

Quid Est Ergo Rationalitas? Review of Michael Peters' Wittgenstein, Education and the Problem of Rationality

Quid Est Ergo Rationalitas? Análise do Livro “Wittgenstein, Education and the Problem of Rationality”, de Michael Peters

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Abstract

This analysis of Michael Peters' recent book, “Wittgenstein, Education and the Problem of Rationality”, was carried out through a conversation between four characters: Oninitibeci, Iniwataale, Iniwatadigini, and Gobaagadi. Their names correspond, respectively, to the numerals one, two, three and four (“our hand”) in the Kadiweu language, spoken by an indigenous group from the State of Mato Grosso do Sul, in Brazil. The main points, aroused by a collective reading of the book, are spontaneously distributed throughout the conversation as a result of the exchange of views among the partakers. They all have practice in mathematics teaching, or philosophy, and frequently discuss educational issues in the light of Wittgenstein's texts. It is from this perspective that they raised a number of critical points within Peters' work. However, it is never too much to remember that the characters maintain ideas independent from each other, so not only they sometimes differ in their evaluations but can also disagree on certain aspects of their readings. The point is that from the heat generated by the dialogical activity springs the conclusion of the importance of Peters' book and its decisive contribution to decolonial discussions about Wittgenstein and his role in the philosophy of education.

Keywords: Wittgenstein. Dialogism. Deconstruction. Decoloniality.

Resumo

Esta análise do recente livro de Michael Peters, “Wittgenstein, Education and the Problem of Rationality”, foi realizada por meio de uma conversa entre quatro personagens: Oninitibeci, Iniwataale, Iniwatadigini, and Gobaagadi. Seus nomes correspondem, respectivamente, aos Algarismos um, dois, três e quatro (“nossa mão”) na língua Kadiwéu, falada por um grupo indígena do Estado do Mato Grosso do Sul, no Brasil. Os principais pontos suscitados pela leitura coletiva do livro são espontaneamente distribuídos ao longo da conversa, como resultado da troca de pontos de vista entre eles. Todos eles têm prática no ensino de matemática ou filosofia e muitas vezes discutem questões educacionais à luz dos textos de Wittgenstein. É a partir desta perspectiva que eles levantam uma série de pontos críticos no trabalho de Peters. No entanto, nunca é demais lembrar que os personagens mantêm ideias independentes entre si; portanto, não apenas às vezes diferem em suas avaliações, mas também podem discordar uns dos outros em certos aspectos de suas leituras. A questão é que do calor gerado pela prática deste debate surge a conclusão da importância da obra e sua contribuição decisiva para as discussões decoloniais sobre Wittgenstein e seu papel na filosofia da educação.

Palavras-chave: Wittgenstein. Dialogismo. Desconstrução. Decolonialidade.

Oninitibeci – I think it is not defensible to build neither a rational nor an irrational LW.¹ That’s because if you set out to defend that LW’s way of philosophizing – and I say “way of philosophizing” because I think he didn’t defend and didn’t even propose a new philosophy – could be seen as “rationalist” or “irrationalist”, then you would also have, by extension, to clarify in what sense the therapeutic “method” of LW could be seen as “rational” or “irrational”; and also, in what sense a language-game – or a form of life in which such a game is constituted and instituted – could be seen as “rational” or “irrational”. Any alleged argument that tried to induce us to see “rationality” in the interactions of the players – humans and non-humans – who participate in a language game because these interactions are not chaotic but guided by grammatical rules within the form of life in which it is constituted, would also have, by extension, to clarify in what sense the origin and the institution of a community sharing these rules could be seen as “rational” or “irrational”, and also in what sense to follow the rules of a language game, or transgress them, could be seen, respectively, as “rational” or “irrational” acts or attitudes. Regarding the argument of a supposed rational character originating from a communitarian institution of a rule, LW seems to argue against that.

LW – Consider: “The only correlate in language to an objective necessity is an arbitrary rule. It is the only thing which one can milk out of this objective necessity into a proposition.”²

Gobaagadi – Do you mean that it is not defensible to propose a reading of Wittgenstein that does not agree with what you think about him?

Oninitibeci – Just to give an example of how we could hardly imagine that following or breaking the rules of a game could have a rational or irrational character, it would be enough to evoke some ungrammatical language games Wittgenstein proposed to our consideration, games that take place without the guidance of any grammar and, therefore, games in which players do

¹ LW corresponds to Ludwig Wittgenstein. From now on, all characters who participate in the debate off-site will appear with the abbreviations of their real names.

² Wittgenstein, 2009, § 372.

not follow any rules. Would LW see them as “irrational” because they are ungrammatical? I don’t think so.

LW – In a conversation: One person throws a ball; the other does not know: is he to throw it back, throw it to a third person, or leave it lying, or pick it up & put it in his pocket, etc.³

Gobaagadi – In what sense does the existence of ungrammatical situations support the view that a theory of rationality inspired by Wittgenstein’s texts cannot be conceived?

Oninitibeci – The fact that I believe that the construction of pictures of a rationalist or irrationalist LW is not defensible does not mean that we could not legitimately investigate how LW would have dealt with the problem of rationality. But the title of Peters’ book can lead us to think that there is a central problem at stake. However, given LW’s therapeutic way of philosophizing, my expectation was that taking to the Wittgensteinian therapeutic couch the way he would have dealt with the problem of rationality should result in a panoramic presentation of its multiple pictures produced by the philosophical discourse in order to deconstruct such a problem as a problem, that is, in order to see it as a false problem.

Gobaagadi – It might not be that your expectations, like anyone else’s, are based on what you consider to be the central issue at stake? Isn’t the central issue always what we think of as such? And how to know if a false problem is false before seeing how it is being proposed as a problem in the use of a certain sentence?

MP – I interpret Wittgenstein’s later work especially at those points where philosophy of language and epistemology intersect – in Hegelian terms. Wittgenstein does not take the problem of rationality as central to philosophy in the way that Russell, or later, A. J. 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 or hold to its status as a second-order activity. Accordingly, 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. They are located within established practice.⁴

LW (walking in Phoenix Park, Dublin, one afternoon) – Kant and Berkeley seem to me very deep thinkers.

MD – What about Hegel?

LW – No, I don’t think I would get on with Hegel. Hegel seems to me to be always wanting to say that things which look different are really the same. Whereas my interest is in showing that things which look the same are really different.⁵

³ Wittgenstein, 1998, p. 84.

⁴ Excerpts taken from Peters (2020, p. 9).

⁵ Conversation between Drury and Wittgenstein, in Rhees (1984, p. 157).

Iniwataale – What I understand, as a Westerner, as “rationality” is that it is a form of organized production of knowledge. But if we take, for example, the geocolormetrics among the Ndebele, in Southern Africa, its organization is very different from any of the color systems that Wittgenstein talks about. Wittgenstein examines several systems of colors, it is true, and even imagine some that are impossible in our grammar. But among the Ndebele the colors of the paintings made outside and inside their homes are meant to control time and space.⁶ A system like this is very different from what we Westerners use to call “rationality”. A color system that we can see, for example, in the art paintings of Esther Mahlangu. Wall paintings among the Ndebele is exclusively executed by women, and their complicated system of signs and symbols cannot be interpreted by anyone but their own cosmologists. In particular, this kind of knowledge can only be appropriated, dominated and transmitted by women. It does not lend itself to being interpreted, for example, by Euclidean geometry, as Paulus Gerdes⁷ suggests, because its rationality is opaque for an axiomatic and exclusively intellectual understanding of geometry. It is, in fact, a contestation geocolormetrics that actually does not fit our own color application patterns. While the word “rationality”, normally referred to reason or the brain, usually excludes among us the use of the body and emotions in the organization of knowledge, this is not in any way the case among the Ndebele feminine tradition of wall paintings. So, I cannot ultimately see the point of talking about “rationality” as if it were a word universally applicable to any knowledge system. What I’m calling *geocolormetrics* from the account of the practice of painting Ndebele houses, stems from my understanding that their colors give meaning to the shapes in the painted space, colors give meaning to this practice, colors becoming form, becoming figures, merging in the clay, a know-how that is performed with the whole body, in which other metrics manifest themselves in the sense of *geocolormetrics*.

LW – To what extent can the function of a rule be described? Someone who is master of none, I can only train. But how can I explain the nature of a rule to myself?

The difficult thing here is not, to dig down to the ground; no, it is to recognize the ground that lies before us as the ground.

For the ground keeps on giving us the illusory image of a greater depth, and when we seek to reach this, we keep on finding ourselves on the old level.

Our disease is one of wanting to explain.⁸

Oninitibeci – The problem I see in Paulus Gerdes pioneering and creative work is that it seems to suggest that the way prehistoric and ancient African peoples practiced mathematics would be placed on the same line of continuity as contemporary academic mathematics, as if these different ways to practice mathematics would participate in the same family tree. I think that from a Wittgensteinian perspective, which was not the Gerdes perspective, any cultural practice that takes place aiming at contemplating normative purposes could be seen as an autonomous mathematical practice, that is, as an autonomous mathematical language game, so that it would not be appropriate to speak of neither mathematics in the singular, which would have developed in a continuous way in history, nor mathematics in the plural, which would differ from each other in relation to distinct temporalities, geopolitical territorialities or even cultures. Each of

⁶ Cf. Gerdes, 1999, pp. 31-33.

⁷ Paulus Gerdes (1952-2014) was a Dutch ethnomathematician, mathematical educator and historian of mathematics, naturalized Mozambican. He was a professor of mathematics at the Eduardo Mondlane University and at the Pedagogical University of Mozambique for many years, serving as Rector of the latter from 1989-1996. He was a visiting professor at the University of Georgia from 1996 to 1998. He has served the African Mathematical Union as chair of AMUCHMA (Commission on the History of Mathematics in Africa), since 1996, and was the secretary of SAMSA (Southern African Mathematical Sciences Association), in the period 1991-1995.

⁸ Wittgenstein, 1978 (Part VI, section § 31).

the language games that are played to fulfill normative purposes can be seen as different mathematics, as each of these games are played with different purposes and guided by different grammars, whether they are played in different forms of life or in the same form of life or culture. However, even if such games can be seen as “one mathematics”, it would not be appropriate, from a Wittgensteinian perspective, to see them as “rational” or “irrational”, nor as “logical” or “non-logical”, nor even as “true” or “false”. I highlight this fact because we could be assuming that, for LW, the problem of rationality actually appears with more emphasis in the domain of mathematics, but this is not the case. Seeing mathematics as a family of distinct and autonomous language games that play in different forms of life, including scientific and academic form of life, each fulfilling different purposes, LW does not see the unlimited language games of this expanding family as being abstract or universal, and neither as rational or irrational.

LW – But where is the problem here? Why should I not say that what we call mathematics is a family of activities with a family of purposes?⁹

But it isn't just that I believe in this way that I have two hands, but that every reasonable person does.

At the foundation of well-founded belief lies belief that is not founded.

Any ‘reasonable’ person behaves like *this*.

(...)

You must bear in mind that the language-game is so to say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds.

It is not reasonable (or unreasonable).

It is there - like our life.¹⁰

Iniwatadigini – It seems there is in Peters’ book some sort of picture of “reason”. A sort of picture that holds us captive, and that takes us in a search for the creation of a theory of knowledge based on universal or historical principles. Of course, not many people would confess nowadays to be in search of impartial and universal principles of all mankind. However, even when some principle is actually defined as occasional and historically conditioned, it is difficult not to continue seeing in it a surrogate of those universal principles, probably in a disguised way. So, what is in this picture? It is the idea that it is somehow possible to propose something safe enough to count as knowledge, in contrast to mere opinion. And in order to achieve this level of security, it is necessary to establish strong standards. Something so solid that deserves to be called “reason”. Through it, then, we can still make valid knowledge judgments. Valid judgments that also deserve to be called “rational”, in opposition to “irrational” or non-valid judgments. Even within a contextualized perspective, it remains an impartial and universal enough pattern capable to differentiate valid from non-valid judgments. Apparently, all human beings would have, in relation to their historical context, such patterns of differentiation made possible by some immutable or sufficient constant principle. So, this ancient picture holds us in such a way that even in the 21st century we continue to look after the Reason without realizing the consequences of the search for a concept like that. Peters, for example, does not break with this picture of reason as a concept. It is only relativized in his text according to historical standards, when he redefines it as historically dynamic contexts rather than universal patterns. In his words, “It is *concept of rationality* in use that also indicates that in our culture science and technology have become “techno-science”, a historically new form

⁹ Wittgenstein, 1978, p. 273 (Part V, section § 15).

¹⁰ Wittgenstein, 1969, sections §§ 252-254; 569.

of rationality the evolving dominant techniques and growing epistemic interdependence of gnomonic and information science” (Peters, 2020, p. 240, emphasis added). But if, instead of impartial and universal principles through which we look at life, at the life of indigenous peoples, for example, and if there were no universal standards and principles by which we could identify both their practice and the knowledge they apply in their normal activities, we would only use the description of what is most characteristic of them, without creating concepts and theories about the ways of life of the indigenous people or any other peoples. When we look at the human life we can see how life is flowing and we could try to describe it.¹¹ Thus, we should not create theories about what we see, about rationality, for example, even if it is in a *variety of ways* or in *family resemblance* concepts, even if it they replace concepts based on universal standards and principles.

Iniwatadigini – “A *picture* held us captive. And we couldn’t get outside it, for it lay in our language, and language seemed only to repeat it to us inexorably”.¹² What are pictures or a picture? Rationality as a concept, types of rationality, a historicist theory of knowledge? A historicist theory of rationality and knowledge? A universal notion of rationality? It is possible that there is none of this, but the desire to theorize and conceptualize. The picture that inexorably captivate us is just trying to theorize on *forms of life*. Fishing practices, singing and dancing practices, construction practices, conversational practices, rituals. The identification, in these cases, seems to be inextricably situated, and it is not possible to extract from there a pattern or general principle such as those that are typically sought in Western philosophy, even in a context-relative way. If we try to do this, we would be immediately eliminating all concrete characteristics that differ them from our patterns and from our own constant principles. We would be erasing differences in favor of our own identities. So, how is it possible to judge what is a valid or rational knowledge for anyone if such things do not always count in many peoples lives as something important or even interesting?

Iniwatadigini – A pertinent question here is to know what, in fact, is the role Wittgenstein is playing in Peters’ book.

Oninitibeci – I would like to remember that a dialectical and contextualized historiography, although not a positivist historiography, still remains progressive and teleological.

MP – [Wittgenstein’s] approach to the problem or 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. They are located within established practices.¹³

Oninitibeci – I think that, for LW, unlike Kant and Hegel, knowing, thinking – and also the process of philosophical investigation of a problem – are not seen as processes occurring in a mental faculty. Thinking consists of “acting on”, that is, an activity that – not “a mind” or, even less, “an I” or a “Cartesian clone” of the brain called “mind” – the whole body performs on the signs of a language game. LW does not think with his head, with his brain, let alone with a

¹¹ “Here one can only *describe* and say: that is human life” (Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 121).

¹² Wittgenstein, 2009, § 115.

¹³ Peters, op. cit., p. 9.

supposed “mind”; he thinks with his pen... I even venture to say that it is his pen that, working with the signs of a language game, thinks *with* him or even thinks instead of him.

LW – I really do think with my pen, for my head often knows nothing of what my hand is writing.¹⁴

Oninitibeci – What, then, would LW’s therapeutic-grammatical method have to do with Hegel’s method of “immanent criticism” (an expression that was not coined and not even used by Hegel himself, but by his disciples), which undoubtedly is an unfolding of the Kantian self-examination requirement of the *faculty of understanding*? They are not alike, in my view. It is a dissonance that can be justified in Hegel’s method requirement that the critique of the epistemological problem to be investigated should also be, simultaneously and inseparably, a critique of the very investigating thought, which is being taken by Hegel as an activity of “consciousness” as well as a constitutive object of logic. So that it is necessary that such immanent criticism should also focus on the logical forms that configure the epistemological problem that is being investigated. Such a method could, perhaps, bear some resemblance to the way LW philosophises in the *Tractatus*, but no longer with the LW of the *Investigations*: a grammatical therapy could never be seen as a (mental) activity of consciousness about itself and does not even operate on logically and univocally configured problems.

Gobaagadi – I would not so readily agree that Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* resemble a “logician of mentalism”. It is possible that such a picture actually belongs to an exegetical mythology rather than to the letter of the text itself. Part of the story is the existence of a first and a later (and sometimes a third) distinct Wittgensteins. Through this threadbare pattern he was a completely different person before a spiritual redemption. It would be better to comply instead with another exegetical mythology by which the *Tractatus* is based on a tripartite structure composed of meaningful, apparent, and non-sense propositions. Through meaningful propositions *we picture* facts to ourselves (TLP § 2.1); through apparent or pseudo-propositions *we mirror* or *reflect* mathematical and logical operations (TLP §§ 5.534-5535; 6.2); and, finally, through non-sense propositions *we contemplate* the world as a limited whole in which we can be happy or not. So, we just have three different kinds of *performances* in this alternative perspective, as long as there is not even an iota of mentalism in this book. If we conceive, in this regard, the *Tractatus* as a therapeutic intervention like anyone of Wittgenstein’s other texts, this time acting as an organized totality, as a typical Goethian morphology or perspicuous presentation as actually is “The contemplation of the world *sub specie aeterni*” (TLP § 6.45), then we can also envisage an author deciding to be happy and showing to his readers that the whole book, along with all its tripartite structure, was pure non-sense and should be abandoned (TLP § 6.54). And this is not a sort of self-contradictory movement, simply because it is not inconsistent to abandon a structure of pure nonsenses (or to keep with it). A decade after the publication of the presumed abandonable book, though, the author came to realize that the first third of its non-sensical structure was simply wrong with respect to our concrete linguistic practices. So, insofar as logical atomism was not sustainable anymore, he could reformulate his conception of language into an even more pragmatical approach.

Oninitibeci – Perhaps a possible similarity between Hegel’s method and that of LW can be traced when we establish a comparison between the self-reflective Kantian appeal present in the Hegelian method and the self-therapeutic appeal manifested in the Wittgensteinian method.

¹⁴ Wittgenstein, 1998, p. 24.

However, it cannot be ignored that the Wittgensteinian self-reflective appeal has a completely different character from both Kant's and Hegel's. Hegel's self-reflective appeal – which is in line with Kant's – is that of a conscience that wants to be aware of itself, that is, that imposes on itself an immanent duty to inspect itself, to critically examine the logic underlying its own internal way of operating in its investigation of the logic underlying the production of knowledge about the phenomenal world. In addition, the logic that the conscience triggers to analyze itself must be the same that it triggers for the analysis of the phenomenal world; in both cases, therefore, a *phenomenal logic*. This is the immanent method used by Hegel in his *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. Thus, for Hegel, this *phenomenal logic* is seen as the reflection or the realization – in the phenomenal world and in the world of individual consciousness – of the laws of a dialectical logic that the *Absolute* or *Objective Spirit* – the entity eternally in itself, infinite and universal, which knows for itself – would impose on the course of natural history. But the self-therapeutic appeal manifested in the Wittgensteinian method is of a radically different nature, for at least two reasons. The first is that, for LW, there cannot be a phenomenal language – and, for this reason, neither a phenomenal logic – directly apprehensible to conscience, as Almeida suggests.

JJA – Unlike both the Tractarian phase, when the philosopher identified logic with language, and its intermediate phase, in which he sought to find logic in a variety of possible applications within an interconnected system of propositions, the so-called “phenomenological phase” of 1929, now it becomes the *practice* that provides its own logic. In more exact terms, logic becomes grammar.¹⁵

Oninitibeci – Furthermore, I think that the self-therapeutic appeal of the Wittgensteinian method could not be seen as either logical or psychological. It would be better to see it as a *grammatical appeal* that leads the philosopher-therapist to fight a vigilant and persistent struggle with the very language games in which the problem he investigates participate, games whose grammars mean it in different ways. Another reason that, in my way of understanding, removes any claim to bring Wittgenstein's method closer to Hegel's is that the Wittgensteinian self-therapeutic appeal – because it is strictly grammatical and not psychological in nature – prevents “consciousness” from seeing itself in a supposed “mirror of the self”, since, for LW, there cannot be a private language. It was this argument that LW himself expressed in the deconstruction of the erroneous picture of knowledge defended by Moore.

LW – This would give us a picture of knowing as the perception of an outer event through visual rays which project it as it is into the eye and the consciousness. Only then the question at once arises whether one can be certain of this projection. And this picture does indeed show how our imagination presents knowledge, but not what lies at the bottom of this presentation.¹⁶

GG – With the criticism of the private language LW rejected the idea that there are internal processes which can be observed: sensations, perceptions, thought processes, linguistic events to be directly observed and analyzed. Someone cannot observe himself in a kind of inner vision. This internal observation, a type of higher-level vision, would guarantee superior epistemic certainty. But how, then, could be answered whether the external view is false while the internal is correct? If we made this assumption, we could also ask whether we see and whether we know what we see. Nor does the assumption that I know my knowledge make any sense. I don't have

¹⁵ Almeida, João José (2011, note 34, p. 84).

¹⁶ Wittgenstein, 1969, section §90.

a superior point of view from which I could judge whether the expression chosen by me agrees with the state of affairs.¹⁷

Oninitibeci – Gebauer’s commentary on this passage from *On Certainty* constitutes an additional argument against any Hegelian interpretation of the self-therapeutic appeal manifested in Wittgensteinian therapy. The Hegelian dialectical method always operates methodologically in the same way – rationally, predictably, univocally and abstractly (or not factually) –, imposing an affirmative and evolutionary path of overcoming syntheses of historical events. On the other hand, the Wittgensteinian “method” – which cannot be properly seen as a “method” –, just to give a few examples, deconstructs Goethe’s *Theory of Colors*, Frazer’s *Golden Bough* and Gödel’s Incompleteness Theorem, always in different ways (“for each disease, a therapy”, says LW). And since, in none of these and other cases, does LW suggest an alternative remedy to fight the disease, a therapy always operates negatively, never being able to be seen, therefore, as a *rational or irrational* method. Thus, if we wanted to see *similar aspects*, it would be more appropriate to say that LW’s different modes of arguing in therapy are more similar to Adorno’s negative dialectic than to Hegelian dialectic, more to Zeno’s paradoxes than to Socrates’ maieutics, more to Derrida’s deconstruction than Gadamer’s hermeneutic dialogue.

Oninitibeci – In what sense is an immanentist conception also constitutive? Let’s suppose that we wanted to maintain an idea of rationality immanent to forms of life. Let’s remember Kant. When I open my window, I cannot see the world outside in more than three dimensions. Why? Perhaps because this is our immanent perceptual rationality, we cannot see the world outside in more than three dimensions even though the world may not be like that. This is the difference between noumenal and phenomenal world. Our brains are constituted according to the phenomenal world only. But the question is: would Wittgenstein share this phenomenal-perceptual view of the mental? Another question: would Wittgenstein share a view of rationality according to historical epochs, to temporalities? One can, for example, relativize mathematics, therefore “rational” language games, to a temporalized territorialities, as Tatiana Roque does.¹⁸ We would then have not just a single mathematics, but as much mathematics as temporalized geopolitical contexts or even cultures. But, instead, Wittgenstein relativizes mathematics in function of a diversity of language games oriented to contemplate normative social purposes, since, for him, each of these games is seen as a complete game, as a idiosyncratic mathematics. We see that there is a set of relativizing criteria at our disposal, that is, a number of different criteria to which the supposed rational aspect of a language game could be relativized: temporalities, territorialities, cultures, communities of practices, etc. But, why is not reasonable to try challenging the supposed universal character of mathematics relativizing it in function of time? Because the price paid for this idea is to defend a Platonic absolutist conception of time. Does this make any sense?

Thus, even if Peters might eventually wish to see rationality in the normative aspect present in the grammar or in the purpose of a language game, he would need to clarify in what sense both the grammar and the social purpose of a game – or even, the purposes that guide players in the game – could be seen by LW as rational or irrational.

Iniwatadigini – Whenever we try to make theories, even if they are situated in contexts, we end up excluding something from what happens in those practices, because of the pattern we try to establish there. We always return to the same picture. A picture that leads us to seek a

¹⁷ Gebauer, 2013, p. 135.

¹⁸ Cf. Roque, 2012.

theory about whatever it is. When Peters talks about “Rationality as a Language-Game”, isn’t he stuck with a picture he can’t get rid of?¹⁹ Doesn’t he seek to create a theory of rationality from Wittgenstein?

Oninitibeci – Rationality is a philosophical theme. It is as if it were a philosophical problem for Wittgenstein as well. But should we not say that Wittgenstein deconstructs the idea of rationality by bringing it into language games? But Wittgenstein deals with it therapeutically, as with any other problem he deals with, that is, as a problem to be therapeutically deconstructed as a problem. For this, he does not deal with “a” reason or “a” rationality as abstract and universal entities, but as words that acquire different meanings in relation to different uses that are made of them in language games. Given that philosophical language games are exclusively linguistic-verbal, propositional, logical-argumentative and demonstrative games, the uses we make of the words “reason” and “rationality” in these types of games tend to be synonyms for coherence or internal consistency of a discourse, or else as a set of beliefs, rules, customs and valuing principles that are not necessarily consistent, but naturalized as such – a “regime of truth”, in a Foucaultian terminology – in order to guide the practices that take place in different human institutions, fields of human activity or forms of life. If I move from the domain of the proposition to the domain of the rules that guide bodily actions, I am not bringing the idea of the rationality of the proposition, nor the idea of the truth of the proposition, into the domain of a practice. For a practice can be neither true or false, nor rational or irrational. I cannot transpose the idea of truth and rationality, which belongs to the domain of propositions, to the domain of a practice.

Iniwataale – The problem of reason is strongly linked to the transcendental in Kant. When we think of reason, we generally are locating ourselves into the realm of the transcendental, and simultaneously escaping from the realm of the immanent. The plane of the immanent is supposed to be the plane of the different spheres of existence, that is, of sociocultural practices without philosophical worries. So, I understand it, in light of Wittgenstein’s discussions, as contained in the same dispositions presented in any form of life. These forms of life have their grammars, their ways of organizing themselves, and these forms of organization are correlated to practices that take place there. They are done with some purpose and without equivocation. When I propose to think about reason, then my intent is to think exclusively about the transcendental and not about the plane of the immanent existence. But in the plane of the immanent existence, problems that are generally related to the concept of reason become just problems of thinking. Wittgenstein mentions the problem of thinking in the *Blue Book*. Thinking viewed as a problem is not about to know whether we have a reason or not, whether we necessarily resort to transcendental conditions of thinking or not, but how we manage to produce something we could call “thinking”.

LW – If again we talk about the locality where thinking takes place, we have a right to say that this locality is the paper on which we write or the mouth which speaks. And if we talk of the head or the brain as the locality of thought, this is using the expression “locality of thinking” in a different sense. Let us examine what are the reasons for calling the head the place of thinking. It is not our intention to criticize this form of expression, or to show that it is not appropriate. What we must do is: understand its working, its grammar, e.g. see what relation this grammar has to that of the expression “we think with our mouth”, or “we think with a pencil on a piece of paper”.

¹⁹ Peters, op. cit, pp. 238-240.

Perhaps the main reason why we are so strongly inclined to talk of the head as the locality of our thoughts is this: the existence of the words “thinking” and “thought” alongside of the words denoting (bodily) activities, such as writing, speaking, etc., makes us look for an activity, different from these but analogous to them, corresponding to the word “thinking”. When words in our ordinary language have *prima facie* analogous grammars we are inclined to try to interpret them analogously; i.e. we try to make the analogy hold throughout. (...) Now does this mean that it is nonsensical to talk of a locality where thought takes place? Certainly not. This phrase has sense if we give it sense.²⁰

GA – HEART-REASONING is not simply a neologism, but it implies thinking of a way to break the fragmentation that the coloniality of power made of the human condition, since, from the colonial rationality of the West, REASONING has been the center of the constitution of the human, already from a semantic point of view this single word connotes the absence of the affective, as the REASON is the center, and in it the affectivity does not appear even in the periphery.²¹

Iniwataale – As long as we remain in the problem of reason, we will continue to appeal to transcendental conditions of thinking. At what point are we going to get rid of this scope? I believe that only when we start to understand that we do not think only with the brain, but also with affections, with the non-human elements that make up the earth, with the objects with which we relate ourselves in our living contexts in order to just live our lives, is that we’ll be set free. It is only at that point that we could finally get rid of this way of thinking.

Oninitibeci – In order to be even more radical, it is necessary to bring Wittgensteinian therapy closer to the Derridean deconstructionism. Why? Because, basically, it is not a question of reinstating a dichotomy between thinking and acting, nor between knowing-that and knowing-how. It is necessary to deconstruct all modern thinking that is based on dichotomies. Why are we insisting in going on thinking in dichotomic terms to the point where we arrive at the basic dichotomy between nature and culture? To be radically therapeutic or Wittgensteinian, so to say, we have to be radically Derridean because only then, maybe, we would dissolve the more crucial dichotomy between humans and non-humans. Thinking should be seen as a form of agency in which vital interactions between humans and non-humans knowledge is produced. An interaction that is neither anthropological, nor sociological, nor transcendental, nor cognitively constituted. There are only human beings in action with other natural beings.

Gobaagadi – Are we not leaving dichotomies just in order to set a theory of everything? Why thinking “should be seen” as something rather than just to describe our uses of the word “thinking” or “reason” when some sentences are actually uttered? When one compares Wittgenstein’s deconstructionism with Derrida’s it seems inevitable to get the impression the latter is trying to propose a reform of language through the use of the word “différance”. Why would it be so urgent to note that meaning is forever “deferred” or postponed through an endless chain of signifiers? What are exactly the “signifiers” in this case, what is their atomic weight, do they obey the law of gravity or not? Do not these assumptions give us the impression that language is never in order when we try to speak, and that we have been captured by eternal dichotomies from which we would be obliged to escape by applying the infallible formula of the “neither..., nor...”?

²⁰ Wittgenstein, 1965, p. 7.

²¹ Guerrero, 2010, p. 40.

LW – On the one hand, it is clear that every sentence in our language ‘is in order as it is’. That is to say, we are not *striving after* an ideal, as if our ordinary vague sentences had not yet got a quite unexceptionable sense, and a perfect language still had to be constructed by us. – On the other hand, it seems clear that where there is sense, there must be perfect order. – So there must be perfect order even in the vaguest sentence.²²

Gobaagadi – What would Wittgenstein say to an earth-flattener or to a defender of hydroxychloroquine as a preventive treatment against Covid-19?

Oninitibeci – The same that LW would have said to Frazer: – “Are you trying to scientificize an already scientifically refuted dogma, or to dogmatize science?”. Whenever scientists formulated theories – that is, *hypothetical causally* articulated narratives about the natural world, isolated phenomena, or problems seen as uniquely human –, LW tended to receive them as a “negationists”. For, a hypothesis, he said, already contains the very explanation that it is giving about the “phenomenon”, or about the “problem” it intends to explain. So, one theory will always be refuted in some of its aspects. What mattered to LW was not exactly: the “intuitive ingenuity” of a theory; the “intuitive ingenuity” of experiments later invented to confirm or refute it locally or globally; its internal coherence; its greater explanatory or predictive power of new phenomena; its power to reconcile apparently contradictory phenomena in light of other theories; the impactful character of the new theory in the sense of suggesting a surprising, unforeseen or non-obvious image about the phenomenon it is supposed to explain. For LW, what mattered, then, was simply the power of a theory to generate new technological practices that could satisfactorily respond to emerging problems in one or more fields of human activity, in one or more human ways of organizing human life. But this technological power to make accessible to empirical description what previously escaped the field of human perception or to materialize technologically adequate answers to vital problems was seen by him as the result of chance. Defending hydroxychloroquine as a preventive treatment for Covid-19 would be seen as the result of neglecting data, social irresponsibility or intellectual dishonesty. This is how I prefer to read LW’s work, not in the light of any explanatory – and therefore *rational* – theories that always causally connect “facts” purportedly seen as transcendently pre-grammaticalized, and therefore transcendently pre-significant and pre-rationalized concepts, but in light of their own descriptive (self) therapeutic appeals – and therefore neither rational nor irrational – which, without denying the ungrammatical and therefore casual transcendental of the mystery and miracle of life and vital phenomena, simply seek to signify in light of grammars interactively produced by humans and other natural beings.

MP – Where Dewey and Wittgenstein reject all forms of foundationalism to emphasize the primacy of practice and *practical reason*, Foucault embraces a *political form of reason* that inverts Kant to emphasize that purported modern scientific truths about human nature, on examination, turn out to be “mere expressions of ethical and political commitments of a particular society”—the “outcome of contingent historical forces” rather than “scientifically grounded truths”. This view shows itself in Foucault’s understanding of modern reason and power that cashes itself out in the institutional forms of disciplinary rationality of the clinic, the prison and the school, demonstrating the operation of an insidious form of power and rationality that imposed itself on Western societies and become the central problematic of liberal modernity.²³

²² Wittgenstein, 2009, section § 98.

²³ Peters, op. cit., pp. 236-237.

Oninitibeci – From a Wittgensteinian perspective, Peters approaches the problem as a supposed power of verbal discourses – whether they be “philosophical”, “sociological”, “historical”, “ethical-political”, etc. – to *scientifically found*, that is, to *rationally explain*, a regime of truth that, from a certain moment, rises and establishes itself as a “norm”, a “normality” or a “rationality” guiding the practices that take place in one or more forms of life. This problem, by extension, is related to the question of the limit of human knowledge, of the limit of what could be counted as a rational explanation. If, in the case of Kant, such a limit is *empirical* – since it is a limit related to the impossibility of empirical judgments about what is happening in a transcendental world inaccessible to knowledge –, and if in the case of the *Tractatus*, such a limit is *linguistic* - strictly speaking, in the case of the *Tractatus*, such a linguistic limit is shown by means of language analysis and, in the case of the Vienna Circle philosophers, by means of an exclusively logical analysis of language related to the world exclusively empirical –, in the case of Foucault, according to Peters, such a limit is political: it would be up to the philosophical discourse itself to watch over the rationality of political discourse, thus preventing it from entering the domain of irrationality. But in this case I would ask how would we do with the section § 124 of the *Philosophical Investigations* which says “Philosophy must not interfere in any way with the actual use of language, so it can in the end only describe it. For it cannot justify it either. It leaves everything as it is”?

MP – Foucault pits a pastoral individualizing form of power against the centralized and centralizing power of the state. He traces the development of pastoral power in early Christianity exerted upon the individual through the demonstration of truth in practical self-examination. He then turns to “reason of state” (and the theory of police as a form of administrative power) during the period when the modern state came into being.²⁴

Oninitibeci – I think that this change of police character in the form of the administration of the modern state accused by Foucault – to which Peters refers – can be historically attested by the episode of the Paris Commune. The film “La commune (Paris, 1871)”, by Peter Watkins, suggests that the “fuse” or “last straw” of the taking of Paris by the *communards* would have been the controversy surrounding the possession of an abandoned cannon on a street, which belonged to the popular revolutionary army, but that the political-administrative power then installed in the city of Paris would have ordered the state police to expropriate it for fear of a revolt against the instituted power by the impoverished and hungry population. The final scenes of the film, in which the *communards* are shot singing *La Marseillaise*, suggest that such a song represented only the ideals of the properly revolutionary wing of the revolution. So, the Paris Commune did not adopt the three-color flag of the French Revolution; its flag was only red. I think that, despite all the internal differences that certainly existed between them, what the *communards* imagined was being able to build another regime of governmentality, other than the liberal regime installed in power since the beginning of the French Revolution. And that is why, since then, our schools have been systematically and structurally liberal and, more recently, neoliberal, since compulsory state schooling that is practiced globally is a stage, progressive, disciplinary, scientific, psychological, focused on the verbal transmission of fixed knowledge, linearly sequenced, propaedeutic, competitive, meritocratic, marketing, ideological, nationalist, fascist, patriarchal, racist, xenophobic, misogynistic, homophobic, excluding and anti-democratic. An education that does not prepare, strictly speaking, neither for work, nor for citizenship, nor for coping with the vital problems that arise for different forms of life. So, when Foucault compares schools to prisons, I think he establishes an analysis of the

²⁴ Peters, op. cit., p. 237.

role of the modern school that does not align with those of neoliberals. When Peters rescues Foucault, he is implying that he would be criticizing neoliberal ideas in education, but the reader is left wondering if this is, in fact, the case, as there is no further development of this theme in the book. Could it be, then, that what Peters is trying to say is that the empirical limit to the human desire for knowledge imposed by the Kantian epistemology, and also, the linguistic limit imposed by the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, should have repercussions and support a supposed thesis – still liberal, but also Foucaultian – of limiting or regulating the power of the modern state over citizens?

MP – Foucault’s concept of governmentality as a means of mapping the “history of the present” understands the rationality of government as both permitting and requiring the practice of freedom of its subjects. Foucault’s approach to governance avoids interpreting liberalism as an ideology, political philosophy, or an economic theory and reconfigures it as a form of governmentality with an emphasis on the question of *how* power is exercised. It makes central the notion of the *self-limiting* state which, in contrast to the administrative or “police” state, brings together in a productive way questions of ethics and technique, through the responsabilization of moral agents and the active reconstruction of the relation between government and self-government. Most importantly, it proposes an investigation of neoliberalism as an intensification of an economy of moral regulation first developed by liberals, and not merely or primarily as a political reaction to big government or the so-called bureaucratic welfare state of the post-war Keynesian settlement. It understands neoliberalism through the development of an actuarial rationality and new forms of prudentialism that manifest and constitute themselves discursively in the language of the market.²⁵

Iniwataale – The most obvious thing to say about neoliberalism and liberalism is that they are social institutionalizations of a quest for freedom. However, there are different narratives about what freedom means. These narratives are not only of interest to Foucaultian researches, but also to Wittgensteinian perspectives too. Because when we have life as the articulating axis of the research, talking about narratives on what freedom means in contexts of rivalry and hurry, this eventually ends up in cleaning everything that was swept under the mat. “[...] We handle it in a very naive way. People don’t know that, it’s not discussed in schools. [...] so it is absolutely necessary for us to bring these issues related to pseudosciences, to the use of science as a justification for the inferiorization and repression of people. Finally, issues that need to be discussed and put on the table. [...] Scientific racism itself was abundantly used by all fascisms”.²⁶ Where this puts us in? It puts us in front of a single narrative of history, in front of the fictional narrative of progress. And, what does this mean? This means the institutionalization of the idea that all human societies have their own realization of a ‘rationality’, they will become suitably more civilized if they assume this vision, with Europe at the forefront as a guiding model. It seems natural, then, that assuming such ‘rationality’ can lead to the progress of nations.

RP²⁷ –

²⁵ Idem, pp. 237-238.

²⁶ Fragments of an interview with the Brazilian black plastic artist Rosana Paulino. Available in: <https://ponte.org/rosana-paulino-revela-racismo-oculto-debaixo-do-tapete-da-historia/>

²⁷ Work by the Brazilian black artist Rosana Paulino. A critical view about the progress of the nations. Available in: <https://ponte.org/rosana-paulino-revela-racismo-oculto-debaixo-do-tapete-da-historia/>



Oninitibeci – Additionally, I see how “ambiguous” – or, at least, not very explicit – the path pointed out by Peters can be. By abandoning Wittgenstein – or, at least, by not sufficiently exploring the non-liberal democratic and political implications of his life and work, as well as non-dogmatic and decolonial aspects of his therapeutic method of philosophizing –, and, instead of Wittgenstein, calling Foucault to accomplish this task –, Peters could be suggesting the maintenance or a mere improvement of liberal policies, as did Keynes, Dewey and Rorty. Or he could be, in fact, willing to radically criticize the liberal and neoliberal regime of governmentality and, by extension, liberal and neoliberal public education policies. Was Peters being like Keynes in Derek Jarman’s film, *Wittgenstein*, in which we have an unforeseen Keynes, since he actually died in 1946 while Wittgenstein just died in 1951, watching him on his deathbed and whispering in his ears an astonishing figment?

DJ – Once upon a time there was a young man who dreamed of reducing the world to pure logic. As he was a very intelligent young man, he succeeded. When he finished, he was admiring his work. A clean world of imperfections and indeterminations was needed. An endless expanse of glowing ice to the horizon. So, the young man decided to explore the world he had created. He took a step forward and fell on his back. He had forgotten about the friction. The ice was smooth, flat and spotless. But you couldn't walk on it. The prepared young man sat down and wept bitter tears. But in time, he became a wise elder. And he understood that irregularity and ambiguity are not imperfections. But yes, what makes the world go round. He wanted to run and dance. And all the words and things scattered on the floor were ambiguous,

distorted and obscured. The wise elder understood that this was how things were. But something about him was still missing the ice, where everything was radiant, absolute, unforgiving. Although he liked the idea of the uneven terrain, he couldn't live there. Thus, he found himself abandoned on an island between land and ice, oblivious to both. And this was the cause of his pain.

Oninitibeci – However, given the intentionally fictional character of the scene, I think that the allegorical fable that Keynes blows in the ears of the dying Wittgenstein, being pure Jarman's invention, should be seen, strictly speaking, as what Jarman himself would have liked to say to Wittgenstein on his deathbed. Not, of course, to reproach him, but rather to give visibility to Wittgenstein's utopian desire to "stay between", on an "island between land and ice", "alien to both". Neither land, nor ice...; nor liberalism, nor state totalitarianism...; nor this / nor that...; neither / nor...; break with the logical principle of excluded middle, but not to fix – according to the principles of *Hegelian dialectic logic* or according to the principles of *fuzzy logic* – one or more new places, one or more new identities between the Hamletian doubt of "to be or not to be"; but, simply, transit through – in a Derridian way – the two antagonistic poles of a binary opposition. I am tempted, then, to say that the allegorical-fictional picture of Wittgenstein's dying in Jarman's eyes *is not* that of dying lucidly aware of the inevitability of economic liberalism, that is, of the impossibility of materializing, in the inevitable friction of the earthly world, an utopia of building an egalitarian and just communal society that was, at the time, supposedly being built by the Soviet Union of Socialist Republics. Perhaps, this "explains" the surprising entry on the scene – in the scene of the death of Wittgenstein – of a Keynes' Derridean spectrum. But also the surprising absence of a radically political and educational dialogue with Wittgenstein's work in a book that, like Peters', bears the title "Education, Wittgenstein and the problem of rationality".

MP – A Wittgensteinian-inspired research programme in philosophy of education would have much to offer a similarly oriented social theory in the realm of education.²⁸

Oninitibeci – Why a Wittgensteinian-inspired research in the realm of education have something to offer to a similarly oriented social theory?

Iniwataale – The text seems to suggest that a Wittgensteinian research in the realm of education would have to be a similarly oriented social theory. But I think that a program in the realm of education inspired by Wittgenstein produces educational practices based on *forms of life*. In this sense, I think we should have to talk about an education that articulates *forms of life* and its own problematizations. An education that is organized on the basis of *forms of life* is concerned with telling their own stories, for example, taking the practice of painting the houses of Ndebele women in the environment in which they are situated, articulating it with the cosmogony and color metrics of this people, and not merely looking for in this practice some similarities with Euclidean geometry. I think this is a way not to be bewitched by a single way of seeing. This means a therapeutic education that fights against the bewitchment of language, of theories, of concepts, and so on.

LW – It was correct that our considerations must not be scientific ones. The feeling 'that it is possible, contrary to our preconceived ideas, to think this or that' a whatever that may mean a could be of no interest to us. (The pneumatic conception of thinking.) And we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. All

²⁸ Peters, op. cit, p. 218.

explanation must disappear, and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light a that is to say, its purpose a from the philosophical problems. These are, of course, not empirical problems; but they are solved through an insight into the workings of our language, and that in such a way that these workings are recognized *despite* an urge to misunderstand them. The problems are solved, not by coming up with new discoveries, but by assembling what we have long been familiar with. Philosophy is a struggle against the bewitchment of our understanding by the resources of our language.²⁹

Iniwatadigini – It seems to me that when Peters brings Foucault at this point in his book, he is only trying to reinforce his picture of rationality as a process that takes place in the course of history. In this case, it is Foucault, more than any other thinker, that relates rationality to acts of governmentality. The so-called police reason, let’s say so. But it is in the next section of the book that the main question is brought up, which is how to deal with rationalities that are contextual, contingent, situated, and that make up various types of rationality. It can be seen, with this, that there is no abandonment of the traditional picture of reason. Actually, there are two points in relation to Wittgenstein that do not seem to me to be contemplated in the perspective proposed by Peters. The first is that Wittgenstein deconstructs both perennial and contextual pictures, and therefore there would be no picture of rationality possible neither contingently nor in a timeless way. The second point is in relation to the word “practice”, which apparently in Peters’ book remains assimilated to the same way of understanding presented by Dewey and Rorty. On the other hand, it seems to me that when Wittgenstein uses the words “practice” and “praxis”, he relates them to “forms of life”, and, with this, separates them from the old dichotomy with the word “theory”. It is just at this point that we can see that it is not exactly rationalities that concerns Wittgenstein, but *forms of life* – at least it seems to me to be so. We rather would have in fact multiple forms of life.

Iniwatadigini – Perhaps Wittgenstein is present there to exemplify the constitution of a rationality closer to the question of the state and governmentality. Because, in the next section of the book Peters makes use of a definition of rationality as a language game.

MP – A language-game approach to the political economy of cybernetical rationality which is at once contextual, historical and evolutionary, seems an appropriate means for mapping our technological culture. Such a view is demanded in relation to the rapidly shifting history of technological reason and the emergence of the concept of techno-science, that springs from the French tradition of historical epistemology dating from the work of Bachelard, Canguilhem, Hottois, Foucault and Lyotard.³⁰

Iniwataale – It is interesting to note how Peters searched for a definition of rationality that fits in language games. He highlighted the contingency and variety of ways of reasoning and thinking using the idea of *family resemblances* as a resource. But a language game can be seen in different ways. One of them, for example, as including other natural beings in its constitution.

AM – As language games, that is, modes of interaction of human bodies, not with an abstract totality we used to call “nature”, but with the bodies of other natural beings guided by interwoven rules in communal forms of life. Rules are agreements that humans establish among themselves and among other natural beings to achieve shared communal purposes. In some games, rules must function as normative standards, that is, they must guide, without any

²⁹ Wittgenstein, 2009, § 109.

³⁰ *Ib.*, p. 238.

ambiguity, how the beings involved in the game must interact so that the purpose of the game is unequivocally achieved because only of the normative standards that were able to ensure the reproduction of the game, the perpetuality of its memory. [...] Think of a human being weaving a garment. It is only possible if he or she has natural beings – thread and needles – at his/her disposal to enable weaving, but also an algorithm or normative standard to knit the thread, negotiate with needles, thread and other human beings. If it is followed to the letter, the normative standard will allow him or her to weave the apparel. Without other natural beings as active parts in the agreement, human beings would not have produced any language game. Every language game is hybrid. Co-produced by human beings and other natural beings.³¹

Gobaagadi – “Every language game ...” sounds pretty much like a theory.

TE – ³²



Iniwatadigini – After your speech, Iniwataale, and after seeing Espitia’s mola and reading Miguel’s quotation, I was wondering what is the meaning of this search for a conceptualization of reason in Wittgensteinian terms. Wittgenstein is an author who clearly avoids theorizing. I see this same problem when trying to create a kind of sentimental or affective reason in Wittgenstein, such as the “heart-reasoning” by Guerrero. It is as if we are twisting the old concept of reason to adapt it in some way to Wittgenstein’s claims. People who act and live in a form of life do not primarily seek to know what something is rather than to understand how to use it.

³¹ Miguel, 2017.

³² Mola made by Tulia Espitia. Tamayo (2017) narrates how the molas, artwork created among Gunadule indigenous women and men from Colombia, are woven by practicing three types of synchronous *language games*: when the Gunadule cacique sings, there’s the *argal* - which he does sometimes as a translator - and the women go on weaving the Mola. Fabricating the shapes of the words, they all act in line with their cosmogony, since developing the practice of weaving is a way to materialize the rituals and the meaning effects of beliefs associated with the fabric.

MP – This is not an investigation of the world but rather a step removed—a meta-activity that seeks agreement to resolve conceptual confusions that arise in our use of concepts.³³

Iniwatadigini – I would ask whether Wittgenstein is really working in the sphere of metalanguage, or, instead, questioning the search for conceptualization that arises from our crave for explanations in philosophy.

Iniwataale – Is the purpose of the book to describe the uses of reason in different discursive fields, or is it trying to explain the meaning of rationality for Wittgenstein?

MP – There is a great deal more work to be done here, not only at the level of philosophical argument which, proceeding from a Hegelian interpretation of the later Wittgenstein, must attempt to develop and further refine a historicist theory of rationality and knowledge, but also at the philosophical-historical level of mapping out and examining conceptual similarities among a series of converging intellectual traditions in true dialogical fashion.³⁴

Iniwatadigini – Would we not have here the refinement of a historical theory of the rationality of knowledge?

Oninitibeci – It would not be precisely the deconstructionist, decolonial and non-dogmatic aspects in Wittgenstein’s therapeutic philosophizing the most powerfully democracy pedagogical weapon to be used to deconstruct the purposes and values globally imposed by the religious dogma of neoliberalism daily disseminated in our schools?

Gobaagadi – My general impression is that Peters’ book has not been published for us to agree with it or not in the first place, or for us to say what are the crucial differences between us and him that would at the same time serve as criteria for evaluating *his* work. In an academic panorama in which several different images of Wittgenstein are circulating and continuously debating with each other without much possibility of great agreement about what his philosophy really is, nobody can seriously assume that her/his vision is more correct than anyone else’s.³⁵ Peters’ work actually has an extraordinary value in itself just by being published. If it weren’t for the amazing opportunity to read it, debates like ours would not even be possible. So, the question is rather, as it seems to me, the service that this book renders in bringing into the scene in the philosophy of education a philosopher so rarely seen in this particular stage, and in showing his importance in comparison with several much better known and publicized philosophical movements in the 20th and 21st century in the area of language, hermeneutics, genealogical and pragmatic discussions. After all, it is really a great pleasure to have a reading of such a quality, in which a wide range of discussed thoughts can be put into a dialogue in a really fruitful way with Wittgenstein. In this respect, which is what matters most, Peters’ achievement crowns with success and brilliance his long bibliographic production, his restless, anticipatory and innovative vision, his importance as a thinker for the decolonial discussions in pedagogy, and his indisputable contribution to awakening among us a debate as vibrant as the one we have just held here. So we have now the chance to do just the other way around: measuring *our* own performance by the criteria of his vision of the problem.

³³ *Ib.*, p. 234.

³⁴ *Ib.*, p. 217.

³⁵ Cf. Biletzki, 2003; Stern, 2006.

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