

# PHILOSOPHER AS A THERAPIST

## Learning from Wittgenstein

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**Abstract:** Recent commentators have suggested that Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) can be understood as much as a therapist as a logician or theoretician. This paper explores how Wittgenstein ‘goes about his work’ as a therapist by looking at two aspects of his writings: the *Übersichtliche Blick* or ‘Way of Seeing’ and the move in his philosophy from thinking to seeing to acting. The paper concludes by suggesting that a Wittgensteinian approach to learning could be categorised as a view of pedagogy as ‘astonishment’.

**Keywords:** Alain Badiou, Anti-Philosophy, Pedagogy, Perspicuous View, Therapy, Wittgenstein

### 1. Introduction: ‘Showing the Fly the Way Out of the Fly-Bottle’

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) famously characterised the aim of his philosophy as showing ‘the fly the way out of the fly-bottle’.<sup>1</sup> Much ink has been spilt as to what exactly he meant by this phrase and, indeed, the major thrust of his philosophy *tout court* (as we shall see shortly). In this article, I present one interpretation of the phrase. My argument is that by working on

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<sup>1</sup>Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe and R. Rhees, Oxford: Blackwell, 1958, 309.

the gossamer-light interface between what can and cannot be said, Wittgenstein's philosophy gently coaxes each reader from the ensnaring prison of the discursive intellect to a wider, non-discursive, *Blick* or view on existence. In so doing the philosopher, rather like a therapist, cannot confine herself simply to words but must work on the subtle choreography between saying and showing.

Recent commentators such as Alain Badiou have gone so far as to suggest that Wittgenstein is better considered as an 'anti-philosopher' who attacks the very roots of Western philosophy itself. Beginning, therefore, with a brief review of some of the problems of Wittgensteinian interpretation that have arisen in the half century since his death in 1951, I then turn my attention to two ways in which the Austrian encourages his readers to 'work on themselves', that is, through the development of the *Übersichtliche Blick* and a discourse that moves from thinking to seeing to acting. I conclude that although some of Wittgenstein's unorthodox methods may trouble or disturb his readers, his ultimate aim stays deeply wedded to the ancient quest to root philosophy in wonderment. In this respect, I argue, we can see his philosophy as much as therapy as pedagogy – a true working on the soul.

## 2. Reading Wittgenstein: Theory and Therapy

Surveying the reactions to Wittgenstein's work nearly fifty years after his death, Rorty, in his essay "Keeping Philosophy Pure," summed up the position thus:

Academic philosophy in our day stands to Wittgenstein as intellectual life in Germany in the first decades of the last century stood to Kant. Kant had changed everything, but no one was sure just what Kant had said – no one was sure what in Kant to take seriously and what to put aside.<sup>2</sup>

In this essay, Rorty suggests that Wittgenstein's writings throw down a gauntlet to all who read them, especially professional philosophers. The challenge to enter the 'transcendental

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<sup>2</sup>R. Rorty, "Keeping Philosophy Pure," in *Consequences of Pragmatism (Essays 1972–1980)*, Brighton: Harvester, 1982, 20.

standpoint’ of the *Tractatus* and the further challenge of the ‘twice born’ to resist this temptation and the challenge to both of the ‘pure of heart’ expounded in the *Philosophical Investigations* that transcends the need to ‘explain, justify and expound’. In tracing this distinction, which Hutto calls the ‘theoretical and the therapeutic’,<sup>3</sup> Rorty emphasises the importance of the *Tractatus* for those who have expounded Wittgenstein from the former point and the importance of the *Investigations* for those of the latter disposition. This distinction between the emphases of the work of the ‘earlier’ and ‘later’ Wittgenstein, and this possible distinction between a theoretical and an anti-theoretical approach to his writings, has been a constant since the voluminous Wittgensteinian secondary literature began to swell. As Pears puts it, in these later works “he is moving away from theorizing and towards plain description of the phenomenon of language.”<sup>4</sup>

Consequently, amongst the Wittgensteinian secondary literature we see a split between those commentators who see the work of the later Wittgenstein as continuing the work of the earlier Wittgenstein and those who see a new *anti-theoretical shift* in the post-*Tractatus* works. To add to the confusion, a recent book, *The Third Wittgenstein: The Post-Investigations Works*<sup>5</sup> has argued that the parts of the *Nachlass* that have appeared charting the latter period of Wittgenstein’s life, in particular *On Certainty*, suggest a *third* interpretation of Wittgenstein that transcends even the position developed in the *Investigations*.

We are, thus, left with four possible ways of viewing his works in the authors of the secondary literature:

1. Those who remain with the traditional division between the ‘earlier’ and the ‘later’ Wittgenstein and see the later works, especially the *Investigations*, as a critique of the earlier works,

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<sup>3</sup>D. Hutto, *Wittgenstein and the End of Philosophy: Neither Theory nor Therapy*, London: Macmillan, 2003.

<sup>4</sup>D. F. Pears, *The False Prison: A Study of the Development of Wittgenstein’s Philosophy*, vol. 1, Oxford: Clarendon, 1988, 218.

<sup>5</sup>D. Moyal-Sharrock, *The Third Wittgenstein: The Post-Investigations Works*, London: Ashgate, 2004.

especially the *Tractatus*. Representative of this trend would be Peter Hacker whose *Wittgenstein: Connections and Controversies* makes this point.<sup>6</sup>

2. The so-called 'new Wittgensteinians' who see a theoretical union between the early and the later Wittgenstein and reject any notion of a firm break between the two.<sup>7</sup>

3. Those who regard the 'third Wittgenstein' of the 'post-*Investigations* works' (so-called) as presenting a third and more radical departure from the Wittgensteinian corpus.

4. To these three interpretations, we could possibly add a fourth, a growing body of Wittgenstein scholars who, following Wittgenstein's own remarks in the latter works of moving from the theoretical to the practical, or from *saying* to *showing*, want to emphasise the importance of the biographical elements of Wittgenstein's life and use them to gain a more complete picture of what his thought was trying to achieve. Again, a key collection of essays, *Wittgenstein: Biography and Philosophy*<sup>8</sup> has acted as a vessel for presenting this interpretative strand. Included in this group would be those (such as myself) who also want to emphasise Wittgenstein's role as a *therapist* as much as a *theoretician* or *logician*.

### 3. Wittgenstein as Therapist

One of the first writers to emphasise the 'therapeutic' within Wittgenstein's writing was Stanley Cavell.<sup>9</sup> By the time Alice Crary's collection *The New Wittgenstein* came out in 2000 it seemed as though the notion had influenced a whole generation of Wittgensteinian scholars. The authors collected there, Crary

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<sup>6</sup>P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Connections and Controversies*, Oxford: Clarendon, 2001.

<sup>7</sup>A. Crary, and R. Read, *The New Wittgenstein*, London: Routledge, 2000.

<sup>8</sup>J. Klagge, *Wittgenstein: Biography and Philosophy*, Cambridge: CUP, 2001.

<sup>9</sup>S. Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say?* Oxford: OUP, 1976; *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality and Tragedy*, Oxford: OUP, 1979.

suggested, shared an interpretation of Wittgenstein’s work as (a) a unified whole and (b) broadly ‘therapeutic’ in nature. This emphasises the shift in recent Wittgensteinian scholarship away from the understanding of his work as largely *theoretical* (or, in Rorty’s words, largely concerned with the reactions and concerns of fellow ‘professional philosophers’) to an understanding which is built around seeing his work as contributing to individual existential development.<sup>10</sup> For Cray, this ‘therapeutic aim’ is largely around helping us to see the ‘sources of philosophical confusion’ we hold by replacing a need for a metaphysical view of language to a concern with the observation of the running of language as a means to solving philosophical confusion. Thus, for Cavell, the aim of Wittgenstein’s philosophy is to bring us back from metaphysical speculation to the everyday discourse of ‘forms of life’ (*Lebensformen*) where language has its natural home. Whereas Cavell and others are primarily concerned with the purely philosophical consequences of reading Wittgenstein’s work, other contemporary authors have gone further and ascribe to Wittgenstein a therapeutic agenda that goes beyond the purely philosophical. In this respect, there has been a growing movement to connect Wittgenstein’s writings with psychotherapeutic literature, beginning of course with his fellow Viennese theorist, Sigmund Freud (1856–1939). Wittgenstein saw the value of Freud’s work not as a pseudo-scientist but in the function of Freudian analysis as ‘aspect-changing’:

When a dream is interpreted we might say that it is fitted into a context in which it ceases to be puzzling. In a sense the dreamer re-dreams his dream in surroundings such that *its aspect changes...*

In considering what a dream is, it is important to consider what happens to it, the way its aspect changes when it is

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<sup>10</sup>In this vein see, for example, J. Nandhikkara, *Being Human after Wittgenstein: A Philosophical Anthropology*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2011.

brought into relation with other things remembered, for instance.<sup>11</sup>

#### 4. The Tools for Doing Philosophy

How, then, does Wittgenstein go about this therapeutic approach? Wittgenstein's approach to philosophy is notoriously dense and obtuse, indeed, it could be argued that much of his philosophical method was about *attacking* philosophical method.<sup>12</sup> "With the eye of a practiced marksman," writes Genova, "he hit his target squarely, rather than rarely, challenging philosophy's emulation of science, especially the latter's penchant for theory and faith in progress."<sup>13</sup> His famous 'anti-philosophical' stance, however, is not the whole story, for, as he assures us himself, his aims were also deeply philosophical. An anti-method it may have been, Wittgenstein still considered himself as a philosopher going about the work of philosophy: "I know that my method is right. My father was a business man, and I am a business man: I want my philosophy to be business-like, to get something done, to get something settled."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, ed., C. Barrett, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989, 45-46.

<sup>12</sup>See, for example, Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* and A. Badiou, *Wittgenstein's Antiphilosophy*, trans. B. Bosteels, London: Verso, 2011.

<sup>13</sup>J. Genova, *Wittgenstein: A Way of Seeing*, London: Routledge, 1995, xiii.

<sup>14</sup>R. Rhees, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Personal Recollections*, Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1981, 125. For Badiou, the 'anti-philosopher' "recalls for us that a philosopher is a political militant, generally hated by the powers that be and by their servants; an aesthete, who walks ahead of the most unlikely creations; a lover, whose life is capable of capsizing for a woman or a man; a savant, who frequents the most violently paradoxical developments of the sciences; and that it is in this effervescence, this in-disposition, this rebellion, that philosophers produce their cathedrals of ideas." Badiou, *Wittgenstein's Antiphilosophy*, 67.

There is clearly ‘method behind the madness’, indeed as we have seen already, much of Wittgenstein’s intentional aim seems to have been to re-envisage the aims, goals, and techniques of philosophy itself, his style itself being part of that revolution. Style, or how something is said, determines, for Wittgenstein, what is said: “In philosophy it is not enough to learn in every case *what* is to be said about a subject, but also *how* one must speak about it. We are always having to begin by learning the method of tackling it.”<sup>15</sup>

The first position involved in his ‘therapeutic’ approach is the development of what he calls ‘a way of seeing’.

#### 4.1. ‘A Way of Seeing’/ *Die Übersichtliche Blick: The Limits of Saying and Showing*

“How hard I find it to see what is right in front of my eyes!”<sup>16</sup> In his lectures of 1930, Wittgenstein defines the task of philosophy as one of attempting to “be rid of a particular kind of puzzlement. This ‘philosophic’ puzzlement is one of the intellect not of instinct” (CLL: 21).<sup>17</sup> From this time onwards he sees philosophy as possessing a clear method or as he describes it in the *Philosophical Investigations* and the *Remarks on Frazer’s Golden Bough, eine Übersichtliche Blick* – a ‘clear overview’ or, as it is often translated, a ‘perspicuous view’ (or as Wittgenstein himself called it, an ‘overlook’). For Wittgenstein, what we are doing in philosophy is ‘tidying up’ our notions of the world, making clear what can be said about the world. From the nineteen thirties onwards Wittgenstein begins to talk increasingly about *die Übersichtliche Darstellung* as a way of ‘doing philosophy’: literally, a ‘way of seeing’. Thus, in the *Remarks on Frazer’s Golden Bough*, written in 1931, he contemplates Frazer’s approach to

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<sup>15</sup>Wittgenstein, *Remarks on Colour*, ed. G. Anscombe; trans. L. McAlister and M. Schättle, Oxford: Blackwell, 1977, III, 43.

<sup>16</sup>Wittgenstein, *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, vol. 8: *Werkausgabe in 8 Bände*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993, 1940.

<sup>17</sup>Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein’s Lectures: Cambridge 1930-1932, from the Notes of John King and Desmond Lee*, ed. D. Lee, Oxford: Blackwell, 1980.

certain anthropological events and how far such an *Übersichtliche Darstellung* can critique reflections such as Frazer's. He states his own position as one that has the form: "Here one can only describe and say: this is what human life is like"<sup>18</sup> contrasting it with what he sees as Frazer's approach:

"And so the chorus points to a secret law" one feels like saying to Frazer's collection of facts. I *can* represent this law, this idea, by means of an evolutionary hypothesis, or also, analogously to the schema of a plant, by means of the schema of a religious ceremony, but also by means of the arrangement of its factual content alone, in an *Übersichtliche Darstellung*.<sup>19</sup>

This 'perspicuous view' is "of fundamental importance" to Wittgenstein's approach and he describes it as that which "brings about the understanding which consists precisely in the fact that we 'see the connections'. Hence the importance of finding *Zwischengliedern* ('connecting links')." <sup>20</sup> These *Zwischengliedern* 'do nothing but direct the attention to the similarity, the relatedness of the *facts*'.

By the time Wittgenstein begins writing the text which will ultimately become the *Philosophical Investigations* (unpublished at the time of his death) the position of the *Übersichtliche Darstellung* has become clearer and more refined. Thus, we find the following key passage which develops the earlier idea of the *Remarks*:

A main source of our misunderstandings is that we do not *übersehen* (oversee) the use of our words. - Our Grammar is lacking an *Übersichtlichkeit* (overview). - The *Übersichtliche Darstellung* produces the understanding which allows us to 'see connections'. Hence the importance of finding and inventing *Zwischengliedern*.

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<sup>18</sup>Wittgenstein, *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough*, reprinted in *Philosophical Occasions 1912-1951*, eds. J. C. Klagge and A. Nordmann, Cambridge: Hackett, 1993, 121.

<sup>19</sup>Wittgenstein, *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough*, 133.

<sup>20</sup>Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe and R. Rhees, Oxford: Blackwell, 1958, 133.



The concept of the *Übersichtliche Darstellung* is of fundamental significance for us. It designates our *Darstellungsform* (viewpoint), the way we see things. (Is this a *Weltanschauung*?)<sup>21</sup>

Following this with two important clarifications that point to the nature of the *Übersichtliche Darstellung*:

Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it. For it cannot give it any foundation either.

It leaves everything as it is.<sup>22</sup>

Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. – Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain.<sup>23</sup>

Wittgenstein, therefore, proposes a methodology, based on the *Übersichtliche Darstellung*, where we simply put ‘everything before us’. We observe the ‘language games’ or our context while not concerning ourselves with ‘hidden things’. Which leads to the second move in his therapeutic philosophy.

#### 4.2. The Move from Seeing to Acting

“*Worte sind Taten* – Words are deeds.”<sup>24</sup>

By the time of the last writings, especially *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein is supplementing the ‘way of seeing’ with a ‘way of acting’, as he puts it in *On Certainty*:

Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end; - but 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.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 122.

<sup>22</sup>Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 124.

<sup>23</sup>Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 126.

<sup>24</sup>Wittgenstein, *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, c1945.

<sup>25</sup>Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, eds. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, Oxford: Blackwell, 1969, 204.

The frame of reference of the mystical discourse in the 'way of life' is essential: "What has to be accepted, the given, is – so one could say – *forms of life*."<sup>26</sup>

We have moved 'out of the head' to find understanding and meaning in the wider arena of games. Our aim is not to "refine or complete the system of rules for the use of our words in unheard-of ways."<sup>27</sup> There is not one "philosophical method" but "methods, like different therapies" (*gleichsam verschiedene Therapien*).<sup>28</sup> Wittgenstein is, therefore, concerned to move the reader from thinking to seeing and finally acting. The reading of his philosophy, as has been emphasised all along, is not a passive act but must be an active engagement that challenges the reader to engage with the work on all levels. As in psychotherapy, Wittgenstein's philosophical approach invites us to observe the foundations of possible buildings rather than trying to build one building – the *Weltbild* rather than the *Weltanschauung*.<sup>29</sup> Like a successful therapist, we do not provide clever interpretations and interventions but allow the clarity of insight (*Übersichtliche Darstellung*) to be turned on the "foundations of possible buildings."<sup>30</sup>

This post-enlightenment way of knowing (therapeutic discourse – to which we could add mystical discourse too) requires a more interactive and immediate medium or frame of reference than either thinking or seeing provides. Action is the closest activity available to language and such activity will be tempered by a necessary vein of humility arising from the lack of an overriding *Weltanschauung*.

For Wittgenstein, therefore, *change* and *transformation* are paramount. To this end, in his writings, he entices, excites, goads and puzzles us in order to effect the change he seeks. *His writings*

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<sup>26</sup>Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 226.

<sup>27</sup>Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 133.

<sup>28</sup>Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 133.

<sup>29</sup>See also P. Tyler, *Picturing the Soul: Revisioning Psychotherapy and Spiritual Direction*, Bangalore: Dharmaram, 2014.

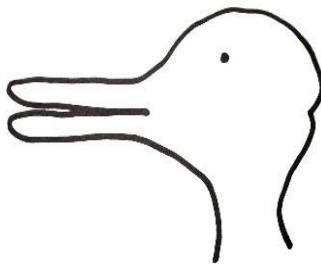
<sup>30</sup>Wittgenstein, *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, vol. 8: *Werkausgabe in 8 Bände*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993, 459.

are not meant to leave us alone. They pose us problems that cannot be ignored. By their nature they ‘subvert’, if they do not subvert they have failed in their task. If we play his games with him we become re-orientated regarding our perceptions of reality, ourselves and our place in the world. Thus, we can characterise Wittgenstein’s writings as what I have termed ‘*performative discourses*’ that ‘show’ as much as they ‘say’. In Genova’s words, they are ‘elucidations’: “Elucidations are in a class of their own, not quite poem, aphorism or logical equation, they resist categorization... They instruct by example, by showing rather than saying.”<sup>31</sup>

As Wittgenstein states in his preface to the *Tractatus*, there is what is presented on the written page and what is unwritten, and often “this second part is the important one.”<sup>32</sup>

### **5. Learning from Wittgenstein: Education as Astonishment**

As he lived in virtual isolation at a farmhouse in Rosro near Connemara, Ireland (having resigned his professorship in Cambridge and more or less withdrawn from academic life) towards the end of his life there are amusing stories of the great philosopher drawing Jastrow’s famous ‘Duck-Rabbit’ diagram in the sand of the sea-shore and then standing there for hours staring at it ... much to the bemusement of his fellow villagers.



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<sup>31</sup>Genova, *Wittgenstein: A Way of Seeing*, 108.

<sup>32</sup>Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. McGuinness, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961. See also *What can be shown, cannot be said, Tractatus*, 4.1212.

In the final *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, he returns continually to the figure and how an aspect is changed in our thought and life. What fascinated him was how “nothing and yet everything” is changed with the change of aspect. As he wrote in 1948 at Rosro:

What is incomprehensible is that *nothing*, and yet *everything*, has changed, after all. That is the only way to put it. Surely *this* way is wrong: It has not changed in *one* respect, but has in another. There would be nothing strange about that. But ‘Nothing has changed’ means: Although I have no right to change my report about what I saw, since I see the same things now as before – still, I am incomprehensibly compelled to report completely different things, one after the other.<sup>33</sup>

As we look at the duck-rabbit, or indeed other parts of our perception of the world, ‘a new aspect’ dawns – everything has changed while nothing has changed. In the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein is at pains to distinguish between “the continuous seeing” of an aspect (such as the duck-rabbit) and the “dawning” / *Aufleuchten* of an aspect,<sup>34</sup> for, as he explains, “the expression of a change of aspect is the expression of a new perception and at the same time of the perception’s being unchanged.”<sup>35</sup> For Aspect-seeing/the Dawning of an Aspect is a “half-visual, half-thought experience” (*das Erlebnis des Aspektswechsels/das Aufleuchten des Aspekts scheint halb Seh-, halb Gedankenerlebnis*).<sup>36</sup> I would interpret this as Wittgenstein suggesting that the dawning of an aspect really goes beyond the logical faculty to a

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<sup>33</sup>Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. 2, eds. G. H. von Wright and H. Nyman, Oxford: Blackwell, 1980, 474.

<sup>34</sup>Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, xi. 194e; / *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, vol. 1: *Werkausgabe in 8 Bände*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993, 520.

<sup>35</sup>Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, xi. 196e; / *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, 522.

<sup>36</sup>Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. 1, eds. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, Oxford: Blackwell, 1982, 554.

place that is “half seen/ half thought.” Almost against the pull of reason the conditions for the change of aspect reach beyond the bound of Aristotelian logic: “Aristotelian logic brands a contradiction as a non-sentence, which is to be excluded from language. But this logic only deals with a very small part of the logic of our language.”<sup>37</sup> For as Wittgenstein beautifully concludes, “*Dem Aspektwechsel wesentlich ist ein Staunen. Und Staunen ist Denken*: The Change of Aspect is essentially an astonishment. And astonishment is thinking.”<sup>38</sup> One of the chief characteristics of the Change of Aspect is that it occurs against our will,<sup>39</sup> it occupies, we could say, adopting the language of mystical theology, the place of unknowing. Thus, I would like to conclude by suggesting that Wittgenstein’s *Blick* that allows us to see the ‘dawning of an Aspect’ offers an educational opportunity to move our perception away from the Cartesian objective-subjective dualism that inevitably forces our thoughts in a certain direction.

We have seen how for Wittgenstein the aim of philosophy was to “show the fly the way out of the fly bottle.”<sup>40</sup> For him philosophy could never be an abstract rarefied discipline, it had to have a *practical, ethical* dimension. His writings interrupt the spontaneous, unselfconscious flow of the dualistic Cartesian mind forcing us to re-evaluate our place in the world and our attitude to it; this can have consequences for how we teach Wittgenstein.

Teaching Wittgenstein is, of course, notoriously difficult. Twenty years ago, I was assigned a class of undergraduates and told to teach them Wittgenstein. Needless to say it was a disaster as I taught his texts ‘straight’ like any other classical philosopher such as Kant or Locke – trying to get the class to repeat and memorise his arguments by rote (perhaps I unconsciously emulated Ludwig as a young man who ended up impatiently cuffing the school-children who couldn’t follow his ice-cold but

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<sup>37</sup>Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. 1, 525.

<sup>38</sup>Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. 1, 565.

<sup>39</sup>Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. 1, 612.

<sup>40</sup>Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 309.

brilliant thought processes...). Two decades later, following the interpretation I have developed in this article, I take an entirely different approach. Having given a preliminary lecture, not unlike the contents of this paper, I then get the students to read the texts themselves and reflect upon them. From the 'form of life' that develops in the group from the interaction of saying and showing the true message, and transformational work, of Wittgenstein begins to happen (much, indeed, as he taught philosophy himself in Cambridge towards the end of his life). By using language, similes and metaphors in unusual and provocative ways I have found that Wittgenstein brings us back to what we knew already but were unable to express in words. In conclusion, then, it may be worth recalling the work of Badiou whom I mentioned earlier, who termed Wittgenstein an 'anti-philosopher'. The role of the 'anti-philosopher', says Badiou, has three key elements:<sup>41</sup>

1. They present 'a linguistic, logical, genealogical critique of the statements of philosophy ... an unravelling of the pretensions of philosophy to constitute itself a theory'.
2. They see that philosophy is 'an act, of which fabulations about 'truth' are clothing, the propaganda, the lies.' (cf. Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity, T 4.112.)
3. They realise that the philosophical act "must install an active non-thought beyond all meaningful propositions, beyond all thought, which also means beyond all science... The antiphilosophical act consists in letting what there is show itself, insofar as 'what there is' is precisely that which no true proposition can say."<sup>42</sup>

Badiou's 'anti-method' is, then, I conclude, the spirit with which we should approach Wittgenstein's works as a guide to pedagogy – an approach that through the use of *Übersichtliche Darstellung* and astonishment will stimulate the move from thinking to seeing to acting that will lead to the position described finally at the end of the *Tractatus*: "There are indeed

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<sup>41</sup>Badiou, *Wittgenstein's Antiphilosophy*, 75-76.

<sup>42</sup>Badiou, *Wittgenstein's Antiphilosophy*, 80.

things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical.”<sup>43</sup> But rather than ‘anti-philosopher’ I would rather conclude that Wittgenstein is the philosopher of wonderment *par excellence*.

## 6. Conclusion

The cautionary moral of this short article is that we must approach Wittgenstein’s texts with care if we are to use them in a classroom setting. At first, seemingly scatty and disorganised, their aim, as I have argued here, is to present a sophisticated pedagogy of ‘showing’, often through as much ‘non-saying’ as ‘saying’. Badiou calls it in his provocative way (a true heir to the Austrian master!) an ‘anti-philosophy’. By returning philosophy back to its Aristotelian roots in astonishment and wonder I would rather characterise Wittgenstein’s art as a ‘philosophy of astonishment’ which aims, in particular, for us to return to the ordinary and every day and to see it clearly for the first time.

Writing as a psychotherapist, I observe this constantly in my analytic work where the unknowing ‘third position’ advocated by Wittgenstein suggests the best position from which to view the analytical situation. In similar vein, in a classroom setting, Wittgenstein’s writings encourage the pedagogue to launch away from prepared lesson-plans and graded assumptions and allow the magic of the Austrian master’s philosophical lexicon to weave its web over the classroom. Once we make this ‘leap of faith’, I can guarantee that the master’s provocative and challenging statements will do their work.

Neither a fideist, foundationalist, nor a fundamentalist (despite the best efforts of his later interpreters to squeeze him into these categories), Wittgenstein’s philosophy of surprise continues to defy characterisation and opens the door of the ordinary person who engages in philosophy into the astonishment of wonder which is his ultimate lesson.

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<sup>43</sup>Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 6.522.