

CRITICAL NOTICE

Starting with Wittgenstein

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Following the recent 2010 publication of Arif Ahmed's *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations* in their *Reader's Guide* series of introductions to the thinking of major philosophers, comes yet another volume from Continuum about Wittgenstein. This time the aim is to facilitate the student's initiation into both the earlier and the later philosophy. Presented as an addition to their *Starting With* philosophical series, Chon Tejedor's book, unlike Ahmed's, is targeted not at second and third year undergraduates but at 'first year students starting out in philosophy' (*blurb*). This is evidently a genuine need that Continuum seeks to satisfy. As so often transpires, the advertised 200 pages the book is said to contain, resolve into only 175 pages of main text, to which can be added a welcome paucity of notes (one page), a three page bibliography of primary and secondary sources, and a relatively brief index of not much above three pages. An acknowledgements section (one page) reveals the influences that have helped shape the author's views both about the *Tractatus* and about the *Investigations* via a list of philosophers most of whose names will be known to readers at all familiar with the vast secondary literature on Wittgenstein.

After four pages of obligatory biographical information, which are undistinguished except for her notable account of the four people in his life with whom Wittgenstein is said to have had 'close personal relationships', his 'long-term partner David Pinsent', Marguerite Respinger 'whom he considered marrying', Francis Skinner and Ben Richards, Chon Tejedor divides her book into two parts. The first and slightly longer part deals with the *Tractatus* and the second, via a gradual transition, with the *Investigations*. Throughout she goes out of her way to give her treatise the quality of a textbook, so that what are often regarded as difficult, complex and challenging concepts are explained 'in as clear a manner as possible' (Introduction, 4). A certain amount of repetition as a

means of emphasis would seem to be an inevitable feature of her unravelling of what in the first part becomes the metaphysics of the *Tractatus*. Furthermore, after each of the sections into which her chapters are divided, there appear *In Summary* listings detailing the major conclusions already arrived at in that section. Few authors have attempted to reach just this level of clarity in a book intended for the absolute beginner, and on the whole the method is successful: there is rarely if ever any doubt about the interpretation provided of what Wittgenstein is really about.

This is particularly true of the first chapter 'Language and Logic', where we are introduced to the distinction between a sentence and a proposition, and to the notion that the same sentence can be used to make a variety of statements about different possible ways that things might be, each statement being determinately true or false. Whilst this is an essential feature of a proposition, the fact, for example, that the same proposition can be expressed in different natural languages is by contrast an inessential feature of a proposition. Introducing the difficult notion of *logical analysis*, Tejedor presents the idea that the ordinary propositions of a natural language can ultimately be broken down into what are called 'elementary propositions' incapable of further analysis, and she stresses that there are no examples provided by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* of how a typical analysis of a proposition in a natural language into a completely analysed proposition might appear.

The 'elementary propositions' of Tejedor's *Tractatus* are composed of absolutely precise and unambiguous 'names', which have meanings that are 'unchangeable, indestructible and simple'. These meanings Wittgenstein calls 'objects'. Elementary propositions share with all propositions the ability to represent possibilities, and since in this case these are the most basic of possibilities, they are granted a special title called 'states of affairs'. Tejedor believes (*Ibid.*, 27) that Wittgenstein's reasons for accepting both that the sense of an ordinary proposition is determinate and that it is capable of being analysed into elementary propositions so constituted, are both complex and problematic, but in the final analysis it is hard to resist the conclusion that these 'reasons' boil down to the conclusion that these matters *could not have been otherwise*. Stressing that the issues surrounding these aspects of the *Tractatus* have led to major scholarly disagreements, and that in her opinion

Wittgenstein's treatment of them in his book is in many respects highly unsatisfactory (*Ibid.*, 30), she would still like to explain why Wittgenstein held to these particular ideas. She suggests that if the objects that make up states of affairs were all constantly changing or were being destroyed, there would be no guarantee that the possibilities being presented were precisely identifiable, and that if possible states of affairs did not have fixed boundaries, the very idea of a proposition that represents one particular possible state would simply disappear. But this has all the characteristics of arguing in a circle, so that beyond repeating that it belongs to the very concept of a proposition that sense be determinate, and that if so, propositions must be analysable into elementary propositions composed of simple and indestructible names, there would appear to be very little else to add.

Tejedor introduces at this point an important distinction between propositions so defined as having *sense*, and names so defined as having *meaning*, so that propositions cannot have *meaning* just as names cannot have *sense*. She goes on, however, to draw a distinction between what a proposition is *about*, and what it *represents*, which as she presents it may seem unclear. We may surmise that what it is actually pointing towards is the distinction between *objects* like the earth and the sun as they occur in a proposition like 'the sun goes round the earth' where this is *about* these objects irrespective of whether the proposition is true or false, and these *objects* as they occur in a true proposition like 'the earth goes round the sun' which *represents* the *actual* relationship between these objects as they occur in a proposition which is determinately true. On the other hand, we are free to see either proposition as *representing* a mere possibility, one which therefore has *sense*, and this is *more* than just a list of objects whose names *e.g.*, 'earth', 'sun', have a *meaning* expressing *only* what these propositions may be said to be *about*.

Tejedor continues by arguing, however, that according to the *Tractatus*, it would be grossly misleading to imagine that these examples of propositions are expressed by sentences containing ordinary words which have as their *meanings* day-to-day things like planets and stars which can change and be destroyed: what these ordinary propositions are *really* about, because

meanings as the ultimate building blocks of sense are simple, unchangeable and indestructible, are the ultimate constituents into which these ordinary propositions are in theory capable of being analysed. Once again, the amount of repetition here as a feature of emphasis, together with the final *In Summary* conclusions, reinforce the oddness of what from an ordinary perspective has all the appearance in the *Tractatus* of a sublime metaphysical thesis.

Tejedor ends her first chapter by discussing what she calls one of the most innovative aspects of the *Tractatus*, the notion of a truth-table, encapsulating the idea that for a proposition to have sense is for it to have a truth-value. This chapter is exemplary in its overall clarity of exposition, and provides just the right kind of background that might prompt students to ask those deeper questions about what the *Tractatus* so far is proposing, that are almost bound to arise in discussion.

The second chapter, 'Thoughts and the Self', begins by stressing *via Tractatus* 4.1 onwards, that philosophy is concerned with the logical clarification of thoughts, and that concepts like *thought*, the *mind* and the *self* have been mishandled, yet not by psychologists but by philosophers. According to Tejedor, at the time of the *Tractatus* Russell in particular had been responsible for the introduction of a psycho-philosophical hybrid approach to the relevant concepts which is at the root of some of the most entrenched problems of philosophy, a point she will take up later on in the chapter (*Ibid.*, 47).

The second section of her chapter is concerned with the idea of thoughts and propositions as *pictures*, where Tejedor's *thoughts* are arrangements of mental signs representing a possible way in which reality might be, a state which is the *sense* of that thought, and which can be communicated to others *via* a proposition with the same sense. This idea is extended into other media by introducing the notion of two and three dimensional *pictures* which can perform the same work as a proposition insofar as they have the same *sense*, and which therefore differ from the *thought* only insofar as they can be perceived through the senses. The famous magazine article about a lawsuit in which models were used to represent a Parisian car accident, and

which is said to have had a powerful effect on Wittgenstein, is used to clearly explain the point:

Imagine that, as part of a lawsuit, a (possible) car crash is represented in four different ways: by means of the written proposition 'the car struck the tree'; by means of the thought expressed by that proposition; by means of a model containing a miniature car and tree (as well as miniature houses, roads, etc.) ; and by means of a figurative painting of a car crashing into a tree (*Ibid.*, 53).

Tejedor expands her treatment of this question by explaining that the 'signs' in the particular medium actually employed to form the picture, are arranged in a way that mirrors the arrangement of elements in the actual state which is being depicted. These correlations are called the 'pictorial relationships' of the picture. Referring to 2.15, the *structure* of the picture is captured in these relationships, but all pictures also contain another feature, their *logical form*, which allows them ultimately to be logically analysed into elementary propositions consisting only of names with simple eternal meanings called *objects*. Once again, at the risk of a certain amount of repetition along the way, Tejedor explains that whilst paintings and models have a pictorial form distinct from their logical form, thoughts and propositions by contrast are the purest and most elegant kinds of pictures because they do not as described exhibit a separate pictorial form. She concludes by explaining that the term 'thought' is something of a blanket term covering a range of mental representations to include beliefs, memories and also sensory experiences.

The final sections of this chapter are devoted to the ideas of the *self* and of *solipsism*, and the first major claim that Tejedor wishes to make is that whilst Russell wrote repeatedly about the self and altered his viewpoint on it throughout his career, the *Tractatus* targets one particular view of the self to which he at one point adhered, the idea that selves are essentially *simple*, and are not therefore made up of elements. According to Tejedor, these simple selves are on Russell's assessment the legitimate subject matter of the psychologist, whose job it is to

investigate the notion of the simple self thinking or entertaining thoughts:

In Russell's view, a proposition such as 'I think that it is raining' should be understood as describing a relationship between something absolutely simple and indivisible (the simple self, the *I*) and a composite thought (the thought 'It is raining').
(*Ibid.*, 64)

Wittgenstein, on the other hand, whilst he does indeed assert that a thought is a *complex* arrangement of mental signs, is on Tejedor's view opposed to Russell's notion of a simple self, an idea which he regards as profoundly mistaken for the reason that the legitimate subject of psychology is instead the composite mind, made up of complex thoughts which can be propositionally expressed. To back up this claim, she quotes the famous *Tractatus* passages 5.54 - 5.5423).

There are clearly a number of questions here which require to be disentangled, and the first concerns what Russell actually thought. At the time of *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912), he certainly expresses the idea that the ego can be known by introspection, yet by the time of *The Analysis of Mind* (1921), in which he endorses neutral monism, he has come to believe that the mind can be constructed from sensory data. But if this programme can be carried out, it is arguable that the basic materials that enter into the construction would serve to 'build' complex thoughts and experiences of the kind that Tejedor's Wittgenstein is said to treat as the proper subject matter of psychology. Yet the *Tractatus* passages to which Tejedor refers are normally understood to be a reiteration of the point that the thinking subject is really a limit of the world rather than a part of it, so that whereas Russell's theory of judgement places the thinking subject very much *in* the world, Wittgenstein's criticism of that theory would appear to be claiming that what is to be discovered *in* the world are only in a Humean fashion the thoughts themselves. If this is what Tejedor means by saying that Wittgenstein is rejecting the idea of Russell's *simple* self, whilst endorsing the idea of the mind as a complex arrangement of thoughts, then her presentation at this point is at the very least a little misleading with its failure to introduce Wittgenstein's distinction between the psychological and the metaphysical self (5.641).

Furthermore, Tejedor takes her Russellian notion of the simple self that thinks or entertains thoughts, a self which is 'impenetrable' to other selves, to form the basis for an argument in favour of what she refers to as 'restrictive solipsism', the claim that I can think of myself as a simple self and of other things, and since things that cannot possibly be thought of do not exist, then the inability to think of other selves shows that they cannot be amongst the things which can be taken to exist. On the other hand, since Wittgenstein's self is the composite mind, then it is possible to represent my own mind and the minds of others in both language and thought. Indeed, restrictive solipsism collapses because it requires the ability to think of one's *self* as something essentially simple; and nothing simple can be represented in language or in thought. This conclusion is a reflection once again of what is often understood to be Wittgenstein's endorsement in the relevant passages of a Humean view of the self.

Certainly, if one looks at this charitably one can reinterpret Tejedor in a way which would allow for some accommodation with a more common understanding of 5.542, in which 'p says p', as against 'A believes that p', but her argument still leaves the impression, at least indirectly, that Russell is espousing a version of 'restrictive solipsism'; and it is not at all clear that he is. This is especially so if we are inclined to think of Russell as someone who at the time of the *Tractatus* wished to quantify over the private experiences of others as a proposal which at least makes *sense* as a component of some kind of metaphysically realist standpoint. Yet the sense in which Wittgenstein perhaps in the *Tractatus* and certainly later on would have been happy to talk of 'representing the experiences of one's self or of others in language or in thought' as Tejedor describes it, is *not* a sense in which he would have expressed the kind of metaphysical realism that Russell regards as having *sense*. The reason for this is primarily that the later philosophy treats this realism as a highly misleading *picture*; and it may also be rejected earlier as well (1). But on Tejedor's account it is left entirely open whether Wittgenstein would favour this kind of realism or not. Consequently, Tejedor's presentation with its failure to discuss solipsism in relation to the non-psychological *I* as the metaphysical subject mentioned in 5.62 and 5.641, makes it hard to resist the conclusion that in what is after all an elementary work, her reading of these passages is less helpful than it really ought to be.

It is also rather surprising that Tejedor decides to devote her final chapter on the earlier philosophy to 'Logic and Ethics', given that, as she admits, 'the *Tractatus* includes very few remarks that could be regarded as touching on ethical themes' (*Ibid.*, 89). Nevertheless, in the course of quoting Wittgenstein's famous remark to von Ficker, whilst recommending his work for publication, that the point of his book is an *ethical* one and, rather paradoxically, that its important part rests in what he has *not* written, Tejedor justifies the amount of space she devotes to this subject by stressing the centrality of ethics to the *Tractatus* even if, as conventionally understood, ethics plays very little part in it. The truth, of course, lies in Wittgenstein's very particular, not to say peculiar view of ethics, which she regards as subtle and frankly difficult (*Ibid.*, 97):

Ethics, for Wittgenstein, consists in having a clear sense of the fundamental contingency of the world and in valuing the world as a whole - the world as the totality of facts - in an absolute manner.....The ethical attitude consists in recognising the fundamental contingency of all facts and in valuing them absolutely as awe-inspiring, precious gifts. Finally, Wittgenstein's ethics runs counter to the traditional idea that freedom is a prerequisite of ethics. In Wittgenstein's view, there are no free choices to be made in this area (*Ibid.*).

Stressing that Wittgenstein's approach to ethics runs counter to three major strands in traditional thinking about ethics, that it can be expressed in words, that action and motivation are central to it, and that freedom is central to moral responsibility, Tejedor sees Wittgenstein gradually develop in the *Notebooks 1914 - 1918* an approach to ethics which eventually in the *Tractatus* comes to contradict those three major strands as they can be found in the thinking of Schopenhauer. This implies that Schopenhauer's deterministic outlook is ultimately opposed to Wittgenstein's insight that the world is fundamentally contingent and lacking in causal necessity, leading him to the conclusions that Tejedor outlines in the passage above.

Her account of Wittgenstein on ethics is comprehensive, if even a little repetitive, for what are once again good reasons in an introductory book. The reader, however, will inevitably be led to ask why in the space available, 25 pages should have been devoted to this subject when they might better have been allotted to a general discussion of all those sections from 6.4 onwards, those culminating in 6.54, a passage which itself has been at the centre of a continuing debate about Wittgenstein's ultimate intentions in the *Tractatus*, one that has been going on for the last two decades. As it is, Tejedor in her final conclusion to Part I of her book contents herself with the observation that the *Tractatus* aims to clarify the concept of 'senseful propositions', and that this involves clarifying how signs are used in propositions. Since this, however, cannot be *said* but only *shown*, 'it is not surprising that Wittgenstein should have regarded the remarks that make up the *Tractatus*, not as senseful remarks that say (or represent) possible states, but as elucidations or instructions lacking in sense' (*Ibid.*, 102).

In Section iii of her final chapter on the earlier philosophy, Tejedor reiterates how important is the claim, one at the very heart of the *Tractatus*, that propositions must be bipolar if they are to be informative; and since it is a requirement of the determinacy of sense that ordinary propositions are the result of applying logical operations to elementary propositions consisting of names with simple meanings, it follows that elementary propositions must be logically independent of each other. This also applies to *states of affairs* as the *senses* of elementary propositions (*Ibid.*, 85).

But when Wittgenstein finally returned to philosophy in 1929, as described by Tejedor in her brief biographical account of what followed his life as a schoolteacher subsequent to the *Tractatus*, she emphasises that one of the considerations that led to its demise is that many of our ordinary propositions *are* logically dependent on each other in an obvious way. She provides as an example the proposition 'this ball is red all over at time t' which rules out the possibility of its being at that time blue. But how can these ordinary propositions then result from applying logical operations to *logically independent* elementary propositions? Since colour propositions *exclude* one another, a point that Wittgenstein actually notes in 6.3751, but which at that time he must have believed

that he could accommodate, and which he came to reflect upon in more detail in 'Some Remarks on Logical Form', there began the process of abandoning the idea of the logical independence of elementary propositions. This led him to doubt the significance of logical analysis itself, and the very idea that sense is determinate. Consequently, he came to question the *point* of asserting that ordinary propositions are capable of being analysed into elementary propositions considered as arrangements of names with simple meanings (*Ibid.*, 110).

Tejedor is now firmly into the first few pages of her fourth chapter 'Language and Use' which commences Part II on 'The Later Wittgenstein'. She has just provided an exceptionally clear account of what has been called the 'colour exclusion problem' and the role it plays in the crumbling of what she refers to as the entire conceptual edifice of the *Tractatus*. Whilst a number of readers may be inclined to see this approach as oversimplistic, with its highly traditional picture of Wittgenstein as the instigator of yet another altogether *new* outlook on philosophical problems, one which culminates in the *Philosophical Investigations*, it is arguable that in a wholly elementary introduction to his thinking this is as good an approach as any, and a solid basis for further refined reflection. Tejedor, then, sees Wittgenstein turning away from the idea of logical analysis, urging his reader to look and see how language is ordinarily *used*. Section iii of her new chapter therefore accounts in a traditional way for the notion of family resemblance as the replacement for the idea that concepts have fixed boundaries or 'essences', illustrating her point by quoting § 66 whilst explaining how the notion of a *game* helps to break the hold of the irresistible idea that concepts have determinacy of sense, without implying that all concepts are of the family resemblance kind.

This leads to her equally traditional account of the Augustinian Picture of Language, as the expression of three major assumptions which Wittgenstein questions: a) that language has a uniformity or essence; b) that acquiring a language involves a process of 'ostensive pointing'; and c) that the meaning of a word is the object for which it stands. Wittgenstein undermines these assumptions by introducing the notion of *language-games* as the expression of human activities pursued for particular purposes. This is actually quite a neat account of what Wittgenstein is

about, and captures the distinctly anti-metaphysical thrust of the later philosophy. It has of course been interpreted as the expression of an inherently relativist standpoint insofar as it suggests that human beings pursue, for example, the moral language-game, the religious language game or even the scientific language-game for particular purposes. If each language-game is then said to operate in accordance with specific criteria which are internal to the game, this encourages an idea which is anathema to the metaphysically inclined. Tejedor does not actually explore these side-avenues, but reminds us that Wittgenstein uses the idea of an imaginary interlocutor who adopts Augustine's point of view as a stance which he is opposing in dialogue throughout these early sections.

It will come as no surprise that Tejedor's shopkeeper is used by Wittgenstein to express the idea that words do not all function in the same way, so that 'apple' instructs him to pick fruit from the apple-drawer, 'red' instructs him to check a colour-sample, and 'five' instructs him to recite the series of cardinal numbers up to five. But 'five' is clearly not the word for an object in the way that 'apple' may appear to be. Might there nevertheless be some aspect of the ordinary use of language that conforms to Augustine's picture? This leads to the story of the builders, and here Tejedor's point is that whilst superficially it may appear that the builders' tale conforms to this picture, Wittgenstein points out in § 6 that understanding 'Slab!' means *acting* in a particular way as the result of training. This leads to further reflection on the idea of language as an *activity*, and to the countless varieties of *acting* that serve as the foundation for our countless language-games (§ 23). Her highly traditional reading of all those sections is very much in conformity with an interpretative approach suitable for the absolute beginner.

Chon Tejedor extends her account by suggesting that the Augustinian philosopher will reply to this that all names *as* proper names *and* general terms in a natural language, have meanings as objects which are taught by means of *ostension* (*Ibid.*, 127), where this means pointing at objects whilst repeating these names. Wittgenstein's reply to this is that ostensive definition is subject to misinterpretation in every case (§ 28). Of course, one can always explain that 'red' is meant to pick out a *colour* and not a *shape*, for example, but this presupposes a familiarity with what it is for an

item to be of a particular *colour*. If attempting to learn one's very first word is construed on her Augustinian model, Tejedor argues that 'there is no guarantee that I will learn what my pointing, repeating teacher intends me to learn' (*Ibid.*, 129). Ostension on her view cannot possibly form the foundation for linguistic acquisition if there were such a wide scope for error in interpretation, for it is then surely unlikely that language would be able to function at all. Her answer, and by implication Wittgenstein's answer to this problem is 'training into the practice or the activity of using that word', a 'training that can only come from observing how the word is used in language' (*Ibid.*, 132), something which is 'necessary and sufficient' for learning the meaning of that word.

If this answer seems in any way inadequate, it is because the practice of looking at how other people use a certain word in order to gain a grasp of its meaning, is a practice that is followed only by someone who is already master of a language. When Wittgenstein refers to *training* in relation to acquiring a language in the first place, he really does mean something which is occurring at a more primitive level, and here it is worthwhile recalling those primitive forms of language referred to in § 5 which a child uses as it learns to talk: training is much closer to, though not identical with a kind of stimulus-response conditioning. The teacher who provides his 'ostensive teaching of words' really does *point* to objects as he directs the child's attention to them whilst uttering the relevant words, so forming, as Wittgenstein puts it (§ 6), an *association* between words and things ; and whilst there is unlimited scope here for what can be called *misunderstanding* as it may occur in this unique context, the 'training' partly consists in giving the child the 'benefit of the doubt' as he is gradually inculcated into the practice. There is no real guarantee that he will 'catch on', but if he is a normal child the chances are very great that after, say, a number of misses he will eventually score a hit and be said colloquially to *grasp* what is required of him. This is very much what *training* often consists in.

Having disposed more or less successfully with Wittgenstein's Augustine, Tejedor turns in her next chapter on 'Rules and Meaning' to consider Wittgenstein's objections to what she calls

mind-based models of meaning, one of which relates to the notion of a rule. But in order to properly understand just what Tejedor has in mind here, it is worthwhile reflecting that when we are inclined to say of the child that he has at last *grasped* the rule, or that he has finally got it *in mind*, these ways of speaking are not in themselves objectionable. They become the object of Wittgenstein's attack only when they are viewed by *philosophers* outwith the ordinary contexts in which we talk about the child's correctly 'following the rule', 'grasping the concept', or finally 'getting a hold of the right idea'. Tejedor has a quite specific target in mind when she refers to 'the rule-based account of meaning' which Wittgenstein regards as 'profoundly mistaken', for this account employs a model in which 'understanding the meaning of a word involves grasping the rule that describes the various ways in which the word is used in language - and this rule is a mental sign: it is a sign that comes before the mind' (*Ibid.*, 139). This on Tejedor's assessment has the unacceptable implication for Wittgenstein that 'you can understand the meaning of a word without ever actually using the word in language'.

We are presumably to take it for granted here that this is not at all to deny that ordinarily one could have a proper grasp of the use of a word without ever having used it in writing or in speech, or a proper grasp of the rules of chess without ever having played the game. As in all cases of this kind, the acid test of whether this claim is justified is to see whether one can use the word correctly in practice, or illustrate one's knowledge of chess by correctly answering specific questions about the game or, even better, by showing that one can properly play it. Furthermore, when Tejedor argues that part of Wittgenstein's objection to 'the rule-based account of meaning' is that not all sections of language are governed by rules, one is forced to ask what is being meant here by a rule:

...it is worth considering what Wittgenstein means by a rule here. As we saw before, a rule is here a mental sign that describes, exhaustively, all of the ways in which a word (or a chess piece) is used. According to Wittgenstein, not all areas of language are governed by such definite, exhaustive, rules. In fact, in

most areas of language, we use words without there being a rule that covers all possible contingencies (*Ibid.*,141).

But whilst this secondary conclusion is undoubtedly valid, this is not the point that Tejedor wishes to extract from Wittgenstein's reflections on a certain conception of rules as mental *signs*, for this is the quite separate and very familiar point that rules as mental *signs* do not carry their own interpretations along with them. This, however, invites the conclusion that what is then needed as a solution is a rule for interpreting *this* rule, given that anything that one does can be regarded as following the rule; and this leads to an infinite regress. Tejedor's down-to-earth answer, following Wittgenstein, is in this case to point towards the idea of a *practice* of rule-following, as captured in § 202, because it is the philosopher's tendency to present rules as 'mental signs requiring interpretation', that 'leads to the collapsing of a distinction that is central to the notion of a rule: the distinction between correct and incorrect application' (*Ibid.*, 145). The interpretative model is 'conceptually confused'.

This account of the paradox of rule-following as expressed in § 201, and its 'solution' as expressed in § 202, an account which identifies the custom or practice of following a rule as something which is closer to *obeying orders* than *interpreting signs* (*Ibid.*, 146), closely conforms to at least one prevailing account of what Wittgenstein is doing in the related passages, and is notable for its neglect of Saul Kripke's interpretation of a Wittgenstein who supplies a 'sceptical solution' to a sceptical problem. This failure to discuss Kripke is not necessarily a fault. Insofar as Tejedor considers Wittgenstein's approach in its own terms, she avoids any over-complications that may be argued to be consequent upon diverting the discussion in directions which on the assessment of many commentators are not particularly Wittgensteinian.

It is also worth noting that towards the end of this chapter we are introduced to the idea that a practice is not necessarily the practice of a *community* of speakers, and can be the practice of a 'single, solitary person' (*Ibid.*, 152). In support of this claim we are provided with the example of a baby abandoned on a desert island from birth who through time is able to

institute a practice of playing a game with an abandoned pack of cards washed up on shore. But this example is offered without any background assessment of the fundamental issues it would usually be employed to illustrate. On the one hand, our ability to imagine it provides the ground for separating *via* Hacker the genesis of an ability from its exercise, yet on the other it can be taken to assume the presence of Augustine's child who can think only not yet speak (§ 32). We are also told that a practice for Wittgenstein is not something that can happen only once, that it relates to a *way* of living. Yet this is integral to the reason *why* no course of action can be determined by a rule if every course of action can be in accord with it : this expression of the sceptical paradox results from regarding the way forward at a particular point in time as a 'stab in the dark', the result of an arbitrary decision made outwith the context of the *practice*. But it is only within this practice that Wittgenstein would regard any decision about what is or is not in accord with the rule to gain the *sense* that it has for its practitioners.

The penultimate chapter on 'Sensations and Private Languages' once again presents sensation-language as understood by Wittgenstein's philosophical opponent, to be the expression of a 'mind-based' model of meaning, and here it is worthwhile considering Tejedor's reasons for deciding why this model is found by the 'Cartesian' to be so attractive. Because the gesture of *pointing* at a tree, for example, can be radically misinterpreted, it cannot be the means by which anyone can learn the meaning of the word 'tree':

When it comes to sensations, however, things seem to be very different, because sensations, in the Cartesian view, are transparent to the person who is experiencing them. I simply cannot be mistaken about the fact that I am having a sensation nor about the nature of this sensation: I am infallible about my own sensations. Since it is impossible for me to misinterpret my own sensations, this view says, why should mental ostension not be regarded as the basis of meaning - at least when it comes to the meaning of sensation words ? (*Ibid.*, 163)

The idea of a private language arises, therefore, on Tejedor's view, from a belief in this direct and infallible knowledge of one's sensations prior to the acquisition of a public language, combined with a belief in the ability to point to those sensations inwardly in the course of endowing a sensation term 'S' with a meaning by association. This is her understanding of § 243 and § 258, and the first answer that Wittgenstein provides to her Cartesian is that Descartes' conception of knowledge is fundamentally flawed because knowledge claims only make sense in circumstances where doubt and error can arise. The key question she then raises on Wittgenstein's behalf is whether one can make a mistake in practice when talking about one's own sensations, a question which she finds to be 'very tricky' (*Ibid.*, 169).

But this proves *not* to be the right question for her to ask, because it leads to the conclusion that in the absence of our possession of a public language, the nature of our sensations would *not* in fact in the required sense be transparent and self-intimating ; and from this she deduces that only in a public context can we be *clear* about the true nature of our sensations. But Wittgenstein does not argue that our sensations are *not* transparent and self-intimating in the way that the 'Cartesian' requires, only that this is an idea that, when doing philosophy, we surreptitiously carry over into contexts in which it can have no genuine application. If with Tejedor we correctly conclude that claims to knowledge make no sense in contexts where doubt and error do not arise, a far better approach is to agree with Wittgenstein in the first place that our first person sensation ascriptions are not true or false according to the application of criteria (§ 288). From this we are free to draw the conclusion with Wittgenstein that whilst the obvious transparency we attribute to our sensations in situations where we do indeed experience new sensations without having any names readily to hand to apply to them, does certainly rest on our prior possession of a public language, it is just not true that these sensations cannot be said in these circumstances to be wholly transparent to us. This helps to explain the 'Cartesian' (and empiricist) tendency to argue that if our sensations did not *already* present themselves prior to language in every respect exactly as they are, with the distinct 'qualitative feels' that philosophers readily attribute to them, it is hard to see *why* we are so

willing to describe pains as 'stabbing', 'dull', or throbbing, or why we should refer to Tejedor's acute pangs of hunger as inherently distinguishable from many proper kinds of pains.

It follows, therefore, that the philosopher who claims that because his sensations are presented to him with their own inherent *representational contents*, this would remain so had he been born as an isolated individual like a born-Crusoe, is taken to task by Wittgenstein, not because he must be telling a lie about how he imagines that things would in these circumstances appear to him, but because he believes that this can retain its sense in isolation from his prior possession of a public language. Tejedor, on the other hand, argues as follows:

...Wittgenstein suggests that it is a mistake to think of sensations as if their nature was clear to us before we have language. On the contrary, in his view, learning a language involves learning to categorize our sensations in particular ways. For instance, learning English involves learning to divide my pain sensations into throbbing pains and stabbing pains, and dull pains. (*Ibid.*, 170)

She goes on to say that experiencing pain in itself does not allow its division into these categories, because this arises only from possession of a language. But this for good reason is not what Wittgenstein says. What he does say is that we learn the *concept* 'pain' when we learn language (§ 384), just as we know that this colour is red because we have 'learnt English' (§ 381). This, however, is not a philosophical thesis but a reminder of the circumstances in which we acquire concepts. If he does *not* tell us that it is *through* learning a language that we learn how to divide our pains into those which are either throbbing, stabbing or dull, this is because this claim has the character *either* of a verifiable hypothesis, *or* of a rather empty statement which has all the appearance of telling us something of which we cannot already fail to be aware.

In the first case, one might imagine as an example a researcher who claims that feral or wolf children abandoned from birth, children on all fours who growl and behave like wolves, are quite unable to express their feelings of pain in anything like the kind of detail we would normally

expect, *because* this is the sort of thing that actually requires training in a social environment, one allowing the child to be inculcated into a practice of talking properly about his different kinds of pains. Whatever one might think of this, it is hardly the kind of proposal that we can imagine Wittgenstein offering as a verifiable hypothesis, for he is just not in the business of providing this kind of explanation. In the second case, there seems little point in saying that it is our acquisition of a language that allows us to divide our pains into pains of different *kinds*. This seems like a misguided attempt to issue a special *philosophical* conclusion that amounts to nothing more than an expression of the platitude that we talk about the world by using language. At most, it might be assumed to be a way of directing us to the kinds of circumstances in which terms like 'stabbing pain' are actually used.

Tejedor has nevertheless drawn our attention to an interesting feature of our thinking, because philosophers are often inclined to say, for example, that whereas animals *feel* pain, they do not have the *concept* of pain. What Wittgenstein does say, referring to a tendency to claim that animals do not talk because they lack the mental capacity (§ 28), is *not* that they do not think, and that is why they do not talk, but simply that they do not talk: except for the most primitive forms of language involving, say, signalling, signing, gesturing as a means of warning, *etc.*, they are not involved in commanding, praying, questioning, recounting and other specifically human forms of activity. But the extent to which they are or are not is largely a matter of degree depending both on the circumstances and on the species being considered. The tendency to say that animals do not think because they do not talk, largely turns on taking an ability to express propositional attitudes as the criterion for being able to *think*, and this as a *philosophical* decision is wholly arbitrary. If thinking is a widely ramified concept (*Zettel*, § 110), then the tendency to see expression in behaviour as the criterion for being able to think, alters the philosophical landscape, so that the ability to think, and even to possess primitive concepts, will become relative to the sophistication that any piece of behaviour will be understood to express. This invites the conclusion that the tendency to say that animals can *experience* pain without having the *concept* of pain - or even with some philosophers that animals cannot *experience* pain because they cannot *think* - so often

depends upon having become party to misleading *pictures* about what it is to think, to experience pain, and about what it is to have a concept. These pictures give rise to puzzles because they divorce these notions from the ordinary circumstances in which we can observe how they are actually used.

It is now clear that Tejedor errs in thinking that one can deny that we have in a 'Cartesian' fashion infallible pre-linguistic knowledge of our sensations, by claiming that it is only through the acquisition of a public language that we can separate our sensations into different categories, because it is so often unclear just what this claim can be taken to mean. In a final part of her chapter (*Ibid.*, 171 - 173) she sums up these various features of her account of Wittgenstein on private language with what has by now become a familiar amount of repetition.

The final conclusion to Part II of her book briefly sees Wittgenstein throughout his life as a philosopher who set himself the task of clarifying concepts, and of having helped to provide the tools that prevent conceptual confusion, so that his work has 'a strong therapeutic dimension' (*Ibid.*, 173). It is suggested that a permanent cure to philosophical sickness could mean reaching a stage at which one might even be able to stop doing philosophy. Whether Tejedor is entirely correct in surmising that Wittgenstein saw most philosophy as intellectually dishonest and not part of a morally good life, and that this was his reason for persuading his students to leave the academic arena and pursue worthy manual labour, is obviously a matter for debate, given that a more positive outlook on his general methodology can be discovered in his work. Certainly, getting people of high mathematical ability, for example, to spend their time doing manual labour would normally be understood to be encouraging a highly irresponsible waste of talent. There is nothing disingenuous, however, as Tejedor initially hints, in Wittgenstein's reference to his producing his own oxygen in the stifling atmosphere of Cambridge, whilst encouraging others to leave in order to find relief elsewhere, since this is no more than an expression of his nature as a genius: his natural ability to recreate himself independently of the effects of his surrounding environment, is something which he would appear to have believed that his students were simply unable to do.

It will be obvious from this assessment that Chon Tejedor has produced a good overall

account of Wittgenstein's ambitions, even if we allow for those sections which have come in for criticism, for these in the main relate to issues which provide subjects for continuing debate, and in doing so offer excellent examples for classroom discussion. On balance, the distinguishing feature of this introduction to Wittgenstein, its 'textbook' quality, captured in Chon Tejedor's obvious attempt to achieve clarity, especially in regard to her account of the *Tractatus*, is something which is bound to make it readily assimilable by those approaching it for the first time.

Certainly, now that new volumes about the *Tractatus*, the *Philosophical Investigations* or about both are appearing just about every month, many of them more than competent in their presentations of his work, it is almost impossible to assess which treatments will pass the test of time and which, after a period of even initial success, will fail to resist sinking beneath the waves into permanent obscurity. As already noted, Continuum has itself recently published a new volume by Arif Ahmed on the *Investigations* in their *Readers Guide* series, and also in that series is the relatively well-known and on its appearance much admired treatment of the *Tractatus* by Roger White (2006), a book accompanied at that time and in succeeding years by many other offerings on the same subject from other publishers.

However, the positive side to all of this is that even if, as we are constantly being reminded, Wittgenstein's status in the current philosophical community and his relevance to 'current debate' has diminished considerably over the last thirty years, it is difficult to resist the impression that the level of scholarly attention that is now being received by his work has never before been equalled. This can act as the catalyst for reconsidering the role that his thinking *ought* to be playing within the prevailing philosophical milieu.

ENDNOTES

- (1) Cora Diamond: "Does Bismarck Have a Beetle in His Box? " in *The New Wittgenstein* ed. Alice Crary & Rupert Read (Routledge: London, 2000).

As do most philosophers, Derek McDougall fondly remembers the publication of his very first paper. This was in MIND in 1972. He has, however, continued to worry whether Gilbert Ryle's comment that "the matter is stated well and almost interestingly" referred more to the quality of its treatment rather than to Ryle's aversion to the nature of its subject (religious belief). Other papers have appeared in organs including PHILOSOPHY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH and PHILOSOPHIA. His latest, on Wittgenstein, appears in the 2008 edition of JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH, with a further in PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS January 2010.