Kitching's particular politician at that time, could have read the different feelings about the author, without agreeing with it. The statement of Kitching's agreement or disagreement in requirements of understanding requiring very what is said is, of particular text depends on agreement (in his understood if you do not understand the anger. Following political conflict. Yet Kitching's There is events dominant in the world and time in which connected list (GK himself) no longer feels the text is embedded in the social action. He then drew upon deeply personal convictions about political conflicts between human beings, a means misappropriations of ordinary language which Wittgenstein saw as bedevilling philosophy.' Politics, said Kitching, is a means of resolving conflicts between human beings, a means of understanding how power is achieved and shared and a means of looking after the welfare of communities. The academic study of politics must look for an objective and uncommitted approach to these issues and must, for example know what Socialism means to a Socialist or Fascism to a Fascist, and thus must have an independent perspective. Yet any theoretical study of politics must also, he emphasised, not ignore 'the hot fusion of intellect and emotion that renders certain aspects of politics both personally compelling and socially divisive.' To focus this point the talk began with a list of strong and substantial reasons, which Gavin Kitching had himself written in 2005, stating why the invasion of Iraq was wrong and also explicitly stating his own anger at that political action. He then drew attention to two main points. First, that although many of the sentences in this list still had a sense, they did not all still have a reference. Referring to Wittgenstein’s later study of language and meaning he expanded this by saying that ‘the meaning of a text is embedded in the social setting in which it is written and read’ and that this is a particular example of how ‘the meaning of politics is contextual’. In this case he was focussing on the context of the text within a particular time. His second point was that the author of this list (GK himself) no longer feels the anger and frustration stated in 2005. He now feels despondency and despair. This was then directly connected with his claim that politics is not merely social, for it can draw upon deeply personal convictions about political actions and events dominant in the world and time in which any particular person lives.

There is surely something not only right but also important about this. Any possibility of limits to intelligibility is crucial in understanding political conflict. Yet Kitching’s account of the connections between the meaning and the particular import of the text may have been too compressed. For example, Kitching says that since the anger expressed in the text is part of the meaning of the text, the text cannot be understood if you do not understand the anger. Following Wittgenstein we could agree that understanding the language used in any particular text depends on agreement (in his particular sense at PI 241) in practices. This particular sense of agreement in understanding what is said is, of course, a fundamental condition for any comprehensible dispute, such as is typical of politics. But there are different requirements of understanding requiring very different sorts of conditions of agreement in the cases of language or concepts, and of agreement or disagreement in cases of verifiable judgements, of value judgements or of feelings motivating actions or responses. In Kitching’s particular example someone may understand the anger, i.e. both the concept and its particular application in this case by this author, without agreeing with it. The statement of anger is of course, personal. Kitching acknowledged that another person could have had different feelings about the invasion at that time and may now have moved from hope to cynicism. But of course this other person is responding not to the text but to his own understanding of the political decisions and their consequences. But another person, say some particular politician at that time, could have read the list and also felt anger, but in his case, against the author.

Kitching’s own list and his current responses could be compared with a very recent interview with General Sir Graeme Lamb: ‘If you look
at Iraq in 2003 as a snapshot in time there are all sorts of reasons why we shouldn’t have invaded – but what you have to do is look at Iraq over the arc of time; see these issues spread over not only years but decades and centuries. It’s only through the long lens of history that one can truly see whether the conflict was for the better or the worse.’ The conditions and limits to understanding between these two temporal and personal perspectives is certainly a complex matter and central to Kitching’s general point about the contrast between the academic disciplines of the Natural and the Social Sciences. The Social Sciences, he says, have no equivalent to the microscope – all they have is ‘imaginative distancing’, and even this can flounder across cultures, times, and, I would add, between individuals. If Kitching’s adamant resistance to all attempts to position Sociology, Economics or Politics within the Sciences, and thereby to displace them from the Humanities is right, then he is showing that the job of Philosophy at the beginning of the 21st Century is to respect the advances of the Sciences in understanding the human animal, whilst guarding strongly against any account of humanity, whether social or psychological, which is reduced to scientific or merely theoretical explanation.

It was a pleasure also to be listening to Professor Kitching’s lecture in the Bloomsbury Institute that evening together with Wittgenstein’s own grand-nephew, William Stonborough.

Next Conference

Saturday 13 – Sunday 14 June 2015
The Seventh BWS Annual Conference will be on ‘Wittgenstein and the Social Sciences’

It will be held at the University of Exeter, and organised by Dr Nigel Pleasants. We are delighted to announce our confirmed speakers to date (we are expecting two more confirmations):

Jeff Coulter (Boston)
John Dupré (Exeter)
Raimond Gaita (Melbourne / King's College London)
John Gunnell (UC, Davis)
Sabina Lovibond (Oxford)
Albert Ogien (CNRS Paris)
John Searle (UC Berkeley)
Wes Sharrock (Manchester)

Registration details will soon be posted on the BWS website, as well as on the Philos-List. We hope to see you all at this exceptional gathering of minds.

Wittgenstein-related Publications

BWS welcomes links and flyers to new Wittgenstein-related publications to post here, in the Newsletter, as well as on the Publications or Postings pages of the website.

What is Fiction for?

How can literature, which consists of nothing more than the description of imaginary events and situations, offer any insight into the workings of 'human reality' or 'the human condition'? Can mere words illuminate something that we call 'reality’?

Bernard Harrison answers these questions in his profoundly original work, What is Fiction For?, and seeks to re-enfranchise reality in the realms of art and discourse.

Read the flyer.

Wittgenstein Anthology

Portraits of Wittgenstein

The four-volume first edition of Portraits of Wittgenstein, published by Thoemmes in 1999, was a splendid anthology of personal memoirs but sadly went out of print. Following a
proposal from Bloomsbury Academic Press to the BWS, agreement was reached on producing a second edition. This is scheduled for publication by Bloomsbury in Summer 2015.

Read the flyer.

Postings

**Wittgenstein, a Memoir**

How a teacher of philosophy turned one writer into a poet.
An article by Garrett Caples on The Poetry Foundation website.

Read the full article on this link

**Philosophy and the prelate**

The former archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams reflects on the ideas of Wittgenstein and the ways in which language works in Theos: a Christian think tank working in the area of religion, politics and society.

Read the article...

**Chronology**

John Preston's **Wittgenstein Day-by-Day** has a new name - formerly called a chronology of his life and work.

**Lecture Series**

*12 May 2015*
Thirteenth BWS Lecture
Speaker: Dr Mikel Burley
**Title: Wittgenstein and Philosophy of Religion: Beyond Fideism and Atheism**

*28 October 2015*
Fourteenth BWS Lecture
Speaker: Professor Constantine Sandis
**Title: Wittgenstein & Friends on Action and the Will**

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.

*venue:* The Bloomsbury Institute, 50 Bedford Square
London WC1B 3DP, in the Conservatory

Review copies

**Available for review**

The following books published in 2014 are available for review. If you would like one
of them sent to you for an in depth critical appreciation, or for a shorter review, please contact Dr Constantinos Athanasopoulos. The books are:

Charlton, W (2014) Metaphysics and Grammar, Bloomsbury

For books published in 2013 and 2012, see the reviews page.

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