

Danièle Moyal-Sharrock, Hertfordshire

Wittgenstein Today¹

Abstract: In this paper, I briefly take stock of Wittgenstein's contribution to philosophy and some other disciplines. Surveying some of the ways in which he emphasizes the primacy of action, together with the superfluity – in basic cases – of propositions and cognition, in his account of mind, language and action, I suggest that, far from being a maverick philosopher, Wittgenstein's pioneering 'enactivism' puts him in the mainstream of philosophy today. I mention the importance of his thought for the philosophy of mind and epistemology, as also for psychology and the cognitive sciences, and conclude that Wittgenstein's philosophy is still spearheading the fight against physicalism and reductionism.

1. Wittgenstein's Enactivism

Much of philosophy and cognitive science are informed by the view that the mind is reducible to the brain; that *all* that human beings think, say or do; all that we hope, expect, believe, learn, remember is encoded in our brain in some form or other: be it in the form of encoded propositions or content, tacit beliefs, mentalese, engrams, representations, concepts and so on. The predominant view is that human meaning and emotion ultimately reside in, and can be reduced to, encoded traces in the brain. I believe that Wittgenstein's groundbreaking contribution to human understanding is to have shown that this reductionist view of the human mind is nonsensical; that it is due to false pictures we make of ourselves and that it needs correcting. Wittgenstein shows this in various ways, and I'll mention a few of them in this paper; but I think they are all variants of his growing realization of the inflated role played by the proposition in our philosophical accounts of mind and action. Wittgenstein realized that our actions, desires, beliefs need not be prompted by more basic inner, ghostly beliefs or propositions and indeed that our beliefs themselves need not be propositions.

For Wittgenstein, it is action, not propositions, that is at the basis of all our speaking and thinking: I do not need to believe that I am in Beijing in order to say: 'I flew in to Beijing two days ago'. He realized that much – not all, but much

¹ This paper was delivered on the occasion of the International Conference on Wittgenstein and Contemporary Philosophy and the Inaugural Meeting of the Chinese Wittgenstein Society, Beijing Normal University 12–13 October 2013.

– of what we have always regarded as thinking is in fact acting or behaviour. Acting, however, that looks like thought because we – philosophers – have put it into words. This includes such things as our basic beliefs, our basic reactions, and our rules of grammar. Now of course, all of these can be put into sentences or, if you like, propositions², but what Wittgenstein has shown is that they do not stem from propositions; that they do not start out as any kind of content or thought.

Contrary to “the widely-endorsed thesis that cognition always and everywhere involves content” (Hutto and Myin 2013), Wittgenstein regards cognition as always and everywhere involving man as an animal, as a creature in a primitive state³. He insists that we cannot make a move or have a thought that does not stem from the animal in us; and that it is only after that primitive start that cognition can have content. This translates into saying that, for Wittgenstein, “at the beginning is the deed”, not the word, not the proposition, but the deed; that is: action: “Language – I want to say – is a refinement. ‘In the beginning was the deed.’”⁴ (UW 1993: 395).

This is what brings me to say that Wittgenstein is at the root of the contemporary philosophical movement called Enactivism, along with its cohorts: embodiment, embeddedness and extensiveness: movements (all encapsulated by the expression: ‘the e-turn’) that Wittgenstein’s work has prompted and fostered. Broadly understood⁵, enactivism is the view that mentality is ‘rooted in engaged, embodied activity as opposed to detached forms of thought’; a view that favours “the primacy of ways of acting over ways of thinking when it comes to understanding our basic psychological and epistemic situation” (Hutto 2013: 281). The most recent version of enactivism: Dan Hutto and Erik Myin’s ‘radical enactivism’

... holds that it is possible to explain a creature’s capacity to perceive, keep track of, and act appropriately with respect to some object or property without positing internal structures that function to represent, refer to, or stand for the object or property in question. Our basic ways of responding to worldly offerings are not semantically contentful. ... the great bulk of world-directed, action-guiding cognition exhibits intentional directedness that is not contentful. (2013, 82)

2 I argue elsewhere (e.g., Moyal-Sharrock 2007) that Wittgenstein’s bipolar view of the proposition precludes his considering *basic* beliefs and rules of grammar as propositions strictly speaking.

3 The term ‘primitive’ whenever used by Wittgenstein or myself in this paper – is to be understood ontogenetically, phylogenetically and logically.

4 And ‘the beginning’ here must be understood ontogenetically and phylogenetically.

5 As opposed to, more narrowly, the movement founded by Varela, Thompson and Rosch 1991.

There is nothing here that cannot be traced back to Wittgenstein, and so Wittgenstein is an enactivist through and through; indeed, the first enactivist.

I will now briefly survey a few of the ways in which Wittgenstein helped emphasize the primacy of action. We can start with his signature phrase: 'meaning is use'; meaning is the product of our operating with words (AWL 1979: 21); and so: "The meaning of a word is described by describing its use" (AWL 1979: 48) – that is, how we operate with that word. And so it goes for understanding. As Wittgenstein says:

We think there must be something going on in one's mind for one to understand the word 'plant'. We are inclined to say that what we mean by one's understanding the word is a process in the mind. ... There is a way out of the difficulty of explaining what understanding is if we take 'understanding a word' to mean, roughly, being able to use it. The point of this explanation is to replace 'understanding a word' by 'being able to use a word', which is not so easily thought of as denoting an [inner] activity. (AWL 1979: 78)

In most cases it [the word 'understand'] is used to mean being able to do so-and-so. ... (AWL 1979: 80)

Add to this his view of rule-following in terms of making a move rather than a judgment. To follow a rule is to do something; calculating, using mathematical rules, are mechanical activities; like making moves that one was trained to perform⁶. Rules of mathematics are akin to orders or commands (RFM 1978: VII, 40; V, 13) that impart technique (RFM 1978: VII, 1) – "The mathematical proposition says to me: 'Proceed like this!'" (RFM 1978: VII, 73); it "determines ... lays down a path for us" (RFM 1978: IV, 8). Indeed Wittgenstein often remarks on the dispensability of propositions in arithmetic, stressing the similarity of calculating to gestures, and of the teaching of arithmetic to a training:

Might we not do arithmetic without having the idea of uttering arithmetical propositions, and without ever having been struck by the similarity between a multiplication and a proposition? ... We are used to saying "2 times 2 is 4", and the verb "is" makes this into a proposition, and apparently establishes a close kinship with everything that we call a 'proposition'. Whereas it is a matter only of a very superficial relationship. (RFM 1978: III, 4)

"The expressions 'being able to', 'understanding how to', 'knowing how to go on' [...] have practically the same grammars" (AWL 1979: 92; my emphasis).

Wittgenstein's razor, as I have elsewhere called it⁷, pares off anything superfluous from our philosophical descriptions or accounts. It is seen at work on the

⁶ See also RFM 1978: I, 143–4 and the thought experiment at IV, 15–20 and V, 8.

⁷ See Moyal-Sharrock 2013.

subjects of perception, belief, feelings, sensations, emotions and of course action, wherever we have traditionally inserted an intellectual process or state – be it a thought, a description, an interpretation, an inference, a theory, a judgment, or a justified true belief – that turns out, upon scrutiny, to be superfluous. Here are some examples:

If I let my gaze wander round a room and suddenly it lights on an object of a striking red colour, and I say 'Red!' – that is not a description. (PI 1997: 187)

My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the opinion that he has a soul. (PI 1997: 287)

You don't need any knowledge to find a smell repulsive. (LW 1992: I, 758)

It is not as if he had only indirect, while I have internal direct evidence for my mental state. Rather, he has evidence for it, (but) I do not. (LW 1992: II, 67)

Whether I know something depends on whether the evidence backs me up or contradicts me. For to say one knows one has a pain means nothing. (OC 1997: 504)

... we can see from their actions that [people] believe certain things ... (OC 1997: 284; my emphasis)

As you can see, Wittgenstein pares off the superfluous thought or intellectual process supposed to lie behind our doxastic and psychological doxastic states; behind a spontaneous utterance, or our attitude to someone, or our reaction (say of disgust) to something. Our impressions and emotions, he insists, needn't be based on any thought or inference (be it conscious or unconscious):

'We see emotion.' – As opposed to what? – We do not see facial contortions and make the inference that he is feeling joy, grief, boredom. We describe a face immediately as sad, radiant, bored, even when we are unable to give any other description of the features. – Grief, one would like to say, is personified in the face. This is essential to what we call 'emotion'. (RPP 1980: II, 570)

And so Wittgenstein makes an unprecedented distinction between emotions and impressions that are grounded in thought and those that aren't grounded on any thought, however tacit. This puts paid to the idea that all our interactions with others are based on a so-called 'theory of mind'. I'll return to this shortly.

Also, Wittgenstein's drawing our attention to the enacted nature of spontaneous first-person psychological utterances – showing that, here too, words can be deeds – adds a new twist to the notion of speech-acts⁸:

⁸ See Moyal-Sharrock 2000.

The words “I am happy” are a bit of the behaviour of joy. (RPP 1980: I, 450)

The exclamation “I’m longing to see him!” may be called an act of expecting. (PI 1997: 586)

So that in some cases, the words ‘I am happy’ or ‘I’m longing to see him’ do not express an inner state such as happiness or expecting; they are part of the manifestation or occurrence of that state.

2. Tacit theories, beliefs or propositions

On most philosophical accounts, for us to be able to act, think or speak sensibly at all, there must be stored somewhere in our brain a myriad of tacit propositional beliefs, representations or concepts; and in order to relate to other people normally, we must deploy a tacit ‘theory of mind’. It is because autistic individuals lack a ‘theory of mind’, or only have an impaired one, that they cannot relate to others.

Wittgenstein shows that these are confused and misleading over-intellectualizations. His view not only defies contradiction by the cognitive scientific world – for no scientist has ever found a hint of a codified proposition, content, representation, or theory in the brain – it encourages us to test the conceptual waters that have harboured such notions and to realize that they are far from transparent. It is in this spirit that philosophers like Dan Hutto, Eric Myin, Peter Hacker and H.-J. Glock argue that it is conceptually muddled to speak of content or information in the brain, or to speak of them at all as if they could exist independently of a subject for whom they are content or information. Take the rings of a tree trunk, they can inform someone of the tree’s age and are then and there information; but if no one is there to interpret them, they are not still, as such, information; they are there, but neither contentful nor informative: “The number of a tree’s rings can covary with the age of the tree, but they are not in and of themselves information or content”, write Hutto and Myin (2013: 67)⁹. Glock concurs: representations are not just signs *of something*, but signs for someone (2013: 218). The standard rebuke here is that neural signs may not be signs for personal sub-

⁹ Covariance is not content: although a tree’s rings carry information (understood in the covariational sense) about the tree’s age, more is needed if there is to be informational or representational content (H&M 2013: 71–2); “... informational content doesn’t exist in nature If informational content doesn’t exist in nature, then cognitive systems don’t literally traffic in informational content ... there is no naturally occurring informational content in the world” (2013: xvi).

jects, but they are signs for sub-personal subjects, such as the brain or its functionally-defined modules¹⁰. To this, the Wittgensteinian response, as encapsulated by Glock is that

... this ... invites the charge of a 'homunculus' or 'mereological fallacy' (Kenny 1984: ch. 9; Bennett/Hacker 2003) ... the fallacy of explaining mental attributes of an animal or subject ... by postulating sub-personal subjects – homunculi – with the same or similar mental capacities – in this case the capacity for the intentional employment of signs. The explanation is fallacious because these capacities can only be attributed to the ... subject ... as a whole.... Furthermore, even if it made sense to credit sub-personal instances with symbolic understanding, this would only push back the problem. One then needs to explain the representational capacities of these postulated homunculi, which engenders a regress. (2013: 218)

It should now be clear that any notion of content or representation or information-encoding that would be independent of persons or social practices – such as the content or representations or encoding supposedly processed *in the brain, by the brain* – is conceptually muddled. Imagine, then, the number of cognitive scientists working with the wrong assumptions and the wrong objectives. The conflation of brain structures with neural representations, codes, or content is one of the conceptual blunders that are today being highlighted and clarified by Wittgensteinians; but it is not easy to crush the conviction that there are physicalist explanations involving physical causes to all that we do. It is this conviction that leads philosophers and scientists to posit representational traces in the brain, when in fact neither explanation nor cause is necessary or necessarily physical; and the involvement of the body – where it occurs – need not be causal but only enabling. Indeed, much of what we do is not susceptible of explanation or cause – e.g., I do not stand because I know I am sitting down and am therefore in a position to stand; or because my body is causing me to; I do not use most of my words when I speak because I have (unconsciously) chosen them from a number of others; or because my brain is causing me to. Our brain enables us to stand, speak, as it enables us to love or remember; but it does not cause us to stand, speak, love or remember.

10 Glock: “Yet neural tokens of computational types are entirely and in principle inaccessible to the subject, they are “deeply unconscious”, to use Searle’s (1997) critical label. By the same token, they cannot be used by *S* intentionally or, *a fortiori*, with the intent to represent anything. Nor can the subject employ them according to rules, as required for symbolic representation.” (2013: 218). As Glock notes, “Fodor himself does not fall back on this response. He grants that ‘nobody ever interprets mental representations’” (2008: 16). Yet this concession removes any license for holding that these representations are symbolic, and hence for speaking about a *language* of thought.’ (2013: 230n3)

Wittgenstein also rejects the standard view in epistemology that tacit beliefs or propositions are the unconscious basis of our acts and thoughts. He puts this error to rest in *On Certainty*. I'll now give a very brief account of how he does this¹¹.

3. An enacted certainty

What philosophers have traditionally called 'basic or tacit beliefs' cannot, on pain of infinite regress, be themselves further propositional beliefs, and Wittgenstein's conception of hinge certainty¹² shows they aren't. Where epistemologists have always thought of our basic beliefs as propositions, Wittgenstein sees them as rules of grammar or bounds of sense that manifest themselves as ways of acting. Such strings of words as 'I have a body' or 'Human beings need oxygen' or 'Babies cannot look after themselves' though they look like empirical propositions are in fact expressions of things that we take, or have come to take (through training or repeated exposure), as standing indubitably fast for us. These are sometimes facts – for example: 'I am standing here', but not always; for example: 'The earth is flat' was, before 1492, a certainty that belonged to the *Weltbild* of most people. We do not hold our certainties because they are true; there is no question of truth or falsity where there are no propositions. For, although we can formulate our certainties as I have just done, this is only for heuristic or philosophical elucidation; formulating them does not make them into propositions. Our basic certainties are nonepistemic and nonpropositional; they can only, qua certainties, show themselves in our acting: I act in the certainty of my standing here, of my being in Beijing, of my speaking English, of there being people other than me in this room, of the world existing and of the earth being round. Our not doubting such certainties – is not due to reasoning or verification, but to our not regarding them as susceptible of doubt in the first place: "I know how to ascertain that I have two coins in my pocket. But I cannot ascertain that I have two hands, because I cannot doubt it" (LW 1992: I, 832), writes Wittgenstein. To be certain, here, means to be unwaveringly and yet noncognitively poised on something that enables us to think, speak or act meaningfully. That something

¹¹ For a more comprehensive account, see Moyal-Sharrock 2007.

¹² In a well-known metaphor, Wittgenstein uses the image of hinges that must stand fast in order for the door of enquiry to turn (OC 1997: 341; 343).

is grammar; and its manifestation in ordinary life is in our ways of acting (OC 1997: 204)¹³:

... the end is not certain 'propositions' striking us immediately as true, i. e. it is not a kind of seeing on our part; it is our acting, which lies at the bottom of the language-game. (OC 1997: 204)

Hinge certainty is an enacted certainty, exhibiting itself in the smoothness of our normal, basic operating in the world. Our hinge certainty that something is a tree shows itself in our treating it as something to cut for firewood, or to sit under for shade, or to examine for its classification. And, although we can formulate grammar in heuristic circumstances (e. g., in teaching language to a child, we say: 'This is a tree' pointing to the oak tree next to her), such formulation *in the flow of the language game* would arrest the game. To use Wittgenstein's example in *On Certainty*, if a forester were to say to his men: 'This tree has got to be cut down, and this one and this one', that would be an informative statement. If he were then to say, pointing to a perfectly ordinary tree: 'That is a tree', his men would look at him perplexed. The language-game is suddenly frozen; the forester isn't making sense: he seems to want to inform his men of something so basic they would have learned it as children. That that is a tree is a rule of grammar; a hinge which, as such, is 'fixed and ... removed from the traffic' (OC 1997: 210) – that is, it enables, but does not belong to the language-game. To say a hinge in the flow of the language-game invariably arrests the game; the fluidity of the game depends on its hinges remaining invisible (unsaid): all the forester needs to say for his men to get to work is which trees need cutting.

Wittgenstein's conclusion in *On Certainty* is that our basic certainty is logical, logically ineffable, and enacted. As he'd already suspected in the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*: "The limits of empiricism are not assumptions unguaranteed, or intuitively known to be correct; they are ways in which ... we act" (RFM 1978: VII, 21).

13 The reform of logical necessity from its traditional depiction as an inexorable *law* to an inexorable *attitude* in the face of what it makes sense to say or think about certain things was undertaken by Wittgenstein in the *Remarks on the Foundation of Mathematics* – an attitude of inexorable *application* in the *Remarks* (p. 82), this attitude is glossed in *On Certainty* as one of nonratiocinated, immediate trust (cf. OC 1997: 150, 283, 509) and thoughtless grasp (OC 1997: 511).

4. Child Development

The fields of child development and language acquisition are also being impacted by Wittgenstein's thought. It is commonplace for psychologists to assume that children construct a theory about human talk and action – a 'theory of mind' – to enable them to relate to others; that they, and generally all of us, need to infer the nature of other people's minds on the basis of our first-person experience of our own minds. Some psychologists have found an alternative to this in what Carpendale and Lewis call Wittgenstein's 'enculturation approach' according to which children understand other 'minds' – or rather other people – by internalizing the folk psychology of their particular culture through a process of enculturation (2004: 80).

This view of interpersonal understanding and social cognition as enculturated, rather than theoretical, inferential or analogical, is shared by eminent psychologist Peter Hobson, who acknowledges his debt to Wittgenstein:

Wittgenstein's attack on the very concept of a private language undermines the assumption that all by oneself and without the possibility of correction by others (already experienced as others), one would be able to identify a given mental state as the same when this recurs within one's own experience, and then go on to ascribe it to other people.¹⁴ ... (2008: 2)

Hobson goes on to flesh out his agreement with Wittgenstein that we basically apprehend feelings in the expressions of other people immediately, and not by way of inference. And as regards non-typically developing children, he finds Wittgenstein's writings offer a conceptual framework that enable a perspicuous account of the developmental psychopathology of autism. In his excellent paper, *Wittgenstein and the developmental psychopathology of autism*, Hobson shows how "Wittgenstein's ideas illuminate autism" (2008, 1).

14 Hobson (passage deleted in the quote): "Even if this were possible, moreover, and if – implausibly – one could develop the mental equipment to formulate and apply analogy prior to engaging with the mental states of other people, still one would lack an adequate basis for such analogical reasoning. Other people would seem very unlike oneself unless already, one could apprehend in some way that they have subjective states of mind. Prior to the application of analogy, one might suppose, 'human things in the environment could be perceived to have bodily characteristics like one's own, but they would appear to lack what is to the forefront of one's own subjective experience, namely the having-of-experience itself. ... Noticing that other bodies are like one's own would give little clue that they might instantiate persons-with-minds'. As Wittgenstein noted: 'If one has to imagine someone else's pain on the model of one's own, this is none too easy a thing to do: for I have to imagine pain which *I do not feel* on the model of the pain which *I do feel*.'" (PI 1997: 302).

On the subject of language acquisition, Wittgenstein has inspired the work of philosophers, such as redith Williams and José Medina (as well as my own), who have argued against the nativist view of language notably promulgated by Jerry Fodor and Noam Chomsky. But linguists and psychologists, too, have found in Wittgenstein resources against a physicalist conception of language acquisition. Many of them draw on the private language argument to argue against the view, predominant in linguistics, that meaning derives from the relation between a mental verb and a corresponding referent, insisting instead, as does for example psycholinguist Derek Montgomery, that semantic development is a 'process of learning how, when, and for what purpose words are used' (2002: 357)¹⁵. I have myself tried to show how Wittgenstein's work helps destabilize the picture of an innate mental universal grammar with a grammar which, though indeed partly universal, is not rooted in the brain but in our basic reactions and transmitted socio-culturally¹⁶.

"Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination", writes Wittgenstein (OC 1997: 475); for him, meaning is logically rooted in instinctive reactions and gestures¹⁷ and further developed through training and enculturation.¹⁸ This, then, makes some apparently empirical conclusions logical. This is the case with primatologist Michael Tomasello's claim, also indebted to Wittgenstein, that 'children must be capable of participating in, and communicating in, mutually understood forms of life before they can acquire communicative conventions at all' (2013). This claim is really only an empirical endorsement of what Wittgenstein has shown to be a logical or conceptual (in Wittgenstein's human-bound sense of the term¹⁹) necessity: a first human language can only be acquired on

¹⁵ See also Carpendale and Lewis (2004).

¹⁶ See Moyal-Sharrock (2010) and (2015).

¹⁷ "Meaning" ("*Bedeutung*") comes from "point" ("deuten"). What we call meaning must be connected with the primitive language of gestures (pointing-language).' (BT 2005: 24); "The origin and the primitive form of the language game is a reaction; only from this can more complicated forms develop. Language – I want to say – is a refinement. 'In the beginning was the deed.'" (UW 1993: 395 – CV p. 31); "Being sure that someone is in pain, doubting whether he is, and so on, are so many natural, instinctive kinds of behaviour towards other human beings, and our language is merely an auxiliary to, and further extension of, this relation. Our language-game is an extension of primitive behaviour. (For our *language-game* is behaviour.) (Instinct)." (Z 1970: 545) [cf. RPP 1980: I, 151].

¹⁸ On the latter, see José Medina's excellent *The Unity of Wittgenstein's Philosophy* (Medina 2002).

¹⁹ "By 'possible' we mean *logically possible*. Where is the phenomenon of possibility to be looked for? Only in the symbolism we use. The essence of logical possibility is what is laid down in language. What is laid down depends on facts, but is not made true or false by them." (AWL 1979: 162)

the basis of participation and communication in a human form of life. This means that: any account of human first-language acquisition that does not assume participation in a human form of life to be basic and crucial is nonsensical. It may sound sensible; but this is only because it is imaginable. We can make cartoons or films describing beings that get fed language the way computers get fed data, but it is precisely this imaginability or picturing that leads us astray, for it encourages and wrongly warrants transferability to our human form of life. The transfer is in fact nonsensical. As Wittgenstein writes: “That one can ‘imagine’ something does not mean that it makes sense to say it” (Z 1970: 250). Wittgenstein urges us to recognize that imaginability is not a *carte blanche* for sense; and therefore for possibility²⁰. It does not make sense to say of a human being that language can be inserted into her brain, or that she might be a brain in a vat, or that she might be a zombie. We can logically or sensically say this of sci-fi characters, not of human beings.

5. Memory

Wittgenstein also turns his attention to memory.²¹ He debunks our preconceptions about memory residing in the brain – in storage as it were – in the form of encoded traces (or engrams). He does not deny that the brain is necessary to memory; in fact, he assumes that there exists a correlation between such activities as talking or writing and what goes on in the brain: “if I talk or write there is, I assume, a system of impulses going out from my brain and correlated with

20 “So it depends wholly on our grammar what will be called possible and what not, i.e. what that grammar permits. But surely that is arbitrary! Certainly; but the grammatical constructions we call empirical propositions (e.g. ones which describe a visible distribution of objects in space and could be replaced by a representational drawing) have a particular application, a particular use. And a construction may have a superficial resemblance to such an empirical proposition and play a somewhat similar role in a calculus without having an analogous application; and if it hasn’t we won’t be inclined to call it a proposition. / ‘Possible’ here means the same as ‘conceivable’; but ‘conceivable’ may mean ‘capable of being painted’, ‘capable of being modelled’, ‘capable of being imagined’; i.e. representable in a particular system of propositions. What matters is the system. – For example someone asks: ‘is it conceivable that a row of trees might go on forever in the same direction without coming to an end? ‘Why shouldn’t it be ‘conceivable’? After all it’s expressible in a grammatical system. But if so what’s the application of the proposition? How is it verified? What is the relation between its verification and the verification of a proposition like ‘this row of trees ends at the hundredth tree’? That will tell us how much this conceivability is worth, so to speak.” (PI 1997: 82)

21 For a fuller analysis of Wittgenstein on memory, see Moyal-Sharrock 2009.



my spoken or written thoughts” (RPP I, 903); what Wittgenstein rejects is that this correlation is a representational or encrypted (codified) correlation. The brain is a *mechanical* enabler; it is not *ipso facto* the storehouse and codifier of our memories:

An event leaves a trace in the memory: one sometimes imagines this as if it consisted in the event's having left a trace, an impression, a consequence, in the nervous system. As if one could say: even the nerves have a memory. But then when someone remembered an event, he would have to infer it from this impression, this trace. Whatever the event does leave behind in the organism, it isn't the memory. (RPP 1980: I, 220)

Wittgenstein's major contribution to the elucidation of the concept of memory is his discrediting the picture of memory as information *storage* and replacing it with the idea that memory is nothing but an *ability* (which, of course, is – as are all our abilities – physiologically supported by the brain) and that, in some contexts, remembering amounts to a way of acting; that is to an act or expression which does not result from introspection or retrospection (e. g., BBB 1969: 85).

Wittgenstein then helps us move away from the distorted picture of memory as the storage and retrieval of reified 'memories' towards a conception of memory as something that can be situated, contextualized, external and in action. My remembering something can be in the form of a mental picture, but it can also have the form of a gesture or a sentence. Remembering can amount to something I say or do. This helps discredit the picture of mental phenomena as essentially representations internal to the brain and sheds light on the mental as an ability whose manifestations can be as much in what we do as in what we think, but never in what our brain 'does' or 'thinks'.

6. Conclusion

Meaning, believing, thinking, understanding, reasoning, calculating, learning, following rules, remembering, intending, expecting, longing – there is hardly anything, traditionally thought to be emergent from, underwritten by, or reducible to, a mental process or state, that Wittgenstein has not subjected to the razor of enactivism; that is: shown to be basically embodied or enacted rather than originating in propositions, theories of mind, or ghostly processes. This may sound like behaviourism, but it isn't. Wittgenstein does not do away with the inner; he merely revises its importance and its nature²².

²² Peter Hacker: "... behaviourism was right about *some* matters. ... Where it was wrong was to

Now, it might be objected, Wittgenstein can say what he likes; but where's the evidence? Well, it is scientists, not philosophers that base their claims on evidence. What philosophers do is work on more perspicuous *conceptual* presentations of how things are. And what Wittgenstein has done is show that we cannot make conceptual sense of basic certainties that start off as propositions, and engrams that work like people. But now let me return the question and ask scientists: where is your evidence? There is none. There has never been found the shadow of anything representational or encoded in the brain. So why insist we go micro (or subpersonal) in our accounts of the mind when even science is unable to demonstrate that that's the way to go? If attention is to be paid by philosophy to science, shouldn't it be to scientific results rather than to scientific hypotheses that seem nourished by a preconception of how things should be?

Wittgenstein's enactive account of mindedness is informed by unassuming description, not tendentious explanation; it relies not on 'assumptions unguaranteed' and indeed unsubstantiated, but on what is 'already in plain view', and yet we seem 'not to understand' (PI 1997: 89). Wittgenstein pioneered the enactive movement towards a more 'perspicuous presentation' and understanding of our concepts for philosophers, scientists and thinkers in disciplines such as education, psychology, linguistics, primatology, sociology, religion and others. It is important that we keep Wittgenstein's philosophy alive and influential, for I don't see any other philosopher around capable of saving us from the still prevalent view that human life and spirit are reducible to electrons and neurons; a view that has rendered commonplace, remarks such as this by Richard Dawkins: "the deep and universal questions of existence and the meaning of life are scientific matters which should properly be dealt with in science classes" (1993). It is the task of the Wittgensteinian philosopher to make perspicuous the nonsensicality of such remarks.

suppose that the mental is *reducible* to behaviour and dispositions to behave. Ontological behaviourism (Watson and Skinner) was right to emphasise that language learning is based on training, and that it presupposes common behavioural reactions and responses. ... It was correct to conceive of understanding in terms of abilities and dispositions, rather than as a hidden mental state or process. But the behaviourists were sorely mistaken to suppose that the mental is a fiction. One can think and feel without showing it, and one can exhibit thoughts and feelings without having them. Avowals of experience are indeed a form of behaviour, but what they avow is not behaviour." (2013: 21)

Bibliography

- Bennett, M. R. & Hacker, P.M.S.: *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience*, Oxford 2003.
- Carpendale, J. & Lewis, C.: ~~(2004)~~ Constructing an Understanding of Mind: The Development of Children's Social Understanding within Social Interaction, in: *Behavioral & Brain Sciences* 27/2004, 79–96.
- Dawkins, R.: *The Independent*, September 1993; cited by Macarthur, D.: Quinean Naturalism in Question, in: *Philo* 11:1/2008, 1–14.
- Glock, H.-J.: *Animal Minds: A Non-Representationalist Approach*, in: *APQ* 50:3/2013, 213–32.
- Hacker, P.M.S.: Wittgenstein's philosophy of psychology as a critical instrument for the psychological sciences, in: *The Role and Use of Conceptual Analysis in Psychology: A Wittgensteinian Perspective*, eds. T. Racine & K. Slaney, Basingstoke 2013, 10–27.
- Hobson, P. ~~(2008)~~: Wittgenstein and the developmental psychopathology of autism, in: *New Ideas in Psychology*,  1–15.
- Hutto, D. D.: *Contentless Perceiving: the very idea*, in: *Wittgenstein and Perception*, ed. M. Campbell, Oxford 2013.
-  & Myin, E.: *Radicalizing Enactivism: Basic Minds without Content*, Cambridge, MA 2013.
- Moyal-Sharrock, D.: Words as Deeds: Wittgenstein's 'Spontaneous Utterances' and the Dissolution of the Explanatory Gap, in: *Philosophical Psychology* 13:3/2000, 355–372.
- : *Understanding Wittgenstein's On Certainty*, Basingstoke 2007.
- : Wittgenstein and the Memory Debate, in: Mueller, U. & Racine T. (Eds), *New Ideas in Psychology. Special Issue: Mind, Meaning and Language: Wittgenstein's Relevance for Psychology* 27/2009, 213–27.
- : *Coming to Language: Wittgenstein's Social 'Theory' of Language*, in: *Language & World: Essays on the Philosophy of Wittgenstein. Part I*. Eds V. Munz, K. Puhl, J. Wang. Heusenstamm 2010, 291–314.
- : *Wittgenstein's Razor: The Cutting Edge of Enactivism'*, in: *APQ* 50:3/2013, 263–79.
- : *Universal Grammar: Wittgenstein versus Chomsky. Memorial Lecture for the Laurence Goldstein Memorial Conference. Kent University at Canterbury* 13–14 May 2015.
- Tomasello, M.: *Communication before language. Plenary Lecture for the 36th International Wittgenstein Symposium on Mind, Language and Action, Kirchberg am Wechsel* 2013.
- Varela, F. J., Thompson, E. and Rosch, E.: *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*, Cambridge, MA 1991.