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1   Wittgenstein's so called 'later philosophy' is usually read from the point of view of its Austro-German sources, which he pointed in 1931 when he drew his intellectual portrait in *Culture and Value* : Goethe, Schopenhauer, Spengler, even Weininger, Kraus, Loos have succeeded to Frege and Russell, Hertz and Boltzmann, who inspired the *Tractatus.* But, and it's a surprise, we read in Dewey's *Experience and Nature* (1925) a number of themes that are well known as Wittgensteinian ones, and which we can find for example in *The Blue Book* and in the *Philosophical Investigations*, a fact neglected or ignored by Wittgensteinian studies. *Experience and Nature* devotes a large amount of attention to the criticisms of the 'private and exclusive' character of mental phenomena – a central point in the *Philosophical Investigations.* Like Heidegger, before Foucault, but after Nietzsche, Dewey traces (in order to deconstruct it), a genealogy of Western philosophy and of its subjectivist, idealistic and moralizing stereotypes: 'the inner life,' the Cartesian 'I,' the isolation of the ego, the 'fantomatic entities' hypostazised from substantive nouns of our language, the quest of essences, the production of theories and of theoretic dualisms which artificially clive the experience; the adoption of an 'empiricist and naturalistic' method should allow us to dismiss them. Like the later Wittgenstein, Dewey admits the devastating character of his method, which "when it is consistently followed, destroys many things once cherished; but [...] destroys them by revealing their inconsistency with the nature of things." As for Wittgenstein and his philosophical method, he speaks of only crushing "castles in the air" (*Investigations,* § 118).

2   Everything goes as if Wittgenstein had taken advantage of *Experience and Nature*, even though this reference to pragmatism was underrated in 1920-30 in Cambridge, where Russell injustly described it as 'the philosophy of American businessmen,' and where James' theory of truth had a bad reputation. True, Wittgenstein confesses the 'pragmatist' influence exerted on him by Ramsey and Sraffa in the Preface of his *Investigations.* But immediately after having mentioned these two proper names, he adds: "For more than *one* reason, what I publish here will have points of contact with what other writers are writing to-day. If my remarks do not bear a stamp which marks them as mine, – I do not

wish to lay any further claim to them as my property." No doubt, from Wittgenstein's point of view, pragmatism was not a *distinguished* philosophy in the sense of Bourdieu (no more than logical empiricism, which he had snobed at the beginnings of 1930's), and neither was American beviahorism, two tendances of the after-War that provided material to his later philosophy. Of course, in this same remark of 1931 where he admits that he has been influenced by pragmatist ideas, Wittgenstein compares himself to Freud as "an example of Jewish reproductive thinking":[1] "I think I have never invented a line of thinking but that it was always provided formeby someone else and I have done no more than passionately take it up for my work of clarification" *(Culture and Value)*. In many passages of the *Blue Book* and of the *Investigations*, the texture lets the Deweyian under-text appear.

3   However, *Experience and Nature* is in itself a remarkable philosophical enterprise, unfortunately forgotten or underrated; influenced by such different authors as Peirce, Hegel, and Nietzsche, Dewey proceeds to a genealogical deconstruction of Western philosophy – two years before Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* – by means of a method that is simpler than the (logical) method of dawning logical empiricism: it consists in a 'naturalistic empiricism,' or even in a 'humanist' empiricism, *i. e.* in a return to 'primary experience,' *which is only what it is* (Dewey is here following the Peircian conception of pure quality as primary entity, which is only what it is). Such a return to experience with a recall of the 'natural history' of man and of his philosophical conceptions are meant to dismiss the claims and false values of a philosophy born in 'leisure class' (Dewey has read Thornstein Veblen, an author inspired by Peirce and James, and who influenced in turn Merton, Bourdieu, Elster), which explains perhaps its idealism and subjectivism; Dewey points to an underrating of appearances or of matter (a Nietzschean theme), which, according to him, implies a moral judgment. His project is simple: bringing philosophy back to ordinary life and practice, restoring the continuity between mind and nature in the sense of a well-understood naturalism, and in this purpose, always returning to 'primary experience' without falsifying it; the oblivion and falsification of this experience have given birth to a number of philosophical harms. Dewey regards as 'mythological' the 'natural history of mind' reflected in the Western conception of the mental. On these matters, he is inspired by Darwin and by his notion of adaptation which plays an important part in his remarkable theory of perception ("To perceive is to acknowledge unattained possibilities," 182) as a forerunner of Gibson's 'affordances' theory – which dismisses the famous 'spectator theory of knowledge.' Our primary experience is not a cognitive one, or only in a derived way: first, there comes experience, which is as such ineffable (but not in a mystical sense) and existential; then comes the cognitive stance.

4   Before Wittgenstein, Dewey was asking philosophy to go back to the ordinary: "to apply to in the more general realm of philosophy the thought which is effective in dealing with any and every genuine question, from the elaborate problems of science to pratical deliberations of daily life, trivial or momentous" (Preface: viii). Transferred to language, this idea is echoed in the *Investigations*, § 116 where Wittgenstein claims: "What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use." Dewey wants to submit unsolvable philosophical enigmas to the pragmatist test elaborated by Peirce: a verification through results (intended as conceivable practical consequences of a conception); he then wants to show that the refuse to consider "primary experience" has generated those enigmas, along with a lot of abstractions. But Dewey's empirical method – as opposed to other kinds of empiricism – is the only one, according to him, that does

justice to primary experience, as opposed to products of reflection which, being detached of it, break its original unity: James did point on this phenomenon in his *Essays on Radical Empiricism* (1904), when he introduced his distinction between 'thing' and 'thought,' a break that only 'radical' empiricism allows to dismiss, by returning to a fluent and continuous experience which is prior to the distinction between subjective and objective.

5 Western philosophy wrongly considers the products of reflection as a primary given. In its quest for simple entities, it stripes off from the continuous and fluent stuff of experience a set of entities which are in no way original: mathematical objects, Platonician Ideas, Russellian sense-data, objects of logical atomism; all of these are products of "a selective choice" ending up in the fact that objects are 'posited' and considered as 'real.' But this choice goes unnoticed; it is not admitted as such by philosophy which considers the results of this 'selective valuation' as real. The problem of philosophy, according to Dewey, is to know what we should regard as primary or as original stuff. Wittgenstein will retain this question, to which he answers in his *Investigations*: "Look on the language-game as the primary thing" [*das Primäre*]" (§ 656); and the given, the *Urphänomen* which we should accept, amounts to our "forms of life" (II, xi, 316), a naturalistic concept referring to an anthropological or even ethological given. Reading Dewey – if my hypothesis is correct – could only encourage Wittgenstein to break with the *Tractatus*' atomism (which, in *Experience and Nature*, is perhaps one of Dewey's targets along with Russellian acquaintance), and lead him to find the way of an anthropological naturalism taking into account the "natural history" of man (a concept which echoes Dewey) and recalling some "very general natural phenomena" constituting the background [*Hintergrund*] presupposed [*vorausgestzt*] by the system of our concepts, according to the philosophical grammar to which Wittgenstein is now devoted. The second chapter of *Experience and Nature* ("Existence as Precarious and as Stable"), evokes these original phenomena in which the inquiry originates, borrowing to some British anthropologists a description of the origins of humanity, while in a similar way and on the same subject, Wittgenstein mentions Renan and Frazer in his *Remarks on the Golden Bough* and in *Culture and value*, while he speaks of the awakening of human mind as linked to striking, even terrifying natural phenomena, describing the same category of facts: a 'precarious and dangerous' world with impressive phenomena giving birth to rituals and superstitions. It is by questioning these origins that we may succeed, according to Dewey, to restore the primary continuity between nature and mind which Western thought has artificially broken. Similarly, in 1930, Wittgenstein describes after Renan a primitive humanity afraid of natural impressive phenomena as thunder, birth, death, and this recalls the Dewey's second chapter: "Existence as Precarious and as Stable." Even better, Dewey, before Wittgenstein, makes use of counterfactual sentences about regular facts of nature: "Unless nature had regular habits, persistent ways, so compacted that they time, measure and and give rhythm and recurrence to transitive flow, meanings, recognizable characters, could not be" (351). This idea is echoed in the *Investigations,* where Wittgenstein points to a correlation between natural regularities and the importance of some concepts; he invites us to imagine "some general facts of nature" as being different from what they are, and to draw some consequences of it on the use of some of our concepts which presuppose these facts: "What we have to mention in order to explain the significance, I mean the importance, of a concept, are often extremely general facts of nature: such facts as are hardly ever mentioned because of their great generality" (§ 143). If these facts were different, "our normal language-games would lose [their] point [*Witz*]" (§ 142). The presupposed fact consists in what is contemplated in the antecedent

of contrefactual sentence. For Dewey as for Wittgenstein, the presupposed facts are often (physical or anthopological) natural regularities, which impose conditions on our language-games and on our conceptual scheme. The idea of regularity is central for these two authors.

6   The return to purely qualitative primary experience (which cannot, nevertheless, afford to restore the primary naivety, but only a second one) is the simple medicine against the gaps introduced by philosophy into the continuity of things related in experience, this fluent stuff which is prior to the distinction between objective and subjective: philosophy breaks its original unity, while it believes to capture it by means of such artificial theorical dualisms as the dualism between matter and mind. Philosophy must then introduce a *tertium quid* in order to relate that which has been unduely separated (97). These criticisms are again taken up by Wittgenstein in his lectures in the beginning of 1930's about such propositional attitudes as expectation and desire: every desire is the desire-of-a specific-something, and there is no gap to be filled by a *tertium quid* introduced, as a philosophical artefact, between desire and the event or object that satisfies it. In particular, the separation between the material and the mental leads the philosopher to "posit" – as Quine would have said – a fantomatic entity, exclusive and private: the mind, to which he assigns vague and mysterious properties (we can find a neat echo of this account in the *Blue Book*). On the contrary, we should bring the mind back into nature – without *reducing* it to nature –, and restore the previous continuity of primary experience. Then comes the idea to retrace a "natural history of mind" (428), a project which caught Wittgenstein's attention: he too wants to reinscribe speaking and thinking in the "natural history of man" (PI, §§ 25 and 415), in the same way as walking and eating. What he recalls are not curiosities, but very general facts of nature "which no one has doubted," pleads Wittgenstein, facts that "have escaped our attention only because they are always before our eyes" (PI, § 415).

7   Meanings are treated in the same way as mind, and on this point, Dewey's influence is not limited to Wittgenstein but also extends to Quine, who was his student (some analogies that are often pointed between Wittgenstein and Quine, especially regarding the mythology of meaning, stem in fact from their common pragmatist source). Meaning is primarily "a property of behavior" (179), and as such, meanings can be objective and universal without necessarily having a psychic existence (181). It is at this point that Dewey, who is not an adept of behaviorism, comes closer to it.

8   Man has a tendency to posit objects (43). For Dewey as later for Quine, entification begins 'at home'; abstract divisions are actually a set of mental operations wrongly reified and hypostazised (a point that Wittgenstein also makes in his *Investigations*, when he criticizes introspection). In Dewey's view, mind is so far from being an ethereal and private entity that it is described as a 'function of social interactions'; the use of a noun like "mind" is misleading, and we would better use an adverb like 'mentally' or an adjective (a quasi-grammatical remark, once more taken up by Wittgenstein). To speak of the mind is a way to speak of especially complex social transactions or interactions. The Self is one of these 'ultimate functions which emerge from organic and social interactions whose organization is highly complex.' This emerging mind is not cut off from nature, but it is a fulfilment, a termination of nature. Dewey, like Peirce – whose account Dewey is adopting here – is radically critic towards egotism, towards Cartesian subjectivity and towards the myths of interiority; he is one of these authors who echo, like James and Wittgenstein, Lichtenberg's famous motto: "We should say *it thinks*, just as we say *it lightens*." Already

for Peirce, the sudden awareness of one's ego is only the result of failure and error, an illusion of human vanity, just like ideas of personality and separate mind (actually, the 'separate selves' can be fused, as in the case of '*l'esprit de corps*'): Dewey subscribes to this conception. As a fierce defender (just like Peirce) of the social character of thought (which is not a private entity and does not necessarily possess a 'psychical existence'), he firmly articulates his thesis: "When the introspectionist thinks he has withdrawn into a wholly private realm of events disparate in kind of other events, made out of mental stuff, he is only turning his attention to his own soliloquy. And soliloquy is the product and reflex of converse with others; social communication not an effect of soliloquy" (170). This is similar to the argument we find in §§ 412-3 of the *Investigations*, where Wittgenstein criticizes introspection and its philosophical use. Dewey reproaches psychology with reinforcing this predjudice concerning the private and exclusive ego. In Wittgenstein's view, introspection only produces artefacts of the stance taken up by philosophers. According to him, too, the philosophical stance creates its own chimeras.

9   According to an enduring legend, thought is a primary given which words only 'express,' without indicating any transition from one to another: such is the lesson which Wittgenstein retains in his *Blue Book*. Actually, thought is revealed to be one of the modalities of social interactions. By inscribing the social in the mental, Dewey allows Wittgenstein to develop one of the main themes of his later philosophy, and provides him with a basis for his argument against a private language and/or the private character of rule-following. But Wittgenstein imprints to Dewey's ideas a linguistic or grammatical turn which the American philosopher did not think of, producing a more sophisticated argument at the service of his philosophical grammar.

10   As for Dewey's conception of 'primary experience,' it may shed light on some of Wittgenstein's obscure sentences which could be explained by reference to *Experience and Nature*: "The things of primary experience are so arresting and engrossing that we tend to accept them just as they are – the flat earth, the march of the sun from east to west ans its sinking under the earth" (14). As it provides beliefs which seem to go without saying because of the strength of the habit, primary experience, according to Dewey, seems to consist inexorably in basic beliefs about environment, obliterated from the very fact of their obviousness and ubiquity: these characteristics are also pointed out by Wittgenstein. PI, § 129 echoes that idea: we tend to forget primary experience and the striking things which seem to go without saying. Important as they are, those things, Wittgenstein insists, don't strike us any more because we are used to them *(ibid.)*: this is why "the real foundations of his inquiry do not strike a man at all. Unless *that* fact has at some time struck him. – And this means: we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and most powerful." The result is that we forget an important part of reality, due to habit and to our ignorance of that which truly interests us. A similar obscure entry of Wittgenstein's *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough* could be explained, according to us, as an echo of the beginning of Dewey's Chapter II: rituals and beliefs "connected with them are the background out of which philosophy and secular morals slowly developed…" (47); for Wittgenstein, too, this background makes up the substratum of philosophy, "the real ground of our researchers," that which truly interests us, being linked with primary experience; but unfortunately, this foundation is forgotten and escapes us. This explains that "the aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity" and that the philosophers must learn again to see visible things around them. Similarly, Dewey writes: "the visible is set in the invisible; and in the

end what is unseen decides what happens in the seen; the tangible rests precariously upon the untouched and ungrasped" (43-4). Both philosophers agree in deploring this kind of blindness to what goes without saying, and is not remarked. According to Wittgenstein, such blindness is also due to the fact that language puts everything as the same level, and does not recognize differences between words – a Nietzschean idea –: against such a prejudice, we must fight in order to make grammatical differences visible and avoid grammatical confusions. A couple of Wittgensteinian texts from the *Philosophical Remarks* denounce the fact that things which go without saying and are immediatly obvious are not considered as the real and important ones: man believes that the real is elsewhere – in an "other-worldliness," as Nietzsche would say: "And one should want that this obviousness – the life – be something accidental, while that about which I do not ordinarily bother would be the very reality. Otherwise said, that which we cannot and doesn't want to go out in order to see from outside would not be the world" (*Philosophical Remarks*, § 47). Wittgenstein thus dismisses both realists and idealists, who actually live in the only one world. It sounds again like Dewey's *Experience and Nature*, which keeps denouncing the implicit metaphysics shared by realism and idealism.

11   We can also find in the *Investigations* some echoes of Dewey's account (after Nietzsche), of the philosopher's tendency to underrate in a "moral" sense one member of a pair, for example phenomena as contrasted with reality, the flow as contrasted with the stable, unity as contrasted with multiplicity. Wittgenstein also notices that some words are blamed for being 'vague,' while other are congratulated as 'precise.' And words are deeds… In Dewey's work, this moralization is not primary, but only emerges at the stage of cognition. Cognitive terms are morally connoted, and also denote artificial entities derived from primary experience. Contrarily to what is taught by Western philosophy, cognition does not emerge at the level of primary experience, which is purely existential, but afterwards, when objects of knowledge have been detached from experience and wrongly posited as real. Such is Dewey's anti-intellectualism: the cognitive stance is not primary; it wrongly intellectualizes a purely qualitative and existential experience. More deeply – and his target seems at this time to be Russell, his 'sense-data' and 'logical constructions,' –Dewey sees in the fact of giving names of physical objects encountered in experience a 'complete metaphysical commitment,' an idea which will have its posterity in the work of Quine. But empirical ordinary objects have nothing to do with physical objects: they are 'mental things,' and since there is nothing but the mental, the word 'mental' is deprived of any oppositional and differential value: if everything is mental, nothing is mental. We can detect again this refuse to use a word without an antithesis in Wittgenstein's work: using a word this way would be to employ it in a 'typically metaphysical manner.' In the *Blue Book,* the Cambridge philosopher criticizes the misleading application of a physicalist grammar to the mental vocabulary: by transferring the grammar of physical objects in the mental field, we introduce ethereal states and proceedings that duplicate our linguistic performances. But such recourse to mental objects does not throw any light on the mental, which only a grammar of psychical terms can elucidate. After Peirce, Dewey criticizes the attitude of speaking of a *place* where thought proceeds, and Wittgenstein makes of this criticism one of his most significative problems. The addition of a linguistic and grammatical dimension is the only thing that distinguishes Wittgenstein from Dewey in several passages.

12   Dewey is, with James, one of the missing links between Peirce and Wittgenstein, whose resemblances we often pointed in earlier works. Wittgenstein could not avoid mentioning

and criticizing James, very popular at this time; Dewey is not as famous as James in Europe, Wittgenstein does not even nominate him. His 'reproductive thinking' has led him to 'passionately take up' Dewey's 'line of thought.' Actually, was he ever done with pragmatism? Did not he avow, at the end of his life, in *On Certainty*: "So I am trying to say something that sounds like pragmatism. Here I am being thwarted by a kind of *Weltanschauung*" (§ 422). Of course, Dewey deserves better than this secret posterity in Wittgenstein's work: under modest appearances, *Experience and Nature* is one of the most remarkable philosophical enterprises of the twenties, which we may be ranked side by side with those of Carnap, Husserl, Heidegger, apart from its impact on the author of the *Investigations*. Anyway, it will be now known that Dewey's naturalistic voice, imprinted with social wisdom and perspicacity, can often be be heard in Wittgenstein's polyphonic *Investigations*.

NOTES

1. This is a perfect example of what historians call the "self-hatred" of Viennese Jews who used to underrate themselves.

ABSTRACTS

Dewey's influence is seldom mentioned in the literature when the relationships between Wittgenstein and pragmatism are addressed. Yet, it should be known that Dewey's philosophy is clearly echoed in Wittgenstein's later philosophy, as it is expressed in his *Philosophical Investigations*. In particular, Dewey's *Experience and Nature* develops many creeds also taken up by Wittgenstein: for instance, the critic attitude towards artificial notions that break with primary experience (*e.g.*, the "Self"), the will to bring philosophy back to the ordinary, or the emphasis laid on the necessity to pay attention to what lies open to the view. Consequently, the influence of pragmatism on Wittgenstein is far from being limited to the influence of C. S. Peirce or of W. James.

AUTHOR

CHRISTIANE CHAUVIRÉ

Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne
christiane.chauvire[at]noos.fr