

Language.

I have probably misunderstood both Wittgenstein and Popper who seem at polar opposites on the place of language in our understanding of reality. I am more sympathetic to Wittgenstein's overall approach but very respectful of Popper's practicality in problem solving. Both seem agreed that language is central to our development and it is the evolution of language which interests me. It is only 10,000 years since the earliest writing and a complete guess as to oral language judging from the anthropological and DNA evidence on modern man probably 150,000 years. This explains the biblical and other religions putting the creation around 10,000 years as this was the first evidence they had of man's existence.

When writing started it would have been the great spur to social cohesion but only led from the top and now that everybody reads and writes explains the helter skelter pace of change in the last 100 years...and its acceleration. How many thousands of languages there are (500 I am told in New Guinea alone) shows the brain is a natural conduit for their development. Was this a mutation in the brain genes which led to a super-abundance of parietal cell activity? (the speech centre is located there on the left lobe in right handed people). A gradual selective change by the normal evolutionary process seems unlikely ...a few extra words would give little advantage compared to other skills. Thus a sudden emergence of linguistic ability seems likely and this skill would lead to homo sapiens becoming preponderant through its socially cohesive power. If we are a model organism for the gods this would be the intervening experiment on us. Currently we take the biological route of mutation, a lucky mutation being beneficial in this case, and so we have language. Through language everything becomes mediated and communicated. First as myth and now by its correspondence with "reality" through science and criticism. As discussed under the question of reality the noumenal world outside space and time is represented by poetry etc the myth element not available to the hypothetical-deductive method. This is where a new poet a new writer will combine these two elements and give us a way forward....in language. That is why I side with Wittgenstein for it must be available to all, not to a tiny coterie of molecular biologists, mathematicians or neuroscientists to tell us who we are! Not that Wittgenstein would have made it comprehensible but to remind Popper of the manners and customs of the people...who must come first.