Subjectivity After Descartes: Wittgenstein as a Pedagogical Philosopher

Michael A. Peters

Abstract This brief introduction is designed to introduce the reader to the man and his work through a reading that emphasizes a broadly cultural approach to his intellectual background, context, and life, recording the influence his thought has exerted on the disciplines, including education and pedagogy. The introductory chapter makes the case for reading Wittgenstein as a pedagogical philosopher that points to a non-foundational approach to traditional philosophical problems that does not proceed by trying to discover essences or eternal forms but rather progresses through commanding a clear view of our concepts and by raising interesting questions. It is therefore an approach that deviates from the foundations of modern philosophy in that it does not base itself on the *cogito*, in the individual thinking; insofar as it avoids this centered Cartesian figure of the subject and of subjectivity the approach adopts an anti-foundationalist stance, an anti-epistemological standpoint and entertains a suspicion of transcendental arguments preferring instead to accept a naturalism grounded in culture and social convention—in what we do and what we say.

Keywords Subjectivity · Descartes · R.S. Peters · Postfoundationalism · Cavell · Pedagogical philosophy

1 Introduction

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) is considered by many to be one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century. His work in the philosophy of logic, mathematics, mind, and language established him as one of the founders

---

A shorter version appears in the Wittgenstein section of the *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory* (Springer, 2016), co-edited by Nicholas Burbules & Jeff Stickney (Michael A. Peters, Chief Editor).

M.A. Peters (✉)
Wilf Malcolm Institute for Educational Research at Waikato University,
Hamilton, New Zealand
e-mail: mpeters@waikato.ac.nz

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2017

M.A. Peters and J. Stickney (eds.), *A Companion to Wittgenstein on Education*,
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3136-6_2

of two movements—logical empiricism (the Vienna Circle) and Oxford-style ordinary language analysis. The impact of his work has been felt in the arts, humanities, and social sciences and strongly influenced the directions of both analytic and post-analytical philosophy. His work is difficult to read and interpret, and there are many competing interpretations of his philosophy. This brief introduction is designed to introduce the reader to the man and his work through a reading that emphasizes a broadly cultural approach to his intellectual background, context, and life, recording the influence his thought has exerted on the disciplines, including education and pedagogy. The introductory chapter makes the case for reading Wittgenstein as a pedagogical philosopher that points to a non-foundational approach to traditional philosophical problems that does not proceed by trying to discover essences or eternal forms but rather progresses through commanding a clear view of our concepts and by raising interesting questions. It is therefore an approach that deviates from the foundations of modern philosophy in that it does not base itself on the *cogito*, in the individual thinking and insofar as it avoids this centered Cartesian figure of the subject and of subjectivity the approach adopts an anti-foundationalist stance, an anti-epistemological standpoint and entertains a suspicion of transcendental arguments preferring instead to accept a naturalism grounded in culture and social convention—in what we do and what we say.

This highlights Wittgenstein's anti-Cartesian standpoint, noted by Sluga (1996: 321) who suggests Wittgenstein had "an enduring hostility to the idea of an individuated, substantive self" that was already evident in the *Tractatus* (TLP)[1]:

> 5.631 There is no such thing as the subject that thinks or entertains ideas. If I wrote a book called *The World as l found it*, I should have to include a report on my body and should have to say which parts were subordinate to my will and which were not, etc., this being a method of isolating the subject, or rather of showing that in an important sense there is no subject; for it alone could not be mentioned in that book.

For Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus,* there is no such thing as the thinking or representing subject. David Stern expresses the point this way:

> The central negative point in the *Tractatus* treatment of the self is the denial that there is a self to be found *within* immediate experience by means of introspection, "a thinking representing subject" that both possesses my experiences and is experienced. (p. 73)

Wittgenstein's anti-Cartesian view of mind is based on the fact that "our language creates the illusion that the word 'I' refers to "something bodiless, which, however, has its seat in our body" (Sluga 1996). The denial of Cartesian mentalism is a position that Wittgenstein sustains in the *Philosophical Investigations* when he states "I" is not the name of a person…" (PI §41) and Sluga (1996: 341) reminds us that "the private language argument can be read as directed against the objectivism in the Cartesian conception of mind."

---

[1]Following convention, titles for Wittgenstein's works are abbreviated (PI = Philosophical Investigations, TLP = Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, Z = Zettel, PG = Philosophical Grammar, OC = On Certainty, CV = Culture and Value), with section (§) or page number (p.), with full citation and initials (e.g., RFM) in the References.

Bax (2009) describes how Wittgenstein simultaneously rethinks the Cartesian inner-outer and the Cartesian self-other schema and in particular how in Wittgenstein "mind and body are intrinsically connected instead of almost accidentally related, and the self, far from being a self-enclosed and self-sufficient entity, from day one depends upon its fellow men to develop its inner life beyond its basic state." Bax (2009: 181) maintains that Wittgenstein "situates mental matters on the outside rather than the inside of the subject, and in the interspace between a community of subjects…." Bax (2009) explains that the emergence of anti-Cartesianism undoubtedly has its roots in a line of thinking that culminated in Heidegger's (1927) *Being and Time* and that "after" Heidegger:

> terms like "subject" and "subjectivity" came to be used almost exclusively to refer to the worldless, Cartesian-style Ego: to the idea that man can, on final analysis, be understood as a thinking substance whose inhabiting a (social) world and a body accordingly do not pertain to its essence. (p. 3)

Those following Heidegger—in particular French thinkers like Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault—are thought of as having delivered the final blow to the Cartesian Ego. "By deconstructing the concept of subjectivity, writing it off as one grand narrative among others, or presenting the subject as a contingent product of power relations, each contributed to or even explicitly predicted the so-called "death of man" (Bax 2009, p. 3). According to Bax, while Wittgenstein is typically not thought of as a Continental philosopher embracing these themes "he can for several reasons be held coresponsible for the demise of the Cartesian Ego" (p. 5).

2 Wittgenstein, Subjectivity, and Philosophy of Education

The analytic revolution in philosophy of education, what Cuypers and Martin (2009) call "a singular analytical paradigm for puzzle-solving in the philosophy of education," was conceived by R.S. Peters as "conceptually foundational" in the sense that it involved "the analysis of concepts [constitutive of education] and with questions about the grounds of knowledge, belief, actions, and activities" as a "necessary preliminary to answering other philosophical questions" (p. 5). In the same volume dedicated to a sympathetic re-reading of R.S. Peters, Laverty (2009: 33) maintains "Peters was clearly influenced by the revolution of post-war philosophy, particularly Wittgenstein's original contribution; but he also strove to establish the revolution's continuity" with the history of philosophy. Laverty (2009: 30) indicates that "Peters rarely theorized his analytic approach to philosophy of education" and that although he appealed to Wittgenstein on linguistic usage and the concept of games, "Peters held that Wittgenstein was wrong to overlook the possibility of a 'general principle' that distinguishes all games." It is not clear on what grounds Peters makes this assertion. Peters' contribution to the analytic paradigm was based on a commitment to a form of conceptual analysis that implied

a view of philosophy as a second-order discipline that casts philosophers of education as "underlabourers in the garden of knowledge" (Peters 1966: 15).

The argument is that R.S. Peters' analytic paradigm was based on an appeal to Wittgenstein that was misplaced and represents a grossly mistaken reading of Wittgenstein. By contrast, this paper proposes a reading of the work of the later Wittgenstein which both unsettles the view of Wittgenstein as a placeholder in the analytic tradition and provides interpretive grounds for viewing him closer to the tradition of Continental philosophy and as a thinker deeply influenced by Krauss, Spengler, Nietzsche, and Freud who embrace the notion of philosophy as a form of cultural criticism (Peters and Marshall 1999; Peters 2002a, b; Peters et al. 2008). The "postmodern" appropriation of the later Wittgenstein marks him out as a philosopher who anticipated central aspects of the re-evaluation of the culture of modernity. This chapter broadens this interpretation to outline a view of subjectivity, knowledge, and representation "after" Wittgenstein, a position that provides a more appropriate platform for philosophy of education in the age of globalization, preserving a link to Wittgenstein and his philosophy while speculating on the sources for a notion of education as openness, engagement, and *co-poiesis*. This chapter provides an account of the Cartesian philosophy of subjectivity and Wittgenstein's attempt to provide a break with the Cartesian worldview that is much more important for contemporary philosophy of education than reference to a method of conceptual analysis that views philosophy as a meta-discipline. In the next section, Wittgenstein's anti-Cartesianism is explored as a basis for deconstructing Descartes' view of mind, human beings, and modern philosophy.

3 Descartes, and the Philosophy of Subjectivity

The philosophy of subjectivity has been one of the crowning achievements of Western philosophy that has helped to shape and define modern philosophy, the foundations of science, liberal political and educational thought, and the culture of modernity. Of all philosophers responsible for the subjective turn and for the subsequent epistemological foundations and direction of modern philosophy, René Descartes deserves special mention. In his own lifetime, his reputation rested on his contributions to mathematics and cosmology, and only in the nineteenth century did his metaphysics and epistemology contribute to the Kantian project of reconstituting the nature of philosophy. His scepticism became important in the revival of Anglophone empiricist epistemology in the twentieth century, and his idea of the self as a locus of subjectivity independent of the world—its ethical and political implications—began to impact French and German philosophy from the 1930s with philosophical engagement of his work by Husserl, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein, among others (Gaukroker 2008).

Descartes' "epistemological turn" (after Bergmann) is one of the centers of his works that lead him to counter scepticism by locating certainty in subjective consciousness setting modern philosophy on a path intimately connected to theory of

knowledge that was later embellished by Kant's transcendental argument concerning synthetic *a priori* knowledge. Stroud (2008: 513) suggests "The philosophical, mathematical, and scientific influence of Descartes is now so deep and so pervasive in our culture that its full extent can no longer be measured with certainty or precision." Descartes' philosophy of mind embraced a mind/body dualism, individualism about mental contents, and adherence to a strong doctrine of privileged first-person access that holds introspective judgments about one's own mental states enjoy a privileged epistemic status of infallibility and immunity to error. Descartes was acknowledged by Husserl as "the genuine patriarch of phenomenology" and christened his own phenomenology a new Cartesianism. Heidegger, by contrast, saw the Cartesianism as a fundamental wrong turn and rebelled against its legacy, suggesting that the *cogito sum* had to be "phenomenologically destroyed" (see Martin 2008: 496).

The words "subject" and "subjectivity" have many different meanings. The word "subject" comes from the Latin word "*subjectum*" which means something under or constituting the foundations of other things. In Aristotle, "subject" is not a philosophical category that belongs to human beings and does not function as a philosophical category nor is it considered to have any kind of precedence over the concept of substance. "Subject" in addition to the use that Descartes firms up as a metaphysical dominant category meaning the mind, ego, or agent that sustains or assumes the form of thought or consciousness, also carries the medieval political meaning of "vassal"—someone who owes fealty to a monarch or one who lives in a territory and owes allegiance to a sovereign power. This is the double political and ethical meaning of subject that Michel Foucault exploits in his studies of subjectivity. Subjectivity has been used to mean many things: consciousness, intentionality, the will, individual volition, and introspection.

An understanding of the significance of Wittgenstein's work as *breaking with* and offering a critique of the Cartesian model of subjectivity is more significant to philosophy of education than the method of conceptual analysis that R.S. Peters and other analytical philosophers of education extract in an appeal to the work of Wittgenstein. It is both more fundamental and provides a basis for a critique of various claims of essentialism in the philosophy of the subject, which is so important in the age of globalization when claims to identity and difference have come to the fore. The Cartesian model of subjectivity arises out of a certain picture or image of the knowing subject deeply embedded in the medieval culture of theology and scholastic philosophy (even though it tries to break with these influences) and a mathematical conception of certainty that is seen as providing appropriate foundations for knowledge. As Wittgenstein (PI §115) suggests (speaking of the "picture language" and the general form of a proposition in the *Tractatus*), "a *picture* held us captive, and we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably." The question so important to philosophy and the nature of education is how to disassemble this metaphysical Cartesian world picture that comprises the foundations of modern philosophy through the binary oppositions from mind/body, subject/object, inner/outer to word/object, signifier/signified, self/other, and male/female. On this view, Wittgensteinian philosophy of education is an approach in part dedicated to

the unpacking and critique of the Cartesian dualist theory of mind and the foundational epistemology that appeals to "certainty" and to accurate representation. On a Wittgensteinian approach, the dualist theory of mind gives way to the study of subjectivity as a result of cultural and historical influences where both knowledge and learning are not seen as wedded to foundations in any sense but rather are a bundle of contingent practices. The Wittgensteinian view is thus both anti-foundational and anti-representational (of a independently existing reality).

In the *Investigations* and later works, Wittgenstein wrestles with the Cartesian picture of subjectivity and its implications for knowledge and representation, providing us with an alternative vocabulary to discuss the Cartesian picture of mind as objects which possess properties and as a non-physical substance that thinks, famously referred to as *the ghost in the machine* by Gilbert Ryle. Wittgenstein takes on this philosophical struggle to unseat Descartes' view of mind as both an essentialist and dualist conception—internalist, private, non-physical—that arises from his view of nature and science as proceeding from mechanistic ("mechanics") principles and a view of knowledge that embraces a form of epistemic internalism that holds that "the difference between true belief and knowledge consists in some form of justification and, crucially, that justification consists in factors that are, in some sense, internal to the subject of the belief" (Rowlands 2008: 6). The Cartesian picture of mind involves many different threads, not just a conception of mind, but also a view of knowledge and representation, an image of philosophy, and a view of the nature of human beings. Dislodging this picture by disassembling it and describing it as *mythology* (as legitimating a certain world picture) requires something more than argument or conceptual analysis. Wittgenstein demonstrates that dislodging the deeply embedded culture of Cartesianism is not a matter of proposing better arguments or of argumentation per se but rather rests on a variety of other rhetorical strategies. This point has a clear set of implications for Wittgensteinian pedagogy—simply put, teachers must engage with the emotions and imagination of students.

It is worth noting in passing that the appeal to Wittgenstein by R.S. Peters on the "revolution in philosophy" does nothing to justify the method of conceptual analysis he advocates but rarely spells out: Wittgenstein contra Peters does not see philosophy in any way as a foundational, second-order activity based on the clarification of concepts. While the early Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* may have seen philosophy as a critique of language using logical analysis to reveal the general form of the proposition "in order to see the world rightly," it does not result in linguistic hygiene or the ultimate meaning of concepts. His later conception of language games, family resemblance, and "meaning as use" further distances Wittgenstein from anything like Peters' conceptual analysis. Against any conception of conceptual analysis in Peters' sense Wittgenstein teaches us: First, we must look to the variety of uses to which the word is put which is purely descriptive rather than explanatory or prescriptive; second, we must be aware of the diversity and multiplicity of uses that only have life within a language game and form of life; third, a concept or word only has meaning in the context of a sentence and sentences within the network of judgments and practices; fourth, while language games have rules, these cannot be learned theoretically but only in practice; fifth, by

following the use, we discover only "a complicated network of similarities, overlapping, and criss-crossing" (PI §66), a family resemblance, that resists all explanation and definition in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions; sixth, the rules of grammar liberated from the bounds of strict logic express the norms of language and tell us what kind of object anything is (PI §§371, 373) for they are embedded in the culture and "the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life" (PI §23). No reading of Wittgenstein validates or justifies anything like Peters' version of conceptual analysis. Wittgenstein would only accept a form of analysis as a kind of therapeutic activity of "assembling reminders for a particular purpose" (PI §127). As he writes in the *Investigations,* "there is not *a* philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies" (PI §133). The aim of philosophy is "to shew the fly out of the fly-bottle" (PI §309).

It is significant that for Wittgenstein in *On Certainty* (1969), language is not the foundation—words and justifications come to an end (OC §192) on the base of "hinge propositions" which are neither true nor false but "remain firm" for us. When Wittgenstein writes: "Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end;—but the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true, i.e., it is not a kind of seeing on our part; it is our acting, which lies at the bottom of the language game" (OC §204) Wittgenstein is suggesting that there is only cultural practice at the bottom of our language games, an ungrounded way of acting. Contrary to Descartes' starting point of the indubitability of the self-reflecting *cogito* as offering the foundations of knowledge based on a mathematical model of certainty that ultimately leads to a self-stultifying solipsistic self, Wittgenstein both naturalizes and socializes cognitive processes locating them first in language and then as part of the activity of a culture. He is thus not a foundationalist in any accepted definition of the term. For him, certainty and the very possibility of meaning lies in the background context without which propositions could not even be enunciated: "…I want to conceive [certainty] as something that lies beyond being justified or unjustified; as it were, as something animal" (OC §359).

The notion of philosophy as a kind of therapy has a set of links and references that take us back to the beginnings of philosophy and certainly to the Stoics who held "that emotions like fear or envy (or impassioned sexual attachments, or passionate love of anything whatsoever) either were, or arose from, false judgements and that the sage—a person who had attained moral and intellectual perfection—would not undergo them". The therapeutic notion of philosophy was intimately tied to the pursuit of the good life and philosophy as a therapy of emotions. Gordon Baker, among others, provides a therapeutic reading of *Investigations* that positions Wittgenstein as attempting to break us free of the impulse to metaphysics through an elaborately structured dialogue where the reader is encouraged to think for himself or herself. The work of Stanley Cavell, James Conant, and Cora Diamond regards Wittgenstein's philosophy as entirely therapeutic, rather than as having any theoretical or metaphysical aspects. Certainly there are a range of comments by Wittgenstein scattered throughout his work where he uses the notion of therapy to describe his activity of doing philosophy such as "In philosophizing we may not terminate a disease of thought. It must run its natural course, and slow cure is all

important" (Z §382). Wittgenstein also extends this conception to education when he says "I trot out all the problems that education represses without solving. I say to those repressed doubts: you are quite correct, go on asking, demand clarification" (PG, p. 382). The justification of R.S. Peters' approach to philosophy of education by means of a distinctive and foundational method of conceptual analysis does not hold water, and its justification cannot be found in Wittgenstein.

By contrast, the "new Wittgenstein" coalesces around a series of common interpretive protocols: Wittgenstein is not advancing theories in philosophy but rather employing a therapeutic method to deconstruct philosophical puzzles; he is helping us to work free of the conceptual confusions that become evident when we begin to philosophize; at the same time, Wittgenstein is disabusing us of the notion that we can stand outside language and command an external view, and that such an external view is both necessary and possible for grasping the essence of thought and language. On the new reading, Wittgenstein encourages us to see that our intuitions about meaning and thought are best accommodated "by attention to our everyday forms of expression and to the world those forms of expression serve to reveal" (Crary and Read 2000: 1). This new schema for reading Wittgenstein puts less emphasis on the decisive break in his thought, represented by the *Tractatus* and the posthumous *Investigations*, to emphasize, by comparison, significant continuities of his thought centring around his therapeutic conception of philosophy. The new reading that emphasizes the therapeutic character of Wittgenstein's philosophical aims and method is sympathetic to and consistent with the "postmodern" view of Wittgenstein (Peters and Marshall 1999) which explicitly provides an emphasis on a literary, cultural, and (auto)biographical reading of Wittgenstein's works, their intertextuality, the expression of the spirit of European (Viennese) modernism in the *Tractatus*, and the anticipation of certain "postmodern" themes in his later works which, on the one hand, cast him in close philosophical proximity to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Heidegger and, on the other, project his writings into an interesting engagement with poststructuralist thought (Peters and Marshall 1999: 19–20).

This cultural reading, in part, was inspired by Cavell's work, which serves as an exemplar both in reading Wittgenstein in relation to the movement of *modernism* and against Wittgenstein's Viennese cultural background where the influence of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Freud is evident. Cavell's writings draw widely upon the philosophical tradition and emphasize the parallels between Wittgenstein and many contemporary thinkers, including both Derrida and Foucault. It is a view that sits well with Wittgenstein as a pedagogical philosopher (Peters et al. 2010). In the "postmodern" reading, the *Tractatus* is seen to be *modernist in its formalism*, while the *Investigations* anticipates certain "postmodernist" themes including anti-foundationalism and anti-representationalism (Peters and Marshall 1999). The distinction is principally a matter of the style of *doing* philosophy, and it is reflective of the impact of larger cultural forces upon Wittgenstein and, significantly, also the seven years Wittgenstein spent as an elementary school teacher in rural Austria. It does not deny that there are significant continuities in his thought, say, for instance, in his view of philosophy. In this reading, it is possible to argue that the therapeutic aim became more manifest in

Wittgenstein's "pedagogical" style and in a view called "philosophy as pedagogy" (Peters and Marshall 1999). This view does not entail necessarily an account of "social constructivism," or imply that "postmodernism" (whatever that elusive term means) necessarily entails social constructivism in any of its versions. In one sense, "postfoundational" is a better term that serves to provide a general philosophical direction in epistemology, learning and ethics.

The cultural and postmodern reading of Wittgenstein, like much of postmodernism, considered as a whole, tends to emphasize a number of overlapping cluster concepts focusing on its openness and lack of essentiality, including the following characteristics:

- antifoundationalism;
- anti-essentialism;
- anti- or post-epistemological standpoint;
- anti-realism about meaning and reference;
- suspicion of transcendental arguments and viewpoints;
- rejection of the picture of knowledge as accurate representation;
- rejection of truth as correspondence to reality;
- rejection of canonical descriptions and final vocabularies;
- suspicion of metanarratives.

The list is taken from Bernd Magnus' (1989) discussion of Nietzsche in relation to postmodern criticism. To Magnus' list, it is relevant to add what Rorty (1979) calls "antirepresentationalism" and also to add, "suspicion of metanarratives" and the turn to narrative and narratology. More generally we can talk of *petite récits* pitted against metanarratives by Lyotard (1984) who significantly makes central use of Wittgenstein in a creative misappropriation to emphasize the conflictual or dissensual nature of language games. We might add an emphasis on linguistic use and *therapeutic view of philosophy*—that is, an embodiment of many of the features of the list above and an ethos, above all, concerning philosophy as a critique of language summed up best in the famous quotation from the *Investigations*: "Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language" (PI §109). This is a view that underlies the development of social sciences and cultural studies in the latter half of the twentieth century; perhaps, sloganized in the twin methodological imperatives: the linguistic turn, the significance of representation, and turn to social practices, on the one hand; and, the attempt to overcome the dualistic thought, the search for certainty and essences, and the subjectivism that are the legacies of the Cartesian thought, on the other. Encouraged by Wittgenstein's expert disassembly of the Cartesian worldview and model of subjectivity we might entertain a model of education as openness, engagement, and *co-poiesis*, one that is more suited to the global, networked, and digital environment we live in. This notion also would lay the groundwork for a notion of Wittgenstein as a pedagogical philosopher that comprises some of the dominant themes of this collection.

4 Reading Wittgenstein as a Pedagogical Philosopher

This collection explores Wittgenstein not so much as a philosopher who provides a method for analyzing educational concepts but rather as one who approaches philosophical questions from a pedagogical point of view. The analytic impulse to want to extract a theory or method from Wittgenstein or to use his method to clarify concepts in the manner of R.S. Peters is only one way of viewing the educational significance of Wittgenstein's philosophy. Perhaps more importantly, his styles are *essentially pedagogical*: he provides a variety of rhetorical strategies as a means to shift our thinking, to help us escape the picture that holds us captive. In this regard, it is also possible to see connections between other aspects of Wittgenstein's life, his cultural orientation, and his styles of philosophizing, including, for example, his interest in architecture and his preference for certain musical and poetic styles and forms.

Wittgenstein's later writing is dialogical, but not in the Socratic sense: The aim is not the search for an adequate definition of a concept. Indeed, if we keep in mind the multiplicity of language games, we will not be inclined to ask questions such as "What is the meaning of…?" (PI §24). Moreover, the kinds of questions Wittgenstein asks, and the way he asks them, is different from those of Socrates. Fann (1969: 109) notes that Wittgenstein asks himself (and his readers) in the order of eight hundred questions in the *Investigations*, yet he only answers one hundred of them and of these the majority (some seventy) he answers deliberately wrongly. If a dialogical work, the *Investigations* is not a conventional dialogical work, for Wittgenstein—by asking questions and answering them wrongly—wants to stop us from asking certain kinds of questions—the sort of "philosophical" questions which require that we provide a theoretical answer abstracted from the context of use and social practice. Philosophy does not make progress because "our language has remained the same and keeps seducing us into asking the same questions" (CV, 15e). Moreover, the questions asks are frequently posed by an imaginary interlocutor *to himself*—linking his approach again with a confessional mode in which the primary dynamic is of an inner dialogue (Finch 1995: 76).

This mode of dialogue, then, is not one of *demonstration* (as it often was for Plato) but of *investigation*. Wittgenstein's use of imagined interchanges, thought experiments, and frequently cryptic aphorisms were meant to engage the reader in a process that was, in Wittgenstein's actual teaching as well as in his writing, the externalization of his own doubts, his own questions, and his own thought processes. Hence, his philosophical purpose was manifested, shown, in *how* he pursued a question; his style was his method, and his writings sought to exemplify how it worked. His concern with matters of composition and form were not only about the presentation of an argument, but about the juxtaposition that would best draw the reader into the very state of puzzlement he himself felt. Therefore, an appreciation of Wittgenstein's style leads us directly to an understanding of the fundamentally *pedagogical* dimension of his philosophy.

Paul Engelmann (1967: 114), in his memoir of Wittgenstein, warns us not to underestimate the influence of Wittgenstein's teaching experience on his philosophical works. Wittgenstein, Engelmann maintains, "used the acquired art of asking questions with consummate skill, and the crucial simplicity with which he accomplished this in his most profound mental probings constitutes his great new philosophical achievement" (p. 115). Engelmann suggests that Wittgenstein moved to the Socratic form of questions in his later work in order to correct the reflective monologue of the *Tractatus* which were written in the form of categorical propositions.

There is more than a family resemblance between Wittgenstein's styles of teaching at Cambridge and his styles of philosophizing. They represent to all intents and purposes a profound and complex continuity: The dividing line between Wittgenstein's teachings and his posthumously collected and edited works are blurred to say the least. The oral performance runs into and sometimes constitutes the written corpus. Many of his "works" are transcriptions, discussions, notes, or lectures recorded by his students and colleagues. His "notes," at another level of composition, are sometimes reworked even in the process of dictation. His styles of teaching and thinking in performance therefore comprise, perhaps more than any modern philosopher, a significant proportion of his extant works.

The accounts of his teaching by his students confirm an *intensity* of thinking that shows itself in his writings; this intensity is driven, in large part, by the ethical and aesthetic requirements of *arranging* or composing his thoughts. His writings mirror his approach to teaching philosophy and vice versa. Above all, they reflect his *honesty* as a thinker and teacher. And if he was unforgiving in his treatment of his students, it is because he was unforgiving with himself. The long painful silences that interspersed his classes, his disregard for institutional conventions in pedagogy at the time and his relentless (self) criticism were an essential part of his style as a "great educator" (in Nietzsche's sense).

Accounts of Wittgenstein as a teacher of philosophy are now legendary. D.A.T. Gasking and A.C. Jackson (1967: 51) report the following description Wittgenstein gave of his own teaching:

> In teaching you philosophy I'm like a guide showing you how to find your way round London. I have to take you through the city from north to south, from east to west, from Euston to the embankment and from Piccadilly to the Marble Arch. After I have taken you many journeys through the city, in all sorts of directions, we shall have passed through any given street a number of times—each time traversing the street as part of a different journey. At the end of this you will know London; you will be able to find your way about like a Londoner. Of course, a good guide will take you through the more important streets more often than he takes you down side streets; a bad guide will do the opposite. In philosophy I'm a rather bad guide….

Janik and Toulmin's (1973) Wittgenstein's Vienna was the first to demonstrate the significance of a historico-cultural approach to understanding Wittgenstein and the importance of the Viennese cultural milieu to understanding his work. Adopting a Kantian interpretation of the early Wittgenstein, they argued he was addressing the problem of representation, a problem that arose in the culture of Viennese

modernism. Janik and Toulmin argued that Wittgenstein was extending in his own way the critique of language and culture initiated by Karl Kraus (and Fritz Mauthner) and they emphasized a romantic and ethical interpretation of the *Tractatus* where, as they assert, "Only art can express moral truth, and only the artist can teach the things that matter most in life" (Janik and Toulmin 1973: 197).

Alan Janik (1981: 85) identifies Wittgenstein 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. Wright (1982), in an influential essay, argues that Wittgenstein displays a Spenglerian attitude to his times: Wittgenstein understood himself to be living in "an age without culture," an age where modern philosophy was no longer able to provide the metalanguage which united the family resemblances of culture's various manifestations.

Erich Heller (1988) suggests that Wittgenstein in many respects resembled Nietzsche:

> in his homelessness, his restless wanderings, his perpetual search for exactly the right conditions in which to work, his loneliness, his ascetism, his need for affection and his shyness in giving it, his intellectual extremism, which drove thought to the borders of insanity, the elasticity of his style, and… in one philosophically most important respect. Like Nietzsche he knew that philosophical opinion was not merely a matter of logically demonstrable right or wrong… it was above all a matter of authenticity… (Heller 1988: 143–4)

Stanley Cavell (1988) views Wittgenstein as a "philosopher of culture" and provides a reading of the *Investigations* as a depiction of our times, agreeing with von Wright's assessment of Wittgenstein's attitude as Spenglerian suggesting that Spengler's vision of culture as a kind of Nature is shared in a modified form in the *Investigations*. Cavell (1988: 261–2) argues that the *Investigations*" diurnalizes Spengler's vision of the destiny toward exhausted forms," toward the loss of culture and community. Cavell draws our attention to the way Wittgenstein's uniqueness as a philosopher of culture comes from "the sense that he is joining the fate of philosophy as such with that of the philosophy of culture or criticism of culture." By doing so, he argues, Wittgenstein is calling into question philosophy's claim to a privileged perspective on culture that could be called the perspective of reason.

In line with this reading, Wittgenstein's work, broadly speaking, may be given a cultural and literary reading which focuses upon his *styles*. Such a reading legitimates both the importance of Wittgenstein—the person—and the significance of his (auto)biography in a way that analytic philosophers might find hard to accept. The question of style is a question inseparable from the reality of his life and the corpus of his work. Wittgenstein himself actively thought this to be the case and that this belief is *shown* in his work. This reading also throws into relief questions concerning his appropriation as a philosopher who had something to contribute to education: Wittgenstein not as a philosopher who provides a *method* for analyzing educational concepts but rather as one who approaches philosophical questions from a *pedagogical* point of view. *Wittgenstein style of* "*doing*" *philosophy is pedagogical.* His styles are *pedagogical*; he provides a teaming variety and vital

repertoire of non-argumentational discursive 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 a defining feature of Wittgenstein's later thought.

References

Bax, C. (2009). *Subjectivity after Wittgenstein: Wittgenstein's embodied and embedded subject and the debate about the death of man*. Ph.D. Thesis, Institute for Logic, Language and Computation (ILLC), University of Amsterdam, at http://dare.uva.nl/record/1/314635

Cavell, S. (1988). Declining decline: Wittgenstein as a philosopher of culture. *Inquiry*, *31*, 253–264.

Crary, A., & Read, R. J. (Eds.). (2000). *The new Wittgenstein*. London: Routledge.

Cuypers, S. E., & Martin, C. (Eds.). (2009). Special issue: Reading R.S. Peters today: Analysis, ethics and the aims of education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 43*, 3–7.

Gaukroker, S. (2008). Life and works. In J. Broughton & J. Carriero (Eds.), *A companion to Descartes*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Engelmann, P. (1967). *Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein, with a Memoir*. (B. F. McGuinness, Ed., L. Furtmüller, Trans.). Oxford: Blackwell.

Fann, K. (1969). *Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Finch, H. (1995). *Wittgenstein*. Dorset: Element.

Heller, E. (1988). Witttgenstein and Nietzsche. First published in *Encounter*, Republished in E. Heller, *The importance of Nietzsche* (pp. 40–48), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 13 Sept 1959.

Janik, A., & Toulmin, S. (1973). *Wittgenstein's Vienna*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Janik, A. (1981). Wittgenstein: An Austrian enigma. In J. C. Nyiri (Ed.), *Austrian philosophy: Studies and texts.* Munchen: Philosophia Verlag.

Laverty, M. J. (2009). Learning our concepts. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 43*, 27–40. Reprinted in Stefaan E. Cuypers & Christopher Martin (Eds.), *Reading R. S. Peters Today: Analysis, ethics, and the aims of education*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Lyotard, J.-F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. (G. Benninton & B. Massumi, Trans.) Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. [*La Condition postmoderne: Rapport sur le savoir*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1979.]

Magnus, B. (1989). Nietzsche and the postmodern condition. *Nietzsche-Studien, 18*(1), 301.

Martin, W. M. (2008). Descartes and the phenomenological tradition. In J. Broughton & J. Carriero (Eds.), *A companion to Descartes*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Peters, M. A. (2002a). Wittgenstein, education and the philosophy of mathematics. *Theory and Science*, *3* (3). http://theoryandfscience.icaap.rorg/

Peters, M. A. (2002b). Wittgenstein and post-analytic philosophy of education: Rorty or Lyotard? *Educational Theory and Philosophy, 29*(2), 1–32.

Peters, M. A., Burbules, N., & Smeyers, P. (2008, 2010). *Saying and doing: Wittgenstein as a pedagogical philosopher*. Boulder: Paradigm Press.

Peters, M., Burbules, N., & Smeyers, P. (2010). *Showing and doing: Wittgenstein as a pedagogical philosopher*. London: Routledge.

Peters, M. A., & Marshall, J. D. (1999). *Wittgenstein: Philosophy, postmodernism, pedagogy*. Westport, CT and London: Bergin and Garvey.

Peters, R. S. (1966). *Ethics and education*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Rorty, R. (1979). *Philosophy and the mirror of nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Rowlands, M. (2008). *The body in mind: Understanding cognitive processes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Sluga, H. (1996). Wittgenstein and the self. In H. Sluga & D. Stern (Eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Wittgenstein*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Stroud, B. (2008). Our debt to Descartes. In J. Broughton & J. Carriero (Eds.), *A companion to Descartes*. Oxford: Blackwell.
von Wright, G. (1982). *Wittgenstein*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Wittgenstein, L. (1961). *Tractatus logico-philosophicus.* (D. F. Pears & B. F. McGuinness, Trans.). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul (TLP).
Wittgenstein, L. (1963). *Philosophical investigations.* (G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell (PI)
Wittgenstein, L. (1967). *Zettel*. (G. H. von Wright & G. E. M. Anscombe, Eds., G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). Oxford: Blackwell (Z).
Wittgenstein, L. (1967). *Philosophical grammar*. (R. Rhees Ed., A. Kenny, Trans.). Oxford: Blackwell (PG).
Wittgenstein, L. (1979). *On certainty*. (G. E. M. Anscombe & G. H. von Wright Eds., D. Paul & G. E. M. Anscombe Trans.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell (OC).
Wittgenstein, L. (1980). *Culture and value.* (G. H. von Wright Ed., in collaboration with H. Nyman and P. Winch, Trans.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell (CV).