

Transversal: International Journal for the Historiography of Science 2021 (10): 1-2
ISSN 2526-2270
Belo Horizonte – MG / Brazil
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From the Editor

Special Issue

Wittgenstein and the Sciences: History and Philosophy of Science and Science Education

Throwing Away the Ladder of Tradition After We Have Climbed up It: Or Must We Imagine Wittgenstein’s Philosophy for Its Own Sake?

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Still under the terrible impacts of the pandemic, we have reached the tenth issue of *Transversal: International Journal for the Historiography of Science*. In this edition, we could honor Ludwig Wittgenstein, the man who was not only one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century but, with no fear of being mistaken, one of the greatest philosophers of all time. The 100th anniversary of the publication of Wittgenstein’s first book, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, was our inspiration for the proposal of this special issue. However, most of the articles presented here do not deal specifically with the first philosophy of the Austrian philosopher but mainly with the later Wittgenstein’s work and its possibilities to analyze sciences.

Wittgenstein’s work reaches its centenary, but this obviously does not mean that we have already had the possibility of understanding it completely. An affirmation that becomes more dramatic, when considering the second phase of his thought, not only for being more recent but, above all, for presenting a disconcerting philosophical innovation, thus confronting more than two thousand years of philosophy. Therefore, more than a work of reference, Wittgenstein’s thought constantly offers us new possibilities with each new look that we cast upon it.

Indeed, this gives us the dimension of the author’s greatness, even though being aware of this greatness does not guarantee a complete understanding of his work. In this direction, Kambartel (1989, 148) has already pointed out that one day we will effectively understand Wittgenstein’s work and then know why we already value it so much.

Perhaps, one of the great difficulties in understanding the innovative Wittgensteinian philosophy, especially the later Wittgenstein, is precisely in our lack of references to frame it. Without these parameters, we create the habit of thinking about his philosophy by comparisons with the philosophical tradition. So, in these

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comparisons, we first say what Wittgenstein's philosophy is not, and then after – and perhaps this part is the most dangerous in our exegesis of his work – we relate it to what it seems to be to us. As if inspired by our author, we look for the “family resemblances” between Wittgensteinian thought and traditional philosophy. This comparison may not be the most fruitful path, although it has been necessary. Thus, perhaps, it is high time to abandon such comparisons of Wittgenstein's thought with tradition and take it up fully without these comparative isms. In other words, to use an analogy found at the end of the *Tractatus*, perhaps we should abandon the ladder which brought us to this level and think of Wittgenstein's work on its own. A task which may be easier for the new generation.

In writing this editorial in a somewhat provocative tone to all of us readers of Wittgenstein, finally, indeed the main reason for these editorial lines, I leave here my immense gratitude to the authors who welcomed the call for papers and have sent their contributions. Without them, this special issue would not exist.

Reference

Kambartel, F. 1989. Wittgensteins späte Philosophie: Zur Vollendung von Kants Kritik der wissenschaftlichen Aufklärung. In *Philosophie der Humanen Welt*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.