

**From:** British Wittgenstein Society [[bws@herts.ac.uk](mailto:bws@herts.ac.uk) ]

**Subject:** Newsletter no.15 Sponsored by Shell

[BWS website home](#)

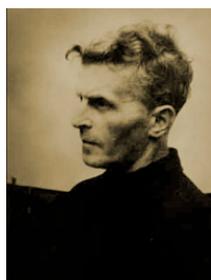


18.7.12

BWS Newsletter Issue no 15

## Contents

- [Pdf version](#) (1 Mb)
- [Nota Bene](#)
- [Editor's Words](#)
- [Conference in Athens](#)
- [Wittgenstein Postings](#)
- [Conference](#)
- [Lecture series](#)
- [Videos](#)
- [Housekeeping](#)
- [Executive Committee](#)



## Nota Bene

*The 'report' for the 2012 BWS annual conference on Wittgenstein, Enactivism and Animal Minds, which took place on 7-8 July at the University of Hertfordshire, will this year take the more personal form of this unsolicited email from Keith Farman (with permission of course), which we couldn't resist sharing. For a more impersonal version of the conference, videos of the talks will be posted on the website before too long.*



Dear Danièle

Thank you for an excellent conference.

I was especially pleased to see and support your efforts to widen the scope and range of the BWS to the vital role of exploring the implications of Wittgenstein's thought *outside* the narrow technical pre-occupations of academic philosophy. As my first contact with Wittgenstein at the beginning of the 7 years I studied with Peter Winch was 'The Idea of A Social Science' you will not be surprised to learn how much I support your endeavours in this direction. Of the many areas of intellectual enquiry where a Wittgensteinian approach and methodology has much to offer, science, especially in disciplines connected with the brain, is perhaps the most important and the most beset with confusing and confused language.

## 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to members of the BWS, on a regular basis, in order to draw attention to updates on the website, or to share as yet unpublished news.



photo of conference speakers by Ian Ground

*Left to right:* Peter Carruthers, Dan Hutto, Michael Tomasello, Mark Rowlands, Hans-Johann Glock, Dorit Bar-on, Daniele Moyal-Sharrock, Jose Medina, Colin Allen, Ned Block

See the [Conference page](#) for more pictures.

I congratulate you also therefore on your robust defence of inviting speakers with opposing or dissenting views to the conference. Quite so. And quite right. I have been interested in recent years in the language within which scientific theories are expressed and have encountered hostility, even contempt from many scientists for philosophy. Many eminent scientists talk as if 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy did not exist and seem comfortable with a use of language that constantly conflates empirical and conceptual enquiry. It was good therefore to hear an intelligent, coherent debate between philosophers and scientists exploring an issue of substance important to both with mutual respect.

The other very pleasing aspect of the two days was that it was good to see some passion on show. Many speakers, not least yourself and Dan, but also those from a scientific background were *engaged* in the issues, committed to a point of view and willing to expound and defend it. I was surprised to discover how much some of these issues and ideas still *matter* to me. I'm sure all of us blessed/cursed with the philosophical 'gene' are only too familiar with the incredulity even of those closest to us, at how much passion can be aroused by challenging and exciting ideas. Your piece on *On Certainty* was by the way the best exegetical summary of a thread of Wittgensteinian thought I have ever heard and that includes Peter Winch and Rush Rhees; both of whom, to be fair, tended towards a more forensic approach with a narrower perspective.

I spoke to a young postgraduate at the conference doing a PhD on Wittgenstein and ethics. As you probably know, Peter Winch's main pre-occupation was moral philosophy. The conference reminded me again after all these years that if one buys in to Wittgenstein's perspective on the language of mind and epistemology then one is presented with some tricky issues of what I guess box-labelling philosophers would call ethical relativism. Certainly Peter Winch often took time to refute the implication. I guess the consequences for the language of values and ethics of both scientific and enactivist positions though very different, was the *baby* intellectual elephant in the enactivist room over the weekend.

I think the strategy of the conference in taking a central theme, irreducibly *both* scientific *and* philosophical with coherent but opposed positions on it, was well judged and raised issues of substance and depth with great success. Methodologically in fact the scientists were rather more 'user-friendly' than some of the philosophers in that they explored and clarified ideas with plenty of examples to render complex ideas accessible to non-scientists hearing them expounded for the first time. In the halcyon days of one-to-one sessions with people like Peter Winch and Rush Rhees I would never have got away with introducing a key idea without applying it to an actual example – a hard but necessary discipline.

I have only a few philosophical ideas to rub together to try to create a spark of understanding: but though few, they are almost all Wittgensteinian. Those few ideas almost always demand that one resist the most persuasive ways language, tradition and even it sometimes seems, intuition, constantly drive us to see and think of e.g. the mind and thought. When one *reads* Wittgenstein he constantly helps the reader to keep these

game-changing ideas clear through the exploration of endless examples and wrong turns and mistaken moves

I am far too out of touch with current philosophy to know what future constructive theme might repeat the considerable success of this conference. On specifically Wittgensteinian themes: Jim Hopkins who taught me at Kings and is still there gave a superb paper on knowledge of other minds some years back at the Royal Institute of Psychotherapy. That was fascinating because if Ned Block and Co were hard to detach from an instinctive attachment to metaphysical, metaphorical inner representationalism, the Psychotherapists were upset and almost traumatised by a view of the mind that *seemed* to them to rob them of an *innerness* of language and experience they cherished above all else.

Sorry this is so long but it is perhaps the best compliment one can pay to an event like this weekend's conference in that it provokes ideas that resonate long after the last excessively fattening but irresistibly Moorish coffee biscuits have been over-indulged in.

What goes around comes around I guess. My prevailing thought after the weekend returns to a now long-abandoned PhD thesis fancifully call *The Will and The Self*. A Wittgensteinian perspective on mind, thought and the *acquisition* of language whether or not one labels it 'enactivist' or any other 'ism' or 'ist'; inevitably makes one wonder about the possibilities and 'grammatical' constraints upon our understanding of ourselves and our relationship to others and the world, that emerge when we are *established*, adult, sophisticated language users, participants in a form (s) of life and with a distinct cultural and intellectual history. So over 30 years on – I end up in the same place, with the same pre-occupations. Easier to abandon a PhD than the ideas that drove it.

If you're still with me: thanks for your patience. Thanks again for an excellently organised and more importantly, conceived conference. To discover one can still not only be excited by ideas but also still feel some passion for exploring them – is a pretty satisfying outcome from an otherwise wet and dreary, 'dreak' as the Scots so wonderfully put it, weekend.

Keith Farman

<http://www.zettelfilmreviews.co.uk>

PS The different ideas of the mind over the 2 days, because of the context, emerged as conceptual, philosophical issues. Also, the Wittgensteinian, enactivist position takes as much effort to hold on to as it does to initially accept. Yet when one looks at all kinds of empirically successful therapies in body/brain/mind related ailments from post-stroke re-rehabilitation, alleviation of depression and a whole host of others concentrating on systematic 'outer' physical training and re-training, exercise and whole person (including body) approaches to therapy, often achieve better, more sustained improvements, even to the functioning of the brain, than either representationally based talk therapies or direct drug treatment of the brain. Not a question of either/or of course but re-thinking the historically prevailing images and metaphors for the mind along Wittgensteinian and enactivist lines looks as if it may have valuable practical, therapeutic benefits beyond 'mere' philosophical debate.

[Back to top](#)

## A Few Words from the BWS Editor

As we are on the point of reaching the milestone of 100,000 visits to our website, I'd like to say a few words on the impact we are making on worldwide Wittgenstein scholarship. Our [website](#) currently includes links to past and future events of Wittgenstein interest; to our BWS Annotated Bibliography; to Wittgenstein scholars websites, and to Wittgenstein-focused Journals. You will also find a page displaying recent books on Wittgenstein, as well as our Reviews page, called BookNOTES, which offers some of these books for review, and posts the ensuing reviews. There are also audio and video links webpages (including our own videos from BWS annual conferences and biannual lectures) and our newsletter archives.



Dr C Athanasopoulos

I'd like to encourage you to join the many Wittgenstein scholars and teachers not only in the UK, but across the globe including far away places such as China (through Yuku, since our websites are blocked in China), Africa and Malaysia, to use our resources for your teaching and research. We have recently received a moving email from Wittgenstein scholars in Brazil, thanking us for the opportunity our website provides to watch video recorded lectures of scholars they know they will never get to hear in person. Note that we only post videos with the speaker's permission.

Please help us reach out and assist scholars and teachers worldwide by sending us your audio and video recorded lectures (or links to them) and we will share them via our website. Also do send us entries for our Bibliography with your Wittgenstein-related published papers and books (with short abstracts if

possible).

A new project is to add to our Bibliography a specific page with lecture notes of courses taught on Wittgenstein: if you have prepared notes in any form (including handwritten) for courses that you teach and/or have taken notes from lectures on Wittgenstein that you attended when you were a student, we would love to have them and upload them to our Bibliography. This will enhance our teaching resources on Wittgenstein and will make teaching courses on Wittgenstein a far more engaging endeavour for both teachers and students. And please do not forget: if you have found good use for our resources recommend them to your colleagues and students. For all the above please contact me at [cathanas@hol.gr](mailto:cathanas@hol.gr)

[Back to top](#)

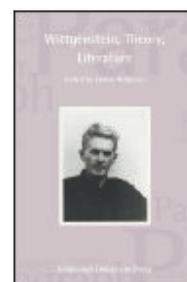
## World Philosophical Congress in Athens

The BWS Editor Costas Athanasopoulos is interested in requesting a Special Round Table Session or a Society Meeting from the organisers of the World Congress of Philosophy (FISP) in Athens ( 4-10 August 2013). He has already contacted them about the possibilities and they are flexible. If enough people from the BWS are interested (4-5) we can make it a Society meeting; if less than four members of the Society are interested we can make it a round table discussion. At the event, we can present the aims and activities of the BWS Society and then members of the Society can present their work. Fees are the normal participating fees for Conference delegates. Please send an email to Costas ([ca356@cam.ac.uk](mailto:ca356@cam.ac.uk) or [cathanas@hol.gr](mailto:cathanas@hol.gr)) with a topic of your interest (and then proceed to make your registration at the Congress as indicated in their webpages). More information about the Congress is here: <http://www.wcp2013.gr/en/universal/congress-filosofias.html>.

## Wittgenstein Postings

Members may like to link to [OLP & Literary Studies Online](#) which has Wittgensteinian sympathies and always calls attention to publications, lectures, and other things on Wittgenstein. Here are their latest postings:

- The Nordic Wittgenstein Society has started a new journal, *Nordic Wittgenstein Review*, the first issue of which will appear in print at Ontos Verlag in August and made available through Open Access online in November.
- A special issue on Wittgenstein in the journal *Paragraph*, appeared in November 2011 - [see details](#).
- Danièle Moyal-Sharrock: 'Cora Diamond and the Ethical Imagination' published in The British Journal of Aesthetics - [see online version](#)



[Back to top](#)

## The next BWS Conference

### Sixth BWS Annual Conference: Wittgenstein and Epistemology

The next BWS conference in 2013 will be held at the University of Edinburgh

It will be organised by Professor Duncan Pritchard

Details to be announced in a future newsletter.



[Back to top](#)

## The Lecture Series

*The next three in the BWS lecture series are:*

[Autumn 2012: Professor Paul Standish](#)  
*On Being Resolute*

Date to be announced

[14 May 2013: Dr Ian Ground](#)  
*Listen to the Lion: Wittgenstein and Animal Minds*

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.

[Autumn 2013: Professor Gavin Kitching](#)  
Title: 'What is the use of my teaching you these techniques...?': Contemporary Wittgensteinian Philosophy and the Really Rough Ground of Politics

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.



## Videos

Videos from the July conference will be posted over the next four months.

It is exciting to be able to announce that BWS videos now are available to the Chinese via [http://i.youku.com/u/id\\_UNDM4ODEwOTQ4](http://i.youku.com/u/id_UNDM4ODEwOTQ4)

Please note that the videos are created by Dr C Athanasopoulos, FHEA, for the use of BWS members and friends of the Society. The videos are copyrighted and remain the property of BWS and C Athanasopoulos. No alteration of the video or audio contained in them is allowed, and they should only be used for educational purposes and never on the basis of a fee or other financial gain. For any information and question in relation to the videos please contact: Dr C Athanasopoulos, FHEA at [cathanas@hol.gr](mailto:cathanas@hol.gr) and [ca356@cam.ac.uk](mailto:ca356@cam.ac.uk).

[Back to top](#)

## Housekeeping

To unsubscribe or inquire about posting news please email [bws@herts.ac.uk](mailto:bws@herts.ac.uk).

[Back to top](#)

## BWS Executive Committee



Dr Danièle Moyal-Sharrock, *President*  
University of Hertfordshire  
Hatfield, Herts AL10 9AB



Dr Ian Ground, *Secretary*  
The University of Sunderland  
Sunderland  
SR1 3SD



Prof. Daniel D Hutto, *Treasurer*  
University of Hertfordshire  
Hatfield  
Herts AL10 9AB



Dr Constantinos Athanasopoulos, *Editor*  
Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies  
Wesley House, Jesus Lane Cambridge, CB5 8BJ

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

[Home](#)

[Back to top](#)



I