

## **The Interface between Wittgenstein's Philosophical Therapy and the Empirical Psychotherapies.**

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Draft

About 3 years ago a leading article in the British Journal of Psychiatry pointed out that in spite of decades of biological and psychological research on the causes of mental distress, in which we have learned a lot about the brain and the mind, there is little evidence that it has been of much help at the ground level of treatment. There is as much mental distress now as ever and in the case of children it has hugely increased. The treatment of mental distress is now the biggest budget in the N.H.S.

In the final section of *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein wrote:  
*The confusion and barrenness of psychology is not to be explained by its being a 'young science';...For in psychology, there are experimental methods and conceptual confusion.....*

*The existence of the experimental method makes us think that we have the means of getting rid of the problems which trouble us; but problem and method pass one another by.....*

Then he says: *An investigation entirely analogous to our investigation of psychology is possible also for mathematics. It is just as little a mathematical investigation as ours is a psychological one....*

(Wittgenstein 2009 frag. 371-2)

I propose to follow up these remarks and show that much can be learned from comparing mathematics with psychotherapy. Both are disciplines, that is, they are not primarily a collection or system of facts used to construct a theory. They do not consist in knowing what is the case, knowing that; but in a skill, a performance, knowing how. Thus knowing a few proofs by heart or knowing facts like Wiles proved Fermat's Last Theorem by working on the Taniyama-Shimura conjecture, does not make me a mathematician but merely informed about bits of it. Similarly knowing the theory of the unconscious, or archetypal theory, does not make me an effective psychotherapist. Psychotherapy and mathematics are disciplines. In mathematics skills of calculation; in psychotherapy the ability to be helpful to people in confusion and despair with themselves.

Theory construction demands that its key terms remain unambiguous, so that we can build on them. A discipline is different, it is the exercise of the skill that is important. It is a practice in which the skills required to do it are displayed in the doing of it and are not subordinated to some further purpose such as acquiring a body of doctrines. A discipline can stand on

its own feet, the learning of it is linked firmly with doing it. It does not have to resort to propositional knowledge to justify itself.

In contemporary psychotherapy knowledge of facts and explanatory theories about the mind and its disorders is paramount. But psychotherapy is not just about explaining facts but about norms, what is rational, what is deviant. If someone dies from an infection no law of nature has been broken. If someone, living in ordinary circumstances cannot leave their house because of anxiety, no natural law has been broken, but both they and we recognise that this is not normal behaviour. A norm has been broken but not a natural law. The logic of these two conditions is different. Most therapists assume there is an apparatus for thinking that is in their heads or brain; and that knowledge of it is necessary for cure. Humans like animals can do all sorts of things. But only humans have the capacity to refrain from both doing and not doing. They can experience potentiality and so are able to create norms that they may or may not follow. There is no fact enables them to do this. Knowing all about a disembodied superstructure of a mental apparatus plays no part in the reflective skills of judging and justifying norms. 'Knowing how' is logically prior to 'knowing that'. (Ryle 1949)

**Psychologism.** One of the main sources of this confusion in psychotherapy is psychologism. This corruption of logic and thought has led to the belief that psychology and its theories should form the basis self-knowledge. Its most famous advocate was Mill - a philosopher greatly admired by Freud. He claimed in his 'System of Logic' that the science of reasoning is a descriptive-explanatory psychological discipline and analysis of mental processes. The overall goal of logic is 'the guidance of one's own thoughts' (Mill 1843,6) He assumed that thoughts are psychic entities which are in the minds of individuals. The meaning of a word is an idea or image in the mind of the individual. Symbols are meaningful bits of language which are transmitted by the speaker and decoded and interpreted by the hearer.

Frege, the most trenchant critic of psychologism, wrote: 'Anyone who holds logical laws as prescribing how one should think, as laws of being true, not as natural laws of human being's holding as true, will ask: who is right? Whose laws of holding as true are in accord with the laws of being true? The psychological logician cannot answer this.' (Frege,1950 Preface 16)

Psychologism leads us to identify logical laws as psychological processes instead of laws of truth. It seduces us into supposing that logical laws

govern thinking in the same way that the laws of nature govern the empirical world. It reduces the laws of thought to mere empirical generalizations. However the validity of logic does not depend on who we are or what happens to be the case. It is logic that shows us what is thinkable. Failure to recognize this results in *'the transformation of norm into theory that is so typical of modern culture'* (Taylor 1985 p.291)

Whose psychology is right? Freud, Jung, Lacan, Gestalt psychology, cognitive psychology, mindfulness, etc.? There are big differences of opinion as to what sanity is, what is normal as opposed to average, the relation between mental health, virtue, and justice. There is often little agreement as to what needs treatment or whether diagnosis and treatment are the right questions in mental disorder. Kraus wrote: *One of the most widespread diseases is diagnosis.* (Kraus 1990 p.77)

Frege pointed out that when we study the mind we must make a distinction between investigation of the mind, the concepts we use to describe it, and the investigation of individual minds. Thoughts are independent of individual men and can be shared. (Frege 1984 p.368-9) They belong neither to the inner world of ideas and feelings nor to the outer world of things perceptible to the senses.

Logic and mathematics have nothing to do with the contents of consciousness of individual people. As Wittgenstein put it: 'I think or believe that  $2+2 = 4$  is not a mathematical statement whereas  $2+2=4$  is.' Logical and mathematical propositions lack sense, they tell us nothing about the world. They are necessary to describe the world but lie outside it. It is a mistake to relate the laws of thought, such as the principles of identity, contradiction, and excluded middle, to the nature of human thinking. If they were, logic would be contingent. Logic is internal to the expression of thought. It is internal to the correlation of representation and the world; to our making sense. A use of signs that is not logical simply does not represent anything. A thought can never be of anything illogical, it would not be a thought but nonsense; it would not represent anything. The limits of sense are not boundaries which we could bump into and define. (Wittgenstein 1961 5.61) The bounds of sense are not prison walls which exclude us from things. We have to look at the speaker's relation to his words to see if they make sense or not.

Attention to logic and what makes sense reveals human possibilities that are obscured by empirical, causal, and individual accounts of how we make sense. In bedrock language, nursery talk, we become able, with the help of care-takers, to use signs that determine meaning and so speak and

think in coordination with one another. We recognise criteria for understanding words, and can see if someone who thinks he understands but does not; this would be merely subjective understanding- *sounds which no one else understands but which I 'appear to understand'*. (Wittgenstein 2009 para. 269) Only much later we may learn the rules of grammar and logic.

By moving away from psychologism we may come to see that neurotic 'symptoms' such as phobias, depressions, obsessions, hysterical symptoms, are not specific moments, symptoms of a neurosis caused by unconscious forces, or defects in the brain; but can be understood as nonsensical attempts to make sense. In other words they are aporetic. They are not so much a loss of reason than a failure to take seriously what is expressed. Their disguised nonsense has to be made to show itself to be nonsense. For the unhappy man the world as a whole seems to lose some of its significance, whereas the happy man's world gains significance. (Wittgenstein 1961 6.43)

**Relations.** A distinction that is fundamental to Wittgenstein's method of analysis is between internal and external relations. He uses this distinction in his analysis both of mathematics and intentional relations. Intentional relations such as desires, wishes, hopes, expectations, are at the core of problems in psychotherapy. An internal relation is a connection which cannot fail to hold. Thus the circumference and radius of a circle are internally related, they could not exist apart from one another to make a circle. In contrast, an external relation is accidental and holds between objects over time. Thus the spatial relation between people in this room is an external one, it is only temporary; causal relations are external. (Macha 2015)

The core of Wittgenstein's conception of mathematics is that mathematical statements are paradigmatic cases of internal relations. But also his analysis of intentionality is that a desire and its fulfilment, an expectation and its fulfilment, fit together and are internally related. This contrasts with both Russell and Freud's account which is causal and so an external relation.

The problem is how an agent recognises that a present state of affairs satisfies their previous intention. How does one know that one has got what one wanted? For example: My girl-friend has left me and I long to have her back. She comes back, but is that what I really wanted? Is my longing a piece of disguised nonsense, in that I have merely an external relation with her? Or is my desire genuine? Then there would be an

internal relation.

Freud's account of desire is that it is a causal external relation. He imagines a hungry baby is in a state of tension but cannot relieve it by itself. When it gets help the tension is relieved and it experiences satisfaction. Henceforth it recognises what it desires because it is something perceptually identical with the experience of satisfaction. (Freud 1900 p. 565-6) Russell's account is much the same. He thought the object of desire is the state of affairs that brings pleasure. There is discomfort and its removal causes pleasure. (Russell 1921 sect. 3, 13) So there is an external relation between the desire and its object. The relation is indeterminate; whatever gives pleasure brings about satisfaction. Both of these accounts, however, are of craving, not of desire. Thus drug addicts and alcoholics clearly describe a feeling of emptiness and a tension that is satisfied by a drug or alcohol. Many people experience sexuality in these terms.

Wittgenstein points out that the fulfilment of a desire cannot be described as a third thing, such as a feeling of pleasure or satisfaction. There is a fit between desire and its fulfilment, an internal relation, this is not necessarily experienced as pleasure or satisfaction. A baby expresses his desires by gesture, we express them in language which includes gesture.

Gesture is not epistemic any more than the relation between  $2+3=5$ . A desire shows itself to those familiar with the language game which has its home in the stream of life. There is a spontaneous internal relation between a baby's desire to feed and its mother's desire to feed it. Its meaning is shown.

**Meaning** Freud claimed to have discovered the meaning of dreams, hysterical symptoms, and what people really want. For example, he famously declared that women really want a penis, unconsciously! This meaning was to be discovered in the unconscious by his methods. But Freud's notion of meaning was under the influence of psychologism. He assumed that the meaning of a word can be taken in isolation from the context of use. As Frege pointed out, if we do this we will take the meanings of words as depending on mental pictures as acts of an individual mind, and so confuse the psychological with the logical. (Frege 1980 Pref. p.10) .

I saw someone who told me he had to check that he had locked his front door exactly 6 times before he could leave for work comfortably. Now what does it mean to think, 'I must check the door 6 times'. These words

have a perfectly sensible meaning, they break no rule of logic or grammar. But what is their meaning in this particular context and what is the force of the ‘must’? Meaning has come apart from use. The sentence is nonsense in this context. The subject suffers from a hallucination of meaning – an occupational hazard of philosophers, psychotherapists and their patients. The sentence sounds alright, which is a necessary condition to being a sentence, but it is not a sufficient one. The thinker has a confused relation to his words, they seem to have a definite meaning, following rules, but are nonsense. His problem lies neither in the sentence itself nor in some incompatibility between the sentence and a determinate context of use but in an incoherent desire of the thinker in respect to his words. He has a merely an external relation to them and so has strayed from the language game which would give him a foothold on meaning in the particular context of use.

Contrast with playing chess. There are lots of rules one must follow but there is no feeling of compulsion, although at a point in the game one may think, ‘I must save my Queen’. Meaning has not come apart from use.

Therapy is concerned with clarity in our use of signs. We can state facts about the world but all facts are contingent. Our bodies, minds, behavior, ideas, desires, feelings and language can all be described, they are contingent facts. We do not own them, they have no spatio-temporal location. We learn to use signs in such a way as to reflect the contingency of facts and to express meaning. This ability does not depend on any theory of language, mind or behavior. It is a practical ability in using signs away from the production of nonsense. It is best performed face-to-face in which we talk freely to another person and where neither treat the other as an object to be manipulated. Both Freud and Wittgenstein used the term *freie einfall* (trans. free association) to describe their method of therapy. Freud interpreted according to his theories, Wittgenstein understood according to the internal relations, the language games in play.

This understanding of therapy fits in well with evidence –based research. This shows that the biggest impact on outcomes of treatment is the therapeutic alliance (as rated by the patient). That is, whether or not there is an internal relation between therapist and patient. The theories held by the therapist makes little difference to the outcome of treatment. Much therapy imposes *a powerful mythology* on people, it also may help them discover important things about themselves. But it requires ‘a very strong and keen and persistent criticism’ to see through the therapist’s

mythology, his confused thinking. (Wittgenstein 1966 p.52)

**Rules.** There is much confusion about rules in psychotherapy. Thought is free and becomes false if compelled. Thinking is not a rule bound process, rails which guide us to thoughts. A thought is not related to thinking as a leap is to leaping. We may be psychologically compelled to obey certain rules such as the law, what our teachers say if we want to get good marks. This is not to be compelled by rules but by people, their ambitions and our wish to conform.

To follow rules as opposed to rule-conforming behavior is to be able to correct or justify what one is doing by appealing to the relevant rules. An observer of a rule follower can see that certain rules are being followed yet the agent may not know them. Thus my 7 year old son, on being given a Rubik cube, solved it in about 3 minutes. But he certainly did not know group theory and the rules that govern the permutations of the faces of the cube. Yet a mathematician watching him would see the boy had a skill which he could not justify by appealing to rules; whereas the mathematician could. Rules are abstractions from practices, they are not rails which we are forced to follow. Treating rules as rails leads to a hallucination of meaning. Consultation of rules is neither a necessary or sufficient condition for following a practice. Following a practice includes the ability of having an overview of the place of the practice in a way of life; we need a sense of the whole to begin. (Tanney 2013 p.88-99)

*Frege: I do not begin with concepts and put them together to form a thought or judgement; I come by the parts of a thought by analyzing the thought.* (Frege 1979 p.253)

When we attend to thought, we may come to recognize that first-person sentences, present tense subjective 'I' utterances, do not imply that we have a substantial ego or a private subjectivity, an inner world. (Wittgenstein 1961. 5.631) If there were, it would be a particular subject, a contingent fact, a mere descriptive feature of the world. If I say: 'I wish I were a movie star', it contains the concepts, wish, movie star, and one's self concept –the second 'I'. The self –concept guarantees that one does not need to pick oneself out from any item in the environment. It is to conceive of oneself without recourse to a name, description or any other third person referring device. It is this that distinguishes persons from every thing. The human face and its expressions is an example often used by Wittgenstein. (PI. 285,536-7, 539, Baker 2013)

In the preface to the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein wrote that his aim was to draw a limit to the expression of thought. All possible thoughts can be expressed in meaningful language. We cannot draw a limit to thought as we would have to find both sides of the limit thinkable. What cannot be thought cannot be thought. But of course we can talk senselessly, without thought. To avoid this we work within language from an engaged position in which we distinguish ourselves as ourselves. We cannot dictate about the nature of reality, the world, or the mind as if from outside language. *'The limits of my language means the limits of my world'* (Wittgenstein 1961.5.6)

**The Metaphysical Impulse.** Wittgenstein questioned the sort of thinking which is subject to what he called the metaphysical impulse which is a wider notion than psychologism. *The essential thing about metaphysics: it obliterates the distinction between factual and conceptual investigations.* (Wittgenstein 1967. 458)

Most psychotherapists fail to make this distinction. Are the unconscious and internal objects facts, particular objects in everyone's mind that could be discovered by psychoanalysis? Or are they concepts, part of the grammar of psychoanalysis? If we are blind to the aspect of using 'I' in the sense of conceiving oneself as one-self, then we reduce the human to an automaton, ruled by processes beyond herself. These processes would be unconscious objects in the inner world, known only by psychoanalysts.

The aim of philosophy, for Wittgenstein, is not to give information about new discoveries, this is the job of science, rather it is a skill which *consists in marshalling recollections for a particular purpose.* (Wittgenstein 2009 para.127) *The purpose being to give an insight into the workings of our language, and that in such a way that these workings are recognised - and despite an urge to misunderstand them.* (*Ibid.* para.109) The metaphysical impulse takes over when we misunderstand the workings of our language.

The way Wittgenstein wrote and so the way he wished to be read, contrasts markedly with the writing of most empirical psychotherapists who pay little attention to the way language works. They write with a controlling authorial voice giving us volumes of information about the 'discoveries' made by individual therapists. Technical words and notions abound – descriptions of mental structures and mechanisms that drive us; cognitive activity that computes representations in a systematic way. The assumption that mental concepts pick out independent states of affairs.



Wittgenstein replaces this kind of writing to overcome the illusion that everything can be explained by using techniques and technical words. Instead he creates an album, ‘criss-cross in every direction’ (Wittgenstein 2009. para. 122), covering a ‘wide field of thought’. There are a number of different voices, often not clearly identified in his writing. He shows the complexity of discourse about the mind and its relation to the words used, their inflections of meaning and connections with gesture and action.

The metaphysical impulse is driven by a theoretical and so cognitive desire to explore the nature of all things.(PI. 89-115) This leads it to make huge generalizations about the world and our place in it. It is driven to penetrate phenomena, to see what lies: *beneath the surface. Something that lies within, which we see when we look into the thing, and which an analysis digs out.* The simile of the outward and inessential versus the hidden, the unconscious and essential appears often. (Wittgenstein 2009 para. 92, 97, 102). As the impulse is to look behind phenomena, the tendency is to disregard the phenomenal or empirical as evidence. The ‘*craving for generality*’ leads to ‘*the contemptuous attitude to the particular case*’. (Wittgenstein 1969. p.18) There are not two spaces, an inner unconscious one and an outer one. The outside in many European languages is expressed by a word that means ‘at the door’ (‘foris’ in Latin, thuria in Greek). The outside is the passage, the threshold, with respect to the limit. It is where we appear. *The subject does not belong to the world: rather it is the limit of the world.* (Tract.5.632)

*‘Philosophy is a struggle against the bewitchment of our understanding by the resources of our language.* (Wittgenstein 2009 para 109)

Bewitchment can give expression to a picture, such as that of an inner and outer world. We may turn this into a TRUTH forgetting that it can only be a contingent truth, depending on the picture.

Freud, was a marvelous story teller and his writing could be titled: ‘Stories of the Inner World’. But his stories obliterate the difference between arguments and stories. Reporting a story is not the same as arguing and inferring things like inner mental objects, which is what he claims to be doing as a scientist. A case history can be used to illustrate many different theories. Psycho-analysts assume that a case history can be an argument for a theory.

*The ‘inner’ is a delusion. That is: the whole complex of ideas alluded to by this word is like a painted curtain drawn in front of the scene of the actual word use.* (Wittgenstein 1992 p.84)

Much psychotherapy is subject to the metaphysical impulse. It determines how things will look to us: *'We predicate of the thing what lies in the method of representing it'* (Wittgenstein 2009 para104). The phenomena are represented as if they had an essence, leading us to think that this essence is actually there, underlying appearance. Thought that is attached to its own content, over and above the relative object of thought, leads to our imagining an underlying reality. Metaphysical pictures have no sense as they do not tie into human ways of acting, thinking, and feeling.

**Science.** A source of the metaphysical impulse is our preoccupation with and confusion about the methods of science. *This tendency is the real source of metaphysics, and leads the philosopher into complete darkness.* (Wittgenstein 1969 p.18)

The natural sciences, provide a unified form on their descriptions of reality and on the description of their picture of the world. Scientific explanation mostly works by hypothesizing entities whose behavior explains phenomena we observe. Thus molecular structure can explain chemical reactions; bacteria and viruses can explain the behavior of certain diseases. Psychotherapists want to explain behavior such as neurotic behavior; so they hypothesize hidden entities in the unconscious such as the id, ego, and other internal objects. These are assumed to be the primitive elements of the human mind. As a recent textbook claims, these elements are like the *ungraspable particles of subatomic physics*. (Spillius et al. 2011 Preface)

*There is no compulsion making one thing happen because another has happened. The only necessity that exists is logical necessity.* (Ibid. 6.37) Wittgenstein wrote: *'Superstition is nothing but belief in the causal nexus'* (Ibid 5.1361)

This superstition applies to Freud's most important discovery – the meaning of dreams and neurotic symptoms. He believed in the causal nexus, The Causal Necessity View. (Tejedor 2015 p.96-99) This is the belief that facts can be necessarily connected with one another, not by internal relations between them but by necessary causes. Freud believed in psychical determinism. That apparently arbitrary psychical acts like slips of the tongue, dreams, neurotic symptoms, have a necessarily determined cause – in the unconscious. He claimed to have overcome superstition in both the ancient and modern world. These beliefs *is nothing but psychology projected into the external world*. (Freud 1901 p.321) He thought they knew nothing of their motives for chance actions

and so displaced this knowledge onto the external world –gods, demons ,etc. He understood motives to be causally necessary but in the mind. He was as superstitious as those he criticized.

***Fragestellung.*** An important notion of Wittgenstein's is expressed by the German word *fragestellung* which means the setting of a question, its context. (Wittgenstein 1961. Preface). He got this notion from the afterword of an edition of Grimm's Fairy Tales. (Floyd, 2007 p.188-9).

In his 'Notes on Frazer's 'The Golden Bough'' Wittgenstein uses his notion of *fragestellung* to criticize Fraser's account of the magical and religious views of 'primitive people' as being errors. He opposes Fraser's attempt to explain them in a causal way which makes them seem dependent on false beliefs of a pre-scientific nature. Fraser, like Freud who greatly admired him, had a hierarchical view of mankind in that he assumed primitive people are rather stupid and we are much more advanced. Wittgenstein, on the other hand, thought that we should try to understand people in the light of what they thought as important, not in terms of what is important to us. He thought that the ancient rites are an extremely developed gesture -language. (Ibid p.135) Human beings are 'ceremonial animals' and tend to create rites around things that are important to them, such as birth, death, puberty, hunting, victories. We are more likely to understand rites if we compare them with our rites such as our rituals of mourning, celebration, coronation, opening of parliament, and so on.

A shift of the *Fragestellung* means that the very formulation of the question needs questioning in order to be solved. In other words, instead of searching within a framework which indicates that we discover something, we search without a method, outside a framework, so that it is open as to what fulfils it. We then face a problem of expression; a need for the clarification of the question rather than the discovery of new explanatory entities and processes such as the unconscious, repression, and internal objects.

A distinctive feature of this way of thinking is that once we have found a clear expression for our thought and feeling then we do not wonder whether or not the original question is really settled. For part of what it is to give a clear expression is to settle on an understanding of what the original question was. To doubt its aptness would be to doubt one's understanding of the original question. Where there was a riddle, there remains none as there is no general theory of the meaning of riddles.

What matters is our capacity to free ourselves from our captivation to the pictures that our a-priori beliefs present us with; such as causality as a universal explanation. *The tyranny of a system of expression is to be broken and the problems dissolved by our effecting a change of aspect through juxtaposing with our language other systems of expression.* (Baker 2004)

Thus in psychotherapy diagnosis is important. But diagnosis is usually part of a framework. However if we are trying to give an insight into the workings of our language then we will attend to the actual words used by the patient rather than imposing our diagnostic words.

Two clinical examples. A young man consulted me as he wanted to know if he was 'really' gay or not. He saw it as a question of his identity and that he must examine his mind, with my help, to find his real identity. He was usually attracted to gay men but not as a strict rule. The trouble was that he did not have a robust first-person perspective. When this developed he could conceive of himself as himself, from the first person, without recourse to a name, description, or other third person referring device, such as being gay. (Wittgenstein 1958 p.66-7. Baker, p.31)

Another example is that of a woman who consulted me as she thought she had an allergy to water. She came from a psycho-analytic family and had had orthodox psycho-analysis 5 times a week for about 4 years from a distinguished psycho-analyst. She had been told and believed, that her mind had been successfully analysed. A year or so after it had finished she felt unwell and depressed, so she thought she must be allergic to water as there could be nothing wrong with her mind, as she had been successfully analysed. She told her GP this, but he dismissed her complaint, as allergy to water is impossible, according to medical orthodoxy. When I saw her she was emphatic that she did not want any more analysis of her mind as it had already been done by someone more competent than me. On the other hand I am not an allergist, which she knew, so there was no medical treatment I could give her.

Our problem was a riddle, rather like one discussed by Wittgenstein. In the fairy tale, the king told the princess to come neither naked nor dressed. So she came wearing a fishnet. The dynamic of riddles is not directed first and foremost at a fixed Yes or No.

A riddle requires that we seek for something not specifiable in advance. It is not something hidden somewhere, like looking for a needle in a haystack. It is not found by looking for something in the unconscious, for

example, as the unconscious is not the bearer of a name for a thing but is a revered name in the psycho-analytic theoretical apparatus.

What matters is the home of words; the behavior with which a word meshes, and the occasion on which it is appropriate. If we lack a clear survey of the terrain of psychological concepts, we become prone to the illusion that if we know what our words mean then we know what we mean by them. Meaning comes apart from use and we end up talking nonsense.

Wittgenstein remarked: *'What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use.'* (Wittgenstein 2009 para 116b)

**Certainty.** The advantage of metaphysical theories about the world is that they give us an apparent intellectual certainty. Their knowledge is a-priori, that is, independent of confirmation by specific experiences. But no-one has produced independent evidence that the application of a therapeutic model based on faulty mechanisms or processes involving abnormal physiological or psychological events occurring in the brain or mind is more effective than one not so based. Yet many are certain that there must be some such model.

An important form of certainty is our understanding of expressive behaviour –smiles, frowns, laughter, gestures. This behaviour is criterial, that is the concept of a smile, for example, is constituted by its expression. An infant responds to a smile, it does not take it to be a symptom of some underlying state of mind, or a signal that has to be decoded. It is spontaneous and normally evokes a spontaneous response. These interactions are fundamental to the development of language as shown by Tomasello and others. (Tomasello 2010)

*And if the play of expressions develops, then indeed I can say that a soul, something inner is developing. But now the inner is no longer the cause of the expression. (No more than mathematical thinking produces calculations, or is the impetus behind them. And this is a remark about concepts)* (Wittgenstein 1982 para. 947)

Classical psychoanalytic therapy seems to be almost designed to force people into the metaphysical belief that there is an unconscious which contains causal elements. Having a person lie on the couch where he is observed by the analyst, who is a blank screen, so there is no expressive interaction with him, will repress expressive behaviour and leave it open

for interpretations based on the analyst's a-priori beliefs.

There are basic certainties -propositions and judgements we do not doubt because they make no sense. Eg. There is a past and future; the world does not end with my death or even with the obliteration of the human race; I have always been called J.H.; and so on. They constitute a norm on which practices of inquiry and giving reasons take place; they constitute the conditions for making judgements and for meaning and understanding. (Wittgenstein 1969 para. 141-4) They do not involve evidence or self-evidence. If someone were to say there is no past or future we would have difficulty in understanding them. We do not specifically teach children these matters, they 'pick them up'.

For example a man consulted me as he said he was Judas Iscariot and wanted a certificate from me saying that, as Judas Iscariot, he was fit for work. He was a highly educated man, smartly dressed, who had held a high post in the government before he became 'ill' and was pensioned off. When I told him I could not give him a certificate, as what he said about his being Judas Iscariot made no sense to me, he accused me of being deluded and walked out – but he did pay my bill! Interestingly, when he made the appointment he gave his normal name – which was on his cheque to me. Furthermore he applied to me, a psychiatrist, to fulfil a requirement to get his job back.

Wittgenstein wrote: *Every possible proposition is legitimately constructed, and if it has no sense this can only be because we have given no meaning to some of its constituent parts. Even if we have believed we have done so.*(Wittgenstein 1961 5.4733)

This man spoke nonsense because his whole demeanor, let alone the place and time when he spoke, gave no meaning to much of what he said. It was outside any language game. There was no play of expression in his interaction with me; a loss of attunement to ordinary human ways.

In much of our life we act with certainty but this certainty is practical and not theoretical. We mostly know our way about our world; children familiarize themselves with it in action and are not explicitly taught it; I unerringly know my way around my house.

But there is a deep uncertainty that is common. Suppose I wonder how I will die. If I have a robust first person perspective I am thinking of myself as myself; not in a third person way as J.H. or that entity J.H., or how one dies in general. Now the psychoanalyst Bion pointed out that anxiety, say

about death, blocks thinking and that a less reality orientated, generalized, pseudo thinking takes over. (Bion 1967 p.112) People who are anxious about dying then tend to think of their death in a generalized way, how people die in general. Their capacity for thought is limited. They do not have a robust first person perspective on themselves so they have a nagging doubt as to who they are, always looking for an entity they might be. One of Wittgenstein's favourite stories, Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych* illustrates this.

*I act with complete certainty. But this certainty is my own.* (OC. 174)

Theories of psychotherapy are nearly all theories about the mind, cognition, or how the brain works. They depend on the belief that to understand sentences we have to add an interpretation to them. From an abstract point of view everything we say or write is ambiguous and so the ambiguity has to be resolved by an interpretation. This fails to take into account our natural responses and training. It fails to attend to the particular circumstances and language in which we are brought up, a child's home life and how people get on with one another. No interpretation is required to see that when we address someone we address them. It is only under rather special circumstances that we have to make interpretations.

*It is always by favour of Nature that one knows something.* (Ibid. para. 505)

Wittgenstein wrote: *If someone were to advance theses in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree with them.* (Wittgenstein 2009 para. 128) He thought there should be no theories and nothing hypothetical in philosophy. I claim that this should be the same in psychotherapy. Dogmatism consists in supposing reality must conform to a picture which we employ as a sort of yardstick. In therapy, for example, people constantly employ some sort of yardstick, got from their upbringing, to which they feel they must conform. The therapist too often conforms to his pictures rather than recognizing the other person's voice.

**Conclusion.** Wittgenstein's therapy is concerned with helping people extricate themselves from the immensely diverse associations they are caught up in. It can be difficult not to use an expression, just as it is difficult to hold back tears, or an outburst of rage. It requires a renunciation of feeling rather than of intellect. So there can be no startling solution or range of techniques which will remove all difficulties (Wittgenstein 2005 p.300) There is no predetermined course of treatment,

no attempt to diagnose and cure particular diseases or to define health. Nothing more than drawing attention to our tendency to identify truth with its formulation, which leads to confusions in our understanding of the use of pictures and deep seated ways of thinking leading to mental pain and hopeless ways of dealing with reality. As soon as this has been done many of our words become nothing but useless tumours which mislead ourselves and others.

The contrast between Wittgenstein's therapy and psychotherapy is paradoxical. Psychotherapy is a practice with its roots in man's efforts to help people who are deeply unhappy. Therapists, however, in our culture are in the grip of intellectualism and seek to explain practices by using propositional knowledge of the unconscious or other objects or processes they claim to have discovered. Philosophy, on the other hand, is usually thought to be a highly theoretical subject with little or no use in practical life. Wittgenstein turns this around: philosophy is rooted in practice, it is a craft.

To return to mathematics.

*Philosophical clarity will have the same effect on the growth of mathematics as sunlight has on the growth of potato shoots. (In a dark cellar they grow yards long) (Wittgenstein 1974 381)*

The same applies to psychotherapy. Psychotherapists of the future will be more sensitive in their use of words, aware of the practical importance of 'logical geography', recognizing this is connected with the solid core of therapy, which is how to live one's life in the world. Clarity will enable us to –'get down to brass tacks' (Ibid. 467)



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