

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

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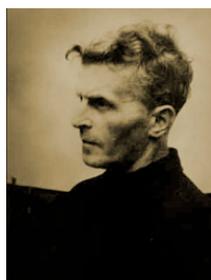


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BWS Newsletter Issue no 17

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Nota Bene

10th BWS Lecture on 14 May 2013: Dr Ian Ground, Listen to the Lion: Wittgenstein and Animal Minds. Report by Neil O'Hara



Dr. Ground's lecture sought to open up more fruitful ways to engage with scientific discoveries about the cognitive abilities of animals. Ground argued that, though some ethologists may indeed come to these discoveries with models of mind that some philosophers might balk at (a default ascription to Theory theory or the like), this should not push us deeper into scepticism about animal minds, but prompt us to offer and make attractive a more philosophically robust notion of animal mindedness.

Whereas philosophers tend to dismiss our ordinary practices around animals, and go instead down the route of theorising, Ground argued it should be the other way round. Our practices show that we already treat many things as minded. And so we should start by critically examining these practices, rather than dismissing them out of hand as philosophically problematic. If we would start this way we would be more open to seeing our own minds as distinctive and special, but also as one amongst many kinds.

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to members of the BWS, on a regular basis, in order to draw attention to updates on the website, or to share as yet unpublished news.

And again, instead of getting hung up on the non-linguistic nature of animal minds, Ground called us to remember the primacy of action. Of course we must beware of the dangers of behaviourism. But on the other hand we should not be so cautious that we neglect evidence of mindedness expressed in action, 'expressive enactions' as Dr. Ground has it. In fact, the investigation of such expressive enactions should form the basis of our ethological methodology.

The central thrust of the paper though was Ground's defence of the principle of parity. Philosophers tend to treat the same evidence as, in humans demonstrating mindedness, and in animals as inconclusive. Does the dog who sees the rabbit think of it? The philosopher tends to answer 'No!' But if the same question were asked of a human similarly placed we would be happy to say that thinking took place. This is surely wrong and, so Ground argued, unless one can give other arguments a principle of parity should be observed. It does make sense to speak of an animal's second personal interactions. And we should feel free to answer that, yes the dog is thinking – but with the caveat 'not in the way the way some mean it'. We must go further and make tenable an affirmation of animal mindedness, based on our ordinary interactions with them, and stripped of theory laden philosophical baggage. And this begins in the beginning, with the primacy of practice, and of the second person.

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Conferences

ALWS in 2013

This year, BWS President, Danièle Moyal-Sharrock will be organising, with Annalisa Coliva and Volker Munz, the 2013 International Wittgenstein Symposium in Kirchberg, Austria for the Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society (ALWS). The Kirchberg conference (11-17 August 2013) will be on 'Mind, Language, Action'. It is now too late to submit a paper, but you can still register to attend by visiting the [website](#). Have a look at the exciting line-up on the [ALWS website](#). This is one Kirchberg you won't want to miss.

The [2013 Ludwig Wittgenstein summer school](#), which just precedes the symposium (7-10 August) will be led by Cora Diamond and James Conant.

[Download the poster](#) (846 Kb in PDF form).

BWS in 2014

Sixth BWS Annual Conference: Wittgenstein and Epistemology

To take place at the University of Edinburgh
Professor Duncan Pritchard



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Wittgenstein Bursary

Congratulations to Britt Harrison, recipient of the first BWS bursary, on the completion of her PhD!

Britt was awarded her PhD by the University of Hertfordshire in April 2013. The BWS cannot presently offer a new Bursary. Updates will be posted on this Newsletter and on the BWS website.



Britt Harrison reports

Having successfully completed my PhD, I welcome this opportunity to publicly thank Danièle Moyal-Sharrock, the British Wittgenstein Society and Shell for the BWS Bursary which made my studies possible.

My doctoral thesis *The Epistemology of Know-How* can be found at <http://uhra.herts.ac.uk/handle/2299/10433>. Its abstract is as follows:

There is an as yet unacknowledged and incomparable contribution to the philosophical debates about know-how to be found in the writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein. It is sourced in his investigations into knowledge and certainty in *On Certainty*, though it is not limited to these late passages. Understanding the ramifications of this putative contribution (even if one does not agree with it) highlights the extent to which (i) there is now a new range of issues pertaining to know-how which no future philosophical consideration of the topic can ignore, except on pain of failing to engage comprehensively with the subject; (ii) the topic of know-how has been inappropriately marginalised by naturalized epistemology, and may well be as central to epistemology as the propositional knowledge which currently dominates epistemology's attention; and (iii) any engagement with these potential Wittgensteinian contributions will need to be conducted in tandem with a reflection on the meta-philosophy of epistemology, since their potential impact extends to epistemology's main methodology, i.e., naturalized reflective equilibrium. These three conclusions, together with a diagnosis of where and why all the current intellectualist accounts of know-how are either internally inconsistent, or irreconcilably flawed on their own terms, provide the motivation and the opportunity for a *New Epistemology of Know-How*. These conclusions established, I offer one possible Wittgensteinian-orientated version of the *New Epistemology of Know-How*, providing the first example of a non-naturalised philosophical approach to the topic since Gilbert Ryle.

More informally, my thesis engages with the current accounts of know-how, challenging Jason Stanley's view that know-how is just another kind of propositional knowledge, and John Bengson & Marc Moffett's equally reductive claim that know-how is a form of objectual knowledge. I then attempt to undermine these intellectualist and naturalized approaches to epistemology using challenges from Wittgenstein; a task not dissimilar to turning a large tanker at sea. Using Wittgensteinian resources and insights I question the presumption that the epistemologist's task is to provide a *theory* of knowledge and/or know-how, and that this theory's purpose is to explain some kind of pre-theoretically assumed 'standing epistemic (mind/brain) state'. The thesis culminates in the assembling of a multiplicity of reminders about what it is to know how to do things. I believe that whatever value my work may have comes from identifying the invisible constraints that limit current epistemological practice, and which risk crippling not only what epistemology is and can be, but our appreciation of what philosophy itself might be. For I take philosophising to be an activity; something one can learn how to do, something one may come to know how to do. As such the epistemology of *know-how* is no marginal topic on the

periphery of contemporary epistemologists' preoccupation with propositional knowledge, but is crucial to any understanding of ourselves as philosophers.

Wittgenstein Postings

Wittgenstein and the Creativity of Language

A report of the workshop held at the University of Bergen on 14 June written by BWS member Ilyas Khan (Fellow, University of Cambridge, Judge Business School) is on [this link](#) (PDF 5 pages).

The full agenda and abstracts can be accessed on [this link](#).

The BWS welcomes reports of Wittgenstein-related conferences and workshops. Please send these to Dr Ian Ground at bws@herts.ac.uk.



BWS lecture at the Leavis Conference

[British Wittgenstein Society Lecture](#)
[International Leavis Conference, 27-28 September 2012](#)
[Downing College, Cambridge](#)
[Bernard Harrison on 'Leavis and Wittgenstein'](#)



LinkedIn

The BWS Wittgenstein's Philosophy Group is flourishing on [LinkedIn](#). Contact [Dr Constantinos Athanasopoulos](#) if you wish to link to it.



Archive update

The [Wittgenstein Archives at the University of Bergen](#) have recently completed a major upload of papers from the Kirchberg International Wittgenstein Symposia from the years 2001-2010, as well as from the Wittgenstein Archives publications series. Approximately 600 items (also including some monographs and a set of audio files) are thus made available digitally and open access.



Wittgenstein round table

4-10 August 2013

The British Wittgenstein Society's presence at the 23rd World Congress of Philosophy, Athens, Greece.

BWS is to host a Round Table discussion on Wittgenstein and Therapy at the 23rd World Congress of Philosophy in Athens, Greece (4-10 August, 2013). BWS members and friends of the Society are very welcome to participate in the discussion and support the presence of BWS in the Congress which will bring hundreds of philosophers from all over the world in Athens. The Round Table will be chaired by BWS Secretary, Dr Costas Athanasopoulos.

Participants are:

Dale Jacquette (Switzerland); Eugen Fischer (United Kingdom); Constantinos Athanasopoulos (Greece); Nuno Venturinha, (Portugal).



Wittgenstein's profile on Facebook

Dr John Preston has collected a large amount of biographical material hat records Wittgenstein's life day-by-day as they occurred one hundred years ago on a [Facebook account](#).



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The Lecture Series

The next in the BWS lecture series is:

[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.



Wittgenstein in Skjolden

A poetic commentary by Wayne Hayes, Greenville Technical College, USA

And the falls,
and the falls,

The white and the
noise of falls
thought. I forever hear
facts world the
sound of
what are the many waters.

what are falls
rules, the falls I see
words everywhere.

The winding
climb from
my house the shore,
Margarette of the
frothing,
tumbling endlessly
wedding gown to
the floor; strangely
hissing
staircase
crowded
at Allegasse.

Do I have
courage once the falls
to
doubt the falls
end?

But ask me not for reasons;
vanishes
their beauty
like
a dream, but the
dark imaginings falls,
are what the falls
bind me not a romance
to life,
but to possess the falls,
this and the cold thoughts
of stones

the unquiet
sound
of the
lake falls
on the water;

this is
certainty my own,
the falls
and do not
the falls infer;
need no laws
but the gravity
to be of the
falls.

And should
I not say
that I
know the falls?

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Housekeeping

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

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