

THEMATIC SECTION:
WITTGENSTEIN AND EDUCATION

Educação
& realidade

Pedagogical Investigations: Wittgenstein and education

Michael A. Peters'

'Beijing Normal University, Beijing – China

ABSTRACT – Pedagogical Investigations: Wittgenstein and education. In this brief autobiographical excursus, Professor Michael Peters not only presents us with the most fundamental aspects of his thinking in philosophy of education, but reveals how, in the midst of some specific concerns, his encounter with Wittgenstein and post-structuralist philosophers ended up shaping the way that he traveled in his intellectual path.

Keywords: Postmodernism and Pedagogy. Styles of Thinking. Philosophy as Poetry.

RESUMO – Investigações Pedagógicas: Wittgenstein e educação. Nesta breve digressão autobiográfica, o professor Michael Peters não apenas nos apresenta aos aspectos mais fundamentais de seu pensamento em filosofia da educação, mas também ao modo como, em meio a algumas preocupações específicas, seu encontro com Wittgenstein e filósofos pós-estruturalistas definiu a maneira pela qual percorreu sua trajetória intelectual.

Palavras-chave: Pós-modernismo. Pedagogia. Estilos de Pensamento. Filosofia como Poesia.

Beginnings

I begin this paper in a confessional and autobiographical tone. My research direction and trajectory as an academic and a scholar has been a result of a deliberate choices about what and who to study that extended my interests. There was a series of accidents and random events that also helped to propel me in a certain direction. As a young geography secondary school teacher, fresh from graduation, interested in theoretical geography, I became interested in philosophy. I was encouraged by a teaching colleague who was a tutor in the philosophy department at Canterbury University to undertake a degree in philosophy of science that began with a focus on Russell, Frege and the early Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, as an introduction to logical atomism and philosophy of language – a kind of basic training in analytic philosophy. In the later stages I was introduced to contemporary philosophy of science through the study of Popper and Kuhn. At this stage no link was suggested between Wittgenstein and philosophy of science or technology. My copy of *Philosophical Investigations* has the date of 1971 in the flyleaf and I studied for a philosophy of science degree at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, during the early 1970s. This was the university where Karl Popper was appointed to the first professor of philosophy in 1937. Popper he stayed until 1943, during which time he composed the two volumes of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* which he regarded as his war effort¹. Popper had published the influential *Logik der Forschung* in 1934, which was only published as *Logic of Scientific Discovery* in 1959. With the help of his fellow Austrian, Friedrich Hayek, a distant cousin of Wittgenstein who became Popper's friend, countryman and mentor, recruited Popper and helped to secure a professorial post at the London School of Economics where he stayed for the remainder of his career. Hayek helped Popper to edit and publish the two volumes of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* which was as the title suggests a political defence of the *open society* as liberal democracy. The first volume *The Spell of Plato* suggested that Plato's work harboured dangerous tendencies toward totalitarianism; the second volume *The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx, and the Aftermath* argued that Hegel and Marx were the source of contemporary totalitarianism. Popper join the Mount Perelin Society that Hayek set up in 1947 based on the values of the open society, including freedom of expression and free market economic policies. These *Western* values were seen to be under threat and the moral and economic source of the current crisis after National Socialism and Communist totalitarianism. The Mount Pelerin Society has been seen as one of the most influential think-tanks and foundations that was responsible for neoliberalism taking hold in the 1980s². The links between liberal political philosophy and neoliberalism are transparent. Of the 39 scholars invited to the inaugural meeting a significant number were economists from the Chicago School, including Milton Friedman, Gary Becker, and George Stigler.

One of the personal *accidents* was an earlier meeting with Peter Munz at Victoria University of Wellington (NZ). Munz was one of only

two people to be a student of both Popper and Wittgenstein. As a German escapee Jew, Munz migrated to NZ arriving in 1937 and enrolled at Canterbury University College, as it was known then (part of the NZ university system), where he studied history and later philosophy under Karl Popper. The two became close friends. He went on to study with Wittgenstein at Cambridge University and completed his PhD on *The Place of Hooker in the History of Thought* (1952). He returned to NZ and was appointed a senior lecturer in history at Victoria University of Wellington teaching medieval history³.

In the 1970s Munz turned to philosophy publishing books on Popper and Wittgenstein such as his celebrated *Our Knowledge of the Growth of Knowledge: Popper or Wittgenstein?* (1985) that shaped up the choice of philosophy after the demise of positivism in terms of a choice between Wittgenstein's *relativism* where meaning is a product of language-games, and Popper's evolutionary epistemology. I met him because my, then, partner had been appointed a junior lecturer in the History Department at Victoria University and Munz offered us his residence while he was away for a sabbatical year in 1970. I was welcome to use his study and his massive book collection which contained all the works of Popper and most by Wittgenstein and I was allowed access to his letters and comments by Popper, often left in the flyleaf of his books.

Munz, an immensely charming and erudite man, argued that Western philosophy was a choice between Wittgenstein and Popper, and, in effect, faced with the choice of sociology or biology, he rejected the Wittgensteinian position and embraced Popperian Darwinism or evolutionary epistemology as the only viable option. Even in 1970 he was firmly in Popper's camp. Munz's book was not published until after I had completed my PhD almost fifteen years later in 1984, by which time I had embraced the *choice* of Wittgenstein's account of philosophy. I suspect that the early experience with Munz had a determining influence on my decision to do philosophy and also to follow a Wittgensteinian style of thought which appealed to my literary background. (While I had majored in Geography and completed a four year honours degree, I had read for papers in English Literature and wanted to major in modern poetics but was persuaded by the NZ Ministry of Education that Geography was in demand as a teaching subject. I taught African and South American *underdevelopment* using poetry).

Where Munz had chosen Popper over Wittgenstein as the future of contemporary Western philosophy, I realise in retrospect that I had, by contrast, seen Wittgenstein, rather than Popper, as the future although in retrospect it was a view that was formulated over many years. This *choice* and the notion of choice or preference in general in philosophy, has an elusive quality that operates at one level in terms of the rational mind comprising theories and arguments; at another, perhaps subconscious, level it operates at in terms of sensibility, where personal preference elides conscious choice-making and surfaces in a larger psychology of literary and aesthetic qualities, much like the attraction to certain kinds of art (such as the political art of the avant-garde). For me

Wittgenstein's aphoristic writing and style, his uncompromising honesty, was satisfying and its organicist and mystical elements appealed to my own poetic sensibilities, against Popper's traditional argumentative style that characterised a certain kind of analytical philosophy upholding values of rigour, argument and analysis. I would contrast them in terms of two views of clarity: analytic and poetic.

My PhD was a thesis strongly influenced by my previous studies in philosophy of science and I was strongly influenced by the new generation of philosophers that included among them Stephen Toulmin, Thomas Kuhn, Paul Feyerabend, Norwood Russell Hanson, Mary Hesse, Mary Douglas, Peter Winch – a new set of thinkers inspired by Wittgenstein's social and linguistic turns, his anti-foundationalism and his naturalising of epistemology. To me a Wittgensteinian-inspired philosophy of science freed us from the scientific tendencies of an old-styled positivism that thrived in educational psychological science and continues to do so today in data-driven utility conceptions of science based on and informationalism as ideology and governing algorithmic theorems. To me despite Popper's innovation in solving Hume's problem of induction through inverting the logic of verification to highlight the logic of falsification, it seemed that Popper was still ultimately to be understood as a reaction to logical empiricism.

Later in the mid-1970s after the philosophy of science, I attended the University of Auckland to complete a masters degree in philosophy where I managed to focus almost entirely on papers involving Wittgenstein's philosophy, including a lovely paper taken by Laurence Goldstein where I was the only student. (We never got beyond the few pages of the *Tractatus*). In this masters degree I included a couple of papers in philosophy of education studying with James Marshall who later became my supervisor. On completing the masters degree I was offered a postgraduate scholarship to complete a PhD on Wittgenstein with a thesis on the problem of rationality that I completed in 1984 (Peters, 2020a).

Education and the Problem of Rationality

My thesis comprised three parts: the first related to the interpretation of a mainstream philosophical tradition, and was designed to provide the necessary historical background and context for understanding the place of Wittgenstein in analytic philosophy and analytic philosophy of education; the second dealt with analytic philosophy of education in terms of its methodological limitations, and; the third and final section was an attempt to advocate a Wittgensteinian-inspired research programme in educational philosophy which draws on wider developments in philosophy, hermeneutics and social theory (Peters, 2020a). The main theme running through each of the three sections is an argument and interpretation of two epistemic notions of rationality. I presented analytic philosophy of education as an attempt to set up, a priori, an absolute and a historical notion of rationality based on a form of conceptual analysis and I argue against this conception of rationality.

I noted that the nature of rationality is a topic which has served as common ground for a great range of issues and problems in much philosophy in the 1970s and 1980s, and one which increasingly became the focus of concern for a generation of philosophers who no longer either conceived of philosophy as the foundational discipline underwriting claims to rationality or of science as the exemplification of rationality at its best. The loss of faith in science as the paradigm of rationality and in philosophy as the foundational discipline concerned to provide universal standards of rationality valid for all actual and possible claims to knowledge, I argued, had forced a re-evaluation of the nature of rationality. I argued that since the days of high positivism a series of attacks have questioned the notion of *analyticity*, *the myth of the given*, the theory-observation distinction, the nature of scientific change, and cast doubt on the accepted nature of scientific inquiry, and seriously questioned the previously unquestioned positivist commitment to science as the only possible rational scheme.

Philosophers have attempted to argue for a postempiricist picture of scientific rationality as one that necessarily involves objectivity and truth in an apparent attempt to combat the allegedly relativist assumptions that are seen to underly the claims of anthropologists, sociologists and social science philosophers alike, who have argued that it is inappropriate to apply our standards of rationality when interpreting or attempting to understand alien belief systems. Their arguments, in part, were designed to undercut the assaults on an allegedly single and universally valid conception of rationality by philosophers and anthropologists who have argued that western scientific rationality is just one type of rationality among others.

Broadly speaking, I drew a distinction between ahistorical and historical conceptions of rationality and attempted to demonstrate that the ahistorical conception, paradoxically is, itself, an historical product – part and parcel of a mainstream philosophical tradition that has dominated for a considerable period of time. This conception I termed absolute rationality, that is, rationality construed as a mode or method which will lead to knowledge and truth. The historical conception, on the other hand, I called constitutive rationality, that is, rationality construed as constitutive of any sustaining system of beliefs. It is a notion that is closely allied to considerations such as intelligibility and the implicit norms of different realms of discourse. Of these two notions, the former can be seen as embodying the traditional and fundamental claim of philosophy to underwrite the rationality of knowledge and belief systems. It has been given a formal, algorithmic character and tends to be associated with absolutist and foundationalist conceptions of knowledge. Often it is seen to presuppose some version of the correspondence theory of truth. Typically, adherents of this view assume a justified true belief account of knowledge so that rationality is seen to consist in holding only those claims that are justifiable.

Justifiability in this context is traditionally seen to depend upon the logical possibility of proving the truth of knowledge claims. As such

claims are held to be proven true by reasoning, it is only by employing a reliable method of reasoning that one is ever entitled to claim certainty. In philosophy of science, this conception of rationality is imbued with logicist assumptions; the principles of logic are considered self-evident and if scientific method is based on them in some way, then it will stand fast, epistemologically speaking. Generally, on this view then, rationality is seen as fixed for all time and space - necessarily always one and the same. The latter notion, on the other hand, is associated with non-foundationalist and fallibilist accounts of knowledge, especially those which emphasize a theoretical or epistemological holism, and it is often seen to presuppose a coherentist or instrumentalist version of truth. Its detractors label it *relativist*, while its advocates, though not speaking with a common voice, prefer to call themselves by a variety of terms – non-absolutists, coherentists, contextualists and so on. This notion of rationality comes into view most clearly where questions about language are taken seriously: it focuses on the language-dependent nature of belief and emphasizes how beliefs form a web or system. In reaction to logicist assumptions, rationality on this view, is increasingly seen in dynamic and evolutionary terms relative to a theory, paradigm or culture and subject to socio-historical conditions.

I described this movement and change from the point of view of a Wittgensteinian, for Wittgenstein in the history of contemporary Anglo-American philosophy is a fulcrum; his early work emphasized the logicity of language (and rationality) in the development of a logically perspicuous language; while his later work emphasized the liberation of language, and specifically *grammar*, from the bounds of strict logic. His writings and his influence in modern philosophy mirror this change. Thus, the early Wittgenstein's influence can be clearly seen in the writings of the Vienna Circle and in the doctrine of Logical Positivism which dominated in philosophy and social theory until quite recently. It has experienced a revival under neoliberalism. The later Wittgenstein can be read, in part, as a reaction against his earlier view of language and logic, and his influence once again is easily visible in the writings of the Wittgensteinians, Kuhn, Toulmin, Feyerabend and Rorty.

I was very influenced by Richard Rorty's (1980) *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* which provides a pragmatist account based on the work of Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Dewey (Peters; Ghiraldelli, 2002). For Rorty, a postphilosophical intellectual culture once freed of the governing metaphors of mind and knowledge as the mirror of nature, *philosophy* can then take its rightful place in culture. Such a view is both anti-representationalist and, following Hegel, Darwin, Sellars, Quine and Davidson, embraces an epistemological naturalism that sees *epistemological behaviorism* as a matter of conversation and social practice. It is this view that Rorty thinks is common to both Wittgenstein and Dewey. I was lucky enough to see him in action at the University of Auckland on a couple of occasions and to present a paper in his honour at the Australian National University in 1999. Rorty's book was well received outside philosophy but not well heralded in philosophy departments.

The general movement in rationality studies, then, can be characterized in historical terms as a move away from a single, universal, and formal model of rationality motivated by considerations of logic to informal, historical models that more closely approximate *rationalities* employed by agents in their active construction of social reality. In one sense, the movement can be considered a reaction against the positivist extraction and formalist interpretation of one paradigm of knowledge, (i.e. science) and the treatment and elevation of it to stand as the exemplification of rationality - as embodying the standards of rationality that should be applied to the interpretation of all social conduct, behaviour and action irrespective of time and place.

I sought to understand this conception of philosophy by locating it within the context of the mainstream tradition of philosophy-as-epistemology (Rorty, 1980) and by briefly tracing its development as a response to the problem of rationality – that of providing a set of ahistorical and cross-culturally valid standards or criteria against which competing beliefs and knowledge claims may be rationally evaluated. The attempt to provide a solution to the problem of rationality encapsulates the main task of this conception of philosophy for as Toulmin (1972) reminds us “[...] the historical invariance of rationality – i.e., the existence of universal principles of human understanding – has always appeared to be a precondition of rational judgement” (p. 20). This philosophical problematic underlies the traditional programme of epistemology as it has been carried out by Descartes, Locke and Kant, and subsequently interpreted by modern philosophers of the linguistic turn such as Russell, the early Wittgenstein, and Ayer. The logico-linguistic turn taken by twentieth century philosophy continues the enterprise of critical philosophy by studying thought and attempting to solve the problem of rationality through the intermediary of language.

The basic conception of philosophy-as-epistemology is not greatly altered, although it is transposed, by replacing questions of the nature and limits of knowledge with questions of the nature and limits of language. The same quest for certainty – the same foundationalism and the same assumptions concerning the autonomy and neutrality of meta-level inquiry that characterizes Kant’s critical philosophy – is evident in the metaphilosophy of the analytic enterprise as was adopted in the philosophy of education.

The philosophy of the later Wittgenstein and in particular *Philosophical Investigations* (1953) I argued provided me with the ground both for advocating a notion of constitutive rationality and for repudiating the traditional conception of philosophy-as-epistemology. In addition, Wittgenstein’s philosophy served as a unifying theme for this thesis giving it a reference point for discussing and evaluating the methodological revolution in analytic philosophy and the various phases through which it has moved while also providing a link with the philosophy of science, and with Continental phenomenology.

My thesis interpretation of Wittgenstein’s philosophy separated him from *linguistic foundationalism* and empiricism typical of much

analytic philosophy, and at the same time provided a response to the problem of rationality that avoids the dilemma facing the traditional conception of philosophy-as-epistemology. Wittgenstein does not take the problem of rationality as central to philosophy in the way that Russell, or later, Alfred Jules Ayer does. Although he distinguishes philosophy from science – for science is concerned with the *nature of reality* and what is distinctive of philosophy is the nature of its questions and their resolution. Wittgenstein does not emphasize the autonomy of philosophy nor hold to its status as a second-order activity. His approach to the problem of rationality is not to attempt to isolate some epistemologically ultimate set of privileged items in the fashion of the foundationalist; nor does he attempt a straightforwardly coherentist account. Rather his response may be likened to that of Hegel's *immanent critique* of knowledge, where standards of reason – the norms of rationality – are seen to be internal to particular forms of life.

For Wittgenstein, the giving of grounds comes to an end not in a series of inviolate propositions or a set of privileged presuppositions but in an ungrounded way of acting puts it in *On Certainty*: “Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end; but the end is not certain propositions striking us immediately as true – ‘it is not a kind of seeing on our part; it is our acting which lies at the bottom of the language-game” (Wittgenstein, 1969, p. 204). In this light, we can better understand the doubts Wittgenstein casts on the analytic-synthetic distinction – a bulwark of positivism. If there is no firm distinction between the world and our representations of it, between sentences which correspond to something and those which are deemed *true* only by convention – a feature that follows naturally from Wittgenstein's holism and coherentism – then philosophy is deprived of its privileged epistemic status in the search for certain foundations for knowledge.

Justification comes to an end in our acting, in our practices, which are embedded in a form of life. There is no justification available or possible outside the framework of a practice. This sort of holistic approach to rationality obscures those neat traditional distinctions on which the analytic enterprise rests – analytic vs. synthetic, necessary vs. contingent, scheme vs. content – that are intended to separate language from the world, and philosophy from first order disciplines. Further, this approach seems to threaten the very idea of philosophy as the discipline concerned to solve traditional problems by means of a distinctively philosophical method. This picture of rationality further reflects the weight I accorded to the recent historicist turn in the philosophy of science which also favoured a holistic approach and similarly rejects as bankrupt the traditional ahistorical justificationist account. Such an account was tied to the logicist assumption that appraisal and explanation could be understood as the ahistorical process of inference-making, linking premises and conclusion.

Philosophers of science, going beyond the latter Wittgenstein, attacked the idea of a first philosophy on detailed historical as well as philosophical grounds. They questioned the inherited logicist (and

positivist) assumption that *form* and questions of methodology are not discoverable in the same way as *facts* are and at the same time they suggested that scientific methods, goals and criteria have been learned or discovered alongside empirical content in an historical process. Some scholars have even gone so far as to propose a pragmatic, a posteriori model for history of science suggesting that it is shifting scientific beliefs that have been responsible for the major doctrinal shifts in philosophy of science and epistemology. The force of this historicist view is to challenge the traditional conception of philosophy as an ahistorical discipline concerned to provide “[...] a permanent and neutral framework for all inquiry” to use Rorty’s (1980, p. 8) phrase, by introducing a notion of rationality that is developmental and historical in nature. In doing so, the historicist movement redefines the problem of rationality. The problem is not how to provide ahistorical and absolutist solutions to questions that do not allow them, but to understand how it is that we are and may yet learn to be more rational – an understanding, it seems, that is primarily historical.

Philosophy as Poetry

Philosophy ought really to be written only as a *form of poetry* (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 24).

As a student of Wittgenstein immediately I was emotionally affected by the elegant architecture of the *Tractatus* and its aphoristic poetical composition as much as what it had to say about the logical form of the proposition. I discovered later that style and form were integral features of Wittgenstein’s philosophy where he trying to persuade “[...] people to change their style of thinking” (p. 28) as he writes in *Lectures and Conversations*. This was not an idle thought. He also wrote that his philosophy was a means by which his readers could recognise their own thinking “[...] with all its deformities so that, helped in this way, he can put it right” (Wittgenstein, 1970, p.18e). As a school teacher I came to Wittgenstein with a pedagogical agenda and I soon realised that he was not advancing a theory or argument the aim of which was to produce a compelling conclusion. Rather he was showing us how to think differently in a way that no longer depended on the force of argumentation alone. He emphasised that *a picture held us captive* and that we were influenced in what beliefs we held by deep cultural metaphors that were difficult to analyse. I focused on Wittgenstein’s *styles of thinking* and began to see him as a *pedagogical philosopher*. I argued that we should view “Wittgenstein not as a philosopher who provides a *method* for analysing educational concepts but rather as one who approaches philosophical questions from a *pedagogical* point of view” and held that “Wittgenstein style of ‘doing’ philosophy is pedagogical” (Peters, 2017, p. 38). I argued that his styles are

[...] essentially *pedagogical*; he provides a teaming variety and vital repertoire of non-argumentational dis-

cursive forms -- pictures, drawings, analogies, similes, jokes, equations, dialogues with himself, little narratives, questions and *wrong* answers, thought experiments, gnomic aphorisms and so on -- as a means primarily to shift our thinking, to help us escape the picture that holds us captive. It is this notion of *philosophy as pedagogy* that is, I shall argue, a defining feature of Wittgenstein's later thought⁴.

At the same time it seem to me that his work was *confessional*, one of the earliest genre forms of philosophy, employed by Augustine and in the modern era by Rousseau. To me "Wittgenstein's style both as a mode of philosophising and as a mode of 'writing the self', tied explicitly to pedagogical practices' that encourages us to tell the truth about ourselves creating conditions for '*ethico-poetical* self-constitution" (Peters, 2003, p. 353). In a recent collection *A Companion to Wittgenstein on Education: Pedagogical Investigations* (Peters; Stickney, 2017, p. 40-41) this view is further amplified as

Wittgenstein's philosophy is essentially pedagogical: he provides pictures, drawings, analogies, similes, jokes, equations, dialogues with himself, questions and wrong answers, experiments and so on, as a means of shifting our thinking, or of helping us escape the pictures that hold us captive (p. 40-41).

This reading inspired me to investigate further the *pedagogical* styles of Wittgenstein's thinking through an historical and (auto)biographical the connections between his styles of teaching philosophy and his styles of thinking based on accounts and reminiscences of his former students. It seemed also that the interpretation could be further defended through an historical investigation of accounts of his experiences as a primary and secondary school teacher in Austria during the crucial period of 1919 to 1929, and the influences upon his thinking during this period. I suggested, in addition, that we might observe these styles directly in his writings.

By *styles of thought* I meant to convey that Wittgenstein's aim was to change the way people thought, to question modernist foundationalist accounts of knowledge that defined Western philosophy from Descartes and Kant onwards, and to attend as much to issues of the form, role and status of philosophy as much as its contents, arguments and theories. I wanted to argue that against the rationalist and cognitive deep structure of the Western educational tradition where the contemporary tendency reinforced by cognitive science is to treat thinking and reasoning ahistorically and aculturally as universal processes of logic and reasoning, Wittgenstein illustrates a historical and philosophical picture of thinking that emphasizes *kinds of thinking* and *styles of reasoning*. Moreover I argued we can this in the work of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Wittgenstein, and in the extension and development of their work in Critical Theory and poststructuralist philosophy that recognises different kinds of thinking, (explored by reference to Heidegger),

and styles of reasoning, (explored by reference to Wittgenstein and to Ian Hacking) (Peters, 2007).

Philosophy, Postmodernism, Pedagogy

This interpretation drew closely on *Wittgenstein: Philosophy, Postmodernism and Pedagogy* (1999) a book coauthored with James Marshall, where we argued for a literary, autobiographical, cultural and historical thesis that interpreted his early work the *Tractatus* as an expression of Viennese modernism and his later works as anticipated certain *post-modern* themes that cast him in terms of a close philosophical proximity with Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Freud. In this interpretation we were influenced by Allan Janik's Stephen Toulmin's (1973) rich cultural history *Wittgenstein's Vienna* that recast Wittgenstein as a Viennese ethical thinker rather than a placeholder in the Cambridge and analytic tradition. Their view saw Wittgenstein's contemporaries – among them Robert Musil, Hermann Bahr, Hugo von Hofmansthal, Ernst Mach, Fritz Mauthner, Karl Kraus, Adolf Loos, Arnold Schoenberg – as struggling to find new and legitimate modes of expression to replace the inauthentic, commercial and corrupt forms coupled to the crumbling House of Habsburg in fin-de-siècle Vienna. Toulmin and Janik (1973) provides a powerful argument that Wittgenstein was concerned not only to draw limits to the expression of thought but also ethics, from the inside so to speak. This interpretation clearly separated him from members of the Vienna Circle who were bent on scientific philosophy and the means of verification of the meaning of a proposition in its correspondence with reality. By the 1930s Wittgenstein had begun to move on in his thinking to a language-game analysis that indicated fundamental differences with the logical empiricists and with neopositivists like Popper who sought to find a solution to the problem of induction though the doctrine of falsificationism.

One major difference between Toulmin and Janik (1973) and our account was to emphasise the significance of Nietzsche and Nietzsche's thinking for Wittgenstein, which when combined with Schopenhauer, provides a clear rationale for a modern (and later postmodernist) Viennese interpretation. We argued that Wittgenstein and Nietzsche were *cultural physicians* – both what I would now call them antiphilosophers, who deconstruct *truth* and assert the *groundlessness* and the ultimately antifoundationalist nature of our claims to knowledge⁵. Wittgenstein, like Nietzsche, Wittgenstein ascribes to a similar romantic view of culture as an organic whole, a form of life where culture is an expressive and *natural* force, one that begins in *doing* (rather than thinking), and can be judged in terms similar to the creation of a work of art. Wittgenstein, like Nietzsche, also sees himself as a philosopher of culture and philosophy as a kind of therapy.

With the significance of Nietzsche's thought in place, it is then possible to project Wittgenstein's work as an Austrian thinker into European philosophy, rather than Anglo-American philosophy, and to see

the parallels between the later Wittgenstein and French poststructuralism, and investigate the direct appropriation of Wittgenstein's work by Jean-Francois Lyotard. I corresponded with Lyotard for a year and. Invited him to write a little foreword to my collection *Education and The Postmodern Condition* (Peters, 1995). I wanted to read Lyotard's notion of the postmodern condition in terms of its relevance and significance for education and to examine the Wittgensteinian role that Lyotard ascribes to philosophy in the postmodern condition, as well as his use of Wittgenstein's notion of *language games* as a means of describing social relations. Following Lyotard's discursive turn, I argued that we needed to locate the problem of the legitimation of education and knowledge in relation to neoliberal capitalism and the question of nihilism (Peters, 2004; Peters, 2006).

This interpretation enabled us to discuss the most pressing problems facing philosophy and education in the postmodern condition: ethico-political lines of inquiry after the collapse of the grand narrative, the understanding of other cultures in the curriculum and the Other in the classroom, and the notion of postmodern science, no longer an account based on absolute reason and rationality but one related to a constitutive notion of rationality. We represented this as a paradigm shift from viewing Wittgenstein as a central figure in contemporary Anglo-American philosophy where his writings serve as a fulcrum in both modern philosophy and philosophy of education, charting the shift away from the formalist approach of logical atomism and conceptual analysis to the more anthropological emphasis on language-games in the analysis of ordinary language.

Lyotard's appropriation of Wittgenstein to interpret the postmodern condition I thought was inspired and drew on Lyotard's understanding of the significance of Viennese modernism and its relation to language and subjectivity for Wittgenstein, even if his interpretation was a creative appropriation. It helped us to see the contemporary relevance of Wittgenstein for analyzing the postmodern condition. It was also a means for radicalizing Wittgenstein and for casting his thought in terms of a politics that could be made to relate to Western culture and capitalism considered as a narrative or epic.

A Nietzschean reading of Wittgenstein is a means of deriving a Left politics that radicalises questions of culture and identity. While Wittgenstein, like Nietzsche, in many respects show *aristocratic* and conservative elements that spring from background influences and in this case the city of Vienna at the turn of the century – a shared cultural and philosophical legacy. I was surprised that there had been very few attempts to link Nietzsche and Wittgenstein or to examine the philosophy of one in terms of the other. It is only in the 1980s and, partly, as a result of the impact of German and French receptions of Nietzsche that the study of Nietzsche's philosophy has become acceptable in the English-speaking world. Only since then has it become more acceptable to see the connections between Nietzsche and Wittgenstein (Peters, 1997; Peters; Marshall, 1999). There is also clear historical evidence

that Wittgenstein read Nietzsche and that he grew up in the company of intellectuals strongly influenced by Nietzsche, including the musician Gustav Mahler and the painter Gustav Klimt, both of whom were regular visitors to the Wittgenstein family mansion. In a more indirect historical sense, Wittgenstein was influenced by the Nietzschean, Oswald Spengler, and both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein (perhaps more so than any other two modern philosophers) were strongly influenced by Schopenhauer. Aspects of Wittgenstein's later philosophy exhibits clear *family resemblances* with Nietzsche's philosophy that I discussed in terms of the notion of *The Philosopher as Cultural Physician* – a phrase that appears in Nietzsche's notes of the early 1870s. The central responsibility of the philosopher of the future is the project of cultivation and education of humanity as a whole. The philosopher as physician does not create cultural health by treating the *sick* individual, by, for instance, enhancing his or her rational autonomy. The cultural malady is not primarily a cognitive disorder which, thus, can be cured by reason alone. The philosopher of the future employs all the cultural resources at his or her disposal to promote what we are capable of becoming. In terms of this metaphor Wittgenstein ascribes to a similar romantic view of culture as a form of life; culture as an expressive and *natural* force, one that begins in *doing* (rather than thinking), and one that can be judged in terms similar to the creation of a work of art. Wittgenstein also sees himself as a philosopher of culture and philosophy as a kind of therapy. Wittgenstein identifies with the spirit of the Austrian counter-enlightenment characterized by a focus upon the limits of reason, in the tradition of Lichtenberg, Kraus, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Weininger and Nietzsche, all influencers in shaping *fin-de-siècle* Vienna.

Le Rider (1991) sees Nietzsche as the common starting point for most Viennese modernists, arguing that “The crisis of the individual, experienced as an identity crisis, is at the heart of all questions we find in literature and the humane sciences” (p. 1) and remarks that “Viennese modernism can be interpreted as an anticipation of certain important ‘postmodern’ themes” (p. 6). He has in mind, for instance, the way in which Wittgenstein's philosophy of language “[...] deconstructs the subject as author and judge of his own semantic intentions” (p. 28). He remarks in terms of the crisis of identity how Wittgenstein, “[...] like all assimilated Jewish intellectuals, found his Jewish identity a problem” and the problem of his Jewish identity was coupled with a crisis of sexual identity, when at least at some periods of his life he sought refuge from his homosexual tendencies in a kind of Tolstoyan ascetism (p. 295).

If Wittgenstein's shares a similar notion of culture to Nietzsche, it is also the case that he, like Nietzsche, speaks of a new way of philosophizing (Wittgenstein, 1970) – a new *style* of philosophy or of thinking – that is therapeutic (Wittgenstein, 1953, p. 133) and designed to resolve puzzles that arise in our language through *grammatical* investigations. Both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein emphasize the importance of language – its powers to mystify us – and philosophy as the means by which we can undertake grammatical investigations to demystify metaphysical

problems. Philosophical problems that arise from misinterpretations of the forms of our language “[...] are deep disquietudes; their roots are as deep in us as the forms of our language, and their significance is as great as great as the importance of our language” (Wittgenstein, 1953, p. 110). These are primarily questions of cultural health. They concern deep problems that often arise when the *practical engagement* with human life has been ignored.

The Nietzschean reading of Wittgenstein later reinforced an interpretation that took seriously the French reception of Wittgenstein based on an ethics of reading (Peters, 2019) that enables us to read him in relation to Nietzschean themes but also in relation to Nietzschean-inspired philosophy emphasising Wittgenstein’s similarities and differences to French thinkers like Pierre Hadot, Lyotard, Derrida and Foucault (Peters, 2020). As I (Peters, 2019) have suggested:

What is of interest to me is not only the production of a dialogue of sorts between these two thinkers from different traditions and cultures, but the construction of a disruptive reading of Wittgenstein in a projected relation with Foucault’s thought that supplies the missing dimension of power relations in Wittgenstein’s work while at the same time thickening the concepts of ‘game’, ‘play’ and ‘rule following’ in Foucault’s work. That this is part of a new French reception to Wittgenstein that in some measure returns to themes first explored by Hadot is entirely fitting. That it constitutes yet a different kind of reading to Cavellian therapeutics is also philosophically interesting in the complexity of interpretation that perpetually seeks new readings in relation to problems and problematisations⁶.

Indeed, it has been this project that has in project driven my latest book *Wittgenstein, Anti-foundationalism, Technoscience and Philosophy of Education* (Peters, 2020e) that collects some of my essays on this theme to provide a Wittgensteinian critique of technoscience, based on observation on Lyotard’s view, the history of the concept technopolitics and its contemporary mapping⁷.

Wittgenstein as a Pedagogical Philosopher

To me the fact that Wittgenstein’s life was captured by education, first, as a privately tutored child at home, then, as a school pupil, and later, as a philosophy student at Cambridge University, a primary school teacher for seven years, and finally a philosophy professor, spoke to an interpretation of Wittgenstein as a pedagogical philosopher⁸. This later became the basis of a co-authored book with Nicholas Burbules and Paul Smeyers called *Showing and Doing: Wittgenstein as a Pedagogical Philosopher* (2008). In the Preface to the paperback edition *Philosophy-as-pedagogy* I wrote that Wittgenstein as a pedagogical philosopher ‘teaches us to reframe the guiding metaphors that guide our enquiries and to release ourselves from the confusion generated by accounts of

language and culture that proceed from old metaphysical assumptions'. He can be seen "[...] to help us work free of the confusions – deep disquietudes – that become evident when we begin to philosophise' and to disabuse us 'of the notion that we can stand outside language and command an external view" (p. ix).

Wittgenstein as a pedagogical philosopher is carried forward in a new work to introduce new readers to Wittgenstein rather than talk to the already initiated in terms of *the picture that held us captive* (Peters; Stickney, 2018). The picture that Wittgenstein is trying to escape is the Cartesian world view as it defines modernity and the beginning of modern philosophy liberating us from essentialist ontological claims and the picture of Cartesian subjectivity. On this view he is also liberating us from the need for foundations and the picture of Cartesian certainty. The work focuses on antifoundationalist pedagogy or that which helps us to *depicture* or *decode* the metaphors that govern our thinking. It is very different from ideology critique but alike in that Wittgenstein's *deconstruction* of world views is so important to understanding the moral purposes of education and pedagogy. How does one dissemble a picture or a deep cultural metaphor? How can we be taught to see things differently? By substituting one picture for another not by refuting individual truth claims – a very different philosophical approach in philosophy based on *seeing connections*.

In *Philosophy of Education and the 'Education Of Reason': Post-Foundational Approaches through Dewey, Wittgenstein, and Foucault'* (Peters; Stickney, 2019) we argue that the history of liberal education is not so much the *education of reason* based on unchanging notions of rationality and truth, as Harvey Siegel and D.C. Phillips portray it. It is, rather, a problematic history of liberal modernity that rejects the easy equation of reason, emancipation, and progress through education in order to argue that modern forms of power-knowledge have served to create new forms of domination. As Dewey and Wittgenstein would concur, what matters most in the end is not the veracity of truth claims but the quality and equality of practices in which we embed ourselves, grow as a form of life and condition the search for freedom in an increasingly technological and interconnected world.

Received 20 June 2020

Approved on August 23, 2020

Notes

1 Available at: <<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4p18/popper-karl-raimund>>.

2 Available at: <<https://www.montpelerin.org/>>.

3 Available at: <<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2007/mar/12/obituaries.mainsection>>.

4 Available at: <http://radicalpedagogy.icaap.org/content/issue3_3/4-peters.html>.

- 5 See Peters (2020b) 'Alain Badiou's *Wittgenstein's Antiphilosophy*'; Peters (2020c) *Anti-art, anti-philosophy, anti-psychiatry, anti-education* and Peters (2020d) *Wittgenstein/Foucault/anti-philosophy: Contingency, community, and the ethics of self-cultivation*.
- 6 Available at: <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00131857.2018.1455394>>.
- 7 See Peters (2020f) *A map of technopolitics: Deep convergence, platform ontologies, and cognitive efficiency*, and video. Available at: <<https://thesiseleven.com/2019/08/13/video-techno-politics-of-the-future-university-michael-peters/>>.
- 8 See also Peters (2017) Wittgenstein's trials and teaching and Cavell's romantic *figure of the child* and. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RnCFOfIr6eQ>>.

References

- JANIK, Allan; TOULMIN, Stephen. **Wittgenstein's Vienna**. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973.
- JANIK, Allan. **Style, Politics and the Future of Philosophy**. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989.
- LE RIDER, Jacques. **Modernité Viennoise et Crises de l'Identité** (Viennese Modernity and Identity Crises). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1991.
- MUNZ, Peter. **The Place of Hooker in the History of Thought**. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952.
- MUNZ, Peter. **Our Knowledge of the Growth of Knowledge: Popper or Wittgenstein?** London: Routledge, 1985.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian. Lyotard, Nihilism and Education. **Studies in Philosophy and Education**, n. 25, p. 303-314, 2006. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-006-9004-4>>.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian. **Wittgenstein, Education and the Problem of Rationality**. Singapore: Springer, 2020. (PhD Thesis 1984).
- PETERS, Michael Adrian; GHIRALDELLI, Paulo (Org.). **Richard Rorty: Education, Philosophy, Politics**. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2002.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian; STICKNEY, Jeff. Philosophy of Education and the 'Education of Reason': post-foundational approaches through Dewey, Wittgenstein, and Foucault. In: BECKER, Kelly; THOMSON, Ian (Org.). **The Cambridge History of Philosophy, 1945–2015**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. P. 513-525.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian (Org.). **Education and The Postmodern Condition**. United States: Bergin & Garvey, 1995.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian. Nietzsche, Poststructuralism and Education: after the subject?. **Educational Philosophy and Theory**, v. 29, n. 1, p. 1-19, 1997. DOI: 10.1111/j.1469-5812.1997.tb00524.x.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian. Writing the Self: Wittgenstein, confession and pedagogy. **Journal of the Philosophy of Education**, v. 34, n. 2, p. 353-368, 2003.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian. Lyotard, Marxism and Education: the problem of knowledge capitalism. In: MARSHALL James (Org.). **Poststructuralism, Philosophy, Pedagogy**. Dordrecht: Springer, 2004.

- PETERS, Michael Adrian. Kinds of Thinking, Styles of Reasoning. **Educational Philosophy and Theory**, United Kingdom, v. 39, n. 4, p. 350-363, 2007.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian. Wittgenstein's Trials and Teaching and Cavell's Romantic 'Figure of the Child'. **A Contrário**, n. 25, v. 2, p. 13-37, 2017. Available at: <<https://www.cairn.info/journal-a-contrario-2017-2-page-13.htm>>.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian. The Ethics of Reading Wittgenstein. **Educational Philosophy and Theory**, n. 51, v. 6, p. 546-558, 2019.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian. **Wittgenstein, Education and the Problem of Rationality**. Singapore: Springer, 2020a.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian. Alain Badiou's Wittgenstein's Antiphilosophy. **Educational Philosophy and Theory**, v. 52, n. 7, p. 699-703, 2020b.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian. Anti-Art, Anti-Philosophy, Anti-Psychiatry, Anti-Education. **Educational Philosophy and Theory**, United Kingdom, v. 52, n. 7, p. 709-715, 2020c.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian. Wittgenstein/Foucault/Anti-Philosophy: contingency, community, and the ethics of self-cultivation. **Educational Philosophy and Theory**, 2020d
- PETERS, Michael Adrian. **Wittgenstein, Anti-foundationalism, Technoscience and Philosophy of Education**. London; New York: Routledge, 2020e.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian. A map of technopolitics: Deep convergence, platform ontologies, and cognitive efficiency'. **Thesis Eleven**, v. 158, n. 1, p. 117-140, 2020f.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian; MARSHALL, James. Nietzsche and Wittgenstein: philosophers of the future. In: PETERS, Michael Adrian; MARSHALL, James. **Wittgenstein: philosophy, postmodernism, pedagogy**. United States: Bergin & Garvey, 1999.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian; STICKNEY, Jeff. **A Companion to Wittgenstein on Education: pedagogical investigations**. Singapore: Springer, 2017.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian; STICKNEY, Jeff. **Wittgenstein's Education: 'a picture held us captive'**. Singapore: Springer, 2018.
- PETERS, Michael Adrian.; BURBULES, Nicholas; SMEYERS, Paul. **Showing and Doing: Wittgenstein as a Pedagogical Philosopher**. London; New York: Routledge, 2015. [2008]
- POPPER, Karl. **The Open Society and Its Enemies**. 2 vol. London: Routledge, 1945.
- POPPER, Karl. **The Logic of Scientific Discovery**. London: Routledge, 2002. [1959]
- RORTY, Richard. **Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature**. Oxford: Blackwell, 1980.
- TOULMIN, Stephen. **Human Understanding**. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972.
- WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig. **Culture and Value**. (G. von Wright, Org.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970.
- WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig. **Philosophical Investigations**. Repr. 1972, trans. G.E. M. Anscombe, Oxford, Blackwell. Part I, followed by paragraph number Part II, followed by page number, 1953.
- WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig. **Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus**. trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness, with B. Russell's Introduction, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul. Followed by sentence number, 1961. [1921]

WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig. Lectures, Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief. In: SMYTHIES, Yorick; RHEES, Rush; TAYLOR, James; BARRETT, Cyril (Org.). **Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief**. Oxford: Blackwell, 1966.

WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig. **On Certainty**. Trans. Denis Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe. Oxford: Blackwell, 1969.

WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig. **Wittgenstein's Lectures**. Cambridge 1930-32, from the Notes of John King and Desmond Lee. Oxford: Blackwell, 1980.

Michael A. Peters is Distinguished Professor at Beijing Normal University, China, and Emeritus Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. His research interests are in educational philosophy, theory and policy studies with a focus on the significance of both contemporary philosophers (Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Heidegger) and the movements of poststructuralism, critical theory and analytic philosophy to the framing of educational theory and practice.

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1482-2975>

E-mail: mpet001@uiuc.edu

Editor-in-charge: Carla Vasques

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 International. Available at: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>.