

Starting with Wittgenstein, by CHON TEJEDOR, LONDON: CONTINUUM INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING GROUP, 2011; pp. 183.

Starting with Wittgenstein is part of Continuum's "Starting with ..." series, which aims to give easily understandable introductions to the ideas of the most influential philosophers. Chon Tejedor's book begins with a short introduction in which Wittgenstein's life is very briefly outlined. The main part of the book is divided into two parts. The first part, *The Earlier Wittgenstein*, concerns the theory Wittgenstein developed in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. The focus of the second part, *The later Wittgenstein*, is on his *Philosophical Investigations*. Every part consists of three chapters, and ends with a short conclusion in which the most important points are briefly summarized in just a few sentences. In addition, the content of most subsections of the chapters are followed by a summary.

Part One begins with the chapter *Language and Logic*. Some basic ideas of Wittgenstein's early philosophy are explained there. Tejedor starts with the distinction between Wittgenstein's notions of sentence and proposition, the importance he saw in logical analysis, his distinction between sense and meaning, and his use of truth-tables, because they "[...] are of fundamental importance to our later understanding of some of Wittgenstein's most intriguing insights: insights on the pictoriality of propositions and thoughts, on the self, on ethics, and, ultimately, on the status of the *Tractatus* itself" [p. 7].

The second chapter *Thoughts and the Self* is dedicated to Wittgenstein's view on the relation between thoughts and propositions, his picture theory of language and his arguments against solipsism. His demarcation between thoughts and propositions is explained as follows. A thought is, according to Wittgenstein, a mental picture representing a possible state of the world that cannot be perceived by our senses. Propositions are also representations of a possible state, but they are made up of words, which can be perceived by our senses. Tejedor goes on to explain why Wittgenstein argues against Bertrand Russell's view of a simple thinking self. Wittgenstein believed in minds that are combinations of thoughts, because only this notion of the self is consistent with the aims and methods of psychology. The chapter closes with a comprehensible commentary on Wittgenstein's argument against solipsism. The solipsistic position is attacked by being established on the wrong assumption that selves are simple.

Part One ends with the chapter *Logic and Ethics*. In this chapter, Tejedor initially analyzes Wittgenstein's critique of traditional ethics and the influence of Schopenhauer's moral philosophy on his philosophy. The most important – and often repeated – statement in this chapter is that "[...] the point of the *Tractatus* is an ethical one [...]" [p. 96], although it does not establish an ethical theory. Tejedor takes the view that Wittgenstein tries to clarify concepts with the

aim of getting a better understanding of the world and concluding that we cannot talk about ethics.

Language and Use, the first chapter of Part Two, begins with some remarks on Wittgenstein's life between 1921 and 1929. Tejedor stresses that the later Wittgenstein pursued in his *Philosophical Investigations* the same aims as in his *Tractatus*, but he changed the methods by which he wanted to achieve them. It is emphasized that Wittgenstein denied some of the very basic ideas of his first major work, including "[...] the view that concepts have fixed essences and the view that logical analysis is central to conceptual clarification" [p. 107]. After explaining this radical change of mind upon giving up the idea of the logical independence of elementary propositions, an analysis of Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance follows. He introduces this notion because he is convinced that most concepts, along with the concept of language, do not have a clear and precise essence. Therefore, logical analysis is useless. We have to look at how a word is used in ordinary language, if we want to specify a concept. Wittgenstein's picture of language, which he developed in his *Tractatus*, is shown to be identical with St Augustine's view. Thereafter, Tejedor examines very accurately how Wittgenstein used in his *Investigations* language-games to demonstrate the impossibility of the theory he defended in his first major work. The chapter concludes with an outline of Wittgenstein's new view on meaning and his central assumption that the meaning of a word is the way in which it is used in a language-game: "For the later Wittgenstein meaning is use" [p. 135].

Tejedor checks an objection against this assumption in the fifth chapter, *Rules and Meaning*, and meets it with the reasons Wittgenstein presented against the objection. Wittgenstein's view on meaning may face the objection that meaning is something existing in our minds: The correct use of a word does not guarantee the understanding of its meaning, because a person may use a word appropriately by just parroting. Therefore, the meaning of a word is the rule according to which it is used. But although rules are a central and important element of language-games, "[...] there is no essence in common to all game-playing, just as there is no essence in common to all language. [...] Some instances of game-playing are governed by rules; others not" [p. 140].

Chapter six, *Sensations and Private Languages*, deals both with Wittgenstein's definition of a private language and the confusions this notion causes. Tejedor reconstructs Wittgenstein's critique of Descartes' belief that anyone's sensations cannot be known by someone else. Part Two ends with the insight that "[t]he *Philosophical Investigations* marks a clear break from the *Tractatus*" [p. 174] and emphasizes Wittgenstein's conviction that philosophical problems arise from confused concepts.

Starting with Wittgenstein is proof that Tejedor is more than familiar with the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein. It is remarkable that the book contains mainly quotes from the two major works of Wittgenstein and only

very few from secondary literature. This seems to me an interesting way to introduce beginners to Wittgenstein's philosophy, and undoubtedly it is a valuable preparation for the first reading of any of Wittgenstein's books.

Tejedor's book is a very useful introduction to the philosophy of Wittgenstein: basic concepts of his works are explained in a simple manner, and central hypotheses are analyzed in a way that allows first-year students to follow the ideas behind them. The individual summaries of the sections, chapters, and of the two main parts of the book make it easier to get an overview of the book's content and Wittgenstein's claims. This will be very helpful for beginners, even if it may be a bit too much for experts in Wittgenstein. Nonetheless, it seems to me that certain parts of the book might be a support for people who are already familiar with Wittgenstein's ideas. Since the aim of the book is to give an introduction into the philosophy of Wittgenstein, it cannot be seen as a shortcoming.

A small deficiency is that the book takes little account of Wittgenstein's philosophical roots and the influence his theories had on the development of 20th century philosophy. "[T]he book introduces the major thinkers whose work proved influential in the development of Wittgenstein's thought, including Frege, Russell and Schopenhauer", is written on the blurb of the book, but this is at best true for Schopenhauer's influence and partially for Russell's, whereas Frege's name cannot even be found in the index. In the *Introduction*, Tejedor claims there is "[...] no doubt that Wittgenstein's contribution to philosophy is extraordinary", but unfortunately the impact his ideas had on the philosophy of recent decades are not considered in the book. Of course, it would too much to ask from the book to present an analysis of the full extent of the influence Wittgenstein's ideas had on his followers and opponents, but the book awakens such expectations in some of its parts. Nevertheless, despite these minor flaws, *Starting with Wittgenstein* has fully achieved its goal and is very well suited to acquaint those who are interested in Wittgenstein's philosophy with the basic ideas of his two major writings.

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Física social, de AUGUSTE COMTE , ESTUDIO PRELIMINAR, TRADUCCIÓN Y EDICIÓN DE JUAN R. GOBERNA FALQUE, MADRID, EDICIONES AKAL, 2012, 1295 pp.

Podría parecer paradójico reseñar como novedad la publicación de un autor clásico fallecido en 1857. En este caso, sin embargo, la traducción al