

From: British Wittgenstein Society [bws@herts.ac.uk]

Subject: Newsletter no.8

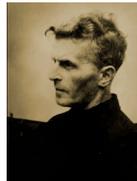
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19 July 2010
BWS Newsletter Issue no 8

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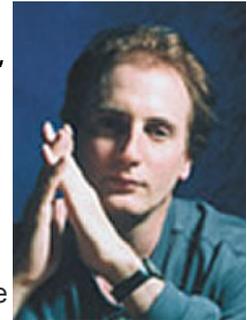
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Nota Bene

Professor Ray Monk on the 3rd BWS Conference, on 'Wittgenstein and Aesthetics' (Southampton 28-29 June 2010)

"It was like walking into the bibliography of my dissertation."



So exclaimed a postgraduate student, upon seeing the starry line-up of this year's British Wittgenstein Society annual conference. The theme was 'Wittgenstein and Aesthetics', and just about all the leading contributors to that field were giving papers. They came from all parts of the UK, and also from France, the USA and even New Zealand. This was a truly international event.

In the question period following the first paper, given by Jean-Pierre Cometti, it looked as though it might become a multi-lingual event as well. When Professor Cometti was stuck for the right English expression to capture his intended meaning, he was encouraged by Danièle Moyal-Sharrock, who was chairing the session, to speak in his native French. This was the cue for an impressive display of bilingualism, which left some of us feeling distinctly under-educated.

About BWS

BWS is a British focal point for research and exchange of ideas among Wittgenstein scholars and students throughout the world.

This Newsletter will be sent exclusively to members of the BWS, on a regular basis, in order to draw attention to updates on the website, or to share as yet unpublished news.

On the first day the emphasis was on literature and poetry. Drawing on a vast knowledge of all kinds of literature and a lifetime's experience of reflecting philosophically upon it, Bernard Harrison led us urbanely through some of the uses of literary fiction, while Richard Eldridge tackled the sensitive and difficult subject of emotion, his paper containing several unwittingly accurate prophecies of the emotions felt by the football fans among us in response to England's baleful performance against Germany in the World Cup the previous day. John Gibson continued the literary theme (the extraordinary way in which the papers at the conference seemed to cohere into a seamless whole was to be remarked upon many times during the two days) with a subtle and nuanced analysis of the meaning of poetic language. The final paper of the first day was presented by Dawn Phillips and offered a bold and persuasive attempt to show the aesthetic significance of clarity in Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.

The second day was dominated by, first, general aesthetic theory and, second, the philosophy of music. It began with a lively Ben Tilghman, shaking off the years to deliver an animated and engrossing discussion of gesture. He was followed by Noel Carroll, whose appearance was the signal for people to file into the lecture theatre from all corners of the campus, such is the esteem in which he is held, not only in Philosophy, but also in English, Film Studies and every part of the Humanities. He lived up to his billing with a breathtakingly erudite and brilliant performance. He was followed by the double act of Aaron Ridley and Alex Neill, after whose paper it is probably safe to write 'Q.E.D.' after the sentence: 'The Institutional Theory of Art is false.'

After lunch, a waspish Roger Scruton reminded us all of why he is one of the best known philosophers in the English-speaking world. His subject was Wittgenstein and 'the aesthetics of everyday life', and he spoke of the artistic sensibilities at play in setting a dinner table and the barbarism of contemporary architecture with the mixture of charm and provocation that his admirers have come to expect. Both the final two speakers, Stephen Davies and Garry Hagberg, talked about music: Davies arguing eloquently that music is literally, rather than metaphorically, sad, uplifting, happy or whatever, and Hagberg rounding proceedings off with a deft attempt to place Wittgenstein's remarks about music in the wider context of his cultural Weltanschauung.

It was a well-attended and (everyone agreed) an extraordinarily convivial conference and nobody really wanted it to end. But end it did, with many of us congregating at the local bar for one last drink and a toast: to the British Wittgenstein Society and to the success of next year's conference.



Speakers and organisers of the conference: from left to right; top row: Aaron Ridley, Genia Schoenbaumsfeld, Noel Carroll, Dawn Phillips, Roger Scruton, Richard Eldridge, Garry Hagberg, Ben Tilghman, Jean-Pierre Cometti, Stephen Davies, Daniele Moyal-Sharrock
bottom row: Alex Neill, Bernard Harrison, John Gibson, Ray Monk



Speakers, organisers and some participants

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Next conference

The Fourth BWS Annual Conference, on 'Wittgenstein and the Swansea School', will be held -- appropriately -- at Swansea University on 15-17 July 2011.

The conference will be organised by Professor David Cockburn and Dr Mario von der Ruhr.

Confirmed speakers so far are:

Brian Davies
Cora Diamond

Raimond Gaita
 Andrew Gleeson
 Lars Hertzberg
 Michel Le Du
 Mikel Burley
 Olli Lagerspetz

Further details in the next Newsletter. Meanwhile, here is a taste of the scenery around Swansea:



Please send links to forthcoming conferences or individual academic/public lectures pertaining to Wittgenstein to bws@herts.ac.uk

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The lecture series

Please note that we now have a date for the next lecture and a title for the Autumn 2011 one. Details are:

[26 October 2010: Professor Frank Cioffi](#)

Title: Was Wittgenstein right to call science a trap?

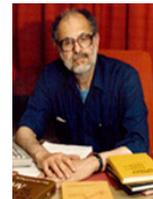
[Spring 2011: Professor Sandra Laugier](#)

Title: The Importance of Importance: Cavell and Diamond on ethics

[Autumn 2011: Professor Bernard Harrison](#)

Title: Language, Practice and Human Worlds: Wittgenstein and the Uses of Literary Fiction

All lectures will be followed by a wine reception. These are complimentary, but advance registration is required once the announcement has been sent, so do check back to the website for details.



New videos

The Logic Lane series of videos by Michael Chanan has been posted (with his consent) on YouTube and is now available for anyone to see.

Each of the 6 hour-long films is divided into 5 or 6 'chunks' and we have linked to the first in each series. So you no longer need to belong to an institution with a licence agreement to see these films.

Have a look at the first one in the [YouTube version](#). This is a retrospective by Professor Sir

Alfred Ayer of the development of philosophy in Oxford from the 1930s to 1972.

We are still linking to the previous versions as some people may find it more convenient to have access to them.

Videos of the July conference will be online in about four weeks time. Check on the Third Conference page to see if they have been posted.

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The BWS website

Updates

The website has undergone a complete overhaul, with a new, dynamic front page, all links checked, and a slightly new (and more logical) ordering of the main areas of the site - all the same menus are there for those who were used to the site the way it was.



The Newsletter archive is available for anyone to see - though only members are circulated with the link to the current issue.

The BWS website is designed and maintained by [Jane Dörner](#).

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