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BWS website home

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BWS Newsletter Issue no 16
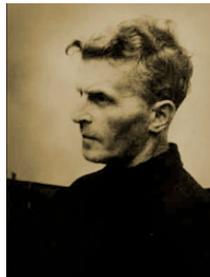
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About BWS

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to members of the BWS, on a regular basis, in order to draw attention to updates on the website, or to share as yet unpublished news.

Nota Bene

Report on the BWS Lecture of 23 November 2012: Professor Paul Standish 'On Being Resolute'

by SunInn Yun & Jeffrey Pocock (Institute of Education, University of London)

Over the past two decades in Wittgenstein studies, 'resolute readings' have gained prominence. Associated with the work of Cora Diamond and James Conant, they are central to the idea of the 'new Wittgenstein', a term borrowed from the title of a collection of essays edited by Alice Crary and Rupert Read, published in 2000. Wittgenstein's purpose in his later work is widely understood to be in part therapeutic, a term he himself provides. The more distinctive feature of the 'resolute reading' is its attribution of such an aim also to the *Tractatus*. This is to find a degree of continuity in Wittgenstein's work that so-called 'standard' interpretations deny. Yet resolute readings also claim something more, that standard readings also misinterpret the later work: these fail because they maintain the assumption that objectivity depends upon features of reality that transcend thought and speech. Put differently, this involves an implicit stepping outside of language and, hence, remains tied to the very metaphysical aspirations that Wittgenstein wishes to overcome.

The alternative is resolutely to turn away from the temptations of both standard conceptions - the metaphysical realism of the *Tractatus*, and the anti-realism of the *Philosophical Investigations* – by recalling Wittgenstein's warning that 'The great difficulty here is not to represent the matter as if there were something one *couldn't* do'.

Paul Standish's discussion of these views effectively reflected the interest of these debates but also drew attention to the tendency for the arguments to pass one another by. He cited the views of Hilary Putnam, who has expressed concern that the contemporary debate has become somewhat self-involved, to the detriment of Wittgenstein's reception in the wider world of philosophy. He went on to raise two questions in relation to resolute readings: first, how far an over-zealous commitment to therapy might purge the metaphysical impulse by which aspects of Wittgenstein's texts continue to be disturbed; second, how far recent interpretation has departed from the work of philosophers who in their different ways had been influential in the development of the resolute readings – that is, Rush Rhees, Hide Ishiguro, and Stanley Cavell.

Professor Standish pointed out the metaphysical or realist character of resoluteness by recalling Wittgenstein's acknowledgement of Heidegger's notion of anxiety. Echoing Stanley Cavell's reading of Wittgenstein, he regarded Wittgenstein's treatment of scepticism not as an epistemological truth but as existential in nature. Methods, therapies and so on are the ongoing process in one's life-struggle and hint at a conception of philosophy as never-ending.

The lecture concluded with the notion of 'the ordinary and language' in the *Investigations* and its possible affinity with Cavell's interpretation of Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*. Cavell distinguishes the 'eventual ordinary' from the 'actual ordinary': the latter being that which fatalistically shapes life's possibilities; the former that of the ordinary to which we return 'encountered with a sense both of new possibility and of intimacy lost: natural or animal absorption gives way to

a kind of exile, but this is also the condition of imagination and the opening to the new.'

The ensuing discussion began with questions on the possibilities of more nuanced positions between realism and anti-realism, and with further clarification of what was implied by the new Wittgenstein. The breadth of the significance of Wittgenstein's claim for philosophy as therapy was then considered. Finally, discussion turned to the meaning of faith and fate and its relation to ordinary language. The impression had by all was that Paul Standish had heeded Wittgenstein's advice and 'gone the bloody hard way', and had done so with much skill and finesse.

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Conferences

ALWS in 2013

This year, BWS President, Danièle Moyal-Sharrock will be organising, along with Annalisa Coliva and Volker Munz, the 2013 International Wittgenstein Symposium in Kirchberg, Austria for the Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society (ALWS). Unlike most years in Kirchberg, the focus this year will be firmly on Wittgenstein. In view of this important Wittgenstein event, the BWS conference will skip a year. The next BWS conference will take place at the University of Edinburgh in the summer of 2014.

The Kirchberg conference (11-17 August 2013) will be on 'Mind, Language, Action'. Have a look at the exciting line-up on the ALWS website . If you'd like to send in a submission, look out for ALWS mailings so as not to miss the deadline, or keep an eye on our Events page. Also, the 2013 Ludwig Wittgenstein summer school (7-10 August) will be led by Cora Diamond and James Conant. This is one Kirchberg you won't want to miss.

Download the poster (846 Kb in PDF form).

BWS in 2014

Sixth BWS Annual Conference:
Wittgenstein and Epistemology

Organised by Professor Duncan Pritchard at the
University of Edinburgh (2014). Details to be announced.

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Wittgenstein Studentship

A Wittgenstein Studentship in Philosophy tenable from 1 October 2013 is offered by Trinity College. Applications by 25 January 2013.

The Studentship is open to any student who is, or is about to be, registered as a graduate student in the University and who intends to undertake research on a philosophical topic, either in the Faculty of Philosophy or elsewhere in the University.

A Studentship will cover all fees and provide a maintenance allowance for the minimum duration of the course, reduced by the amount of any grant from public or comparable sources, for which due application must be made.

Tenure of the Studentship is conditional upon the elected student having applied for admission to the University's Graduate Admissions Office and been accepted either for the MPhil degree or for the PhD. The successful applicant must become a member of Trinity College on taking up the Studentship.

Click for further details and application form.

Wittgenstein Postings

2011 BWS Conference Proceedings

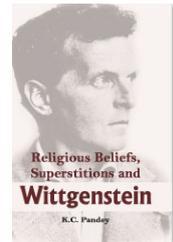*Philosophical Investigations:* (Wiley-Blackwell) edited by Professor HO Mounce. Volume 35, Issue 3-4 Pages 185 - 387, July/October 2012

Special Issue: British Wittgenstein Society Conference 2011

Book Award

Dr KC Pandey, Associate Professor, Dept. of Philosophy, Lucknow University has been awarded a Best Book Award for *Religious Beliefs, Superstitions and Wittgenstein*, New Dehli: Readworthy Publications (2009; 2012 Kindle edition). The Swami Pranavananda Philosophy Book Award is given each year to the best book in Philosophy by the Indian Philosophical Congress (IPC). The award was set up with a donation to IPC by the Swami Pranavananda Trust, USA. It is given to the best book published in India in all the disciplines of Philosophy in English language. A committee is formed each year which selects the best book among many entries.

Dr Pandey has also written a book on Wittgenstein in the Hindi language which is prescribed in many universities in North India: *Wittgenstein Ke Darshan Ki Ruparekha* (An Outline of Wittgenstein's Philosophy) (2005)

Facebook

BWS now has a [Facebook Page](#) which is open to anyone with a Facebook account.

Podcast

[Wittgenstein and Metaphilosophy](#) 27'32"
Click above to download a podcast (© Copyright Minerva), in which Peter Hacker explains Wittgenstein's metaphilosophical views, talks about the mind, and expresses his pessimism about contemporary philosophy. Peter Hacker is a Wittgenstein expert, and an Emeritus Research Fellow at St. John's College, Oxford.

Wittgenstein reading group

This takes place every two weeks in London to provoke informal but serious discussion of Wittgenstein's philosophy. The reading/topic for the following session is decided (democratically) at the end of each meeting. If you are interested in coming along please register your interest by forwarding your email address to a.brockless@heythrop.ac.uk or [shaun.choquet@kcl.ac.uk.](mailto:shaun.choquet@kcl.ac.uk) You will then receive the selected reading attached to an email about a week before each session.

The meetings are held at a Starbucks on The Strand with a spacious downstairs area that they reserve for the group every second Friday between 4 and 6. The address is: Starbucks, 32 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1AA.

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The Lecture Series

The next two in the BWS lecture series are:

14 May 2013: Dr Ian Ground
Listen to the Lion: Wittgenstein and Animal Minds

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

These videos from the Conference: **Wittgenstein, Enactivism and Animal Minds 2012** are now online:

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

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APA members - please vote

Jose Medina is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Vanderbilt University and Distinguished Chair in the Humanities at the Carlos III University in Madrid, Spain (2011-2012). He is also a distinguished Wittgenstein scholar (The Unity of Wittgenstein's Philosophy: Necessity, Intelligibility, and Normativity (SUNY, 2002), who some of you might have met at the last BWS conference on Wittgenstein, Enactivism and Animal Minds. Jose will be on the ballot for the Eastern APA Executive Committee. If you are APA members and can vote, we definitely need more Wittgensteinians on those committees.

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Housekeeping

To unsubscribe or inquire about posting news please email bws@herts.ac.uk. Please inform us of changes in your email address so that we can keep out list up to date.

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The BWS website is designed and maintained by Jane Dorner.

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