so, in a radical manner he starts from the hypothesis that the anthropic supposition that "we can only construe the world, we cannot know it" is absolutely false. Why false? Because it is inconsistent: it is formulated from

<sup>7</sup> Welsch goes through its versions and paradigmatic examples till date in M1: Feuerbach, historicism, Nietzsche, today's humanities and cultural sciences, and analytic philosophy; while realizing that even some of the critics continue in its circle: Frege, Russell, Husserl, Foucault, Heidegger (whose case is explained in great detail in M2). Welsch, quickly, like hinting at it, is able to place that imprisonment in such a state of tension that the self-indulgence with which it is assumed seems grotesque and it dissolves itself by means of its own triviality and inconsistency. By the way, Diderot's formulation, which is the explicit origin of everything and defines programmatically modern anthropocentrism by distinguishing it from previous versions, is the following: "L'homme est le terme unique d'où il faut partir, & auquel il faut tout ramener" (cfr. M1, 3ss.). Welsch quotes the paragraph B XVI of the 1781 prologue to Kant's KRV (ed. 1787) (cfr. M1, 6ss.) as if it was a "perfekte epistemologische Legitimation" of it.

an impossible unconditioned perspective. Because it confuses conditions of access and those of validity: to have cognitive access to something does not mean to condition it really. And because modernity's immunity, even self-indulgence, from that fundamental incongruence of its thinking, which seems not to bother it at all, is not a symptom of rationality. It is rather suspected of ideology. This is something that seems to really disturb Welsch, and it is understandable: whatever you say in a critical vein (inconsistency, confusion or ideological sectarianism) has no repercussion, the moderns do not get the message. It seems that prison is for them a safe shelter.

Welsch, taking all this into account, tries to elucidate, first, the genesis (from Diderot) of that obstinate modern way of thinking, and suggests, secondly, a critique and a way of surmounting it. That is what he did in Madrid in 2004. Let us take for granted the history of the genesis of that stubbornness, which can be followed in M1. How did Welsch sketch or "insinuate" in Madrid the path that he has developed later on towards an image of the human being different from that anthropocentrically closed one? Under two programmatic criteria. First, that image has to take into account evolution and its continuous influence (Fortwirken) on us, so that it retrospectively contemplates the whole history of being, and not just a short textual episode of it, as it takes place in Heidegger's philosophy. Secondly: it ought to take into account that the evolutionary patterns by means of which we relate to the world have already originated from it, by interacting with it, so they are a priori adapted to its fundamental structures; that the world is inscribed in the a priori, that the way of operating of our brain is per se in correspondence with those structures, as neurobiology's discoveries seem to indicate. From both points of view – which are basically two aspects of the same thing – the image of the human being is transformed, as well as the conditions of objectivity of his understanding. Furthermore, the relationship between the self and the world is different and, in general, the anthropic conception, together with its inconsiderate self-sufficiency, vanishes<sup>8</sup>.

What was just an "Andeutung" in Madrid has been and is materializing in the meanwhile. In September 2007 Welsch criticizes Michael Tomasello both clearly and respectfully<sup>9</sup>, while making clear his own point of view. Tomasello's progressive moves, forced by recent discoveries, in the detection of the humanly specific – in short, which go from the individual intentionality to the shared and the collective ones – and his definitive failure to locate it make Welsch reflect and consolidate his own path. Is it possible to grasp that human *specificum*? Will it not always happen the same than to Tomasello? The search for the human *proprium*, and the way out of modern anthropic thinking by means of a new definition of the human, turns into an absurd task, isn't it? (Perhaps the human could be defined by human-transformation itself...) Perhaps that process threatens to continue ad infinitum because it is looked at from the wrong perspective and one ought to take a completely different one. It might well be that Tomasello's thesis, which supports all his work, that there is

<sup>8</sup> Cfr. in relation to what has been said till now in this section: M1, passim y M2, 22s.; in relation to what is coming: manuscripts 3 and 4.

<sup>9</sup> This critique refers above all to his work: *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition*, Harvard University Press, 1999. (*Die kulturelle Entwicklung des menschlichen Denkens. Zur Evolution der Kognition*, Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 2002.)

(only) one human *specificum* is wrong. It seems – strangely in a scientist of his importance – that he is close to superseded essentialist positions: it is not about defining the human being by means of only one of his capacities (reason, language) like it used to be done before. His nature is not based on only one biological adaptation, as Tomasello thinks, as if it had been granted by God like a hidden cause or a “*qualitas occulta*”. According to the new discoveries, one ought to commit oneself to graduality and try to understand how a new structure emerges from a previous one. Tomasello's explanation is not really evolutionist, it is merely a sum of factual verifications of differences between human beings and animals. It is odd that Tomasello overlooked that the origins of both our cognition and our cultural conditions are not cultural in turn, that the specific of the human being ought to be traced in the protocultural evolution, and explained from it, to explain its genesis, that is, not to merely confirm the differences with animals but explaining them evolutively. "Kulturell agieren wir ein protokulturell entstandenes Potential aus", writes Welsch<sup>10</sup>.

However, what the human being is remains unclear after Welsch's critical considerations: is it something that in the course of evolution has developed as it is, a special being? That is reasonable, but it says little. The ideal would be, writes Welsch, to unite Tomasello's psychologically and factually oriented analyses and genuinely evolutionist explanations in order to leave the impression that we want to assign an essentialist peculiarity to the human being far behind. "Dann würde endlich begreifbar, wie der Mensch im *Zug der Evolution* zu dem besonderen Wesen geworden ist, als das wir leben"<sup>11</sup>.

(the cumulative cultural evolution as the human *proprium*)

With this perspective in mind, Welsch continues on his path towards the human *proprium* in the conference he gave in Bamberg in August 2010. First, he made clear that essentialism is unreasonable by means of its more paradigmatic case: that of rationality, which was the handiest emblem ascribed to the human being from time immemorial (*animal rationale*). Today's discoveries show that no element in rationality (conceptualization, calculus, weighing, etc.) is exclusively human; our rationality is a later stage of animal rationality: "Nichts von dem, was wir beim Menschen finden, ist eine *absolute* Novität, die mit der Ankunft des Menschen plötzlich vom Himmel gefallen wäre, sondern es handelt sich bei alledem um Weiterentwicklungen von *prähuman* schon *Hervorgebildetem*" (M4, 2). That does not mean that we are merely animals or primates, we are clearly different from other beings due to our cultural features. "Der Generalnenner dieser den Menschen unterscheidenden Leistungen lautet 'Kultur'. Der Mensch ist das Kulturwesen par excellence - und eben dadurch von den anderen Lebewesen unterschieden" (id.) (A first step towards the human *proprium*: the cultural being par excellence.)

Although there is culture in the animal kingdom (state-oriented configurations, ingenious forms of communication, use and invention of tools, etc., cultural skills in general), it is missing in it the "cumulative cultural development" that has lead the human being to that enormous cultural evolution that clearly

<sup>10</sup> M3, 10; DZPhil 55, 758.

<sup>11</sup> Id.

differentiates him from those coexisting with him. We are special beings, then, but it is impossible to find a distinctive, exclusively human factor. We must be looking in the wrong direction... In the light of the factors of continuity that keep being discovered, the task is different from the essentialist one: "eine neuartige Erklärung der menschlichen Besonderheit zu finden, die nicht auf einen Sonderfaktor setzt, der beim Menschen irgendwoher hinzugekommen wäre, sondern die strikt davon ausgeht, dass unseren Vorfahren auf dem Weg der Menschwerdung gar kein anderes Startkapital zur Verfügung stand als das unseren nächsten Verwandten ebenfalls zur Verfügung stehende Kapital". And for this the fascinating question is: "wie dieses prähuman Startkapital beim Menschen im Verlauf der Hominisation eine Ausrichtung annehmen konnte, die ihn schliesslich zu den eindrucksvollen Leistungen der kulturellen Evolution befähigte" (id., 2-3).

In order to make this obvious, Welsch goes through the three phases in the evolutionary development from the separation between the australopithecus and chimpanzees to the human being of today, according to the state of the question: that of the hominids, that of the *homo homo* and that of the *homo sapiens*, let us say, while emphasizing in each one of them the most important and impressive evolutionary landmarks. A history of 7 million years: ca. 4 and a half million of hominization period, ca. 2 and a half million of protocultural period and ca. 40.000 years of cultural period. We are very old. In Classic Greece, of course, the epiphany of the *ratio universalis* did not take place, and let alone as a consequence of divine mania or due to the philosophical *daimon*, as it is sometimes said. Even the most recent cultural evolutionary landmark, the appearance of the great cultures, took place 6.000 years ago. Even though they are not relevant distances from an evolutionary point of view, it is too much for the common history of thinking.

We cannot find anything specifically human before 40000 years ago. Not even the brain – formed before – distinguished us from animals, it is not characteristic of the human being. In fact, Einstein conceived the theory of relativity with a paleolithic brain. The cultural features of the human being began accumulating in such a way and speed since then that his fellow beings were left far behind. (The brain does not develop biologically any longer.) One can only find relevant differences (cultural differences) between the human being and the animal in the third period, where that "cultural being par excellence", as the human being has been characterized till now from a close-up, reigned. A cultural being par excellence and par excellence accumulating culture, and both things always evolving.

So as to guarantee the possibility of cumulative cultural evolution, in a constant process of development, without stagnation, certain mechanisms that are also typical of the human being are needed. Fast, precise, economical training and learning mechanisms, which guarantee the balance between identity and difference, tradition and innovation in the evolutionary whole of a culture: the human capacity for imitation, variation and innovation and for consolidating the cultural process of development in everlasting and alive cultural institutions. Very interesting is the allusion to writing as the most ordinary of the "Wildwuchs-Stornierungssysteme" (neutralizing systems of wild growth) (M4, 12). The institution of writing guarantees, on the one hand, the accuracy of the copy, the

identical reproduction, that is, identity. On the other hand, it is the substratum of sense: sense becomes independent from writing there; and with sense – the door to hermeneutics – comes diversity and difference: completely different things can be deduced from the same text. Sense is the nuclear product of a culture as long as it overcomes cultural identity by means of difference from its very core. After all, all cultures are hermeneutic.

And in the human cultural dialectics of identity and difference, there is one more exponent in the path towards the human: generality is the last step to the peculiarity of the human being. The human being is a generalist, writes Welsch, he has a capacity for abstraction that can be applied to any possible field without being limited to relevant aspects for the world of life. The human brain has become an apparatus of generalized adaptation: it is an universal problem-solving machine, "eine generelle Problemlösungsmaschine", writes Welsch. So the continuous development of specific capacities is not the only typical feature of the human being. Above all, we have to take into consideration his capacity to re-orient them towards the direction of generality. Pre-human capacities have humanly freed themselves from their bond to the exit sphere and have spread beyond it. "Menschen sind Primaten, die sich zu Generalisten entwickelt haben" (M4, 13).

Generality is the last step in the path towards the human proprium as long as it is the fundamental inventive motor of accumulation: as long as it enables transpositions of solutions to problems in different spheres, as well as new combinations of patterns of proceeding, so long as it is in charge of creativity and progress, of paradigm shifts. "So fusst der kumulative Charakter der kulturellen Evolution insgesamt auf der humanspezifischen Generalitätstendenz / Flexibilität und der aus ihr erwachsenden Tendenz zum Überschreiten des status quo" (Id., 14). This is Welsch's definitive step towards the human proprium, which, within the balance between identity and difference, tradition and innovation, is clearly circumscribed in the following way: cumulative cultural flexibility, capacity for innovation by means of generalization within the cultural accumulation. And, from this point of view, cumulative cultural evolution is definitely the human proprium.

A *cumulative* cultural development, in any of the senses mentioned here, and hence an authentic cultural *evolution*, both within the course (Gang) of a culture and in the transition from one to another (Übergang), can only be found in human beings, who are eminently cultural. "Eine auch nur annähernd vergleichbare kumulative Entwicklung ist nirgendwo im sonstigen Tierreich - auch nicht bei unseren nächsten Verwandten- festzustellen. / zu finden" (Id.) Welsch brilliantly ends this conference of Bamberg, which I have almost repeated here<sup>12</sup>, referring to Darwin – the ultimate responsible for everything – in the bicentenary of his birth. Darwin's proof that the human being comes from the animal kingdom is not an insult to the human condition, as Freud thought (or Heidegger would think). Welsch thinks quite the opposite. "Die evolutionäre Betrachtung zeigt: Die Menschen sind sehr besondere Wesen, weil nur bei

<sup>12</sup> The interest of M4 and the fact that it is still unpublished provides an excuse for the literalness and basic narrativity of my commentary, that for those reasons did not want to be either interpretative or critical, but merely descriptive. It will be different from now on.

ihnen aus dem gemeinsamen prähumanen Erbe etwas so Besonderes geworden ist; und sie haben in gewissen Sinne diese ihre Menschwerdung selber betrieben. Ein solches Wesen aber, das aus so bescheidenen Anfängen so besonders geworden ist, muss man doch wohl mehr bewundern, als eines, das nur aufgrund einer fremden Gabe und ohne eigenes Zutun eine Besonderheit aufweist. Die evolutionäre Betrachtung fügt uns und unserem Selbstbewusstsein gerade keine Kränkung zu, sondern kann, ganz in Gegenteil, eher Anlass zur Bewunderung bieten" (Id., 15)

The human: *cumulative cultural flexibility of the cultural being par excellence*.  
And the animal?

## II. The animal. (The mystical in the later Wittgenstein)

In the pages that I have talked about till now, Welsch does not take into consideration the metaphysical delusions generated by such a self-recurrent, generalizing brain, its speculative flexibility. Nor the intellectual tension that could be typical of the life of a human being that seriously used that excessive self-referential capacity of his brain (10 million times superior to that of referring to the outside). Both things also belong to culture and to the experience of its creation, and hence to the cultural evolution of human reason and sensibility. The animal, before all this, involves moderation and peace. That is: either the (imaginary) retro-evolution of the human being to pre-human or proto-cultural stages, even hominid ones (there is a range of 7 million years to chose from), or the (de facto) permanence, latently active in whatever form, of traces of in general pre-human stages of the human being can dissolve speculative enthusiasms, on the one hand, and provide peace to thinking, on the other. All this should be understood with no exaggeration or pomposity. It is indeed possible to imagine – humanly, of course – the state of the pre-human proto-rational condition (that we enjoyed, evolutionarily speaking, more than 40.000 years ago). And it is a fact that it provides peace to thinking. The best efficient proof of it – without evolutionary data – is Wittgenstein.

Keeping in view Welsch's intellectual world (which I have described), this is where I would place the few but striking references of the later Wittgenstein to the animal (or to the 'childlike') in the pages of *Über Gewissheit*. It is difficult to find a more serious, profound and respectful consideration of the animal (I insist: from the point of view of the human). Wittgenstein's serious and sober consideration of the animal (the definitive confidence of knowing is something that is beyond the well-founded and the unfounded, and as such it can be conceived as "something animal"<sup>13</sup>) does not have anything to do explicitly with evolution. Wittgenstein was not an evolutionist. It is well known that he was not interested in scientific questions, but in conceptual and aesthetic ones. However, he considered that Darwin was a great man. He mentions him

<sup>13</sup> Cfr. *ÜG* §§357-359. *ÜG* (*Über Gewissheit*), we refer to the paragraph number. *VB* (*Vermischte Bemerkungen*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1977), we refer to the page number of this edition. *TR* (*Tractatus logico-philosophicus*), it is quoted according to its propositions. *PU I* (*Philosophische Untersuchungen*, first part), we refer to the paragraph number. *TB* (*Tagebücher 1914-1916*), we refer to the date of the entry where what we are referring to is included.

together with Copernicus, while saying that their achievement was not to discover a true theory (something absurd), but a new fertile perspective from where to look at things (the most that you can do rationally). Nevertheless, he felt that Darwin's discovery did not have a special influence on philosophy<sup>14</sup>.

Why do we turn to Wittgenstein (and Heidegger) now? As I have already said, in the second conference given in Madrid in 2004 (M2), Prof. Welsch explained Heidegger's both poetic and evanescent conception of the human being, which looks down on the animal in the name of a humanism oriented towards Being that does not overcome anthropism. While listening to him, I was thinking of Wittgenstein's uneven option, that I have finally been able to state explicitly – after such a long time – in November 2010, precisely in Jena and again from the perspective of, or in contrast to, Welsch's positions. That is why both Wittgenstein and Heidegger come into play now. After all, they are the greatest philosophers after Nietzsche; we could even refer to them as the greatest Post-Nietzschean philosophers (more than being evolutionary, they destroy). For neither of them was evolution the exit from, or vanishing point of, the anthropic imprisonment: for Heidegger, it was the ontological (and as such a history reduced to Being); for Wittgenstein, the animal (free of history). (Welsch has studied the first in M2, I will study the latter in the following pages.) This merely rhetorical, propedeutic question could be raised from this point of view, that is, it does not expect a theoretical answer because there is none, and it only tries to look at what has been written till now from a different perspective (or to look at Wittgenstein's conception of the animal from a different point of view by means of all what has been written so far): is the human proprium in line with Heidegger's "Being" or with "the animal" of Wittgenstein? The background of the question in the foreground is the following: Heidegger did not leave the anthropic imprisonment; however, Wittgenstein did. In the background: the evolutionist point of view is incompatible with that of Heidegger and it is not incompatible with that of Wittgenstein. These are a few landmarks that will help us along our path... First, let us refer briefly to Welsch's depiction of Heidegger in Madrid.

(Heidegger)

Heidegger would have absolutely rejected the evolutionist point of view and considered it as something pre-philosophical. For him it was simply irritant our "kaum auszudenkende abgründige leibliche Verwandtschaft mit dem Tier", as he called it, while trying to make us believe that the essence of the divine is closer to the human being than the unusual in animals. "Das ist nur noch schlecht weltanschaulicher (nicht einmal mehr philosophisch zu nennender) Unsinn", concludes Welsch (M2, 22). In reaction to that annoying animal resemblance, Heidegger tries to explain the human being by means of its relation to Being, but he is not able to avoid anthropism: while transforming that relationship into the most intimate feature of the human being, the only thing that he manages to do is to "ontologize" it, that is, to thicken it metaphysically, and with it, anthropocentrism. In short, it is not clear whether the human being is Being or Being is the human being: Being constitutes human thinking but it does not

<sup>14</sup> Cfr. VB 42, TR 4.1122.

think anything without that thinking; the reference to Being constitutes the essence of the human being, but Being has no other reference, etc. Heidegger does not leave the humanoid circle. He makes it deeper.

The reason for this is that the essential reference to Being is already based on an *ad hoc* conception of essence: as "ecstasy" of the being there (of Being) or "eccentricity" of the center (of the human being). The exit via essence is rather essential; no matter how eccentric essence is, that eccentricity belongs to it, that is, essence continues being the center. But the reference of the center is no exit. It is endless reference.

Heidegger admitted his anthropocentrism, but he also described it – also *ad hoc* – as "eccentric", while perhaps believing sincerely that he was actually saying something meaningful: a concentric eccentricity, or rather the other way around. He remains sunk in the concentric maelstrom of historical hermeneutics of clichés that he himself aimed at destroying. (Precisely the opposite is the distinctive feature of Wittgenstein.) One changes the name. But inside the little box, the beetle continues being the same. Or it is the little box that remains the same and the beetle that changes. It is the same. But it seems that Welsch prefers the latter. "Er hat das alte Privileg des animal rationale durch das neue des Partners ('Nachbarn', 'Hirten') des Seins ersetzt. Der Inhalt hat sich geändert, die Struktur ist geblieben" (M2, 21).

Despite references, eccentricities and ecstasies, Heidegger does not go beyond the horizon of the human, concludes Welsch; he remains secluded, let us say, in that sticky essentialism of the modern theory of the human. And in that circle – that he calls "Lichtung" –, he left us – stunned – waiting for Being. (An evolutionist perspective would expect something else, in a different way, and with a human horizon different from essentialism.)

(Wittgenstein I)

For the earlier Wittgenstein, the essence of the human being was the same than that of the world: logic (there was no other essence then). The world was the totality of facts and the subject the totality of propositions. Everything was pure logic. The a priori was the set of logical variables, in fact, only one constant: the general form of the proposition, which, given its consecutive repetition, generated all the propositions in language and with them all the facts of the world; and, therefore, it was the essence of both of them at the same time (and even a good description of God)<sup>15</sup>. Logic essentially identified world and language from a background resembling the doctrine of pre-established harmony: "Wenn ein Gott eine Welt erschafft, worin gewisse Sätze wahr sind, so schafft er damit auch schon eine Welt, in welcher alle ihre Folgesätze stimmen. Und ähnlich könnte er keine Welt schaffen, worin der Satz 'p' wahr ist, ohne seine sämtlichen Gegenstände zu schaffen" (TR, 5.123). It is clear: propositions correspond to facts and things to words. Due to this harmony or logical essential identity between the self and the world, it is not possible to speak of anthropocentrism in the first Wittgenstein. We could only speak of solipsism: I am my world, the world is my world; a solipsism that indeed does

<sup>15</sup> TR 5.471, 5.4711; cfr. 5.4731 and TB 1.8.16.

coincide with realism when taken to the (other) extreme (of that harmony or identity)<sup>16</sup>.

So questions like whether it is knowledge that adjusts to objects or the other way around, or whether the center is the subject or the world, are overruled. Simply put, there is no such a thing as a subject of knowledge and I am the only world that there is. Which 'I'? A solipsist 'I' that is the world, but which cannot be the same as anything within it: it is not a representing subject (there is nothing to represent, I am all that there is); it is not a physical entity (as a body, I am one more thing in the world); nor a psychical one (the soul, as a composed entity, for example, of representations, is an absurdity). It is a metaphysical subject. What is that? A self that is reduced to being a limit of the world, that is coordinated with the world by the power of God or nature, but which is neither in it nor belongs to it<sup>17</sup>. Where is it? Asking that is like asking where logic lies... And if "logic fills the world", then, the subject, as a limit to the world, must be also the limit of logic. A logic that, in turn, also sets limits to it: "Wir können nichts Unlogisches denken, weil wir sonst unlogisch denken müssten" (*TR*, 3.03). "Dass nicht unlogisch gedacht werden kann" (id., 5.4731) is the imprisonment. An imprisonment within myself. Saying that there is no exit from logic is equivalent to saying that there is no exit from the subject. This radicality has very little to do with anthropisms: I am the very limit of my imprisonment. If essence is considered to be pure logic, metaphysical thickness almost disappears. The subject is in the place that he himself is: the limit of the world and of logic. The subject is nothing either inside or outside them.

In that solipsist *huis-clos*, the self keeps shrinking progressively till it becomes a point without extension, till it disappears, and only then does the reality coordinated with it emerge (*TR*, 5.64). Is appearing in a different form the only exit? That is no exit. One ought to go beyond the barrier of the point where reality and subject merge. How? As it has been always done: by appealing to God, an infinite resource. Or as it can be done now: by looking back to the animal aspect of our condition, to understand that that harmony or logical coordination between the self and the world is not strange at all. It has been generated in the evolutionary adaptation to the world. Therefore, the world is somehow absorbed in the self. It is in my brain because my brain is (biologically, adaptively) world. Solipsism can be understood like this in a different way: from that evolutionist point or moment when reality and subject, world and brain, do not dissolve in each other, but construe each other together. That harmony or coordination would not be odd at all from this point of view: it is genetical.

(Wittgenstein II)

If for the first Wittgenstein all that can be said or thought is logical, for the second Wittgenstein that whole is grammatical. Rather than withdrawing into something, or everything, whether logic or grammar, Wittgenstein withdrew into the awareness of imprisonment, that is, into himself. Let us call "logocentrist" that second form of Wittgensteinian imprisonment: the imprisonment in words.

<sup>16</sup> *TR*, 5.63, 5.64, 5.641.

<sup>17</sup> Cfr. for what has been said so far in this paragraph: *TR* 5.631, 5.632, 5.641.

Language (not the world) is the original datum of the human being, and there is no exit from it. The absolute dispersion typical of language games, which are innumerable, forces us to keep looking constantly for their justification; otherwise, the whole scaffolding pends in the air. And there is no ultimate justification. So either one plays eternally with the bad conscience that thinking or life is just a game to be played and that is all or one ought to stop that game of conscience at some point. Where to do it? Just like before but the other way around. Wittgenstein earlier left all the logical apparatus of world-self, self-world, confined in itself and it seems that thought's exit was to an ineffable and eternal world of religious, ethical and aesthetic values (in a way in the direction to God, although he never reached him). However, it seems that it is now the animal that represents perfectly that eternal silence; the mystical is now the animal. If one could leave the logical circle by progressing to the infinitum of an intuition or feeling of the world *sub specie aeterni*, then, in order to leave the grammatical circle, one must not go back to the infinitum, but travel very far back in the line of the real evolution of the world.

(But one does not have to keep insisting in detail on the evolutionary explanation, which does not strictly belong to the philosophical way of thinking and which has only a relative validity within it. It is enough if that general hypothesis stays, in general, in the philosophical consciousness<sup>18</sup>. In philosophy

<sup>18</sup> Although both modestly and sincerely I believe that in philosophy it is best to hold scientific hypotheses like in a kind of swing between veiling and unveiling, in half light, not in the foreground of the stage of the philosophical *Lichtung*, where those hypotheses transform into bizarre characters with bizarre roles, on the other hand, it is true that they are suitable for games or interesting philosophical approaches. For instance, like these:

(1) If, as we have said, we put the solipsist logical confinement on an equal footing with the biological evolution of the proto-rational period (from two million and a half years ago to forty thousand years ago, let us remember), the evolutionist hypothesis would make us grasp the exit to the circle as something very difficult. We could say that it is very difficult to leave that paleolithic brain, which dedicates a 90% of its volume to re-reflection, whose channels of internal communication (of self-reference) exceed those of external communication (of reference to the exterior) in a mammoth proportion: out of the one thousand billion of nervous fibers that are supposed to be in our brain only one out of hundred million leads to the outside. (Nevertheless, we would have ten million of possibilities to escape.)

(2) Let us approach the exit differently: where to place Wittgenstein's notion of the animal, that peace of thinking and that safety of thinking imagined beyond any kind of rational justification? Is it enough to get to the level of consciousness of the quaternary proto-cultural *homo* (as terminology went before), or shall we turn to tertiary hominids, or shall we trace the animal even in mammals, always with the hope to find the exact point to be crossed: that where the Wittgensteinian non-peace begins? Or does it start with the metaphysical constructions of the great cultures and hence one must go back only 6.000 years?

(3) And, moreover: why not to look for neuronal traces of that Wittgensteinian peace, that is, genetical traces? Just like they are looked for in relation to aesthetic taste, one could look for the neuronal traces of the philosophical pleasure involved in the definitive abstention from judgment: the genetical traces of the *epoché*, the *apatheia*, the *ataraxia*.

(4) The effort of learning is rewarded with the speed of the cultural evolution. However, one could also understand that speed as the cause of the intellectual stress of the spirit, of the being confined in a reflexivity more and more accelerated, and that exiting it would involve going back to "a snail-paced tempo" characteristic of the proto-cultural biological evolution.

(5) Or that the origin of the tension of thinking is the generality, at some point already metaphysically undiscriminated, of the brain (turned into "eine generelle Problemlösungsmaschine" at the time of its reflexive splendor). And that, if "human beings are primates that have developed till becoming generalists" (M3, 13), as writes Welsch, then, we

things are seen differently and are not as simple. The evolutionist scientific hypothesis has more value from a critical point of view (against essentialisms) than explanatorily (like a truth) in philosophy. The imprisonment and the possibility of exit can only be understood from a philosophical point of view. Otherwise, it becomes even ridiculous.)

In order to read *Über Gewissheit* (thoughts that Wittgenstein wrote down in the last year and a half of his life; in fact, he wrote more than the half, from §300 onwards, the last three months before his death, alone in the house of his doctor, where he went to wait for it), it is useful to find one's way by making use of the following "landmarks": 1. "Forget this transcendent certainty, which is connected with your concept of spirit" (§47)<sup>19</sup>. 2. "The difficulty is to realize the groundlessness of our believing" (§166). 3. "And substantiation comes to an end" (§563).

The fact that the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein, especially the latest, has an instinctive dimension is well-known, and explicitly related to *ÜG*<sup>20</sup>. It seems that Wittgenstein was more and more interested in the instinctive, perhaps because he understood it as the only way not to be out of his depth. He wrote in 1948: "We must not forget: even our more refined, more philosophical, scruples have a foundation in instinct. E.g. the 'We can never know...' Remaining receptive to further arguments. People who couldn't be taught this would strike us as mentally inferior. *Still* incapable of forming a certain concept" (VB 83 (MS 137 57b: 30.6.1948)<sup>\*\*</sup>). Behind the laws of the grammatical game, there are only learnt routines (that is logic at this point) and a subject trained in them. And that has an instinctive basis.

In fact, it is only the mentally retarded who are not able to develop their instincts in the learning process. However, even the fact that there are those who are able to do it, such as the average human being or the philosopher, now does not amount to much either. All you need is a subject trained in a language and in a form of life since childhood: when he notices the imprisonment of the language game, he can only make sense of it as a whole by going on and playing. There is of course the liberating awareness that that is his basic condition, probably an inheritance of millions of years ago. That justifies the unjustifiable in the game. "So denken wir. So handeln wir. So reden wir darüber" (Zettel §309). We can only allude to that ultimate way of acting by

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ought to go back (imaginarily) to the condition of the primate in order to find an (Böhmean) Ungrund.

Translator's note: We have used the following English translation of the original German: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. Von Wright, trans. Denis Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003).

<sup>19</sup> If from now on we do not quote, the paragraph belongs to *ÜG*.

<sup>20</sup> For example: "It is part and parcel of the view of knowledge advanced in *On Certainty* that we shall not understand the nature of human knowledge until we grasp how human intelligence develops out of animal instinct". That is how Allan Janik begins his interesting article "From Logic to Animality or How Wittgenstein Used Otto Weininger" published in the present volume, which deals with the possible influence on Wittgenstein's life and philosophy of the "rhetoric of science" of Hertz and of the "animal psychology" of Weininger.

Translator's note: We have used the following translation of VB: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Vermischte Bemerkungen/ Culture and value*, revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edition with English translation, ed. Georg Henrik Von Wright in collaboration with Heikki Nyman, trans. Peter Winch (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2006).

deictic determinations: "this" game is my game. Or with modal complementations: "so" we are, speak, calculate, act. Definitively, there is no why, I just simply do or do not do something. Like logic before, now "the praxis has to speak for itself"<sup>21</sup>, but, just like logic, because there is something underneath supporting it and coordinating it with the world. That is all. However, that praxis of the "so" actually implies many more things than an empirical evidence. Human practice, and the subsequent training, leads beyond itself. That the language game is ratified because it is of some use and is effective might be the "cause" of the game, but not its "grounds", its ultimate meaning: why we play at all (§474). Cause leads to the rational, grounds to the animal. The learning (Abrichtung) involved in games reveals an animal foundation, pre-human at least<sup>22</sup>.

Despite both neuronal connexions and the training in languages games, or precisely because of them, it continues being a mystery how thoughts come to life. It is clear that they do not emerge logically, framed in a discursive context. They emerge free, loose, like improvised brush strokes of a landscape without horizon, like they developed in Wittgenstein. Without the horizon of (let us say, neolithic) culture yet. Although today they appear in the age of virtuality, they arise from the depths of the Stone Age. How does language spring? It is clear that it does not emerge from a reasoning process. Let us remember that even our more subtle reflections have an instinctive basis. Thinking and speaking do not involve too much logic. Logic is a dispensable luxury, at times vain and at times dangerous. It is better to look at things from a perspective less human than the human, all too human one, typical of visionary enthusiasms, monsters of reason, etc. For example: "I want to regard man here as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct but not ratiocination. As a creature in a primitive state. Any logic good enough for a primitive means of communication needs no apology from us. Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination" (§475). Language has sprung from that primitive logic, minimally necessary, an instinctive logic, most probably anchored in the depths of biological evolution, but more perceptibly anchored in the ontogenetic evolution of the individual: training in rules and in rule-following, which is the same (a rule is not understood, nor can it be understood, but it is fulfilled: that is the best and only way of understanding it).

I have a "system" or "building of convictions" that is naturally coherent, although unconsciously, with everything of what with conviction I think or say "I believe", "I know", "I am convinced" that it is true. One does not get there by reasoning, but it is unshakeably anchored "in all my questions and my answers", in all my analyses and proofs; not only is it the point of departure for all our arguments, but it also belongs to the very essence of what we call an argument: it is its "vital element"<sup>23</sup>. Someone says that he knows something and says that it is true: yes, but it is true "only as long as it is an immutable foundation of his

<sup>21</sup> ÜG §139; cfr § 212, 148.

<sup>22</sup> "Das kindliche Verständnis der physischen Welt beruht auf der sicheren Grundlage der Primatencognition". (Michael Tomasello, *Die kulturelle Entwicklung des menschlichen Denkens*, edición alemana citada, p. 220.) Quoted by Welsch (M3, 6).

<sup>23</sup> Cfr. ÜG §§102-104, 162, 185.

language games", the perfect certainty with which he says it "is only a matter of his judgment", of his attitude: "that certainty is my own"<sup>24</sup>. And where do these certainties, fundamentals, criteria come from? It is quite clear: "It is always by the grace of nature that we know something". (§506)

Nature has structured a system of evidence and error based in suppositions and actions<sup>25</sup>. That system of evidences is a system of beliefs that one keeps on learning from childhood and whose certainty is not a matter of their clarity and evidence, but of their coherence with what surrounds them. Their certainty, above all, depends on the fact that they are learnt in order to act. (That is animal learning: the animal character of our way of creating meaning is precisely that continuous interweaving of words and actions<sup>26</sup>.) It is praxis and coherence that generate that system of non-evident evidences which constitutes one's beliefs. What we belief depends on what we learn. For instance: "Since childhood I have learnt to judge like that": that is judging, in fact, that is how I have learnt that something is a judgment<sup>27</sup>.

It seems easy and even obvious. But it is difficult to understand all this and to admit it. Because "the difficulty lies in realizing the groundlessness of our believing" (§166), that "at the foundation of well-founded belief lies belief that is not founded" (§253), that it does not have a justification. It is not a matter of will to believe what I believe; it simply depends on "ein Naturgesetz des 'Fürwahrhaltens'". Perhaps the firm nucleus of our beliefs, truths, reasons, the scaffolding of all our thoughts come from "time immemorial". "(Every human being has parents)". Indeed, and parents with parents... till the immemorial.<sup>28</sup>

It is difficult to understand this lack of ground because it does not look good, self-deception looks better, the appeal for delusion beyond nature and its laws, beyond our very basic condition. Things are meaningless both further backward and forward. "Nothing is so difficult as not deceiving oneself" (VB 39). Why? Because it is difficult to find the beginning, to begin at the beginning and not to try to go further back. At some point one must stop thinking, withdraw thinking from traffic and "take it to a siding". Substantiation comes to an end. And the end, as we indicated, "is not an unfounded assumption but an unfounded means of action", not an immediate evidence, but our way of acting, which is at the heart of the language game<sup>29</sup>. Our condition.

And that is all, even though it is difficult to understand, no matter how clear it is. Before, in 1937, perhaps Wittgenstein himself was not so clear. Then he would have liked to have an argument with God<sup>30</sup>; probably also one about that scaffolding that he has made things into. The certainty of knowing and life that he had earlier looked for in the logically impossible surrender to the Christian faith in God – certainty that he never found because it was a fight between the

<sup>24</sup> Cfr. *ÜG* §§403/404, 174.

<sup>25</sup> Cfr. *ÜG* §§196, 254.

<sup>26</sup> Cfr. A. Janik, o. c., 9.

<sup>27</sup> Cfr. *ÜG* §§ 128/129, 114, 115, 160, 263, 286.

<sup>28</sup> Cfr. *ÜG* §§ 175, 173, 172, 211.

<sup>29</sup> Cfr. *ÜG* §§ 471, 210, 563, 110, 204.

<sup>30</sup> Cfr. L. W., *Denkbewegungen. Tagebücher 1930-1932/1936-1937*, Innsbruck: Haymon-Verlag 1997, 96 (17.3.37): "Ich möchte mit Gott rechten"; cfr. 137 (17.4.37).

reasonable (not believing) and the unreasonable (believing), and because he could not abdicate from reason and logic in absurdity –, he now finds it in the animal, beyond that dichotomy, once he dissolved that way of looking at things, conceived beyond all justification, where there is no absurdity left. That certainty, already “calmed”, of the knowing now, when the point where there is no room for doubt is reached, is form of life or a form of life. "But that means I want to conceive it as something that lies beyond being justified or unjustified; as it were, as something animal" (§359). This is the great reference of *ÜG* to the animal.

Let us conclude with the animal: both the form of life and the language game are anchored in a background of practices that rests on something animal, as long as it does not raise any kind of justification. It is indeed questionable whether Wittgenstein would agree to specify it with the data from the actual evolutionist theories, but it is possible to do it by commenting on his philosophy. It is a good mixture. Every definitive justification of reason which goes beyond itself, not circular, rests on the animal, without the animal being a kind of justification, but a fundamental biological datum which avoids any justification. The lack of logic, or the rudimentary logic of the animal, is the only approximative way of staying logical, that is, free of metaphysical shocks, without looking for outlandish justifications. Its unawareness of the game is the only approximative model to follow in order to stay aware of the whole rational scaffolding without shutting oneself in its circle. The evolutionist data color Wittgenstein's ideas, the latter gives depth to those data.

We speak of the "animal", but we could also speak of "God". Why not to call "God" the ultimate certainty that we have been talking about, beyond reason and unreasonableness, the definitive evidence of knowledge, its foundation beyond its game, if it fulfills all its attributes? I can perfectly think that it is God that teaches or reveals to me those things of which I am certain, the one that prevents me from deception (§361). Why not? The kind God, at least conceptually, is simply a metaphor for the obscure origin, which, in fact, can only be obscure. "Is God bound by our knowledge? Are a lot of our statements incapable of falsehood? For that is what we want to say" (§436). But it seems that in the end God is not a valid hypothesis. God is out of the game, out of the context of human knowing and talking, not even in their limits. Surely there are things that I know about which God himself could tell me nothing (§554). God cannot be subject to my knowing, he cannot be committed to it to that extent. God might not be in the game, but he does make us play like that: if one accepts his hypothesis or plays with it, he, after all, is the one responsible for everything... We would like to say all this and also the opposite. (There is no way to either understand oneself or Wittgenstein clearly in this respect. All in all, it seems that he keeps thinking that accepting or not the hypothesis of the God that reveals certain basic truths and prevents us from deception is a decision; that he was not able to make at the end of his life either, probably in none of its dimensions.)(§362) But it seems that the animal is closer to us than God, especially in the light of scientific data. (We are animals and not gods. The hypothesis of God is a beautiful absolutely gratuitous hypothesis, too unfounded to beat the alternative foundation/non-foundation, let us say.) From this point of view, God is out of the human game. Or rather: God is out of the animal game.

The animal is the game itself: the basic rules of the game that are rooted in our condition.

And the 'childlike'? The 'childlike' is me beginning the game. Let us finish leaving everything around the child, because the child condition has the same conceptual advantages of peace as that of the animal (and that of the divine). We were children only a while ago and animals a long ago. But we keep being both – and for what matters here, they are the same. If ontogenesis reproduces phylogeny in a certain way, the original animality must appear in a way or another in the child. The child is conditioned by the game, trained (abgerichtet) in it, he does not know that he is playing, he neither has nor needs the capacity to ask about it. Like the cat, for example: "Does a child believe that milk exists? Or does it know that milk exists? Does a cat know that a mouse exists?" (§478) Or like the dog: "Ein Hund könnte lernen, auf den Ruf 'N' zu N zu laufen und auf den Ruf 'M' zu M, – wüßte er aber darum, wie die Leute heißen?" (§540). The child does not learn that there are or there are not books, armchairs, etc., or that they exist or don't exist. He learns to pick up the books, to sit down in an armchair, etc.. He does not know that this is his hand, and even less does he question whether it is his hand or not; he learns countless language games that deal with his hand (§§476s., 374). "The child, I should like to say, learns to react in such and such a way; and in so reacting does not so far know anything. Knowing only begins at a later level" (§538). The child, then, does not believe, nor doubt, etc. At first it is as with the animal, later he awakens to reason and problems appear, he stops being an animal and leaves behind the peace of thinking... The great tragedy of man is not that he was once a child (Descartes), but that he stopped being one. And to have to look for foundations continuously. For thinking and life, that is, for everything, it should definitely suffice this (ultimate, definitive, animal) one: "You must bear in mind that the language game... is not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable). It is there – like our life" (§559). Wittgenstein writes that on 19.4.51, ten days before his death. It was enough for him, or it was at least the last and definitive one.

(end)

The human and the animal: the imprisonment and the openness, respectively, tension and peace. Animal, child or God: that is the exit and rest area for the human. The three of them are the protagonists of Rilke's eighth elegy.

*Mit allen Augen sieht die Kreatur  
das Offene. Nur unsre Augen sind  
wie umgekehrt und ganz um sie gestellt  
als Fallen, rings um ihren freien Ausgang.  
Was draußen ist, wir wissens aus des Tiers  
Antlitz allein; denn schon das frühe Kind  
wenden wir um und zwingens, daß es rückwärts  
Gestaltung sehe, nicht das Offne, das  
im Tiergesicht so tief ist. Frei von Tod.  
Ihn sehen wir allein; das freie Tier  
hat seinen Untergang stets hinter sich  
und vor sich Gott, und wenn es geht, so gehts*

*in Ewigkeit, so wie die Brunnen gehen.*

*(...)*

*Wäre Bewußtheit unsrer Art in dem  
sicheren Tier, das uns entgegenzieht  
in anderer Richtung -, riß es uns herum  
mit seinem Wandel. Doch sein Sein ist ihm  
unendlich, ungefaßt und ohne Blick  
auf seinen Zustand, rein, so wie sein Ausblick.  
Und wo wir Zukunft sehn, dort sieht es Alles  
und sich in Allem und geheilt für immer.<sup>31</sup>*

Who explains more, by the way, in this case: Darwin or Rilke?



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<sup>31</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, *Die Duineser Elegien*, achte Elegie, 7./8.2.1922, Château de Muzot.