

## 29 Program and abstracts

### 29 May

10.15 Meet up in front of Johanneskirken

10.30 Bus leaves Johanneskirken

16.30 Arrival Skjolden

16.30 – 17.15 Check-in at Skjolden Hotel

19.00 – 20.00 Dinner

20.00 – 21.15 [Cora Diamond](#) (via Zoom), University of Virginia

### “Wittgenstein’s Impatient Reply to Russell”

In a letter of August 1919, Russell said that he thought Wittgenstein was right in his main contention, that logical propositions are tautologies, which are not true in the sense that substantial propositions are true. Wittgenstein replied in a somewhat impatient tone that Russell had not got hold of his main contention. My paper comments on Wittgenstein's reply. I draw on Juliet Floyd (on the relation between Wittgenstein on mathematics and on philosophical method) and on Jean-Philippe Narboux (on Wittgenstein on saying and showing).

### 30 May

08.00 – 09.30 *Breakfast*

09.30 – 10.45 [Juliet Floyd](#), Boston University

### “Truth in Russell, Early Wittgenstein and Gödel”

The *Tractatus*'s engagement with the issue of the nature of truth and falsity emerged from engagement with Russell. This engagement reverberated through the Vienna Circle and in particular affected Gödel. The *Tractatus*'s “elementary sentences” must be seen against the backdrop of Russell’s “multiple relation theory of judgment”, his theory of

truth in *Principia Mathematica*, which Wittgenstein discussed at length with Russell in 1912-1913 and Gödel studied in 1929-1932. Russell's approach was directed against both Idealism and William James's pragmatist view of truth. It aimed at a direct treatment of the distinction between truth and falsity in terms of particular, logically simple beliefs (judgments lacking in truth-functional and quantification complexity). Schlick rejected Russell's view in favor of his more holistic correspondence theory, one which, however, tipped easily into pragmatism, conventionalism and verificationism. The *Tractatus* begins, rather, with Russell's bottom-up approach truth, and then draws in two further ideas: 1. The need for a medium of representation and 2. The importance of modality (possibility and necessity) to logic. This approach was developed further in his later work, i.e., *Philosophical Investigations*. Aware of the *Tractatus* and Russell's engagement with Wittgenstein on truth, Gödel continued to engage with Russell's multiple relation theory of truth and *Principia* philosophically up through 1944. The parallel yet distinct engagements of Gödel and Wittgenstein with Russell on truth (and Vienna positivism) show that each regarded Russell's view as requiring amendment. However, their philosophical differences with one another are not merely to be understood in terms of the dichotomy between conventionalism (the usual view of Wittgenstein) and Platonism (the usual view of Gödel). They must rather be seen to emerge from the original approach to truth we find in Russell.

10.45 – 11.00 Break

11.00 – 12.15 [Jose Zalabardo](#), University College, London

### **“Non-Elementary Picturing”**

Wittgenstein tells us that a proposition is a picture of reality. However, his account of propositions as pictures applies in the first instance only to elementary propositions. I explore the difficulties that Wittgenstein encounters when he tries to extend the pictorial approach to everyday propositions—truth-functional compounds of elementary propositions. I argue that the problem is addressed in the *Notebooks*, primarily in connection with negative propositions, but also truth-functional compounds in general. I claim that the *Tractatus* offers no solution to this problem. In order to explain how everyday propositions represent the world, the picture theory would have to be supplemented by a non-pictorial component, but the *Tractatus* doesn't through any light on the nature of this component. I discuss the role that this problem might have played in the later Wittgenstein's engagement with rule following, by providing the starting point for the regress of interpretations.

12.15 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 14.15 **Gilad Nir**, Universität Potsdam

### **“Wittgenstein’s Disjunctivist Approach to Reasoning”**

The Tractarian construal of the nature of reasoning conflicts with the conventional wisdom that logic is normative, not descriptive of thought. For although we sometimes seem to reason incorrectly, Wittgenstein denies that we can make logical mistakes (5.473). Moreover, he denies that in providing inferential justification, we engage in some additional act over and above understanding the premises and conclusion, such as the application of logical laws (5.132). He thus seems to leave out of his account that element of inference which is standardly appealed to in order to explain how cases of bad reasoning nonetheless count as cases of reasoning, and hence subject to the same norms of evaluation. My aim in this paper is to show that Wittgenstein is nonetheless able to offer an attractive account of reasoning, and that he provides us with good reasons to be suspicious of some of the central assumptions of what has by now become the standard way of construing the nature of inference. In particular, I propose that the rejection of logical mistakes reflects Wittgenstein’s non-psychological approach to the thinking subject (5.641), as well as his holistic construal of the relations between inference, understanding, and meaning. From this perspective, cases of invalid reasoning involve a defective grasp of meaning, manifested in an indeterminate use of signs. For this reason, defective reasoning cannot count as a species of reasoning, just as uttering a nonsensical strings of signs cannot count as asserting a proposition. The rejection of logical mistakes, I propose, reflects Wittgenstein’s disjunctivist approach to reasoning. I briefly consider two objections. The first objection is that Wittgenstein’s account places unrealistic demands on finite, thinking subjects. The second objection, which traces back to Ramsey, is that in denying the normativity of logic, Wittgenstein leaves it a mystery why we prefer logically valid over invalid reasoning. I indicate how each objection can be met. To overcome the first objection we must attend to Wittgenstein’s remarks on solipsism, in which he rejects the possibility of there being a mismatch between the limits of a thinker’s language and the limits of her world. To overcome the second objection requires that we resist the temptation to equate the authority a rule has within a system and the authority of the system itself.

*14.15 – 14.30 Break*

14.30 – 15.45 **Friedrich Stadler**, Institute Vienna Circle, University of Vienna, and Vienna Circle Society

### **“Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle – The Case of the Tractatus Reconsidered”**

Research and publications on Wittgenstein and on the Vienna Circle have been steadily increasing in recent decades. Nevertheless, detailed comparisons between the single famous philosopher and the influential circle around Moritz Schlick are less often undertaken. To be sure, the reception and impact of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (TLP) on the Vienna Circle is a familiar topic as are the conversations Wittgenstein had with Schlick and Waismann. In my paper I argue that a broader focus be adopted. After an overview of the multi-faceted Vienna Circle based on recent historiography and primary sources a new perspective on the complex relations between Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle is offered. To this end, a case study of a central relevant document is provided, namely of Rose Rand's "Development of the Theses of the 'Vienna Circle'" (1932/33). A close reading and interpretation of this unique source in conjunction with the correspondence between Carnap and Neurath and Carnap's diaries, sheds new light on the central philosophical triangle of Wittgenstein - Schlick - Waismann and opens up new avenues for future analyses.

15.45 – 16.00 Break

16.00 – 17.15 **David Stern**, University of Iowa

### **"Tree-Structured Readings of the *Tractatus*"**

In an unpublished letter that G.E.M. Anscombe sent to G. H. von Wright in May 1948, Anscombe suggested a new way of reading the *Tractatus*: "By the way, it occurred to me to try a method of reading it which is pretty obvious but has not been tried by anyone I mentioned it to, and which I think helps: it is to read it in successive steps, first whole numbers, then these together with the first decimal point, then up to the second point, and so on." Anscombe's suggestion amounted to the first formulation, or perhaps anticipation, of what has since become known as a tree-structured reading. On this approach, the starting point consists of the seven whole-numbered remarks, which form the trunk of the tree; from there one turns to those with just one cardinal number after the decimal point, the main branches that are directly attached to the trunk; next come those with two cardinal numbers, the branches that are attached to the main branches, and so on. However, Anscombe never publicized this approach, and so it received almost no attention for over forty years, until work by Brian McGuinness, Verena Mayer and others made it clear that Wittgenstein had used that system to assemble and organize his work between 1915 and 1918. Luciano Bazzocchi and Peter Hacker have recently argued that a tree-structured reading provides the key to understanding the structure of the *Tractatus*. In this paper, I draw on earlier discussions of tree-structured readings to argue that such readings can both help us see how Wittgenstein's conception of the main themes of his book changed in the course of writing it and also provide us with a

valuable alternative reading order. However, I also argue against Bazzocchi and Hacker that such readings cannot decisively settle much-debated questions about the book's aims and methods.

17.15 – 18.00 **Jakub Gomułka**, Pedagogical University of Cracow (Poland)

### **“Tractatus 6 Reconsidered: An Algorithmic Alternative to Wittgenstein’s Trade-off”**

Wittgenstein’s conception of the general form of a truth-function given in thesis 6 can be presented as a sort of a trade-off: the author of the *Tractatus* is unable to reconcile the simplicity of his original idea of a series of forms with the simplicity of his generalisation of Sheffer’s stroke; therefore, he is forced to sacrifice one of them. As will be argued in the paper, the choice he makes – to weaken the logical constraints put on the concept of a series of forms, thus effectively metaphorising that concept for the sake of upholding the N-operation’s role of generating the series – is unfortunate. An actual expansion of a series of truth-functions as defined in 6 would require either making decisions at each step (Anscombe) or outwardly rejecting the concept of a series (Sundholm). However, neither is faithful to Wittgenstein’s own fundamental intuitions regarding the nature of logic. For this reason, a different trade-off that prioritises upholding the basic features of a series of forms over the simplicity of the operation that generates that series seems to be much more reasonable. Such a trade-off can be offered as a development of the schema already present in the *Tractatus* (5.101).

The key element of this alternative solution is the construction of an operation that can perform the task of producing all consecutive truth-functions of a given collection of atomic propositions as an invariant difference between any base and its successor throughout the series. The operation is defined as a sequence of three transformations: the first turns a symbol of a given truth-function into a binary number, the second increments that number, the third turns the result back into a symbol of another truth-function.

18.00 – 19.00 **Nordic Wittgenstein Society annual meeting**

*19.00 Dinner*

**31 May**

08.00 – 09.30 Breakfast

09.30 – 10.45 [Hanne Appelqvist](#), University of Helsinki

### **“Aesthetics in the Tractatus”**

The *Tractatus* is usually read as a work primarily concerned with linguistic meaning. In spite of Wittgenstein’s suggestion that aesthetics and logic stand on a par by being transcendental, his early remarks on aesthetics are typically treated either as illustrations of his account of language or as an indication of his mystical tendencies. Indeed, according to Peter Hacker, the very attempt to connect the book’s linguistic core to its “mystical” part, where the mention of the transcendental of aesthetics surfaces, is “at best misleading, at worst erroneous” (Hacker 1986, 101). I will argue, *pace* Hacker, that aesthetics plays a significant role in Wittgenstein’s early philosophy. However, by contrast to the analytic mainstream that takes aesthetics to be a relatively narrow field of philosophy concerned with art, beauty, and taste, we should understand aesthetics in its broad Kantian sense that signifies the investigation of the sensible domain in general. I will argue that the Kantian conception of transcendental aesthetic in specific is echoed in Wittgenstein’s understanding of logical form that shows itself but cannot be *said*.

10.45 – 11.30 [Sushobhona Pal](#), Shri Shikshayatan College, Calcutta

### **“The Thought (*Gedanke*): Frege and the Early Wittgenstein”**

The *Tractatus* clearly reflects the influence of Fregean Philosophy. Wittgenstein acknowledged his indebtedness to Frege in unequivocal terms. Yet Wittgenstein was never a copy of Frege but rather tried to construct a radically different kind of philosophy. Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* which contains the intricate question of the relation between language, thought and reality, does not dwell elaborately on the concept of thought. This skeletal picture of thought by the early Wittgenstein stands in sharp contrast to Frege’s presentation of the same. This paper will attempt to discuss the Fregean notion of thought and the Tractarian notion of the same and attempt an analytical comparison between them. I think that Wittgenstein was more accurate in his presentation of the concept of thought in view of the fact that he never shifted from his basic aim, that of establishing a relation between language, thought and reality. A one-to-one correspondence has been explicitly stated by him between language and reality but that of thought has not been stated explicitly. I will show that a one-to-one correspondence between thought and reality follows from TLP 3 and TLP 4. Wittgenstein’s presentation of thought is strictly speaking logical in line with the basic aim of the *Tractatus*. But Frege’s presentation of the same concept, I think hovers somewhere between the psychological and the ontological. He is sure that thoughts exist in a third realm but his proof is no proof at all. But the greatest difficulty on Wittgenstein’s presentation is that he has not elaborated much on the

concept of thought unlike Frege. So, whatever we have to conclude from the *Tractatus* are analyzable deductions. This is a serious difficulty.

*11.30 – 11.45 Break*

11.45 – 13.00 [Denis McManus](#), University of Southampton

### **“Ethics, the self and the ‘paradox of being’ in the early Wittgenstein”**

The early Wittgenstein’s reflections on ethics have long been a puzzle. They are puzzling in themselves—for example, what does it mean to say that ‘value ... must lie outside the world’ (6.41)?—but also their place within the *Tractatus* is puzzling, leading commentators such as Peter Hacker and Hanjo Glock to depict them as ‘tenuously’ ‘grafted’ on to that book’s ‘logical trunk’. This paper will look again at these reflections to try to identify how considerations recognizably continuous with those that do belong to that ‘trunk’ might inform those reflections and find echoes in a recognizable sense of the challenge of living a good life.

*13.00 – 14.00 Lunch*

14.00 – 15.15 [Chon Tejedor](#), University of Valencia

### **“The *Tractatus*’ Enduring Power to Transform: Cultural Lacunas, Honesty and Conditioned Responsibility”**

In this paper, I revisit the *Tractatus*’ notion of ethical attitude in the light of what I call *Individual Conditioned Responsibility*. Individual Conditioned Responsibility arises in situations in which there is a strong case for ascribing ethical responsibility to an individual, but such responsibility cannot be cashed out in terms either of her intentions or of the consequences of her actions. Examples of situations of this type, include, notably, some associated with human-generated climate change. Situations of this type present us with a cultural hermeneutical lacuna: it seems apposite to ascribe some degree of ethical responsibility to individuals in these cases, but, given that this a move that cannot be justified in consequential or intentional terms, we seem culturally to lack the hermeneutical resources capable of justifying such an ascription. I argue that the *Tractatus*’ notion of dispositional ethical attitude (Tejedor 2015), understood as a form of honesty in one’s position in the world, can play an important role in filling precisely this lacuna.

*15.15 – 15.30 Break*

15.30 – 16.15 [Michael Wee](#), Durham University

### **“The Tractatus and On Certainty: Bookending Wittgenstein’s Legacy”**

Conceptual similarities between the *Tractatus* and *On Certainty* have occasionally been noted, in passing, by commentators like G.H. von Wright and P.F. Strawson, but this comparison is rarely, if ever, given the detailed treatment it deserves. In this paper, I will argue that these two works should be seen as bookends to Wittgenstein’s legacy because of their capacity for mutual illumination which, crucially, serves to reinforce the unity of Wittgenstein’s thought. I will begin by considering three Tractarian themes and their development in the context of *On Certainty*: 1) The saying-showing distinction; 2) The irrefutability of scepticism; 3) The tautological nature of logical propositions. Each of these motifs, I will argue, returns in *On Certainty*. The latter work’s hinge propositions, not being actual empirical propositions, do not say anything, but they show what the *Tractatus* would call formal concepts. The empirical form of hinge propositions also shows their rootedness in the world, which conditions the limits of language and renders scepticism nonsensical, even if irrefutable. Like the *Tractatus*’s logical tautologies, which also stand at the limits of language, hinge propositions are similarly tautological. Though they are not in themselves rules of inference, our recognition that they are tautologies – manifested in our use of language – licenses inferences in thinking. This has implications for reading both texts. Despite the supposed autonomy of grammar, *On Certainty* turns out to be preoccupied with the old, Tractarian problem of harmony between language and world – though this harmony is now effected by pre-linguistic reactions rather than isomorphism. This, in turn, gives fresh support to the Ishiguro-McGuinness reading of the *Tractatus*: simple objects (much like hinge certainties) are better thought of as a heuristic device rather than actual entities, and the *Tractatus* already contains the view, albeit in narrower terms, that ‘meaning is use’.

16.15 – 17.00 [James Matthew Fielding](#), Univ-Paris1

### **“Time, Temporality and the Task of the Tractatus”**

Time thoroughly structures our engagement with the *Tractatus*. The work’s very form seems to be intended to scaffold our real, temporally-situated encounter with it: from the opening line of the preface – where Wittgenstein announces that the work will only be understood by those “who have already had the thoughts that are expressed in it” – to the propositional structure of the text itself and its final invocation in 6.54 of the ladder, which is ultimately to be cast aside only after it has been ascended. Within the pages of the book, however, we consistently find

references to the contrary. From that perfect foreseeability that belongs to logical operations, to the a-temporal and ahistorical existence of the 'metaphysical subject', whose view *sub specie aeternitatis* is the hallmark of the world seen rightly, the logico-philosophical significance of time is consistently suppressed. How, then, are we to align these two Tractarian images of time and temporality? Given the fact that the significance of time is systematically denied within the book, and yet animates its structure or 'frame', we may be tempted to assume that the vision evoked within is just one more instance of metaphysical nonsense, to be rejected along with all the rest once we have cast the *Tractatus* aside. However, to do so would be to underestimate the extent to which that very vision of a-temporality is essential to achieving the work's explicit aim: the final solution to the problems of philosophy. In this talk, I explore the connection between time, temporality and the task of the *Tractatus*. I demonstrate how this uncomfortable dialectic problematizes certain prominent readings of the work and, furthermore, how it re-orientates our understanding of Wittgenstein's later critique of his earlier thought. Far from a mere rejection of his earlier views, however, I show how Wittgenstein, in various pre-Tractarian Nachlass sources, had himself already articulated what exactly is at stake in all this. Thus, though he privileged one side of the equation in the *Tractatus*, the foundations for his later thought had already been thoroughly established.

17.00 – 19.00 **Excursion to Wittgenstein's house**

19.30 *Conference dinner*

## **1 June**

08.00 Breakfast

09.00 Bus leaves for Bergen

ca 15.00 Drop-off at Bergen airport (if needed)

ca 15.30 Arrival Johanneskirken